

The Novel Crop of 1926

By WILLIAM LYON PHELPS

I CAN think at this moment of only two years in my novel-reading life that can compare with 1926—they are 1894 and 1920. In 1894 came "Esther Waters," "Lord Ormont and his Aminta," "Jude the Obscure" in serial form, "Pudd'nhead Wilson," "A Traveller from Altruria," "The Jungle Book," "The Ebb-Tide," "Pembroke," "The Prisoner of Zenda," "Under the Red Robe," and in 1920 appeared "Main Street," "The Age of Innocence," "Youth and the Bright Medusa," "Miss Lulu Bett," "The Third Window."

Practically all the British and American veterans have produced in 1926 novels that are, either in fact or in intention, important works of art. The most pretentious book of the year is "The World of William Clissold," by H. G. Wells, which appeared in England in three volumes, its only similarity to Victorian manners. I surmise that its author already regrets that he allowed the first volume to appear in advance of the others; it received a general slating, and put the reviewers in a hostile attitude towards its two successors; in America we were given the whole work at once, and in two volumes.

I wish to pay two compliments, neither of them to the author. In a time when nearly all new books are marred by inexcusable typographical errors, the American publishers printed these more than 800 pages without any mistake. At first I thought "ascendency" was a slip, but I find there is authority for that spelling, though I don't like it. The only other possible slip I noticed was "St. Simon" when "St. Simeon" is surely more common, but the former may be, for all I know accurate. To launch such a leviathan without a mishap is an achievement; and our American publishers should be proud.

The other compliment is to Mrs. Padraic Colum, whose review in this periodical was an admirable critical essay, full of thought and insight. Mrs. Colum is one of our foremost living critics—she is well equipped by knowledge and judgment, and commands a prose style truly distinguished.

Some of the English reviewers complained that the book was dull. I did not find it so. It is portentously long, filled with summaries and repetitions taken from the author's previous works in fiction, history, and philosophy; but I found it continuously interesting, not at all difficult to read. There is a physical vitality in Mr. Wells's temperament that gives fire and heat to the whole work, like an efficient central-heating plant in a vast edifice. He writes, as he lives, with inexhaustible gusto.

Yet it is, in many ways, a detestable book. The peevish preface (before the title-page) in which he attempts to score off those who have attacked his previous books and to forestall adverse criticism of this one, is filled with appalling statements. He protests that Clissold is not Wells; he protests too much. He maintains that the work is a novel, when it is really a novel only in name. It is a gigantic tract for the times, and its interest lies in its strictly contemporary flavor—it belongs to 1926, and will perish like the almanacs and calendars of this present year.

If he were not a man of genius, he could not have written this book at all; if he had even elementary good taste, ability to appreciate points of view opposed to his own, and anything akin to sound culture, he could not have written the book in this way. Clissold's attacks on the Catholic Church, on Socialism, on classical education, on standards of morality, are marred by crudities and by a kind of bumptious conceit that is happily all his own. The details of Clissold's various amours are not nearly so offensive as the boastful complacency with which they are recorded. He is forever telling us of the "adult mind," which will relegate theism in religion and monogamy in morals to the ash-heap; but this same adult mind, in love-affairs at sixty, forces us to reflect that there is no fool like an old fool. I refer of course to Clissold and not to Wells.

Mr. Wells has an enormous audience in many nations and exerts a powerful and wide-spread influence, chiefly on immature minds; he wrote to Henry James that he preferred to be regarded as a journalist rather than as a novelist. For my part, I am grateful to him because he wrote "The Wheels of Chance," "Kippis," "Mr. Polly," "Tono-Bungay," and "Mr. Britling." When he wrote those books he was a novelist and

a literary artist—and Clissold's crude ideas on religion, morality, politics, and education cannot destroy the earlier works.

Immediately after reading "The World of William Clissold" one should read Hugh Walpole's "Harmer John." The author has completely recovered from his sudden attack of Red Hair, and has written a novel ranking with his best, with "The Green Mirror," "The Cathedral," "The Old Ladies." This is realism and idealism combined; and the spiritual values of life, missing in Clissold's world, are here restored. Man is an incurably religious animal; man is as instinctively religious as he is instinctively lustful—for there are good instincts as well as bad. Harmer John cannot endure the thought that the same town which has a cathedral should also have slums; and I suppose towns will have slums until all churchgoers feel responsibility for them. It is an interesting coincidence that simultaneously with the publication of "Harmer John" came a plan to rid New York city of its slums, a plan that decorated the first page of the metropolitan newspapers.

