

appearance of the anti-highbrow leaders and middles that apparently expressed an editorial policy. It is still necessary to make a distinction between the leading articles, which are usually depressing, and the reviews. Not all the reviews, of course, are good, but enough of them are to make it plain that there is an intelligent and disinterested controlling purpose. Again and again, when the handling in the *T.L.S.* of an author favoured in Bloomsbury is compared with that in *The New Statesman*, it will be found that the *T.L.S.* has performed the function of criticism—and been left to perform it. Here, for instance, from the issue for December 7th, is its placing of an author cried up by the modish gallophils who made an exhibition of themselves over Aragon:

'There were not a few people in this country who, having read Vercors' *Le Silence de la Mer*, could only raise their eyebrows at the fanfare of trumpets which it had called forth. Now comes an English translation of *La Marche à l'Etoile*, another *nouvelle* of a similar sort, and this time one's eyebrows remain motionless and one's heart sinks instead. For the sentimentality, the imaginative falsity, the nationalistic unction of the second tale by Vercors are distressing in the extreme . . . the whole concoction indeed, is shockingly sentimental and a disservice to the restoration of the confidence of the French in themselves'.

AN IRISH MONTHLY.

The Bell is a monthly coming from Dublin that is now to be distributed by The Pilot Press (45 Great Russell Street, W.C.1: the price is 1/6 a copy, the yearly subscription 18/-, plus 1/6 postage). To judge by the December number (in spite of the write-up of Aldous Huxley) this review is intelligently directed: the promise of a lively criticism independent of the English set-up certainly deserves attention. In this number, for instance, 'The Pieties of Evelyn Waugh' by Donat O'Donnell deals aptly with a writer who has not only been acclaimed by Catholic critics, but has also—in spite of the radical anti-Leftish tendencies that Mr. O'Donnell diagnoses in him—enjoyed a cult among intellectuals of the *New Statesman* milieu.

'THE KENYON REVIEW' AND 'SCRUTINY'.

As far as one can judge with the limited opportunities one has on this side of the Atlantic, *The Kenyon Review* is the best of those American reviews which, published from universities, give American criticism so marked an advantage over British. The issue for Autumn, 1946, contains a long essay by Quentin Anderson, 'Henry James and the New Jerusalem', which no student of James can afford to miss. It deals with the influence on the novelist of his father's system of ideas. The book promised by Mr. Anderson is one to look forward to.

In the same issue Mr. Eric Bentley, reviewing L. C. Knights's *Explorations*, hands *Scrutiny* a handsome bouquet:

'One may dislike its tone, one may have reservations about this or that, but one should admit that *Scrutiny* is one of the best literary journals of to-day. Why have the books of the *Scrutiny* group never been published in America? *Determinations*, *Fiction and the Reading Public*, *For Continuity*, *Revaluation*, are all among the first books I would recommend to anyone entering upon the serious study of literature. There is much more "new criticism" in them than in all the other works of the "new" school put together. Richards wrote *Practical Criticism* but *Scrutiny* was practical and criticized. Cleanth Brooks wrote notes for a new history of English poetry but in essay after essay *Scrutiny* accumulated a new history *in extenso*. Burke and Ransom extended the boundaries of critical discussion but *Scrutiny* actually occupied the territory and issued new maps. What a pity so many Americans think that the best British literary journal is *Horizon*'.

The bouquet, however, is qualified:

'Of course *Scrutiny* differs as widely from *Horizon* in its intentions as *KR* does from *Partisan Review*. Indeed *Scrutiny* is the most special and specialized journal of the four. Its offering of creative literature is negligible. Its coverage of foreign literature and of non-literary matters is haphazard and of uneven quality. The number of contributors to the magazine is very small, and of the happy few only three or four seem to have a character of their own; the others use the ideas of the editors as mechanical formulas'.

The qualifying nettles should stimulate us to even greater efforts at remedying the shortcomings we are conscious of. We don't, of course (and Mr. Bentley hardly suggests it) aim at making *Scrutiny* a vehicle for creative literature: that doesn't fall within our conception of the function we can most usefully undertake. The criticism that, to our sense, touches us most nearly is that regarding 'non-literary matters'; it seems to us we have given more, and more consistent, attention to music than any other non-specialist review and our music criticism has been intimately related to our literary. But if our provision under the head of 'non-literary matters' hasn't been stronger, that hasn't been for lack of the aim and endeavour. And here comes in a general consideration that Mr. Bentley's criticisms invite us to state: we have always been anxious to avoid the illusory 'offering': and the maintenance of any serious standards means, surely, that one can't even suppose—whatever one's illusions about oneself—that there are many possible contributors to choose from. Actually, we think that Mr. Bentley overstates the restriction in number; if he looks over the past dozen years of *Scrutiny* he will find (a guess—there is no time for research)

that the tale of contributors runs into three figures. And we have to add that the small nucleus of really *live* contributors to *The Kenyon Review* seems to us to comprise largely the same names as we remember from the *Southern* and have starred elsewhere.

As for the criticism that, in *Scrutiny*, 'the others use the ideas of the editors as mechanical formulas'—it would be interesting to have Mr. Bentley's detailed illustrations—it appears to us unjust, and to be based on a misconception, one encouraged by the account sedulously propagated by our academic detractors. *Scrutiny* has no orthodoxy and no system to which it expects its contributors to subscribe. But its contributors do, for all the variety represented by their own positions, share a common conception of the kind of discipline of intelligence literary criticism should be, a measure of agreement about the kind of relation literary criticism should bear to 'non-literary matters', and, further, a common conception of the function of a non-specialist intellectual review in contemporary England. They are, in fact, collaborators (and unpaid). Here is the explanation of the survival of *Scrutiny* for fifteen years, and (if we may say so) of the influence it has, in spite of the fierce and mean hostility of the 'official' literary and academic worlds. If *Scrutiny* had had behind it nothing more positive than the idea of running a high-brow review (and our criticism of the *Kenyon*, as of the old *Southern* and the *Sewanee*, is that we have been able to discern nothing more positive behind them), then there would have been neither influence nor survival. There would certainly not have been the achievement that Mr. Bentley credits us with.

And as for foreign literature, we think we have been less inadequate than he might appear to suggest. But certainly we offer no such 'coverage' of Europe and America as *The Criterion* undertook. And it seems to us that if it can't be better done than *The Criterion* did it, then it is hardly worth offering. People, in those matters, are prone to be too easily impressed, and to take the pretension for something real. We, of course, should like to do much more than we have done to help in keeping open the lines of communication with other countries and cultures. But the essential thing, it seems to us, is to maintain standards; except in relation to standards, effectively present, nothing real *can* be done.

FOR WHOM DO UNIVERSITIES EXIST ?

There are two contributions in particular that make the first number of *Universities Quarterly* (5/-) worth looking up—the contributions of Professors H. M. Chadwick and Denis Saurat to the symposium, 'Why compulsory philology?' Professor Chadwick, starting from the assumption (a decidedly heretical one in some influential quarters) that 'It is primarily for students that the universities exist', says, with his great authority, some admirably phrased things about the place of philology and 'history of the language' in university education. Of 'history of the language' he says: