

Old Syntax in New Languages

"The Classical Heritage and Its Beneficiaries," by **R. R. Bolgar** (Cambridge University Press, 592 pp. \$8.50), details the influence of classicism between the eighth and sixteenth centuries. Our reviewer, Professor Frederick B. Artz of Oberlin College, is the author of *"The Mind of the Middle Ages"* and other works.

By Frederick B. Artz

THE set of principles and methods we call classicism began in the schools and literature of the Hellenistic Age. Here earlier literary models were set for both the training of students and for the formation of writers. Roman civilization followed this same pattern in its schools and in much of its literature. With the barbarian migrations of the fifth century A. D. the knowledge of Greek was all but lost in Western Europe, and with the end of the Roman schools the Latin used was terribly barbarized and much of Latin literature was neglected. In the twelve centuries between 400 and 1600 A. D. Latin Christendom slowly recovered its classical heritage. If the literary and cultural achievement of Greece and Rome be compared to a vast palace, men lived for centuries in a few lower rooms of a structure otherwise abandoned and fallen into ruin. By slow degrees the dwellers below moved upward, and gradually rehabilitated the rest of the structure. By 1600 they had reconstituted the whole, though in their rebuilding they had modified the plan and redesigned the details. Three stages stand out in this process of reconstruction: first the Carolingian Revival of the ninth century, then the Northern French Renewal of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and, finally, the Italian and Northern Renaissance of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

In each of these high points in the upward movement of culture a few intellectual leaders, besides taking over ideas from their immediate predecessors, looked back to the original Graeco-Roman sources for ideas that could be used in education, in the professions, and in literature. This long-range exploitation of the past was, according to R. R. Bolgar, conditioned by the pressure of immediate political, economic, and cultural requirements. It was also, the reviewer believes, oc-

casioned by the very human curiosity of scholars, who, in a growingly peaceable and prosperous environment, were looking for what had earlier been written on their specialties. In the ninth century Alcuin's aim was to improve the clarity of Latin writing and to teach men to put more order into their ideas. In the twelfth century, in a time of more political centralization, of increasing town life, and of a higher material civilization, some of the intellectuals reached backward to revive Roman law, Greek medicine, and Aristotelian philosophy, and to remold each to current needs. Finally, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the leaders of culture strove to capture the secrets of the literary style of the ancients and to reform men's lives on the worldly patterns of Cicero and Horace. Every change from the ninth century on generated such a vigorous opposition that the innovators were forced to make compromises with those who wished to hold to the status quo. For example, in the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries the Church set limits to how far changes might go. Thus, Aquinas limited the fullest use of Aristotle and his Islamic commentators so as to

harmonize their teachings with Christian dogmas.

This is the heart of what is set forth for the period 700 to 1600 A. D. in this brilliant book, a work comparable in its learning and insight to C. N. Cochrane's "Christianity and Classical Culture," and a work superior in its grasp to Gilbert Highet's "The Classical Tradition." Bolgar's work is thick with new material and, better still, it draws many new diagonals through old subjects. The author's main interest centers in modifications in education, but he branches out to show the basic changes in law, philosophy, medicine, and literature. He even devotes a section to the progress of learning and literature in the Byzantine world. The only significant omissions are the classical influences in medieval vernacular literatures. Such influences for the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are noted, but "Beowulf," the French "Chansons de Geste," the chivalric romances, and the lyrics of the troubadours, *trouvères*, and minnesingers are ignored. And how could the author avoid mentioning Andreas Capellanus's Latin treatise "The Art of Courtly Love"? It is, otherwise, all solidly reasoned and closely (perhaps too closely) tied up into a synthesis. It assumes an extensive knowledge of political, economic, and cultural history. This is a scholar's book written for scholars. But to anyone interested in the intellectual history of the centuries A.D. 700 to 1600 the book will be a *grande trouvaille*.

