

add. It's April's feast, the feast of all living things, and we, brides and bridegrooms of the great world's weddings, are making ourselves fair putting on jewels and ribbons. Then, in ecstasy, we sing, we gossip, we whistle."

The Toad

"**O** PHILOSOPHER of the mire, you who drag your belly from one tuft of broom to the next, and in the shade scratch your jaundiced skin with your foot! O bloated and slimy toad, we are at leisure, now that the afternoon draws on; so, between friends, let's have a bit of talk. Tell me what you have in your flattened skull. They say that long ago Plato, a master of speech, took pleasure at his evening board in questioning his guests over a flagon of old wine. Cup in hand, at every pause, the learned company discussed the Beautiful, the Good and the True of things. Let's do likewise. What is the Beautiful?"

"For me the Beautiful is my lady toad. Nothing under the canopy of the sky can equal her when in spring she has donned her yellow apron and white bib. No, nothing can rival her puffy breast, and her plump legs which are modeled, you'd say, by the hands of a fairy. To see her an instant at night, by the light of the stars, I, her poor lover, come out softly from my burrow, and with a circle of coals I light my eyeballs. It's not enough to admire her from afar. My timid breast dares, in a hoarse croak, invite my superb mistress to the cabin of my flat stone."

"Let's go on. The Good—what is that to you?"

"To me the Good is the cockroach. Richly fat, it has the merit, without intoxicating me, of giving me a rare feast. It's a dainty morsel for the stomach—tickling so gently all the places that hunger sets itching, and gliding deliciously into the paunch. Good, too, is the black cricket, whom I meet outside his hole. Good, too, when he flies at twilight, the dung-beetle who gives out a musk fragrance. I'm not one of your squeamish folk, I can make a feast with the riff-raff of wood-lice who season themselves in the saltpetre sweated by old walls."

"So far, so good. And then, what is the True? What do you think of that in your flat pate?"

"I don't think of it at all. All the same, I'll tell you a saying I had from an old codger who had seen his share of the world. 'For what doesn't concern us,' said he, 'don't let's break our heads, because to smell further than your nose is bad for toads. Young fellow, it's a curse!' Do you smell further, my friend of the bearded chin and pale face? To dine well, to sleep well, you have the Beautiful, your toad, you have the Good, your

would say, 'Who is that man who has everything and yet complains?' "

"Listen, good toad. There's no doubt that on dark days when I'm out of sorts with the world I'm jealous of your wisdom. You have the blessed simplicity of the beast that carouses, courts, and nests stretched out in the cool mud or the warm straw. You have bold ignorance, tranquil indifference to everything but your pleasures, you never ask what so fatigues—and alack! so wears us out to find. Under your flagstone Truth never shines. What do you care for the True and the reason for things? That sun isn't yours; if the warmth of the other is shed for you, toad, as it is for me, the sun of Truth shines and gleams only for man. The dung-beetle and the cricket are your food. Of Truth, more than of bread, unless he be mere toad, man makes his food."

(*Oubreto Prouvençalo dou Félibre di Tavan:*

Provençal Trifles, by the Poet of the Insects.)

Translated by ELIZABETH SHEPLEY SERGEANT.

Round About Treitschke

IT is the fashion to link Nietzsche and Treitschke together—in the main, perhaps, because both names are difficult to pronounce, and therefore somewhat sinister in association. They sound gloomy and unfriendly; both arouse in English-speaking people some initial prejudice. Thus a name like Namur or Maubeuge may conjure up a pleasant landscape, but to most of us the sun never shines at Czenstochowa, and we perceive no vivid difference between Czenstochowa and Skierniewice. It is undoubtedly a sign of our ignorance and provincialism.

Between Nietzsche and Treitschke there are, however, profound differences which do not disappear because both men would have been equally unpopular on the Chautauqua circuit. They were contemporaries, but between the Prussian professor and the Basle philologist there was never any exchange of courtesies. A mutual friend, named Overbeck, wrote to Treitschke saying, "I am sure that you will discern in these contemplations of Nietzsche's the most profound, the most serious, the most instinctive devotion to German greatness." Treitschke didn't discern anything of the kind. Overbeck tried again: "It is Nietzsche, my suffering friend, of whom I will and above all must talk to you." This was more than Treitschke's nerves could endure. "Your Basle," he replied, "is a boudoir from which German culture is insulted."

