NEW BOOKS.

Some Remarkable Essays.

It is but seldom that we receive a collection of papers so valuable in respect of substantive thought and literary form as are those contained in a volume called *Modern Poet Prophets*, by W. NORMAN GUTHRIE (Cincinnati, the R. Clarke Company). These papers may be considered collectively as a protest against the dictum of "Art for art's sake," a dictum which, in the hands of materialists, has had some melancholy results. Everything depends, however, as the author of these essays shows, on an artist's fundamental philosophy; this he has undertaken to demonstrate in a paper on the conditions of permanence in art or the relations of art to ontology. Mr. Guthrie is one of those who believes that, while the poets can hardly be described as "God's only truth tellers," yet they do bring scientific truths and speculations, the moral and social ideals of their period, to the test of beauty. They serve to make us feel the difference between the respectable and the heroic; between the half truth, brilliant but death-dealing, and the whole truth, vital and quickening; between the pleasurable and the beautiful; between success and merit. The author says truly that the failures of poets technically admirable are as instructive as their successes. We learn from the former that no amount of art can make what is essentially unbeautiful permanently pleasing. Their successes, on the other hand, as being well-springs of joy, do more than teach. As Sir Philip Sidney said long ago, they not only show the way, but give so fair a prospect into the way as will entice any man to enter into it. It is true, as Mr. Guthrie says, that what we need is not so much to know as to love the truth. *Meliora video proboque, deteriora sequor*, is a sufficiently common confession. It is in will rather than in discrimination that we fail. The true and great poets make us love the truth, and, loving it, embody it. They show us, indeed, that the truth is large and many-sided. Leopardi makes one feel that pessimism is true; Shelley makes us surer still of optimism; while a Browning enables us to see the relation between both moods as parts of a more comprehensive, more human view of life. Of the nine essays in this volume, we shall pass over those on ideal womanhood; on the "Prometheus Unbound" of Shelley, which our author deems an imperishable poem; on realistic art on the stage; and on Walt Whitman. We shall confine ourselves to the papers which deal with Leopardi and "Evolutional Pessimism;" with the divorce of morals from theology, exemplified in the "Oberman" of Senancour and in Matthew Arnold; with England's agnostic poets, to wit.: Clough, Swinburne, Rossetti, and Matthew Arnold; and, finally, with the conditions of permanence in works of art.

In the essay on Leopardi the author quotes with approval Lotze's assertion that all man's endeavors have, as a last resort, but one meaning, namely, that they, in connection with those of countless others, should combine to trace an image of the world from which we may learn what we have to reverence as the true significance of existence, what we have to do and what to hope. This is pronounced an inextinguishable spiritual demand, and the inference drawn is that, whenever any scientific revolution has driven out old modes of thought, the new views that take their place must justify themselves by the permanent or increasing satisfaction which they are capable of affording the spiritual demand, which cannot be put off or ignored. Mr. Guthrie points out that it is with a more or less conscious sense of this need of self justification that attempts are made every now and then to furnish substitutes for old faiths, which science conceives itself to have made impossible. It is his opinion that, in this field of the apologetics of science, the commonest and most luxuriant growths are equivocations more or less subtle. For the great multitudes life must be miserable, if the race is to go forward. The comfort of the majority can be purchased only at the cost of general degeneracy. Men, therefore, are robbed of any ignorant hope of better times in the near future. There must of necessity steal over the man, who does not take for granted that he is an exception, a sense of the questionable worth of life for himself. Even if he should conceive himself fortunate, he would, in proportion to the nobility of his nature, never be able to reconcile himself to the failure of so many others. Our author submits that the evolutional philosophy has, as yet, done little or nothing to justify itself by supplying mind and heart with true peace. From its own account of the mental faculties of man, the distinction between truth and falsehood imports into the former a power to keep alive. The philosophy, then, which shall give its adherents the best chance of survival in the struggle for existence will be, ultimately, the only true one, since it must eventually prevail. Does the evolutional philosophy liberate a current of vitality? Does it or does it not "fit the average man to live?" It is because he considers the question fair that the author gives us an account of Leopardi's poetry, which, undoubtedly, assumes that life is not worth living.

I.

What seems to the writer of these essays most noteworthy in Leopardi's career is not that he was diseased in body and unfortunate in more than one respect, and that no scope was given to his marvellous powers, but that, while many men experience all this more or less, so acute a mind as Leopardi's, who anticipated the attitude imposed on man by the evolutional philosophy, found no consolatory compensation. With most men, so strong is the instinctive love of life that they find themselves unable to accept practically the pessimism which logically follows from their philosophy. It scarcely seems fair, therefore, to derive Leopardi's pessimism from his misfortunes. Many men under circumstances quite as adverse, thanks to another theory of life traditionally or rationally held, have been optimists. What makes the case of Leopardi particularly interesting is that it was apparently uncomplicated with moral laxity, like that of Heine; that, the love of life being all but wholly neutralized by ever-present pain and disappointment, he was able to accept entire the practical pessimism of his philosophy. Content with no evasions, however specious, he demanded either that he should be comfortless or that his comfort should be consistent with his philosophy. Here we are reminded that Leopardi derived his mechanical theory of the universe solely from the new astronomy, and only anticipated the conclusions of biology, without any knowledge of the arguments that have since led up to them. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that his poetry does not always put the case as strongly as one might conceive it to be put to-day. Sometimes the poet is driven irresistibly to doubt his radical conclusions, when, had he lived later, he would have felt no scruple. For instance, on one occasion he exclaims: "O, human nature, if thou be altogether frail and vile, dust and shadow, how is it thou art capable of such lofty sentiments? If thou be noble in part, how then is it that thy worthier impulses and thoughts can be by such slight and base causes kindled and quenched by turns? Mr. Guthrie proceeds to translate a number of extracts from Leopardi's poetry which bear upon his philosophy. Their purport is thus summarized: Life, for the seekers of pleasure at least, is predominantly painful. One of the great sources of joy, the capacity to imagine and believe truth to be such as we wish, is gone. To see purpose in Nature is to personify what is, so far as we can tell, impersonal. As resulting "from everything in heaven and on earth, whirling without rest, always to return thither whence it came, I can conceive of no use or fruit." The beauty of Nature is no permanent consoler, because our sensitiveness to it diminishes with time. We become, Leopardi notes, as we grow older, less and less sensitive to Nature's beauty; this very appreciation belongs, as Wordsworth perceived, to youth. Driven inward, we find that the indulging of reason to the utmost ends in the sterilization and paralysis of the heart. Love, the great source of joy, is made by death uncertain; and death, do what we will, is odious for one's self, and piteous in others. We cannot derive any pleasure or comfort from a consideration of death, when we remember that it is love's inevitable end. It is not strange that, from all this, there emerged a species of nihilism. Driven inward and upward by the sense of the insufficiency of the world and the insignificance of sense, Leopardi sought absorption in an idea that might deliver him from misery. He indulged a great thirst for the absolute. He strove to think on and on, till he might pass beyond the reach of wing-weary self-consciousness; "thus in the midst of this immensity, my thought is drowned, and shipwreck in such sea to me is sweet." With regard to the world, present or prospective, he permitted himself no illusions. He said to his sister: "We scorn virtue while alive, adore her when dead." He complained "that even the reward of mere glory is denied to worthy pursuits." Unlike Mr. Swinburne, he dreamed of no divine democracy: "Power and rule, however much concentrated, or however much subdivided, whoever is invested with them, under whatever name, will commit abuses to the end of time."

II.

In the essay on Oberman and Matthew Arnold the indebtedness of the latter to the former is proved clearly by a series of quotations. Can morals be divorced from revealed religion? Obermann held that they could, and so did Matthew Arnold. The spectacle of a world full of injustice, where crime does not bring punishment as surely as does a violation of mechanical law, made Oberman feel that spirit and matter are not in harmony; that spirit, with its needs, is a solitary outcast in a universe which knows nothing of right and wrong. Since Nature does not reward virtue as such, nor punish vice as such, there must be error in our conceptions of right and wrong, or else their reward and punishment are to be sought in man instead of in the outer world. Hence Oberman first tries to give himself an account of what is not traditionally but naturally right and wrong. Perceiving, however, that even then, after all corrections have been made, there is no certainty of justice in external life, he is led to affirm that virtue is not a more or less painful means to the attainment of a hypothetical joy-giving end; that this, in truth, has been an old pernicious mistake, to which is due very much of our despondency, and, therefore, not a little of our depravity. On the contrary, virtue is not a means, but an end, the object of a natural prepotent passion in men for righteousness, and being an end *per se*, has a right to be considered a good, without reference to any reward it may bring besides. Indeed, all goods resulting secondarily from virtue as a means are secondary and adventitious, and would not be eagerly expected, if men were normal, and weighed probabilities without prejudice. Oberman's conclusion is, that to teach men not to count upon such accidental rewards of righteousness would greatly enhance their felicity. For, if these secondary goods were not much sought, their partial presence or their absence would no longer produce a sense of disappointment and unfair treatment, which, reacting on the moral sense, often tends to weaken the impulse to virtue in the unfortunate, because virtue comes to be regarded as lacking all natural sanction, and, therefore, as not endowed with the obligatoriness of law. Religion, to be sure, has done its best to make men look for no rewards as due to right-doing in this life; but it has promised them in another. Religion's mistake has been to appeal to the imagination for prospective reward, instead of making virtue appear, in itself, a good highly desirable, a noble reward of lifelong effort. It was Oberman's opinion that attention should have been drawn to the fact of virtue's fulfilling an eternal and supreme human want. Instead of this, an after-life of adequate reward and punishment has been held up to the eye of fancy and of faith. If this was once a help to morals, it is certainly becoming less and less potent as a motive for conduct, since mankind at large trusts the human imagination less and less, and actual cognition more and more. Besides, as Oberman points out, this method of immortal reward and punishment is fatal to the dignity of virtue, degrading it to the rank of a means; furthermore, it vitiates the very essence of virtue itself. For if, as Jesus taught, good or evil lie in the motive of an act, then virtue for the sake of beatitude is not virtuous; it is selfish, grasping; it is egotism postponed to an imaginary hereafter; it is, to use Matthew Arnold's expression, not disinterested righteousness but other-worldliness. Oberman goes on to argue that in the downfall of false theology there is danger that there will be a rupture of barriers in morals and a destructive flood of vice. This is only to be avoided by a timely divorce of ethics and superstition, which shall leave the latter to its fate and prove morality to be quite independent of external stimulus, since it has an internal motive force of its own, and at no time requires the mechanical, supercilious aid of religion. The preacher's duty, he says, is not to preach a heaven and a hell in some doubtful hereafter, but to stir to conscious life the dawn of craving for righteousness, to herald an actual this-life heaven of virtue; the supreme attainment of a supreme end, which, being within reach, independent of the unmoral world of mechanism, is positive, certain, practical, cognizable and worth all peril and strain. In the stimulation of this passion, with its satisfaction dependent only on the will of the individual, lies, he says, the secret of self-mastery, contentment and peace.

