

LETTERS AND THE ARTS

HOW SCHNITZLER WROTE

THE late Arthur Schnitzler left behind him some notes explaining five different origins of the inspiration that expressed itself in his work. 'A work of art,' he said, 'can arise from an idea, a situation, an observation, a character, a sensation.' He then illustrated how these five sources of inspiration were responsible for five of his own creations whose titles he added in parentheses. '1. The idea: In a bar a group of actors are pretending to be thieves; what if one of them really were a thief? (*Der grüne Kakadu*.) 2. The situation: I meet an old schoolboy friend who is jealous of me, treats me rudely, and finally says, "Don't be so superior." (*Letzte Masken*.) 3. The observation: Dueling is nonsense. (*Freiwild*.) 4. The character: An old man who used to be a poet and has now almost forgotten the fact is lionized by the young. (*Der greise Dichter*.) 5. The feeling: How painful is yearning for the past. (Lyrics and legends.)' Schnitzler then explained that every work of art contains a blend of several elements and that, when an idea or a character lies behind some inspiration, some plan must at once be outlined. Often the secondary *motif* appears first. In one of his works he began with an idea, but the character that illustrated the idea finally overshadowed it. He then gave this detailed account of how he wrote *Der Schleier der Beatrice*:—

'The idea: A girl who is engaged to be married decides to commit suicide with her lover. He dies, but at the last moment she loses courage and flees, forgetting her veil. Since she is expected at home, she has to go back for it, and climbs the stairs to take it from the room where the dead man lies. So far everything is impersonal; the idea is completely empty. A man, a woman, an attempt at suicide, cowardice, anxiety, horror. A short story is started and soon abandoned because the idea does not interest the author.

'The decision to put the idea into a pantomime leads to an examination of plots

and openings that have already been prepared. The veil idea seems to fit, and the pantomime is sketched out. The plot is divided into three acts with more intelligence than intuition. The characters try to become individuals. The lover is a dreamy youth. There are gay friends, both girls and boys, and a servant. The girl is in love, uncertain, nervous, bold, mysterious. Her parents and girl friends rally around her. The man to whom she is engaged becomes a contrasting figure. This pantomime is completed but is laid aside because it lacks flavor, life, and intensity.

'Later a short story entitled *The Dead Keep Silent* contains a situation similar to the one about the veil. A dead lover is deserted by his mistress. Through this story the veil idea acquires new significance. Talking with a friend, the author gets new light on this material. The friend says that he would like to see the veil idea worked out.

'Still another attempt is made, this time to write a costume play dealing with Vienna at the beginning of the nineteenth century. This decision is determined by an inner necessity and by a real connection between the characters and the material, on the one hand, and the time and setting on the other. The lover becomes a discharged and impoverished Austrian officer. The girl is the daughter of an innkeeper. Her fiancé is a Greek banker. The plot begins to stand out more clearly, but it is still merely an idea, an intelligent development of a situation. The characters are not yet real people but only superior dummies that might develop into something more than types if their spirits could be summoned to life by the vitality of the idea.

'One and a half acts of the play have already been written according to this new plan when something happens—one of the dummies seems to have thrown aside its mask in some mysterious way. The intuitive ability of the author—which does not mean artistic power, but simply psychological skill—causes the dummy to come to life, and from this moment on it becomes subject

to the laws of human truth, emerging for what it really is, a Renaissance prince.

'Another attempt to rewrite the play is made, this time as a five-act drama with extensive borrowings from Shakespearean technique. An inner tendency toward simplification and an outer regard for the demands of the modern theatre lead to a more closely knit production. As the play develops more alterations are necessary, and the action is confined to a single night. Other characters begin to come to life. In opposition to the prince, the figure of the poet emerges. The chief character remains uncertain longest, yet from the beginning this character, as an unconscious, elementary, and highly feminine force, tends to become the central one.