Treitschke was right. Insults to German culture

the German spirit." When Metz capitulated in 1870, Nietzsche was in the little Prussian town of Naumburg and he saw the frenzy which the victory brought. He wrote to Gersdorff: "I fear that we shall have to pay for our marvelous national victories at a price to which I, for my part, will never consent. In confidence, I am of the opinion that modern Prussia is a power highly dangerous to culture." Nietzsche would have been unable to express his contempt for a statement like Treitschke's that "the most daring thoughts about the highest problems which trouble mankind are uttered by Germans." Nietzsche, in fact, wrote toward the end of his life "At the Court of Prussia I fear that Herr von Treitschke is regarded as deep."

But Nietzsche did something much more incisive than this. He pointed to the sources of that crookedness of vision of which Treitschke is only a conspicuous example. Writing of Hegel's philosophy of history, Nietzsche says: "Such a mode of contemplation has accustomed Germans to speak of the 'World-process' and to justify their own age as the necessary result of this 'World-process'; it has also raised history to the exclusively sovereign power . . . under the supposition that it is the 'self-realizing power,' 'the dialectic of the spirit of the nations,' and 'the final court of appeal.' History thus interpreted according to the teachings of Hegel has been sarcastically called 'the perambulation of God upon the earth.'"

Had the Germans taken Nietzsche's advice and set out to "learn to think unhistorically," they might not have saved themselves this war, but they would not have exasperated the neutral opinion of mankind. It is the historical presumption of German apologetics which has turned so much of the world's intellect against the German empire. For there is nothing so dehumanizing as the attempt to deal with contemporary life as if it were the pageant of history. There is no nonsense you will not believe if you can once intoxicate yourself into believing that you are a figure in history and that your acts are the material for future historians. Nothing is so conducive to strutting, to theatricality, bombast and criminal romance as dogmatism about historical destiny, historical mission, and all the other humbug of a self-selected chosen people.

The historical imagination applied to contemporary life is one of the ultimate pitfalls of the intellect. It treats the living as indistinguishable from the dead, and both only as figures silhouetted in contemplation. All the real choice, pain, decision, struggle, are nullified and insulted when looked at as part of history. The historical point of view is one of the antidotes to living, one of the great monasteries erected in the nineteenth cen-

He manipulates nations as a child toys with his lead soldiers, admiring the big ones, the finely colored ones, the ones that form pretty patterns. He has a kind of Olympian levity about individual fate. He thinks in big, rounded epochs, "Kulturs," in dramas on a world scale. But what it is all good for, except to the historical imagination, he never seems to have inquired.

There is one contemporary journalist in America who has this kind of historical imagination in a very considerable degree. He is Mr. Frank H. Simonds. Mr. Simonds writes of war in a nice clean way, as if it were some fine parade at the Hippodrome. He writes of it with the same deodorized detachment that you find in school-book accounts of the Napoleonic wars. You know perfectly well that war isn't in the least as Mr. Simonds describes it, that it isn't the finely joined, nicely composed, intellectually satisfying spectacle he makes it out to be. All this is only a design he weaves into it by treating the armies as if they were mannikins on a map. He shows us no faces, but he gives us the drum and fife, and when human nature enters his discussions, it enters in some historically certified form like courage, patriotism, sentiment. It is instructive to read Mr. Simonds, because he makes it all so simple and so unfeeling, but our complacency might be shaken if we thought that he was going to try to write about American affairs as if they too were happening a hundred years ago in a history book. He has helped us all to understand the great war by serving it up in the form we know from childhood. But the same quality of historical thinking employed by a statesman in power would be infinitely dangerous and misleading.

No one can read an Englishman like Cramb, or Prussians like Treitschke, von Bülow, Bethmann-Hollweg, Münsterberg, Dernburg, even the Kaiser himself, without feeling the effect of history taken too seriously, too uncritically, too emotionally. The curious and irritating inhumanity of so many of their judgments is due, more than anything else, to their being victims of nineteenth century historical learning. For a penetrating analysis of its dangers, nothing better has been done than the paper of Professor Morris Cohen called "History versus Value," which is published in the *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods* for December 17, 1914. Professor Cohen shows how in one field of learning after another, in economics, jurisprudence, politics, ethics, religion and philosophy, the attempt to use the history of a thing to determine its value, breaks down and distorts ideas.