John Galsworthy, whose passionate sympathies with the oppressed and whose fierce hatred of injustice cannot spoil his art, has given us another instalment of Forsyte family history in "The Silver Spoon." If he



James Esch
at
Dimitry Dell.

A drawing done in youth by Aubrey Beardsley for "Pickwick Papers"
Courtesy of the Anderson Galleries

were not an artist in spite of himself, his novels would suffer from propaganda—and they never do. It was not until some time after I had read "The Silver Spoon" that I discovered that he himself believed in the scheme of emigration therein discussed—so nicely did he balance the scales. Mr. Galsworthy has two consciences that somehow do not interfere; a moral and an artistic conscience. Tolstoy finally sacrificed the latter for the former, as many others have done. A minority have managed, on the other hand, to stifle the former altogether. But Mr. Galsworthy loves something even more than he loves justice—he loves the truth.

"The Silver Spoon" I found a more interesting narrative than anything he has written since "The Man of Property." In that novel Soames was the most detestable character—in "The Silver Spoon" he is the most admirable. It is a fine instance of development.

I do not know whether Arnold Bennett's "Lord Raingo" is a good novel or not; I read over a hundred pages, and was forced to desist, owing to invincible boredom. It is strange that a man who has written two or three high-grade novels and at least twenty diverting ones, can be so dull as in "Lord Raingo." Perhaps it is better farther on—I haven't the courage or the curiosity to find out.

In certain quarters I am regarded as a little unbalanced because of my enjoyment of the novels of Archibald Marshall; if to admire works that are completely normal be a sign of abnormality in the admirer, then I plead guilty. I like Mr. Marshall's books because in these sensational days he has the audacity to fill his books with natural people, natural situations, and natural talk; and I like "The Allbrights" better than anything he has written since the Clinton Series.

C. E. Montague's "Rough Justice" is a well-wrought, thoughtful novel, stocked with ideas; a good picture of English life. May Sinclair's "Far End" is a condensed

novel, with a house as a hero, and an unconvincing conclusion—the best thing in it is her omission of the tags, "he said," "she wailed," "he kissed." Jane Austen proved the value of omitting them.

W. J. Locke in "Perella" turns off another competently-written story, with a good fable and amusing characters, nothing more or less. Warwick Deeping's "Sorrell and Son" is very fine to its mathematical middle; its latter half is deplorable. Compton Mackenzie, Sheila Kaye-Smith, Frank Swinnerton, Rose Macaulay, Robert Hichens, have each and all produced new books in 1926. I really ought to read before reviewing, for although this is quite out of style, I am still old-fashioned enough to do it. If I had the creative gift of some reviewers, which would enable me to discuss books I had not read, I should become a novelist and leave criticism to others.

One of the best English novels of the present year is a first book by a young woman who refuses to divulge her name: this is "Miss Tiverton Goes Out." It is a novel that many writers of well-earned fame would be proud to sign. I confidently recommend it to intelligent readers.

I have not mentioned Rudyard Kipling's "Debits and Credits," for although Mr. Kipling is one of the most eminent authors now living, he belongs to the nineteenth century. He is one of the great Victorian novelists and in all probability will survive with his peers.

I have not had time to read many of the

America. I had supposed that it was a historical romance of modern times, and that the life it described belonged wholly to the recent past. But the author informs me that although the show boats have left the Mississippi, owing to the too abundant perils of that ungovernable river, there are plenty of floating theatres on the other rivers of the South; that they are at this moment more magnificent than Magnolia's, and also more profitable; those who own and direct them are literally rolling in motors and diamonds. Miss Ferber thinks that "Show Boat" is her best book, just as Hugh Walpole thinks "Harmer John" to be his masterpiece; it is natural, I suppose, for an author to love the latest child the most. Well, perhaps they are right; and both books are so excellent that their authors' pride is justifiable.