In a word, Oberman foresaw the downfall of popular thaumaturgical Christianity, and believed that morality would gain greatly if it waived the support of a foredoomed fanaticism in order to base its majesty on unimpeachable evidence. "Do you want principles," he asks, "that stick to the heart? Summon, then, once more to your aid those principles that are in the heart of every well organized man." Where religion touches morality is, according to Oberman, chiefly in its doctrine of an after-existence of just rewards and punishments. He holds that, on one hand, this after-existence, in the literal sense, is problematic, and, therefore, only a restraint of a precarious sort, while, on the other hand, it actually vitiates virtue. "Is it not," he inquires, "a notable fact that the terrors of an after life have been a check to very few of those who were likely to be held back by nothing else? For the remainder of mankind there are more natural, more direct, and therefore more potent restraints. Since man was endowed once for all with a sense for order, since it forms a part of his nature, the need of it should have been made a conscious one in every individual. Thus there would have been left fewer villains than dogmas leave, and we should have been spared all those which they create." We see, then, that instead of seeking it in immortality Oberman finds the true source of morality in man, in a faculty akin to his sense of the proportionate in the realm of form, of the harmonious in the domain of sound, in an ethical instinct quite as real as man's æsthetic instinct, and requiring no artificial stimulation from belief in heaven and hell. "If," he adds, "the rules of morality preached to the people were true, consistent, and never strained; if the reason for each duty were shown, and a due proportion observed; if the rules had reference only to their actual ends, we should have nothing left to do but to hold in check a handful of men whose ill-organized brains have no sense for righteousness."

We have here reproduced enough of Mr. Guthrie's essay to make good his conclusion that Matthew Arnold was led by a study of Senancour's "Oberman" to attempt the divorce of morals from religion. In one other extract from "Oberman" is set forth his vision of the true priest of ethics, a vision destined to find fulfilment in the career of Arnold: "If there were righteous men lovers of order by nature, whose first personal want was to bring men back to more unanimity, more conformity, and more joy; if, leaving to one side as doubtful whatever has never been proved, they impressed on men's minds the principles of righteousness and universal love which no one could confute; if they ventured to speak of the unerring paths to bliss; if, carried away by the truth they felt and saw and which the listener, too, could not but foresee, they were to consecrate their lives to proclaiming it in different ways and to creating conviction by repetition," why, then, we should have just such a teacher as Matthew Arnold actually was.

III.

The paper on England's agnostic poets begins with an estimate of Arthur Hugh Clough. With him, loyalty to truth was a maxim, a necessity. He recognized the sentiment attaching to ancestral creeds, but held that it cannot and must not sway us. On the other hand, the moral power fostered by those creeds must, he said, by all means be preserved. If the garden is about to wither in a winter of discontent, let us speedily gather in the flowers and distil from them an essence of piety, self-oblation, and patience. We have been freed from the shackles of history. Duty, then, must be understood in a better way, in harmony with a religious feeling which has outlived conviction. Duty, in other words, and piety are maids no longer; nor wives either, for that matter. Decalogue and Convention, successive husbands of Duty, are both dead. Intellectual conviction has breathed his last and religious feeling or piety is alone. Two widows in weeds of mourning, sworn not to remarry, but to live on memories of old home happiness, duty and piety come, as it were, to espouse one another; at least such seems to be Clough's hope. To see the worth of doubt that destroys dogmatic knowledge; to give scope to faith and yet not to allow it to call itself knowledge; not only to see the weight of doubt, but to feel it, and, therefore, to foster doubt while also fostering faith, required, indeed, a courageous soul. The consciousness that the abjuration of speculative thought, the determination to work in the dark, could not bring peace of soul save at the cost of total self-denial, was perhaps, our author suggests, the very thing which compelled Clough more and more to an impartial great-hearted inclusiveness; to see things less and less from the viewpoint of self, to insist less and less upon his own salvation. Notwithstanding, however, all this magnanimous and difficult devotion to a God who will not reveal himself, Clough found peace only in death.