You cannot tell what ought to be by looking at

America by studying its history. This in essence is what the historicists—an awkward name for awkward people—are trying to do. When they are eloquent and handsome as Treitschke was, when they conform unconsciously to social necessities, their romantic history becomes a kind of national religion and an immense spur to the will. In that intoxication men soon cease to care for facts; the only facts recognized are the ones which

serve the great purpose. Our history teachers, for example, never seem able to convey very vividly the information that in the War of 1812 the British burned Washington. History, which has unquestionable value as a liberator of the mind, as a leavening and maturing influence, can all too easily be erected by the historicist into a mystical patriotism, a foolish exaltation, a chromo view of life from which flow all manner of monstrous ideas.

Robert Burns

BURNS is the last poet in our tradition who made poetry out of his own Works and Days.

He finds a poem when his plowshare turns up a daisy's root or a mouse's nest, when Mailie, his sheep, comes to meet him, when he sits down to blackguard his neighbor, when he goes to a penny dance and gives his attention to Eliza or Jean or Nancy. "Leeze me on rhyme!" The wonderful thing is that so little of what he made with such abandonment is indifferent poetry. The great volume of his work is a testimony to his wide responsiveness and his splendid power of shaping all he felt. It is an index, too, to the culture of the little community that had Burns for its laureate.

Walt Whitman would have liked to have written as Burns wrote—about the Days and Works of a man who made a living with his hands. But Whitman had a thesis, and this thesis, even though it was about average life, made him a separate man. Burns had no principle that separated him from anyone except the men with the thesis—the elders and the Calvinist divines. Besides, Whitman in America could not be a communist in poetry; he might bestow, but he could not share, for there was no popular poetry to take from. Burns's mind moved amongst communal creations; around him were the folk-melodies that, as one might almost say, are the only begetters of lyric poetry; the popular verse forms that anonymous poets had evolved; the fragments of folk-song that might give rise to new creations or be used to fill out a half personal combination; half formed characters and half shaped stories.

Like all who have a few possessions, Burns's people were interested in things more than in ideas, and like all country-people, they took account of personalities and phrases. Such tendencies made a good environment for a poet. Their culture was not predominantly Saxon. Burns, like the Irish poets of the nineteenth century, felt the flow of the Gaelic tradition. The music that shaped his

so abundant in Burns's idiom. With these diminutives he creates a language that seems far removed from English speech:

Wee, sleekit, cowrin, tim'rous beastie,
O what a panic 's in thy breastie!
Thou need'st not start away so hasty,
Wi' bickering brattle!
I wad be laith to rin and chase thee
Wi' murdering pattle!

The words are influenced by Gaelic idiom and the meter is taken straight from Gaelic poetry. And the feeling in the poem is Celtic too. In Irish there are many poems addressed to such little creatures as Burns's mouse. Again one is reminded of Catullus, who, as scholars assure us, bore a Celtic name and was native of a country where the Celtic memory and the Celtic thought were preserved as in the north-English-speaking Scotland of Burns's day and the English-speaking Ireland of to-day.

A certain racial complacency has prevented scholars from alluding to Burns's Gaelic affiliations. But these are marked in the measures of his poetry. He writes easily to tunes that have come to him from Ireland directly, as in his verse accompaniment to "The Humours of Glinn":

Their groves o' sweet myrtle let foreign lands reckon,
Where bright-beaming Summers exalt the perfume!
Far dearer to me yon lone glen of green breckan,
Wi' the burn stealing under the long yellow broom.

And the mould of Irish music is apparent in the vagabond-soldier's song in "The Jolly Beggars":

I am a son of Mars, who have been in many wars,
And show my cuts and scars wherever I come:
This here was for a wench, and that other in a trench,
When welcoming the French at the sound of the drum.

His experiments with Irish music show his leaning towards the Gaelic rhythm. But always, naturally and unconsciously, he used Gaelic forms. One can find at random stanzas rhymed in this characteristically Gaelic way:

O, leave novëls, ye Mauchline belles—
Ye're safer at your spinning-wheel!