It seems clear that in America the women novelists have surpassed the men; indeed I do not know of any country in the world which has so remarkable a group of women novelists as our own. What collection of men in America and what list of women writers in any other nation today can equal an assembly composed of Edith Wharton, Anne Sedgwick, Dorothy Canfield, Willa Cather, Edna Ferber, Zona Gale, Margaret Deland, Ellen Glasgow, Elinor Wylie?

I have not read all of Ellen Glasgow's works, but of those that I have read I certainly put first "The Romantic Comedians," published this year. This is written with a subdued and chastened irony and never becomes obtrusive. A parochial group is shown up through the wrong end of the telescope; and that particular form of insanity which afflicts men of sixty, and takes the form of self-delusion, making them believe that they can still be objects of romantic attachment on the part of young women, is mercilessly diagnosed. Should any old man who reads "The Romantic Comedians" be suffering from this delusion, it ought to cure him, but if he is sufficiently infatuated, it probably won't. If his old man's sensitive pride is too severely hurt by Ellen Glasgow's truthfulness, I advise him to read Mr. Locke's "Perella," where the young girl sticks to her aged husband. Of which two things may justly be said. Mr. Locke does not write realistic novels, but romances; and it would be very unfair to submit his plots and characters to the verification of reality. Then too, his old man belongs to the scholarly type, like college professors, and every one knows that they are irresistible.

Margaret Widdemer's new novel, "Gallant Lady," is a study of the younger generation and the "young married set" from a new point of view, and is worth reading for that reason. It is unconventional and original; though it lacks the depth and vitality of the best work of Dorothy Canfield and Edna Ferber.

Two of our foremost novelists, Edith Wharton and Anne Sedgwick, have published this year collections of short stories; these are written with exquisite art, but they cannot rank with "The Little French Girl" or with "The Age of Innocence."

Sinclair Lewis, in "Mantrap" wrote a motion-picture story, the true value of which he knows better than any one else; he has a rod in pickle for us all, which will chastise us at the psychological moment. Joe Lincoln, whose Cape Cod resembles that of Eugene O'Neill only geographically—it is always the same world, but there are optimists and pessimists—has given us "The Big Mogul," which I shall read later. On my list to be read at an early date are "Tampico," by Joseph Hergesheimer, "Preface to a Life," by Willa Cather, "Trail Makers of the Middle Border," by Hamlin Garland, "The Kays," by Margaret Deland, "Galahad," by the amazing John Erskine, "The Orphan Angel," by Elinor Wylie, "Early Autumn," by Louis Bromfield, "Pig Iron," by Charles G. Norris, "Hildegard," by Kathleen Norris; and I shall not fail to read "Tish"—because Mary Roberts Rinehart always has a good story and the knack of telling it in a diverting manner.

This article is little more than a roll-call. I have meant to call attention to the fact that 1926 has had a bumper crop of novels, which are decidedly worth reading. How can any one book survive among so many? How many of these books, excellent as they are, will be read in 2026? Last week I read for the sixth or seventh time, "Pride and Prejudice," in which nothing happens; but everyone will be reading it in 2026, and with the same unspeakable delight. The only thing that can possibly prevent that novel from having readers in 2026 will be a total change in human nature. The only living man who really thinks human nature is going to change is H. G. Wells; and the only thing in the world I am absolutely sure of, is that it won't.

DODD MEAD DODD MEAD DODD MEAD DODD MEAD

Kindling and Ashes

□ By GEORGE BARR McCUTCHEON

Never in his long and successful career has McCutcheon received such praise from critics as he has for this Indiana feud story. "It is a powerful, soul-searching document . . . crowded with astonishing moments of emotional stress . . . a remarkable story, exceptionally well done."—*Boston Transcript*. \$2.00

Perella

□ By WILLIAM J. LOCKE

The author of "The Beloved Vagabond" writes "a tale of new love as fragrant as the loves of olden time, set in the eternal beauty which is Florence."—*Boston Transcript*. \$2.00

Three Women

□ By FAITH BALDWIN

"The very real happenings in three women's lives . . . dramatic and absorbing."—*N. Y. Times*. "I think 'Three Women' a really fine and dramatic book. It's splendid." . . . *Rebecca West*. \$2.00