If Clough, compelling doubt to what seems its legitimate function, and, at the same time, preventing any usurpation of improper authority by faith, could only live in fierce unrest, Mr. Swinburne is not more fortunate. He addressed himself with "vigor and rigor" to the solution of the problem "how to guard our unbelief." He attempts to solve it as follows: We must, in the first place, eschew all legends associated hitherto with outgrown superstitions. We may, if we choose, pursue the path of excesses to the abode of a mediæval Venus witch. We may indulge in dotings like Chastelard's on some object of desire. If satiety or disenchantment should again endanger us, we may take imaginative refuge in times the religion of which was other than ours, and wherein lurk no hints of our discarded superstitions in their wonted, and, therefore, dangerous form. We may seek an asylum, for example, in the garden of Proserpine, with Atalanta in Calydon, with Erechtheus of legendary Athens. It may be, however, that, in the end, we shall behold the Greek Fate bearing unpleasant, if remote, resemblance to Providence. Notwithstanding all the fury of Mr. Swinburne's genius, and all his scholarship, in spite of his excursion with Baudelaire into unhallowed regions, and his persistent use of colored glasses that make familiar objects safely new and strange, he is not able to escape from his fierce unrest without formulating a definite creed. This he does at considerable length in more than one passage, and Mr. Guthrie would epitomize it thus: Life offers a reasonable amount of gratification in return for a definite amount of exertion and endurance. If you train yourself to expect no more than you are likely to get, you will be content. Extravagant ambitions, unreasonable heart-claims, unsatisfiable spiritual aspirations, must be deliberately extirpated. One can systematically induce the atrophy, little by little, of all those faculties, or, rather, supposed faculties, for which the present life affords no scope. Then the normal exercise of the rest will constitute the *summum bonum*. Make your mental and sentimental vision coincide exactly with ocular perception. Get rid of ghosts. Stop worrying about shadows, and take a good hold of the bone with your teeth. In other terms, extinguish yearnings, delicate dreams, sensitive affections, ecstatic wants which inhere neither in the stomach, nor the liver, nor the lungs. Be an intelligent, sensible, reasonably genial, self-indulgent animal, and, if you are that and nothing else, you will find life worth living. He who cuts his coat to his cloth may go scantily clad, but does not get into his tailor's debt. Scant clothing, too, is not so dreadful when one is well rid of the crass superstition of fine clothes. No doubt the case is here put somewhat coarsely, but our author submits that it is put truthfully, and he bids us contrast Swinburne's philosophy with Wordsworth's declaration that "whose mind is but the mind of his own eyes, he is a slave, the meanest we can meet."

We come to Dante Gabriel Rossetti, realist and symbolist, who, in our author's view, attempts to increase the power of faith by artificial stimulation, sufficient to make it quasi-independent of opinions and convictions. How has he succeeded? In his sonnet series we find a tale of life and love, of faith and doubt. The poet begins with the reminder, not expressed but sub-conscious, that we are not otherwise now than in the flesh. To anticipate the time when we shall be bodyless is absurd. The relations of body serve as a continuous orchestral accompaniment to the broken melody of soul. Certain forms, tones, color-combinations, postures, are indissolubly tangled with our loves and hates. The body of his beloved cannot be distinguished by the lover from her soul. That her soul lives he knows, because her body testifies it to his senses. In absence it is memory and imagination that, at his bidding, furnish her soul with a body. Not always, however, do imagination and memory play their part so well. Let the lovers sit down in the same room, each busy at a different task, and he feels all the while her presence. Separate them many miles, and only at happy intervals is she felt to be near. Let death intervene, and then only at rare moments is his soul able to cry: "Your heart is never away, but ever with mine forever." Mr. Guthrie considers it fortunate that Rossetti did not torture his heart to explain the "why" of love. His very skepticism delivered him from such love-killing scrutiny. The loud sea of mystery on which death and birth open; the ultimate things unuttered behind the intolerable shaken shadow which serves them as a frail screen; the impenetrable distances beyond the utmost bound of thought; all these are God to him. Love he describes as the last relay and ultimate outpost of eternity.

