

continuous range of woods, along which, the saying is, a squirrel could travel between the two cities without touching earth.

AGAIN we turn to the fortunes of the ex-officer. What can Europe do for him? Does America need him; can she help him? Appalling stories appear day after day in the British press. A friend writes: 'I know a young Flying Corps officer who was a brilliant pilot. He tried to get work, but all that was offered was a job as an unskilled mechanic at £2 10s. a week. His furniture, bought on the hire system, was seized by the lenders; what his wife and baby are doing I do not know, but the last time I saw him he was cadging a few shillings from any friends he met to help him to live. He should not have refused the mechanic's job pending something better, but as an officer of the Air Force he expected something better.'

A CONFERENCE of those interested in the theatre has been taking place at Stratford on Avon. On August 23 the subject was the little theatre movement. Mr. Norman MacDermott was in the chair. The following report has been clipped from the pages of the *Morning Post*:

'In introducing Mr. Ernest Rhys, editor of the *Everyman* library, Mr. MacDermott observed that for a theatre to be "little" was not in itself a virtue, though America had developed a special pride in houses that would not seat more than sixty.

'Mr. Rhys said that small communities could afford only small theatres, and that the value of a repertory theatre varied with the value of the plays presented. The Little Theatre should be a pliable, flexible, elastic instrument. The English people had the dramatic instinct strongly developed, and would readily respond to any drama that was an expression of life. The Greek drama owed much to the constant inter-action of the theatre and life around it. The artist must not separate himself from the crowd. When once art or literature parted company with life its vitality was greatly impaired.

'Mr. Bakshy, the author of *The Path of the Modern Russian Stage*, after a wholly

superfluous apology for his English, declared that the repertory theatre had compromised itself badly with modern plays, which, provocative of thought, were properly the preserves of the "high brow." At the same time, "high brow" was a term which Caliban, had he been an American, would have applied to Prospero. Over the commercial theatre, admittedly in a state of decay, the Little Theatre had one great advantage. Each little theatre was independent of the others, and the collapse of one did not affect the rest. Again, each was free to develop on its own lines. In Russia there was no little theatre, but, on the other hand, a big production in Moscow or Petrograd was a national event, as much a matter of general concern as the Newmarket races in England. The Little Theatre was bound to be experimental, but without experiment there was no art.

'This speech, though containing much praise of his *Everyman* Theatre, Mr. MacDermott described as a bromide speech.

'Mr. Garside, who followed, gave a description of the *Everyman* Theatre, with the design and objects of which the visitor to Stratford has every facility for acquainting himself. It was right, Mr. Garside said, that the shareholders should receive no dividend. The holding out of hopes of pecuniary gain had been the ruin of several ventures of the kind owing to the managers having sooner or later to lower the standard of entertainment with a view to redeeming its pledges.

'The general discussion that followed was not particularly fruitful, and there were times when one looked through the old diamond-paned window at an Australian soldier sketching across the road and wondered how he was getting on.

'Miss Hope deprecated the attack on the commercial theatre. Mr. Lugg deplored the multiplication of all sorts of labels for theatres — repertory, little, round, square, oblong, and what not, and asked why we should not simply turn our thoughts to the theatre itself. Mr. Dawes, speaking of Leeds, a town where, by-the-by, a century ago the actor was stoned, said the two means of getting out of one's surroundings were drink and the drama. In reply, Mr. MacDermott defined the object of the

Everyman Theatre to be the making, not of dividends, but of better citizens.

'What greatly militates against the probability of these conferences achieving substantial results is the fact that many of the members have come to Stratford with their own special pattern of fly, or bait (to use an angler's simile), the use of which is to work wonders if only someone will provide them with rod, reel, line, and a few other trifles.

'Before the discussion, Miss Elsie Fogerty read a letter received by her from Madame de Maratraye. "Englished" it ran as follows:

"May I ask you to act as our interpreter to express to the organizers of the Con-

ference our gratitude for the charming welcome given to us in that theatre which seems a temple of art. Those admirable actors; the happy blending of performers and audiences; the incomparable site of the little town; the impromptu friendliness of the proceedings, delighted us. We dream of returning next year, bringing with us a group of representatives of all forms of French dramatic art. What a pleasure it would be to me to introduce them to you."

'Miss Fogerty also stated that Miss Viola Tree would contribute to the proceedings of the Conference on Monday morning, when the subject will be "Music in the Theatre."

THE EDITOR'S NOTE-BOOK

Eden Phillpotts, once known best as a novelist, is now winning laurels as a poet and essayist.

* * *

Oscar Browning, scholar and historian,

is a Fellow of King's College, Cambridge.

* * *

Mr. William Butler Yeats's last volume is entitled *The Wild Swans*. It has been reviewed in *THE LIVING AGE*.