The Allbrights

□ By ARCHIBALD MARSHALL

William Lyon Phelps says: "The Allbrights" is, in my opinion, the best novel that Archibald Marshall has written since the 'Clinton' series, and I am recommending it in all my lectures." \$2.00

Gabrielle, a Romance

□ By W. B. MAXWELL

The romance of a radiant girl on her own in London, and her fight for independence. "Will win the heart of every reader."—*P. A. Kinsley in Philadelphia Record*. \$2.00

Another Great Success by MARTHA OSTENSO

Author of
**THE DARK
DAWN**
Third
Large
Printing



MARTHA OSTENSO

Author of
**WILD
GEESE**
Second
Hundred
Thousand

The DARK DAWN

□ A Dramatic Story of the Northwest Prairies and the Eternal Conflict Between Man and Woman.

WHAT THE REVIEWERS SAY:

Zona Gale, in the New York Herald Tribune: "It has vitality, invention, living beings. Further, it is absorbing reading."

Dorothy Scarborough, in the Saturday Review: "Proves conclusively that this young woman is no one-book author."

Boston Transcript: "'The Dark Dawn' is better than 'Wild Geese.'"

Detroit News: "Martha Ostenso's star rises to new splendor."

San Francisco News: "Martha Ostenso proves beyond doubt that she is one of those who will count."

Baltimore Eve. Sun: "Not only equals, but surpasses 'Wild Geese.'"

Boston Herald: "A story you will remember . . . strong and compelling."

At All Booksellers, \$2.00

The Exquisite Perdita

□ By E. BARRINGTON

"The character of Perdita is a real creation: full of contradictions and impulses, compound of charm and weakness, the beauty lives vividly. The novel has a solidarity and power of its own even apart from the fascination of the panorama of the past."—*London Spectator*. Decorative box for gift and mailing \$2.50

Dreams and Delights

□ By L. ADAMS BECK

Fascinating new stories of the mysterious Far East. "The sheer, absolute beauty of the stories is like a bowl of blown Venetian glass, filled with rare blossoms."—*Philadelphia Inquirer*. \$2.50

Hand and Ring

□ By ANNA KATHARINE GREEN

A detective novel by the author of the famous "The Leavenworth Case." "A fascinating mystery worked out only as Anna Katharine Green or Conan Doyle could have done it."—*N. Y. Herald Tribune*. \$2.00

Shutters

□ By OLIVE WADSLEY

"A love story which deserves the attention and admiration of its readers . . . one of the interesting and admirable novels of the year."—*Boston Transcript*. \$2.00

High Silver

□ By ANTHONY RICHARDSON

A sophisticated study of a young man of ideals, confronted by the realities of life, as seen in present-day London. \$2.00

DODD MEAD DODD MEAD DODD MEAD DODD MEAD

Superb Gift Editions

Don Juan

□ By LORD BYRON

Byron's masterpiece of love and satire unexpurgated and distinctively illustrated by John Austen with many full-page pictures and text cuts in black and white. \$6.00

Thais

□ By ANATOLE FRANCE

A passionate and richly beautiful story illustrated in photogravure and with many text cuts by Frank C. Papé, illustrator of "Penguin Island." \$5.00

Zadig

□ And Other Romances by VOLTAIRE

A magnificent edition with many illustrations in photogravure and decorations in black and white by Henry Keen. \$6.00

The Light of Asia

□ By SIR EDWIN ARNOLD

A beautiful limited edition of Arnold's great work, with 16 illustrations in color and decorations in black and white by Hamzeh Carr. \$6.00

The Cruise of the Cachalot

□ By FRANK T. BULLEN

This famous whaling story has been beautifully illustrated by Mead Schaeffer with full-page plates and end papers in color. Uniform with "Moby Dick." \$3.50

HUMAN VIBRATION: The Mechanics of Life and Mind

□ By CONRAD RICHTER

An analysis of the phenomenon of life energy and its division into three basic parts. \$2.50



