

The most remarkable fact about *The Enigma of Rabelais* is that a book so formal, so earnest, so unsmiling, could emerge as a by-product of the fantastic imaginations and mirth of Gargantua and Pantagruel. It may be presumed that Mr. Chappell enjoys his Rabelais in weaker moments as much as we of the more ignorant sort, but with rare self-denial he has prevented any of that enjoyment from entering his book. In writing *The Enigma of Rabelais* Mr. Chappell must have had his nose pretty frequently into the pages of a book whose *verve* is so infectious that, after reading it, most people find their pens begin to frisk and flirt and run away with their solemnity. Mr. Chappell's prose plods on with unswerving monotony, and is only lavish in "somewhats," "therefores," "howevers," and the like.

The "interpretation" is hardly an interpretation at all. In effect, what it propounds is that Rabelais developed intellectually and spiritually as he grew older, and gained more experience of the world; that he expressed in his book many of his views on philosophy, religion, society, education, learning; and that the views expressed in the *Tiers Livre* and *Quart Livre* often differ greatly from those in the two earlier books—not a very astounding fact, considering the lapse of time between the second and third books, and the new experience of men and affairs absorbed by Rabelais in Italy and from his association with the Cardinal du Bellay and at Court. It is obvious that the happy escaped monk and young doctor who wrote the first two books was a different person from the man of the world who wrote the others. The "enigma" would seem to resolve itself into the fact that the book was composed at different periods of the life of a man whose views changed as he grew older, "a supposition," as Mr. Chappell sagely remarks, "not out of keeping with observed developments of the human mind even later in an individual's life." Whether these undoubted facts are a solid enough basis for the creation of Mr. Chappell's earnest and didactic Rabelais may admit a query. For example, can we say that the phrase "*calme et grande mere la terre*" means that Rabelais "combined a sense of mystery with a passionate love of the earth"? Are we greatly enlightened by being told that "much of his [Rabelais's] humor throughout depends upon an ingenious play upon words and phrases," and that his "fertile invention . . . wilfully envelops earnest matter in the most ridiculous buffoonery"? And why does Mr. Chappell unnecessarily and inaccurately romanticize Pantagruel by saying: "Although in the storm-scene we are interested in Friar John's activity and amused by Panurge's terror, we never lose sight of the quiet, dignified leader whose place is *at the helm*"; when Rabelais says that by the pilot's advice Pantagruel firmly grasped the *mast*—"par l'advis du pilot *l'arbre fort et ferme*"? Has Mr. Chappell no sense of humor?

There are two obvious and important facts to realize about Rabelais. One is that he was a humorous, imaginative, and creative artist of the first order; the other, that he was one of the world's really civilized and enlightened men, warring against superstition, violence, pendency, ignorance, and oppression. Those two propositions can be enlarged and modified with an immense amount of detail, but no ingenuity can transform the very human Rabelais who enjoyed bawdy jests and the rattle of pottle-pots into a didactic and solemn "teacher."

RICHARD ALDINGTON.

## Manin's Revolution

*Manin and the Venetian Revolution, 1848*, by George Macaulay Trevelyan. New York: Longmans, Green and Company. \$4.50.

A ONE-MAN revolution suggests biography rather than history. M. Trevelyan has recognized this in the very arrangement of his title. Here, as in his various preceding volumes on Garibaldi, the protagonist is well to the front, and the historic happenings are ranged round and behind him. Manin was the revolution. Though the Venice of 1848 was far from being the supine, abject thing that was snuffed out by Bonaparte half a century earlier, yet the Venetian aristocracy, unlike that of Milan in the same revolutionary year, contributed little to the movement: the strength of that came from the confidence which the middle and lower orders reposed in Manin personally. On the whole—though showing some error in judgment—he deserved it: he "cooked the latent spirit of Venetia, in which so many patriots had refused to believe." But in order to rouse the Venetians he was obliged to proclaim the Republic—a revival of its millennial predecessor; and such a course made difficulties with Piedmont and France, the two hopes of Venice against the Austrian tyranny. Also, he failed to deal adequately with the Imperial fleet stationed at the head of the Adriatic; and it was the bombardment from this fleet which, after a year and a half of republican government, put an end, temporarily, to the hopes of Venice and of her dictator.

Thus, regrettably, an opportunity was lost. Our author still retains to the full the British belief in the efficacy of the British form of government for Continental peoples and their ills: "It was a moment when Parliamentary institutions and free political life might have been established on the Continent in time to become acclimatized before the social questions and class divisions of modern industrialism became unfavourably acute."