Exit Lines

MEN when they are about to die often utter last words. These have a way of becoming significant to those survivors they leave behind them, and Edward S. LeComte has gathered together a gigantic number of them into a volume called "Dictionary of Last Words" (Philosophical Library, \$5). Here, for what they are worth, are a few:

- "Let me go! Let me go!"—Clara Barton.
- "I am about to—or I am going to—die: either expression is used."—Dominique Bouhours (grammarian).
- "If you will send for a doctor I will see him now."—Emily Brontë.
- "Thank God."—Lady Isabel Burton.
- "A general good-night."—Thomas Chalmers (Scottish theologian and preacher).
- "I am not the least afraid to die."—Charles Darwin.
- "Well, I fooled 'em for five years!"—Joseph Duveen (art dealer).
- "O death, where is thy—"—Philip Henry (nonconformist divine).
- "Freedom."—Lucy Larcom (author and educator).
- "I am hot."—Leopold II of Belgium.
- "I am cold."—Louis Michel Lepelletier de Saint-Fargeau (politician).
- "We shall meet again!"—Madame Jeanne Recamier (famous for her salons).
- "Deeply and profoundly."—Madame de Stael (asked if she thought she would be able to sleep).
- "Tis well."—George Washington.
- "I feel better."—Brigham Young.

FINE ARTS

Japanese Pattern

"The Floating World," by James A. Michener (Random House. 403 pp. 63 illus. \$8.50), presents in word and text an account of a style of Japanese print that flourished from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. Here it is reviewed by Harold Phillip Stern, assistant in Japanese art at the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington.

By Harold Phillip Stern

THE SEVENTEENTH century in Japan was marked by the arrival of a school of art known as the Ukiyoe, and it is about this that James A. Michener has chosen to write "The Floating World: The Story of Japanese Prints."

Mr. Michener's sympathy for things Japanese is well attested to by his recent novel "Sayonara." In his latest work he turns from fiction to the world of fact, for the Ukiyoe, or pictures of the floating world, are a historical chronicle of the life and people of Tokugawa Japan (circa 1660-1868). That he has written such a survey is important, for it gives us a chance to observe him working in a different and unfamiliar medium. One might well compare it to the time when Shiba Kokan, also known as Harushige and one of the artists he cites, switched from a Japanese Ukiyoe style of painting to a Western oil technique.

Mr. Michener states that he had four objectives in writing this book: (1) to recount the life and death of Ukiyoe; (2) to take note of the great masters; (3) to indicate what happens under government interference (which seems to me to be actually a part of the first); (4) to awaken us to the great treasures in American collections. To achieve this, in addition to the text he provides sixty-three plates, of which forty are in color, a note on prices, a chronological table, brief biographical sketches, and an annotated bibliography.

Mr. Michener tells his story well and is most at ease in describing the birth of Ukiyoe or in relating the romances produced on the Kabuki stage, which provided themes for so many of the prints. He comes to grips with the usual problems of the identity of the artists Kiyonobu I and II, Kiyomasa I and II, and the Kaigetsudo's. He tries to explain "the volcanic eruption" of Sharaku and his sudden disappearance. All these mysteries,

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—From "The Floating World."

THE ELOPEMENT OF UKIFUNE AND NIO: This print was based on the novel "The Tale of Genji," called by the author of "The Floating World" "one of the most pregnant approaches to Japanese culture, whose final, sedate chapters recount the love of two friends for beautiful Ukifune ('Lady Drifting Boat')." The book's caption gives the following information: *Location:* Art Institute, Chicago. *Size:* 12 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 6. *Signed:* Hogetsudo Okumura Bunkaku ga. *Date:* 1740. *Translation:* The color of the Isle of Tachibana would not change but I know not the destination of this floating boat. *Technical:* Ishizuri-e (stone-printed pictures) are adapted from Chinese techniques in which stone carvings were covered with paper which was forced into the incisions and carbon was rubbed over what remained exposed, yielding a white-on-black print. The publisher Masanobu of course used only wood, and used ink instead of carbon.