'Then from all this manœuvring the following idea arises: the feminine spirit wavers between the man of action and the man of thought and must find these two principles combined in a single person before it can rise to supreme faithfulness. This thought consciously and voluntarily begins to dominate the whole work. But even the character of the woman, in spite of all her superiority and intuition, lacks real life until the author chances to meet a woman who resembles his imaginary character. Then in physiognomy, qualities, gestures, and aspect the character comes more and more to resemble a living individual. The author's understanding of her increases, and finally she develops into a fully rounded character.'

STALIN'S SCHOOL DAYS

FATHER BOGOYAVLENSKI, who used to teach in the religious seminary at Tiflis that Stalin attended as a boy, has told some amusing stories that may or may not be true concerning the behavior of the present Russian dictator when he answered to the name of Djugashvili. The pupils, most of whom were Georgians, cared more about wine and women than about religion and they gave Stalin the nickname of 'the robber.' He was a boy of medium height, thickset, with a large nose and little eyes, at least one of which was usually blackened as a result of his propensity to fist-fighting. On at least one occasion he resorted to

violence defending the religion that he is attacking to-day. It seems that one of the Russian boys had caused great amusement by the following utterance: 'I believe that Jesus fed five thousand people with five loaves of bread but I do not believe that the people got enough to eat. I even believe that Jesus turned water into wine, but I do not believe that anybody could have got tight on that wine.' While the other boys roared with laughter, the youthful Stalin assailed the speaker and beat him so mercilessly that he had to be sent to the hospital. It later transpired that Stalin was acting on the advice of a visiting bishop who had said in his catechism, 'If you hear sacrilegious speech, close the mouth of the blasphemer with your hand.'

Father Bogoyavlenski admits that Stalin 'may have been a good friend' but that he was certainly a bad scholar. In mathematics he always stood at the foot of the class. Asked to do a sum in addition, he said the answer was one thousand. 'Only one thousand?' the teacher inquired. 'Well, then, a million,' the boy replied. On another occasion Stalin was asked by the archbishop to relate the parable of the sower. 'The sower sows—sows—sows—' he said, but could go no further. 'What happens then?' the archbishop inquired, trying to help him. 'Suddenly it begins to rain,' Stalin replied, glaring at his interlocutor. The archbishop answered with a smile, 'My son, I had heard that you were irrigated by the true faith, but it seems to have rained in your head, too.'

FRENCH UNIVERSITIES AND LITERATURE

JULIEN BENDA, author of the widely read *Trabison des clercs* and of an article entitled 'Are Frenchmen Chauvinists?' in our December issue, has returned from a lecture tour through Switzerland, Holland, and England with some significant comparisons between the French attitude toward literature and learning and the same attitude abroad. He finds that, whereas in France writers enjoy great prestige throughout the middle class and university professors are more or less looked down on, the condition is exactly the other way around

abroad. On the basis of first-hand observation M. Benda asserts that outside France the learned man is esteemed because he is an expert, but that the French, having more respect for intuition than for science, prefer the man of letters. He admits that Taine, Bergson, and Renan held professorships, but they are such exceptional cases that they really prove the rule. The average Frenchman believes that 'on no subject is there any other affirmation of value than that provided by personal impressions and the present moment.'

But the foreigner, though he believes in the scientific method, does not understand it any better than the Frenchman. 'The Fribourg bourgeois who honors the local professor of romance languages knows no more about the philological method than the Lille bourgeois who does not honor him.' M. Benda then quotes this aphorism by Malebranche: 'The stupid man and the brilliant wit are equally closed to the truth; but there is always this difference, that the stupid man respects truth and the brilliant wit despises it.' Substitute the word 'naïve' for 'stupid' and you have the difference between the ingenuous foreigner on the one hand and the brilliant Frenchman on the other.