Yet, after all, the revolutionary movement of the forties, if not the full success of that in the sixties, was far from being the total failure of that in the twenties. It brought together the cities, noticeably Venice and Milan; and, as the author acutely observes, "it was the voluntary union of the cities of Italy that made the movement of the Risorgimento." More specifically, it was the project for a railway between these two cities which helped draw them together, and which gave Manin some of his best and earliest experiences in public life. Vienna would permit no activity that possessed political significance, but would not too much impede an enterprise that appeared to be commercial. Manin, up to 1840 a practising lawyer and nothing more, now took a leading part in the railway question. It was this, as much as any other single consideration, which put him at the head of Venice's political concerns. The land campaigns in the warfare between Venice and Austria were fought out in large part on the Piave, like the more recent campaigns of 1918; and it is interesting to recall that Mr. Trevelyan's preceding book, dated 1919, again goes over this historic ground. It was, in fact, too good a chance for one of the most intelligently Italianate of Englishmen to overlook. Trevelyan writes on Italian themes out of a great love and an immense competency. The monumental bibliography which accompanies the present volume shows the extent and closeness of his studies. Obviously it was not constructed merely to make a fine showing: throughout it

leaves evidences of the most familiar use. As a record of one of the minor phases in the long course of Italian unification, this book and its bibliography will probably stand for the final, sufficing word.

HENRY B. FULLER.

## Briefs on Art

*Southern Baroque Art: A Study of Painting, Architecture and Music in Italy and Spain of the 17th & 18th Centuries*, by Sacheverell Sitwell. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. \$6.00.

SOUTHERN Baroque Art is an attempt to recreate certain aspects of the Southern culture and civilisation of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in Mexico as well as in Spain and Italy: it pictures that gaudy, hectic, extravagant dance of amateurs which—with tightened laces and mincing steps—marched decorously into the Victorian period of the Northern countries. Nearer to us than any of the greater epochs of art, the Baroque has been for this reason the object of contempt and misunderstanding, and Mr. Sitwell's book adds bravely to the growing literature which seeks to place the Baroque in a more sympathetic light.

The artists and architects of the Baroque made a religion of gaiety: with the same smile, with the same bright tunes and amiable colors and proliferating ornament, they approached a church, a monastery, a palace, or, for that matter, a cemetery. No other art exhibits a more complete absence of the austere virtues: no other art sticks a more impudent tongue out at sincerity: no other art belongs more completely to the pastrycook. Mr. Sitwell has written a tribute to the period which is itself Baroque; his chapters are thick with information, incident, description, interpretation; but somehow they have the exuberant pointlessness of Baroque architecture itself, and one is not quite sure whether he wrote as a lover of Baroque art, as a literary historian, or as one who merely wished to handle a theme which called for rich embroidery. To those who enjoy the Baroque this characterization will make Mr. Sitwell's book seem doubly commendable; and I mean that it should; for Mr. Sitwell's gifts and his theme are happily wedded. It is a uniquely good book on a uniquely interesting episode in the European mind.

*Living Painters: Duncan Grant, with an introduction by Roger Fry*. London: The Hogarth Press. 8s. 6d.

THESE twenty-four black and white reproductions, with a little essay by Roger Fry, are a welcome introduction to the work of Mr. Grant. As with his contemporary, Mr. Nevinson, one sees in Mr. Grant's work, not the firm and unhesitating inner movement of Mr. Wyndham Lewis, but rather the deliberate playing about with themes and methods, now with a touch of Augustus John, now with a hint of Derain or Cézanne, now influenced—as in *The Tightrope Walker*—by Seurat, or finally falling back into the solid English landscape tradition of the eighteenth century water-colorists. There is a color facsimile of one of Mr. Grant's pictures in the Dial's Folio of *Living Art*; but one surmises that it is neither for color nor for formal design that Mr. Grant's work is highly prized; but rather for a certain decorative grace and vivacity best seen, perhaps, in his *Decoration on a Cupboard*, or in his background for a Venetian ballet.

*The Outline of Art*, edited by Sir William Orpen; illustrated. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. \$4.50.

SIR WILLIAM ORPEN'S *Outline of Art* has just the opposite virtues of the *Outline of Literature*. For a synopsis of art, the reproductions are distinctly second-rate, and the values of the color-reproductions are quite as false as those of the tepid brown ink monotones. On the other hand, the text abounds in anecdotes, which are the marginalia of criticism, and with no pretence at getting behind the most obvious of "personalities" it has at least the virtue of honesty. The amount of attention devoted to the second-rate Victorians and to British official war artists would be ludicrous were the volumes not directed towards a British public. The comparative neglect of France and the absolute neglect of post-reformation Germany, of Russia, of the United States, plainly derive from the same bias. It should be added that "Art" in the title means painting alone.

*The Necessity of Art*, by A. Clutton Brock, Percy Dearmer, A. S. Duncan-Jones, J. Middleton Murry, A. W. Pollard, and Malcolm Spencer. New York: George H. Doran Co. \$3.00.

THIS is a symposium on the importance of art by a group that would restore art to its ancient, central position as a handmaiden to religion. It is headed by an excellent essay on Art and the Escape from Banality, which lacks nothing but a sufficient conclusion; and its discussions of the Church's attitude towards art, of the Puritan's objection to it, and on the relation of literature and religion show a freshness of interest which derives from the personality of the writers. None of the contributors, however, has quite faced the critical difficulty of coupling art with religion—the difficulty that religion itself has alas! been pushed towards the periphery of life.

LEWIS MUMFORD.

## Contributors

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