We have seen that Rossetti turned to love and put a tremendous strain upon this passion. A number of relevant passages quoted by our author from Matthew Arnold prove that the latter found the boat of love too weak, even at the outset, to bear him on the seas of his distress. Each individual clings tenaciously to his past, but a different past so clung to is a barrier to mutual understanding. Even self-knowledge is wanting, the primary condition of the knowledge of others. Baffled, then, in the direction of soul-satisfying, personal love, Matthew Arnold directed our eyes toward culture, toward "knowing the best that has been taught in every age," as a basis for a general intellectual sympathy. With Sophocles, we must learn to "see life steadily and see it whole." We must try to gain Goethe's wide and luminous view, accepting his message, "Art still has truth; take refuge there." So, thanks to wide reading and to seeing all noble "sights from pole to pole," we are to enter into a gracious world of self-delusion. A sympathy with extinct religious faith may do duty for personal conviction. In default of this sympathy we may turn to poetry as a criticism of life, "under the conditions fixed by the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty," for consolation and stay, or, if one is himself a poet at heart, he may go to nature, as the poet does, and, when the head is troubled and the heart aches, may seek those mystic exaltations derived from a treatment of nature as a symbol of the soul. So much for Arnold the poet. Arnold the critic has told us that conduct is three-fourths of life. "What, then," asks our author, "is the other fourth?" Granted that righteousness brings a great inherent bliss with it; still, it is not the entire bliss of which man is capable. The other fourth of life should be put under contribution. Suppose, says Mr. Guthrie, that the other fourth were culture? Then we should have conduct and culture for a complete rule of life. Suppose we should unite to the satisfaction of goodness the satisfaction of an unsordid play of mind and heart on what is beautiful? Suppose the æsthetic compensation for the poverty of life, which, by itself, is insufficient, were joined to this ethical compensation, would not the problem of life thus find an adequate solution, one both sentimental and rational, one both of instinct and of will, of moral repression compensated by æsthetic expansion? Will it not satisfy the whole being of man and recommend itself more strongly than can any other agnostic solution?

IV.

In an essay on the permanence of art, Mr. Guthrie submits that it is quite impossible for any one, who desires to see a noble work of art perpetuated from age to age, to postpone a settlement in his mind of the vital issue, realism or idealism? Absolute realism is at once dismissed as an absurd theory which no great artist has ever carried into his workshop. The theory is compelled to make concession after concession to its opponents. The mere practical exigencies of a picture, a statue, a sonata, or a poem forbid an unflinching obedience to the maxims logically deducible from the extreme position of the realists. Absolute realism would require that no alteration be made in the data of nature; that no right of selection, resolution, and recombination of parts be claimed by the artist; that filth of gutters and blues of heaven should be accounted equally interesting and delectable; that no extraneous attractions should be imported into the objects selected at random for copy; that the artist, without any impertinent notions of beauty and ugliness, should transcribe unaltered, unshaded, unemphasized what he sees, injecting into his work nothing of his own intellectual and moral self, no suggestion of a personal message to men, not the faintest impress of his presence and preference. In fact, absolute realism is a theory which demands of the artist that he be a machine, and his work a transparent window through which a man may look upon the objective world that surrounds him. Indeed, the artist would have to be a machine undisturbed by any natural conditions whatsoever, always and in all places equally able and willing to observe and reproduce. The photographic camera is far too human to be the ideal practitioner. It has an unwarranted prejudice for light. Vague profundities of twilight awe and midnight horror the sensitive plate refuses to report. The eye can give more than the camera, but, unluckily, behind the eye is lodged a living, sensitive soul, a medium whose refracting power is never absolutely calculable. Even the eye scientifically trained has its theory to prove, puts its own construction upon things, sees only what attracts it, and has a history which determines its method of observation and the nature of what attracts or fails to attract. Indeed, the very constitution of the eye is a mute reproof to realism. All things are seen according to the eye's structure, and not, primarily, according to the structure of things. Then, again, there is a horizon. Once more, things appear to us grouped according to our own position. So it is with the soul, and, sooner or later, every artist will have to reckon with the soul in its totality. Here the author interjects an averment that the artist who consults the soul's demand for beauty cannot afford to neglect its demand for goodness. All realism is an exaggerated attempt to satisfy the soul's demand for truth. We are cautioned, however, to remember that man is a unit, no matter how much we may dissect him in our text books of psychology, theology, rhetoric, or anatomy. There is one soul with many faculties. If it be satisfied as to truth, but morally offended, the hurt will counteract the delight. Let the artist theorize as he will, he can never declare himself independent of the ultimate moral ideal, much less of contemporary feelings as to what is repulsive, foul, and villainous. The most obstinate realist would find that only those of his works which happened to give some favorable aspect of nature, some shocking or lovely combination, allowing of a definite, rational, or emotional construction, would attract and hold the attention of his public. The public always was, and will be, idealistic. It has enough to do with dust and squalor. It loves tinsel, anything that will rescue it from the weariness of the commonplace. Fidelity to crude fact is the last thing it appreciates. It may admire and praise the skill of the literal copyist, but it will soon turn away, bored or angered, from his works. In words, one may assert that all things in nature are equally beautiful. When it comes to practice, one soon finds that all things will not equally endure artistic reproduction. Realism, then, is not so much a theory as a reactionist cry. Fundamentally, it is a plea for truth. As truth, however, is not all that the soul wants, realism is impotent, or rather inadequate, to rule when the reins of government are put in its hands.

V.

