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British infantryman moving forward through the Reichswald forest

Towards the Rhine

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End of a Teutonic Dream

WICKHAM STEED on the German exodus from the Eastern Marches

ıdering the Russian invasion of Germany, it is not only :ary aspect of things that has impressed me. With the aps we can see pretty clearly the extent of the German What we cannot measure is the shock which those especially the exodus of millions of German refugees ıstern homelands, has given to German and particu- sian minds. The material shock, the impact of positive st be shattering enough. To lose the Silesian coal lose the big estates of the East Prussian *Junkers*, which so large a part in the political and economic life of r many generations, and the prospective loss of the ınd potato lands of the Eastern Marches that have st of Germany with much of her food supply, must ın imagination as one of the direst blows their country :ered. Yet I fancy these misfortunes are not the only the deepest cause of the sense of catastrophe which overwhelming thoughtful Germans. The deepest cause : the realisation that the Eastern Marches of Germany, of Germanism on the east, the springboard for the what the Germans call *Kultur*, may be gone, perhaps

if any, Germans can say offhand what they mean by word is almost untranslatable. It does not mean what we understand by 'culture', and it is certainly not the same thing as our idea of 'civilisation'. On the east, at any rate, it means something like the supremacy, the mastery, of the German way of life and of German power over the ways of life of non-German peoples like the Poles, the Lithuanians and the Russians whose territories lie beyond the eastern borderlands, or outer Marches, of the German Reich. '*Mark*' or 'March' is the German word for borderland. This was why the province of Brandenburg, the home of the Hohenzollern Dynasty, was called the Brandenburg '*Mark*'. Now into this *Mark*, of which Berlin is the centre, millions of Germans, hitherto the bearers and wardens of German *Kultur* in the east, have been and are streaming back as refugees. How many they may be we do not yet know. Some neutrals guess their number as six millions; others put it as high as eight millions. Nazi spokes- men, who may not be altogether wrong, have called the exodus the greatest migration Germany has ever known. It is certainly one of the most astonishing events in this unprecedented war.

It is here that the meaning which Germans attach to their word *Kultur* comes in. Eight or nine years ago the leading French authority on matters Germanic, Professor Edmond Vermeil of the University of Paris, wrote the best definition of *Kultur* that I have yet come across. He was trying to find an answer to a question that had long puzzled him. The question was why modern German

Points from Letters

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Science and Life

Science is a means but not an end, a technique but not a subject. It is a means of discovering provisional truth, and as a means, its only justification is pragmatic—it works. The two essential features of the scientific method are the direct approach by the scientist to his raw material (whether it be a group of molecules or of human beings), and the relevance of all available evidence. The scientist must find his facts, and having found them, he cannot pick and choose only those which fit his theories. Thus his conclusions are always provisional, since new facts may at any time force a revision of the conclusions. Science teaches humility, and the lesson is a hard one. Perhaps this is why so many scientists cease to be humble when they step out of their laboratories; and, of course, once they cease to be humble, they cease to follow the scientific method.

Science has certainly been applied to the study of methods of fighting, just as it has been to methods of healing, building, transport, and sound-transmission. A start has been made in applying it to the problems of human society, but it has, as yet, not got very far. The phenomena displayed when organised groups of men and women fight each other are capable of being studied by the scientific technique. But even when such studies have been carried to practical conclusions, they will not prevent wars. They will only tell men what they should do *if* they want to prevent them. Thus science does not relieve man of the necessity for moral judgments. Rather does it enable him to translate his judgments into action much more effectively. Thus, it increases rather than decreases his moral and ethical responsibilities.

Nevertheless, science has a message of hope for the world. Only a minority of men still do evil, if they can see the full consequence of their actions. As a psychiatrist, my guess of the size of this minority is about 10 per cent. The Nazis do evil self-righteously; they have been trained not to look at end-results, but to act in blind faith. It is the job of social science to present man with a guide to the results of his behaviour, and to devise methods of making sure that all men know the contents of this guide. When this has been done, scientists will have more justification for complacency, but if they are to remain true to their calling, they must not exercise their rights in this respect.

London, N.W.5 STEPHEN TAYLOR, M.D.

Poetry in War Time

The literary critic must concern himself more with the achievement of poets than with their renown, and the popularity or otherwise of the poets I wrote about is not my business. It is always deplorable that poets who are gifted, sincere and hard-working should be ignored or disparaged merely because their work is not always easy to grasp; but it will, I think, be a long time before one can hope for a disappearance of that traditional attitude which finds expression in the satirical second paragraph of Mr. Richards' letter: 'If we admit that people, however they may respect contemporary poets, do not quote them, then what Mr. Reed means by poetry and what it means to the *homme moyen esthétique* are two entirely different and distinct things'. Between the protasis and the apodosis of this statement there is no obvious connection; but I sense from the tone what Mr. Richards believes: that modern poetry—probably all of it—is obscure, impenetrable, esoteric, and unlovely. I do not agree with him: we can merely state our tastes. But if by the *homme moyen esthétique* he means the average man who takes an interest in art—the man who, for example, takes the trouble to go to W.E.A. classes, or to read regularly and seriously by himself—then I know that he very much underestimates that man's tolerance, patience and curiosity. Mr. Richards lacks these qualities, and is wrong to put himself beside the *homme moyen esthétique*. He is the *homme moyen philistin*; and he is proud of it.