But the French are paying a high price for their brilliance. In other lands, the universities are bulwarks of the middle class; in France, which honors its writers above its professors, the universities are instilling anti-bourgeois ideas into the minds of the young. Although M. Benda does not say so, a state of affairs in which the writer is chiefly concerned with defending the established order is fatal to literary creation and quite probably accounts for the complete sterility of modern France as far as the art of letters is concerned. What M. Benda does say is this: 'The foreign university teacher, being treated as an intellectual leader by the bourgeoisie of his nation, is invincibly forced to believe that that class is not bad, and in his teaching he will support it and its conventions. The French university teacher, on the other hand, does his work without any consideration for the interests of a class that prefers the writer to him and that often sets the writer against him. Perhaps I am confusing cause and

effect and perhaps the reason the bourgeoisie prefers the man of letters is because the French teacher looks down on it. In any case, it is certainly true that the foreign teacher is generally a conformist, whereas in France he is not. The man who is a conformist in France is the writer.'

M. Benda dreads the outcome of this condition because the youth of the country is not being taught to defend the interests of the dominant class.

MEMORIES OF MARX

NEW and cheerful light on the private life of Karl Marx has been shed by the recently published memoirs of Professor Kovalevski, a Russian scholar and politician who lived from 1851 to 1916 and who met the author of *Das Kapital* in London in 1875. His first impression was unfavorable because his host suspected him of Pan-Slavism. Although he presented a letter of introduction from a revolutionist who had saved the life of Marx's son-in-law, Charles Longuet, during the Paris Commune, he said that he was 'treated like a wet poodle, and left the house resolved never to set foot in it again.' But soon afterward Kovalevski encountered Marx in Carlsbad and found him delightful: 'We walked together every morning and evening and violated our diet with the aid of a bottle of Rüdeshimer, of which Marx was especially fond. Out of his regular surroundings, this great man was very polite and even gentle. He could tell stories endlessly, had a great deal of humor, and was always ready to make fun of himself.'

The friendship that began on the Continent continued in London, where Kovalevski often saw both Marx and Engels, although the former kept very much to himself and shrank from contact even with distinguished visitors. 'I often called on him when he was immersed in his work,' says Kovalevski, 'and at such times it was difficult to draw his attention away from what he was doing and get him to discuss some other subject. This did not mean that he had no interest in contemporary politics. On the contrary, he would spend hours reading newspapers, not only the English ones but the entire world press. I once

found him reading *Romanul* and had an opportunity to observe how thoroughly he had mastered the difficult Rumanian language.'

In the second volume of *Das Kapital* Marx had planned to make a special study of economic conditions in Russia and the United States. For this reason he was learning Russian, to the distress of his wife, who would jokingly threaten to withhold from him his favorite dish, a lamb chop, unless he would lay aside his new Russian books. Kovalevski found Mrs. Jenny Marx wholly delightful: 'Seldom does one encounter such hospitality under such reduced circumstances as Marx's wife displayed, and seldom does one meet a woman living in humble surroundings whose bearing and appearance suggest what the French call a *grande dame* to such a degree as Jenny Marx.' Her husband was cheerful in the home circle: 'Even as an old, gray-bearded man Marx loved to greet the New Year by dancing either with his own wife or with one of Engels's lady friends.' Kovalevski closes his memoirs as follows: 'Even after twenty-five years I cherish a delightful recollection of Marx as an estimable teacher who exercised some influence on my own economic labors. I also had the pleasure of coming to know in the person of Marx one of the ethical and intellectual leaders of humanity, a man who can quite rightly be regarded as the most significant force for progress in the public life of his time.'

A WORLD PRESS EXHIBITION

FROM Tiflis, capital of the Georgian Republic of the U. S. S. R., we have received the following communication, which we present exactly as it was originally printed:—

Dear Sir,

The All Nations Press Exhibition has the honor to invite You to take part in our work and to send for the Exhibition some copies, of all your papers magazines, yearbooks, almanachs, calendars etc as well old, as new

ones Also all supplements to those; posters, reclames, prospects etc.

The Exhibition aimes to show the historical development of your Press and you shall much oblige us, by sending us its old copies of past years.

Waiting for your favor,
we beg to remain,

THE ALL NATIONS PRESS EXHIBITION.