What, then, will Mr. Guthrie say of idealism? In the first place, how will he defend it? To give, in fancy, free scope to the powers of nature, to hasten the process of their evolution, to bring in idea the process to its apparently rational conclusion, to its craved completion and perfection; this, in his view is to idealize. Idealistic art portrays the final state or some visibly advancing stage in the process of attainment. We are reminded how often in nature we find isolated instances of realistically reproducible landscapes, faces, and color groupings. These serve as educative hints. The artist comprehends that these isolated instances are what will bring a panic of joy to the hearts of men. A radiant sunset; a vast expanse of nacreous waters; a spread of marsh, netted with reflected blue or gold; a plain of mingling fields and woods; a burst of icy peaks from among forested foothills; a ravine loud with the rapturous tumult of torrents; the unheaval of cloud-continents threatening to bury our awe-struck world; a child in careless merriment; a woman, the perfection of all things seen; such isolated phenomena, and a thousand like them, present themselves again and again in the history of mankind. A hunger is thereby whetted beyond patient endurance. More! is the cry; More! Thereupon the artist catches glimpses with his soul's eye of "the light that never was on sea or land," made imaginable, however, by his experience of stars, and moon, and sun; and with symbols, to-wit, visible forms, colors, musical tones and words, he essays to impart his visions; symbols which, while they present not the things themselves, but only a sense-suggestion of them, give us who are, at bottom, most in love with things, a moment's delirious illusion of seeing, hearing, having, and handling the things themselves. To the extent implied in this requisite illusion, the artist must be a realist. He must be plausible.

Reverting to the problem of perpetuity for art, the author suggests that we might be able to determine in advance what kind of art would be permanently admirable, if we could but decide which of the several philosophic hypotheses will triumph. In other words, asked to solve a riddle, the author does but propound another more difficult as a solution. He begins, for instance, by assuming the truth of positivism; that is to say, he takes for granted, provisionally, that the proper attitude of the philosophic mind is that of hostility to philosophy, waiving all theory, and contenting itself with the mere accumulation of facts, the data of experience. Of course, a classification, for convenience, will be made, and the notes of each class will be stated; but the classification must always be regarded as for convenience only, and the notes of each class as tentative expressions; further experience may require an entire reclassification and entire restatement of the so-called laws of nature. In plain words, we are to accept things as they present themselves to us. The law of cause and effect is stated as a law of phenomenal sequence. Observed facts are all that it is licit to contemplate. If this be the true attitude of the intelligent, what becomes of art? What is its office? Obviously, to express the observed laws of nature, the abstract statements of her customary workings, allegorically for the sake of those who are yet unable to grasp them directly. Art, in other words, takes the rank of a more or less unconscious expositor or handmaid of science. This is the rank that M. Taine assigns to it in the first chapters of his "Philosophy of Art." On the hypothesis, however, of continuous human progress, of ultimate universal education, this office of art will become useless. Art will have eventually a sinecure. It will be more and more transparent, surrendering more and more its concrete methods. Finally, art will be, as a teacher, relegated altogether to the nursery or kindergarten. To cultivated men, its only sphere of enjoyable usefulness will be that of mimicry. But mimicry is permanently pleasurable only to those who possess, or believe that they can or will possess the real things mimicked. What a diabolical spirit would be that of a mimicking art for the poor and impotent, showing them what they might enjoy, but must never have. The rich can enjoy more or less the imitative suggestions of art, because they can, at any moment, replace them by the positive objects suggested. But, even for the rich, what dignity is left for a mimicking art? The dignity of the mirror behind a splendid showcase, feebly duplicating what is before it for an instant, a frivolously amusing illusion as the passer by looks in. Here we are cautioned to remember that all idealizing in art is banned by positivism as sentimentality quite behind the times. Art, then, reasonably can furnish nothing but what already exists far more satisfactorily in sensible reality. Whenever she exploits the vaulting ambition of the heart, suggests the pursuit of rainbow-contacts, she is an immoral disturber of the normal contentment which the practical man should cultivate above all else. Summing up the case for art, if positivism is to triumph, Mr. Guthrie says that the love of things "as they are" makes art wicked for the poor, foolish and trifling for the rich. But what is wicked and foolish or trifling suffers extinction in due time. Only what is kindly, beneficent, wise and useful will be, in the long run, sought and preserved by men.

The author proceeds to consider the future of art under one or another of the great hypotheses in respect to mind and matter that present themselves to all men except to consistent positivists. These various philosophic systems may be compendiously described as dualism, as monism, as materialism, and as idealism or spiritism. We cannot follow the author through his somewhat prolonged discussion of these systems, but we can state in a few words his conclusion. It is that art will thrive and hold a position of permanent dignity only with monism regnant. It must suffer more or less from the predominance of either materialism or spiritism. Under the absolute consistent rule of positivism art must perish. With dualism supreme, art would run great risks of losing a fair balance, because the dualist is almost sure to emphasize one or the other of his uncombinable, hostile twain. On the whole, Mr. Guthrie is inclined to think that the undisputed acceptance of monism itself might tend to injure the artist through making his work too conscious a practice of a precise and rigid æsthetic. Who knows, he asks, but that the predominance of no philosophic theory in particular, of intellectual anarchy, the mutual checkmating of various hypotheses, leaving the artist heart-whole and fancy-free to follow his creative instincts, may constitute the most favorable condition for a robust and delight-giving art? But, in that case, what of the perpetuity of art on the hypothesis of a steady growth of civilization and intellectual order?