AMERICAN GLASS

□ By MARY HARROD NORTHEAD

A complete history of one of America's earliest industries, with separate chapters on the various forms of interesting glass which have been produced in this country. A beautiful gift book, particularly valuable for the collector. Beautifully illustrated. \$5.00



THE BRIDGE

□ By FRANK BRANGWYN

This sumptuous volume contains 24 new pictures of bridges in color, together with decorations in black and white, by the distinguished English artist. Illuminating text by Christian Barman, a leading architectural authority, accompanies the pictures. Large quarto. \$10.00

THE BOWL OF HEAVEN

□ By EVANGELINE ADAMS

The amazing life story of the foremost living astrologer in which she relates some of her most interesting professional experiences and justifies her individual system of Horary Astrology. Her reminiscences are a Who's Who of prominent personages of the last twenty-five years. \$3.00

TEN WEEKS WITH CHINESE BANDITS

□ By HARVEY J. HOWARD, M. D.

An account of the harrowing experiences and hairbreadth escapes of an American physician who was captured by a strange, courageous, well-organized and intelligently directed band of Chinese bandits in the wilds of Manchuria in 1925. An illuminating picture of Chinese problems. Illustrated. \$3.00

HOMES OF CHARACTER

□ By MARCIA MEAD

A beautiful book describing in separate chapters each of the more popular types of modern American houses, with more than 100 illustrations from drawings by D. R. Eggers and from photographs, and with plans furnished by the Architect's Small House Corporation. Ready December 11. \$3.50

NOTE—Check in the box in front of each author's name the books you desire and send to your bookseller. If there is no bookseller in your vicinity send your list direct to the publishers, with your remittance, and books will be promptly forwarded. Add 15c a book for postage.

DODD, MEAD & COMPANY, 449 Fourth Avenue, NEW YORK

The Best Short Stories of 1926

And The Year Book of the American Short Story

□ EDITED BY EDWARD J. O'BRIEN

The outstanding annual collection selected from the work of various American authors. \$2.50

The Best Plays of 1925-26

And The Year Book of the American Drama

□ EDITED BY BURNS MANTLE

Excerpts and resumés of ten outstanding plays of the last season, with statistics and summary of the American theatrical season. \$3.00

The Best French Short Stories of 1925-26

And The Year Book of the French Short Story

□ EDITED BY RICHARD EATON

The most interesting, intriguing and well-written short stories published in France during the current year. \$2.50

The Best British Short Stories of 1926

And The Year Book of the British and Irish Short Story

□ EDITED BY EDWARD J. O'BRIEN

The popular annual collection by many well-known British authors of today. \$2.50

Golden Tales of Anatole France

□ A splendid collection of a score of France's best known tales. In subject they are varied; in form they constitute the highest achievement of the great French writer's art. "The selection is beyond criticism."—*Will Durant*. \$3.00

A General History of Pirates

□ By CAPTAIN CHARLES JOHNSON

The best pirate book ever written. Published first in 1724, this edition contains the full original text, with all the original copperplate engravings. \$6.00

DODD MEAD DODD MEAD DODD MEAD DODD MEAD

Peter's Pence of Literature

By COUNT HERMANN KEYSERLING

DURING a recent visit to Weimar, where I spent several days, and where I had the opportunity of conferring with the custodians of the local spiritual legacy of the past, I was struck by a number of ideas which, I thought, were of practical value. My training in political finance is not sufficient to enable me to be certain that the particular form in which I express what I mean will meet every objection. But in any case I believe the intent of these ideas to be right. I set them down here in the hope that they will provoke a widespread discussion on the subject.

According to current German law the literary legacy of an author is "released" after the lapse of thirty years from his death. In other words, it is placed freely at the disposal of anyone who wishes to exploit it. That the protective period of thirty years is too short, and that I hope soon to see it extended to fifty years, in accordance with the practice in other countries, I mention only in passing; as long as the inheritance of property is regarded as valid, it is, to say the least, a cheap appraisal of things to allow the grandchildren of a creator of spiritual values, who still enjoy the usufruct of the legacy, to be legally disinherited as long as the legacy itself has demonstrated the permanence of its value. . . . But this observation is, as I say, made only in passing. *I think it wrong that a spiritual legacy should ever be released, for it is this very fact which invalidates the original intention that this legacy should be transferred completely to all mankind.*

