

## O B I T E R

*HUMANITAS* is the comprehensive title of a new quarterly (from the University Union, Manchester 15; 2s. 6d.) which avoids all ambiguity its objects by stating them at length on an inside cover.

'At the present time the supreme need is for men to achieve some agreement concerning the ends they seek. The discussion of means (politics) should always be subordinated to this primary concern. Politics are today receiving such inordinate emphasis that there is dissension, often fratricidal, between men who are at one on fundamental issues. Conscious of the crisis in which we live, we believe that the unity of those who stand for supra-material values, for the whole person and for our inherited cultural tradition, is too vital to be squandered over secondary considerations. . . . The Universities should be bastions in the defence of this tradition—and something more. For in them tradition must be revitalised and developed, before being handed on. . . . It is the University *as a whole* that must face the task of reintegrating the material and spiritual aspects of society. *Humanitas* is offered as a modest instrument towards that end'.

Notable in the first number is an article, 'The Case Against the Universities' by Thomas Fish:

'If there be a principle of order operative in our Universities today, it could not be stated in medieval terms. If "integrity" be a mark of contemporary University discipline, it is not consciously derived from a sense of transcendent reality of which earthly beings are the effect and for which earthly beings are made. . . . It may be stated, not as a criticism but as a fact, that at first, and even at second view, the Universities we know present the appearance of an incoherent collection of courses with no consistency of direction other than the examinations in specific subjects, and the careers to which, it is hoped, success in those examinations may lead'.

\* \* \* \*

FRANCE, that land of pamphlets, is coming into her own again. The flood of manifestoes, reviews, and *cahiers* includes a powerful Catholic current, in which the publications of the Editions du Cerf are prominent. The June number of *La Vie Intellectuelle* has a number of articles on Existentialism, which, we gather, is already out of fashion:

'In France everyone smiles at the mention of it, and it is only abroad that anyone asks about books which, a few months ago, caused a great sensation. All the same we return to the subject, because it would be wrong to ignore, on account of its extrava-

gances, the renewal of philosophy that existentialism has brought about'.

An article on Gabriel Marcel, 'dialecticien de l'Espérance', is included, 'lest it be supposed that all existential thought is necessarily atheistic'.

A reprint, by the Editions du Rhône, of Théophile Delaporte's *Pamphlet contre les Catholiques de France* (1924) reminds one forcibly of the development that took place in French apologetic between the wars. The impatient invective has by this a faded air, so largely has French Catholic writing been freed from the respect for *les bien-pensants* which roused Bloy to such wrath. A series of pamphlets, *Les Lampes*, by Yves de Montheuil, Henry de Lubac, and others, reflects the uncompromising mood of the Resistance, when *Un Christianisme de Choc* (the title of the first pamphlet, by Louis Beirnaert) took on more than a figurative meaning.

\* \* \* \*

M. MARITAIN, concluding a series of articles on 'Education for the Good Life' in the American *Commonweal*, describes the new 'apocalyptic age':

'Unavoidably, we shall live in a new world in which, for better or for worse, tremendous new energies will be at work. The iron discipline of social organization, as required by the technological revolution and the intercommunication of all the peoples of the earth, will probably succeed the age of rugged, or rather, loose, individualism. If human civilization yields under the burden of matter and gives itself over to technocracy, state despotism, and scientific cultivation of a soulless, rational ape, it's all over with morality, as well as with art and contemplation and freedom. If the heaven and inspiration of the Gospel raises and quickens the whole mass, everything will be saved. . . . Human morals and ethics will revive on condition that human life be transpenetrated by the call of the hero, by the call of the saint, and, as Bergson put it, that mechanics and civilization, the working of practical reason and the human will, be given the *supplement d'âme* which they need, by mystics and the paschal fire of contemplative wisdom and love'.

\* \* \* \*

DAVID JONES considers the *recta ratio factibilium* in the current issue of *Wales*:

'"For whom do I write?" gets quickly involved in "Why?", and to state "why" any maker makes his works is not at all easy and soon takes us into deep water. Beyond the easily-seen reasons why this or that work is made and the commonplaces of supply and demand, there are the far deeper causes and the

more intricate ones. This applies to the whole creativeness of man and especially so at that level of it now called "literature and the arts". . . . The muse of history and the muse of song begin to knit their brows and so do the psychologists and the metaphysicians, even if the Marxists remain calm. On the whole I am inclined to say that one makes a writing "for" anyone anywhere at any time who may happen in some way to "delight" in it. For although in the making of any work it is the shape of the work itself which engrosses the maker, nevertheless some "audience", some "consumer" is presupposed because men make things for men'.

\* \* \* \*

SIR ALBERT HOWARD, concluding a letter to *The New English Weekly* (June 27) on the restoration of a derelict dairy-farm through 'organic' farming, writes:

'Two questions are constantly being put to me: (1) Why spend one hundred and fifty millions a year for the treatment and care of casualties, most of which need never have occurred? (2) Why not devote, to begin with, a tithe of this vast sum to the prevention of disease at the source by restoring and maintaining the fertility of the soil and then bringing its fresh products to the tables of our people? My invariable reply is: There can be no satisfactory answer to these questions till another disease of the modern world has been overcome—fragmentation—due to the well-meaning but superficial efforts of hordes of experts, each busy in his own narrow field. The spate of advice, often masquerading as Science, which results, prevents our rulers, and indeed ourselves from seeing the wood for the trees. We must either rule these specialists or allow them to ruin civilization'.

\* \* \* \*

EVE AND THE GRYPHON is the title of a new book by Fr Gerald Vann, O.P., shortly to be published by BLACKFRIARS at approximately 5s. It is a study of the vocation of woman, the word 'vocation' being taken in its fullest sense. Fr Vann takes Our Lady, St Monica, Dante's Beatrice, and St Catherine of Siena as types of women 'living in the world', and the Gryphon, as readers of Dante will remember, is the figure of Our Lord to whom Beatrice leads Dante. The frontispiece to the book is a reproduction of El Greco's 'Virgin', recently exhibited at the Exhibition of Greek Art in London. The title of the painting is arbitrary, for its subject, it appears, may well be the artist's own daughter.

ALDATE.