M. W. H.

British Central Africa.

It is a valuable addition to our knowledge of the Dark Continent, which is made in a quarto volume of some five hundred pages, entitled *British Central Africa*, by Sir HARRY H. JOHNSTON (Edward Arnold). The author was, for seven years, the British Commissioner and Consul-General in the Central African Protectorate, which is administered directly by the Imperial Government. He has, consequently, had unusual opportunities of observation, and he has profited by them because he brought to his post an exceptionally good equipment and remarkable industry. His book is undoubtedly superior to any other relating to the interior of Africa. He does not, of course, undertake to answer every question that may be put by the geographer, the geologist, the anthropologist, the philologist, the botanist, the mineralogist, the sociologist, and the economist. When he is unable, however, to solve a problem, he says so frankly, and the number of interesting and important questions which he manages to answer is surprisingly large. A review of the book which should simply essay to outline the information conveyed would cover several pages of this newspaper. In this notice, the only inquiries upon which we shall endeavor, with the author's assistance, to throw some light are these: What is the region called British Central Africa? What is its history? What is the character of the present native population? What is likely to be the future of the country?

I.

The first inquiry is answered in the preface. What is now termed British Central Africa, which comprehends not only the Protectorate proper, but also the so-called Sphere of Influence, lies north of the Zambezi and in the south central portion of the continent of Africa; it is bounded on the north by Lake Tanganyika and the Congo Free State, on the northeast by German East Africa, on the east, southeast, and west, by the Portuguese possessions. The sphere of influence is much larger than the actual protectorate, which is chiefly confined to the districts bordering on Lake Nyassa and on the River Shire. The sphere of influence is, at present, administered under the charter of the British South Africa Company; whereas the Protectorate, as we have said, has, from the time of its inception, been controlled by officers appointed directly by the Imperial Government. As Sir H. H. Johnston happened to be the chief agent in bringing all this territory under British influence, both on behalf of the imperial Government and of the chartered company, it lay with him to propose a geographical and political term for the region thus secured as a dependency of the British Empire. He chose the name of "British Central Africa," because he hoped that the new sphere of British influence might include much of Central Africa, where, at the time (1889) the territories of foreign powers were in a state of flux, no hard and fast boundaries having been determined. The author believed, therefore, that, by fair means, Great Britain's share north of the Zambezi might be made to connect her protectorate on the Upper Nile with her dominions south of the Zambezi. To this end treaties were secured which advanced British territory from the south end to the north end of Lake Tanganyika, where the British flag was planted, at the request of the natives, in the spring of 1890; the said treaties arrived too late, however, for them to be taken into consideration at the time the Anglo-German convention was drawn up. Consequently, all the British Government could do was to secure from Germany a right of way across the intervening strip of territory; and the boundaries of German East Africa and of the Congo Free State were, henceforth, conterminous in the district immediately north of Tanganyika. In like manner the agents of the King of the Belgians were able to make good their claims to the country west and southwest of Tanganyika. Thus British Central Africa did not ultimately attain the geographical limits to which our author had originally aspired, and which would have amply justified its title. After all, however, the name is a fairly correct designation of a territory in the south central portion of the continent, separated by several hundred miles from the east and west coasts, and stretching up to the equatorial regions. The book before us, as we have said, deals only with that eastern portion of British Central Africa which has come, more or less, within the author's personal experience; that is to say, it is principally confined to the regions bordering on Lake Tanganyika, Lake Nyassa, and the River Shire.

II.