The world having become what we find it to be today, the idea—originally only that of America—that the state of prosperity is the normal state (the intent being, that it *should* be), and that wealth is the relevant exponent of all values, has triumphed historically. And this circumstance may be evaluated in the purely positive sense for five reasons: first because in the world of today it is in reality very easy to turn every quality into a source of wealth. (In this connection we need only remember that Germany, in spite of defeat, and in spite of her tremendous debts, is rising again irresistibly: a small capital, rapidly used and reused, means more than an immense capital which cannot be transformed, or which can only be transformed with difficulty. Thus, today, capital is rather the effect than the cause, just as, for Hegel, God was the effect and not the First Cause.) Second, because a narrow life demonstrably constricts and deforms. Third, because the psychological injuriousness inherent in the acquisition of wealth disappears as soon as wealth has become the tacit and self-understood basis of life. Fourth, because on this earth the spiritual, too, can be made fruitful only by material means. Fifth, and most important of all, because it is the privilege of the sovereign spirit to impart to facts whatever meaning it desires.

The old idea indeed, that the creation of ideal values should not pay was also nothing more than a free idea imposed by man, the creator of idea and meaning, and it is one which falls or stands according to man's attitude toward it. For this reason prosperity should, from the historic point of view, be regarded as the normal state of things, and material wealth should be accepted as the expression, faithful to the spiritual meaning, of every possible value. If, thanks to the World War, things are, in many respects, very different in the Europe of today, it is nevertheless certain that, in spite of the consequences of the war, poverty will, in a very few decades, be overcome to an extent unheard of hitherto. The guarantee for this is to be found in the universal "materialism" of the masses.* And if things are as I have indicated, is it not utterly contrary to sense that the highest spiritual legacy of mankind should not as such represent a material power?

I wish to link up with these observations the example of Weimar, an example which is both familiar and obvious. Classical Weimar has been lifted out of the secular into the eternal. For Germany it has much the same significance as classical Athens would have meant for mankind, if it had

*Cf my book "Politik, Wirtschaft, Weisheit," also "The World in the Making" (Harcourt, Brace & Co.)

been preserved, and before long that significance will exist not only for Germany but for all mankind. It is quite certain that before long Weimar will become one of the most popular centres of pilgrimage in the world. And so, from what I hear, the State does all sorts of things for Weimar. But the State will continue to accumulate other obligations, which will progressively absorb its exclusive attention. Following the line of its development, the State will tend more and more to become the expression of the Socialist idea in the sense of the care of the well-being of the masses. Its rôle will become, with progressive exclusiveness, that of the adjuster who fixes justice and fairness in the relations between the various forces of life. It will therefore be able to do less and less for purely qualitative matters, that is to say, it will find itself in increasing contradiction to the sense or meaning of such matters, and when this is the case it will inevitably show itself more and more inadequate for tasks of this kind.

It follows logically from this—the idea has been demonstrated in detail in my book "Politik, Wirtschaft, Weisheit"—that if the qualitative is to continue its rôle, it must consolidate its position more and more independently of the State. And so in regard to Weimar the state of things is such that the Goethe House itself is being—barely—maintained, but that the Goethe heritage—perhaps the richest spiritual legacy of mankind,—does not command anything like the means which it needs in order to work itself out as it could and should. It is only in regard to the antiquarian aspect that a certain degree of success has been achieved, while in regard to prospective other aspects, which are a million times more important, nothing at all has been done. By prospective aspects I mean here the spread and encouragement of the vital spirit of Goethe, which is to be reincarnated in our children and in our grandchildren. Matters stand much worse with all other exponents of Weimar, and worst of all with the Nietzsche archives, the maintenance of which is, thanks to the utterly inadequate period of protection, with discontinuation threatened in the very immediate future. And on top of this we must remember that Nietzsche has been hailed as the first and greatest prophet of the world in the making. Is not this state of things perfectly shameful? Spiritual Weimar should in its own right be able to command a budget of more than a million marks. It is only thus that the legacy of its great spirits could become as fruitful as, ideally speaking, it ought to become. It is only thus that it can grow and reproduce itself, as it should. But here I shall be interrupted with the objection that the plain fact is that we lack money for the purpose. And with that I come to what is really the practical aim of this article: it will be a trifling matter to obtain this budget of a million for the future, first, as soon as it is recognized what is at stake and second, how the thing is to be started off.