It is more profitable to discuss Mr. Richards' first paragraph. He is right in assuming that Rupert Brooke achieved far greater popularity than any poet of today. This was not, however, due to any particular poetic merit; Brooke's talents were, in fact, of the slightest. He achieved his unparalleled popularity, I believe, simply because he contrived at an appropriate moment to falsify the nature of war in a way that the public found palatable. He himself is not to be blamed for this; had he lived, he might have regretted his five war-sonnets (and had he lived, he would probably never have been so famous). For they show a defect of imagination which in a poet is serious to the point of catastrophe. And Brooke saw very little of the war itself, and nothing at all of the long-term horror which might have filled the gap his imagination failed to fill. He wrote in enthusiastic ignorance; death in battle appeared lovely; there was no suggestion that war might be a tragedy. This was all highly consolatory to those whose task it was to keep the home fires burning. He was a poet for the thoughtless; and there is no fundamental difference between his war-poetry and the present-day song beginning 'There'll always be an England'.

The poets who saw what war was really like, who saw it for a long time, and who unflinchingly described it—Owen and Sassoon, for example—did not fare so well, either during or after the war. It is alongside them that I would put the best war-poets of today: such poets as Lewis and Keyes. And though they may not be widely quoted—whatever that is worth (and it may be remembered that Housman is easier to quote than Milton)—their success with the general public is a hopeful sign that people are able to 'take' a little more in the way of honesty than they used to be. It is worth while adding that Lewis's *Raiders' Dawn* sold well, even before Lewis's death. But neither of them has had the freakish success of Rupert Brooke or Julian Grenfell; nor would they have hoped for it.

Mr. Grigson is right in assuming that I have not read Mr. Auden's new book, which has not yet been published over here. No one could look forward to it with more eagerness than I do. I hope it is as good as Mr. Grigson says; if it is, it will survive Mr. Grigson's praise.

Bletchley HENRY REED

White Bread

Mr. Fussell joins issue with me 'on the question whether wheat, with or without the whole germ, formed any part of the diet of the majority of farm-workers, or even many of the small farmers', in 1740. The nearest year for which good figures are available is 1764. In *The Bread of our Forefathers*, the classic on the subject, by Sir William Ashley, it is stated on the evidence of the Corn Tracts that in this year wheat supplied 62 per cent. of the grain of the national bread supply. Wheat consumption was distributed unevenly, the percentage figure varying from 89 in East Anglia and the south-east, to 27 in Yorkshire and Lancashire.

Harpenden 'RADIO DOCTOR'

Inoculation Against Diphtheria

A correspondent in THE LISTENER of February 1 states that 'serum is not used in diphtheria prophylaxis'. I should like to point out in turn that THE LISTENER was right and the doctor quite wrong. The fact is that antitoxic serum, derived from a horse, is a *constituent* of one of the most widely used diphtheria prophylactics used in this country, namely T.A.F. (Toxoid *Antitoxin* Floccules). This product is almost invariably used for nursing staffs and for children over nine years, on account of its comparative freedom from reactions. Dr. James Grant, in *The Lancet*, January 13, 1945 (page 46), states that in Gateshead during 1943, 'children over nine years of age were treated by three injections, each of 1 c.cm. T.A.F.'. As its full name implies, this substance is composed of toxoid, that is toxin heated or otherwise neutralised, and antitoxin, which is the serum taken from a horse which has been immunised by increasing doses of toxin or toxoid. These two are mixed together and form floccules. According to *Evans' Journal*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (November, 1938), T.A.F. 'has the same disadvantage as T.A.M. resulting from the horse protein in its composition'.

M. BEDDOW BAYLY, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.
Camberley

Gardening Questions

Question: What is meant by certain pear trees being 'double worked'?—(R. Q., Southend)

Reply: It refers to the method of grafting. Pears are usually budded or grafted on to the quince, but some varieties are incompatible, and do not make a good union. So another variety of pear is first grafted on the quince, and then the desired variety is in turn grafted on to that.

Question: We have some peach and apricot trees trained against a brick wall. Can you recommend a winter wash for cleaning the brick-work and the trees, and preventing black fly?—(Enquirer, Silver End)

Reply: Yes, tar-oil winter wash, one part of the neat liquid in thirteen parts of water, but you will have to be quick and get it done before the buds begin to swell.

Question: In this district we had trouble with our raspberries, as nearly all the ripe raspberries had a small worm or maggot in them. Spraying appears to be ineffective. Can you advise, please?—(E. N. B., Bramhall)

Reply: The only preventive I know is to spray the open flowers with arsenate of lead or derris insecticide, or to dust the flowers with derris powder or nicotine dust, to prevent egg laying or destroy the young maggot before it enters the core. The objection to this is that it is said to injure bees, but my experience is that bees keep away from the sprayed flowers, and only an odd one here and there, which is actually caught by the spray, gets hurt.

C. H. MIDDLETON