What is the history of this region? It cannot be said to have fallen within the domain of written history until about forty years ago. It is barely possible, however, that the south end of Lake Nyassa, and it is certain that a portion of the River Shire, which flows from it, were known to the Portuguese explorers at the latter end of the sixteenth century. It is also pronounced possible that, when the Sabaeans and Arabs traded with southeast Africa during the first half of the Christian era, one or another of them may have penetrated into the countries around Lake Nyassa. With this proviso as to the possibility of such a journey, the author does not hesitate to aver that the Arabs did little more in regard to British Central Africa than to settle on the coast of the Indian Ocean and establish a trading depot at Sena on the lower Zambezi. The unwritten history of the region, the history which can be deduced from researches into languages, examinations of racial type, native traditions, and archæological researches, stretches back into the remoteness which veils the earlier movements of the human genus. To Sir H. H. Johnston it seems probable that three thousand years ago the distribution of races in Africa stood thus: The southern half of the continent, from a little north of the equator to the Cape of Good Hope, was very thinly populated with a low negroid type, of which the present Bushmen and Hottentots, and possibly the pigmy tribes of the Congo forests, are the descendants. The north and northeast of Africa, from Morocco to Egypt, and again from Egypt to Somaliland, were peopled mainly by the Hamites, a race akin in origin and language to the Semitic type, which latter our author believes to have been a higher development from a parent Hamitic stock. The Hamites themselves, however, obviously originated as a superior ascending variety of the Negritic species, from which basal stock had been derived in still earlier times the Bushman-Hottentot group, the languages of which, especially the Hottentot, are thought by some authorities to show remote affinities in structure to the Hamitic tongues. Westward of the Hamites, and representing an earlier divergence from the original Negritic group, were the true black negroes, more closely allied, perhaps, in origin to the Bushmen-Hottentots than to the more divergent Hamites. But 3,000 years ago, or about the time of the foundation of Carthage, our author is inclined to think that the true negroes were bounded in their distribution by the northern limits of the Sahara Desert, by the Atlantic Ocean on the west, by the great forests of the Congo Basin on the south, and by either the Nile Valley or the Abyssinian highlands on the east. Here and there different sections of the Negritic stock would mingle, producing races superior to the pure negro, like the Nubians, the Somalis and the Fulve, which dwell more or less on the border lands between the negro and the Hamite. When the true negroes invaded the southern half of the African continent, some two thousand years ago, they carried with them such culture, domestic animals and cultivated plants as they had derived indirectly from Egypt. Sir H. H. Johnston is of the opinion that, in Nyassa Land and along the shores of Lake Tanganyika, the history of negro culture retrograded until the coming of the Arab and the European. In one or two places on the shores of Lake Nyassa, old pottery has been dug up at a considerable depth below the surface, with trees of great girth and age growing over these remains. The pottery has been found imbedded in the sand of an ancient shore line of Nyassa, now covered by about five feet of humus, in which baobab trees are strongly rooted. From the approximate age of the trees, and from the time it should have taken to accumulate the vegetable soil, some of this pottery must have been five hundred or six hundred years old. One large pot thus discovered has been deposited by our author in the British Museum. The few remains exhibit evidences of greater skill and taste than is shown by the pottery produced at the present time in the same district. Researches founded on the study of languages, of religion, of traditions, and on the records of Portuguese explorers in West Africa seem to show that in the western part of the continent many of the negro States were in a far higher stage of culture 500 years ago than they are now. As regards the particular region officially called British Central Africa, our author does not believe that the Bantu negroes took possession of it earlier than about 1,000 years ago, when they drove out or absorbed the antecedent Bushmen race.

III.

With the doubtful excention of the visit of an occasional Arab slave dealer, these Bantu negroes, themselves comparatively newcomers, had no contact with the outer world until the arrival of the Portuguese on the east coast of Africa, which is the first definite landmark in the written history of this portion of the continent. Vasco da Gama, after rounding the Cape of Good Hope in 1495, stopped at the Arab settlements of Sofala (near the modern Beira) and Mozambique, and thence passed onward to Malindi (near Mombasa) and India. On his return from India he further explored the southeast coast of Africa, and in January, 1498 (probably from information given by Arab pilots), entered with his little fleet the Quelimane River, which was connected intermittently with the main Zambezi, and which, indeed, until the other day, was supposed to be the only certain means of reaching the Zambezi above its delta. This river he called the "River of Good Indications." The name Quelimane, which he applied to a small village twelve miles inland from the mouth of the river (the origin of the now important town of Quelimane, the capital of Portuguese Zambezia), seems to have been derived from the coast-Arabic term for interpreter, which was given to Vasco da Gama's guide and go-between.

For some five centuries before the Portuguese arrived, the Arabs of southern and eastern Arabia had formed or re-formed settlements along the east coast of Africa from Somaliland to Sofala. The word re-formed seems the more correct, because we are now practically certain that some races of Southern Arabia had founded ancient settlements, possibly in connection with the Phœnicians, in Southeastern Africa, not only on the east coast, but far in the interior of Mashonaland. These settlements were, it is presumed, destroyed by the advent of the Bantu tribes from the north, who were far more formidable enemies than the feeble Bushmen and Hottentots. It is pronounced possible that the natives of Arabia did not entirely give up their African trade, although they had to quit the interior and confine their settlements to the coast, but, whether or no there was a lull in Arab enterprise during the early part of the Christian era, there was a great revival in the tenth century, and, in the eleventh, a strong Arab kingdom was formed at Kilwa (midway between Zanzibar and Mozambique), which exercised a kind of suzerainty over the other settlements or Sultanates. Mosques were built at this period, the remains of which may be seen at the present day. The Arab settlements founded at this time in the direction of British Central Africa were chiefly established at Mozambique, Ngoji (Angoche), and Sena on the Zambezi. The Arabs, apparently, found no direct entrance into the Zambezi River, and preferred to use the Quelimane River, which could be easily navigated by their dhows. This, in exceptionally rainy seasons even at the present day, becomes connected with the Zambezi River by overflow creeks; and, possibly, some centuries ago was the most northern branch of the delta. The Arabs seem then to have gone up this river, past the village of Quelimane, and then to have travelled either by water when the river was full, or overland at other seasons, to Sena, a settlement not