As far as the first half of the problem is concerned, I need add little to what has already been said above. The spiritual values of mankind will, in an increasing measure, be recognized as human values. Putting the point in extreme form, I would say that the maintenance of the spirit of Weimar is of much more importance, from the point of view of humanity, than the maintenance of the German State. And for centuries to come the same will be true in an increasing degree of all authentic spiritual values. As I have proved in detail in my new book, "Menschen als Sinnbilder" (Darmstadt: Otto Reichl), there exist in the domain of the spirit not abstract, but only spiritual values. It is not only in the case of Christ that we have to do with a strictly personal spirit, the same is true of every spiritual creator.

It follows that it is a fundamental principle that in every case we must point all efforts to this end, that the purely personal character involved may be completely retained. And obviously this can take place only if the relevant spiritual legacy—let us say the Goethe legacy—becomes an institution living in its own right, as the Christ legacy lives in the institution of the Church. Only when it is *not* the State, *not* an alien-spirited power; only when the spiritual legacy maintains and directs its growth and continuation in its

own right: only then have we a guarantee that the personal element will be retained. And from another point of view; the fact that this objective is attainable along the path I have indicated, is made so obvious by the continuation of the person of Jesus, in contradistinction to all other spirits, thanks to the Church, that not another word need be wasted on this subject. I may therefore pass on without loss of time to the second point, that is, how the thing is to be started off in order that the institution analogous to the Church may arise.

The situation is as a matter of fact extraordinarily simple. *Spiritual possessions should never be completely released; a certain percentage of what these bring in as returns should be retained for the common benefit.* And, be it noted, the income should not be turned over to the State, which would then use it up for any purpose it might choose—probably for the support of idiots—but to an institution, analogous to the Church, but yet to be created, an institution devoted exclusively to the service of the spirit. It is very obvious that a proposition of this kind will call forth the most vigorous protests on the part of many publishers; but I really cannot see why other individuals should derive especial profit from those possessions which have been taken away from the natural heirs. Quite naturally the usual argument will be invoked against this proposition that it will serve to raise the price of a commodity which was intended for the good of all. But in the first place this rise in price does not represent anything considerable—for otherwise the works of living or protected authors would, in comparison with those of dead or unprotected authors, hardly be read at all, whereas the contrary is demonstrably the case. In the second place, mankind will inevitably be growing richer. In the third place—and most important—this argument has no weight whatsoever against the counter-argument, that only with this percentage can we create a fund which, by means of a real Peter's penny, shall be able to ensure the continuation of a spiritual heritage just as the original Peter's penny sustains the Catholic Church. And anyone who raises the further argument that the sums to be obtained in this fashion will never amount to anything of consequence, forgets that hundreds of years, thousands, still lie before us, in which these sums may go on accumulating. He forgets further what all historical experience goes to show, namely, that once the needed institution is in existence, it will attract important legacies, and gifts in various forms, which will help it over the first difficult stages. But if there is anyone who thinks that the immediate insurance of these spiritual legacies is as yet unnecessary, let him remember that we are rapidly approaching the barbaric age of the Chauffeur,* and that everything therefore points to the prospect that without a special form of assurance these legacies will never be secured. Taking into consideration what I have said above I, for my part, see no valid objection against my fundamental proposition. It is obvious that the working out of this proposition will, in the course of centuries, lead to the accumulation of ever larger property. And it is equally obvious that it will be much easier in this way to find spirits who will act as the immediate officials of the literary heritage, serving the idea of the continuation of the spirit of the great according to their meaning and intention, than it would be if the choice were left to government officials. All that is needed, in order that something of enduring greatness and of infinite importance may be achieved, is a quite trivial and harmless legislative act.

The importance of this achievement would, in my opinion, far exceed the importance of any act since the coming of the new post-war period. And this legislative act could, without any ado, be made retroactive for all writers even of the remote past. I cannot see any reason why the publishers of authors who no longer receive any royalty should not, after a certain period, pay a certain percentage of the income on new editions, just as naturally as everyone of us, without any ado, pays taxes which have been newly enacted.