Here is the full account of the exhibition, likewise written in Georgian English:—

The All Nations Press Exhibition, Tiflis, 1932, is the World wide Press Show with the periodical Press exponents on 181 different languages from 249 countries. (The first International Press Exhibition, Cologne, 1928, had only about 100 languages and 90 countries).

The exhibition's programme is: the Press of all peoples, all times, all countries. The life of the Press, the Press in the life. The Press and the life. History, Technics, Statistics, Mashinery, Illustrations. Graphics of to day. Reclames. Every kind of the Press. The Book.

The Newspaper. Modern Printings. Their development. The Press for the Blind etc, etc.

The Exhibition is the first in the World that posses the list of all World's periodical Press' languages as well as the first maps of the Press' Geography.

The Exhibition is a World's Press Show, not only a World's Show of the Press. The Exhibition shall visite many countries and cities.

The Exhibition invites all Editors, Proprietors and Managers of every kind of the Press, Museums, Archives, Libraries, all Firms, as well as private people to take an active part in our work.

The exponents have no charges.

THE ALL NATIONS PRESS EXHIBITION.

Needless to say, we have accepted with pleasure, and rare old copies of THE LIVING AGE are already on their way toward Hamilton Fish's promised land.

AS OTHERS SEE US

BEAVERBROOK FOR REPUDIATION

LORD BEAVERBROOK, owner of a powerful chain of British newspapers and advocate of Empire free trade, has written a leading editorial in the *Evening Standard* of London calling for outright repudiation of England's war debts to the United States. Since it is just as certain that most Englishmen indorse his opinion as it is that most Americans indorse the 'rider' attached by Congress to the Hoover Moratorium refusing to consider cancellation, we reprint his editorial in full:—

This Government is our Government, elected by our efforts. When I say 'our' I am referring to those who have been advocating the Empire cause during the last two or three years. The National Government was given its great preponderance of votes by us, and not by any Liberals or Socialists. We have a right, then, to make requirements of the Government. We require two things from them, here and now:—

1. There must be more production at home, in order to save the nation from the threat of starvation.

2. There must be no more debt payments to the United States.

We are going to secure that decision because we lent to our European Allies for the prosecution of the War more money than we borrowed from the United States. We have a right to be regarded as an intermediary, whose credit was pledged on behalf of our Allies.

It is not a question now of making plain to the United States our intention to get relief from the payment of those debts. It is a question of making that fact plain to Mr. Baldwin and his associates. In so far as this question of war debts is concerned, Mr. Baldwin is a menacing figure. It was he who involved this country in the catastrophic settlement with America by which we pay them the full amount of the original

debt, whereas France pays us half and Italy a quarter of their original debts. We must see to it that his influence is not used now to prevent our deliverance.

We have every right to disown both the agent of the debt settlement and the act itself. For we are in an extraordinary position. We made a greater effort in the War than any other nation; we spent more money than the rest; we contributed more to the defeat of Germany. Yet what has happened since the peace? The United States has actually cashed in £450,000,000 on its war-debt account. France has a credit balance of £160,000,000 on debt and reparations payments. But Great Britain is £135,000,000 out of pocket! We are the only belligerent nation of those that shared in the triumph of the War which continues to disburse more money than it receives. It is an intolerable situation. It demonstrates how tragically the guardians of our purse have failed in their duty of defending it.

But we have not finished with the dreadful settlement that Mr. Baldwin made with the United States. We have to consider what the position would be if the postponement clauses of the different debt agreements were invoked. We can postpone 18 per cent of our debt payments to the United States for a period of two years. France, on the other hand, can postpone 60 per cent of her annuity for three years. As for France's debt payments to us, we had better realize that France made it quite clear at the time of the settlement that she had not the slightest intention of paying us if Germany did not pay her.

That is the position. It holds no comfort for us. It should serve to fortify the resolution of the British people that the debt situation must be drastically reconsidered. If we make our intentions plain now we will get what we want. Determined men always get what they want, by the mere force of their determination. And, in this case, determination is buttressed by an inextinguishable sense of injustice and a vivid conviction that our national existence is in jeopardy.