But it is only at this point that I come to what I consider the most important issue. The Peter's pence of literature must under no circumstances serve any charitable purpose. Charity is the business of the State. Before long its *sole* purpose will be to serve the highest good of the largest number. As against this it should, in view of the irresistible growth of the over-

*See Chapter I of "The World in the Making" for detailed explanation.

powering Chauffeur world, be the exclusive function of that which is not represented in the State to take care of the qualitative. It is utterly contrary to sense that the heritage of great spirits should serve the purpose of supporting asses. In the case of the new institution, which is yet to be created, we must have to do only with that which is qualitative in the extreme, i.e., something which is focussed on the aristocratic and hierarchic, for in the eyes of the spirit there exists only more and less; there is never equality. So that the institution, analogous to the Church, which is to be created, must from the outset be so organized as to further only that which has the highest value. In the case of living writers this process will certainly involve a certain degree of error, though it is equally true that if the right men are chosen for sizethis Senate or Consistory, and—I emphasize this—if they are made as independent as judges are, success should be easier to attain than in any other analogous domain. But in the case of the dead all error can be removed, and it is this which is of primary importance. The achievement to be aimed at is the perpetuation of the spirit of the great in the same sense that the church perpetuates the spirit of Jesus and of the saints. And in order to pick out the right spirits, the same processes must be set on foot which are employed by the Church when it proposes a canonization. By the time a spiritual legacy has been set free, it will, in the majority of cases, not be difficult to determine whether this particular spirit belongs to the "Saints" or not. Should the answer be in the affirmative, then his spirit must for all eternity be supported by an endowment. In regard to the last century in Germany, this is what would have taken place first in the case of classical Weimar, second in the case of the legacy of Nietzsche and Wagner. And the same would apply to the spiritual and intellectual heroes of all other countries.

Since I have not the time for personal correspondence, I would like to ask all those who are in fundamental agreement with my suggestion, to make their statements to that effect in the press. Likewise I would like to ask those who have suggestions for improvements to offer, to do so through the public prints. A few words on the part of a large number, at the cost of very little time, would suffice to set the necessary movement on foot along large lines.

The annual catalogue of "The Mosher Books" has just made its appearance. Book-lovers familiar with these publications will remember a little duo-decimo of about 200 pages, printed on hand-made paper, bound in blue boards, entitled "Amphora" published in 1912. Mr. Mosher had the habit of enriching his catalogues by using their blank pages for printing selections of prose and verse that appealed to his fancy, together with some of the "Forewords" which his catalogues contained for many years. The book was a gem still treasured by many booklovers. It had long been Mr. Mosher's purpose to make a second collection of rare verse and prose, selected from his catalogues from 1912 to 1923, intending to publish them in a satisfactory format when death frustrated his plan. This has now been done by other hands. A new volume, "Amphora: A Second Collection," with a portrait of Mr. Mosher, together with several tributes to his life and work, taking on the character of a memorial, will be published this season. Book-lovers fond of "The Mosher Books" will want this delightful companion volume to "Amphora" of 1912.

The Library of Congress will receive under the will of Harry Houdini what is rated as the finest library in the world on conjuring, magic, witchcraft, demonology, occultism, spiritualism, and allied subjects. Houdini's lawyer who drew up his will in 1924, declares that it had long been the intention of the magician to leave this collection to the American people.

The English book auction season of 1926-1927 opened with a sale at Sotheby's in London on November 8, 9, and 10, of valuable books selected from several private libraries, including the most extensive collection of Oliver Goldsmith ever offered at auction, comprising upwards of 200 editions of the "Vicar of Wakefield." Other notable works were the sixth edition of Gray's "Elegy," 1752, with a presentation inscription and pen corrections by the author; presentation copies of the works of Robert Browning, and Douglas Jerrold; Boswell's "Life of Johnson," with corrections and additions; an extra-illustrated copy of "Byron and His Contemporaries," and "Letters and Journals," Westmacott's "English Spy," 1825-26; and Beaumont and Fletcher's "Comedies and Tragedies."