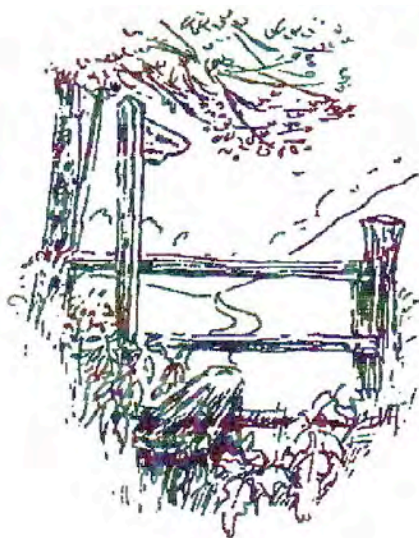


THE EDWARD THOMAS FELLOWSHIP



NEWSLETTER 75

February 2016

But it is probable that though his theory implied contempt for the usual mental processes in speech and writing, his own may not in practice have differed from them nearly so much and the difference was in his self-consciousness. Had he really composed according to his theory he would either have written only a hundredth part of what he did, or have committed suicide, or have been unintelligible.

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Please send material for the next Newsletter as a Word document in an email attachment. Thank you.

Eric Francis
(1925-2015)

For many years now, Fellowship events have been greatly enlivened by the genial presence of Eric Francis and his wife Joy, long-time Hampshire residents and devoted supporters of our walks, seminars, concerts and social gatherings. Eric sadly died in November, at the age of 90, and a memorial event took place at the Festival Hall in Petersfield on 1 February 2016, attended by a large number of relatives, friends and former colleagues. Eric, the son of a submariner, was born in Portsmouth and became a naval draftsman before training as a teacher and rising through the ranks to become a Headteacher, as well as member of the Education Committees of Portsmouth and Hampshire, and President of Hampshire National Union of Teachers. In a long retirement he travelled to many parts of the world with Joy, performed with choral and theatre groups, read voraciously, helped as a volunteer with care groups and the disabled, and was an enthusiastic Friend of the Dymock Poets. Eric will be much missed and we send Joy and the family our deepest sympathy.

Note from the Secretary

Subscriptions

The subscriptions for 2016 are now due. If members would like to move to payment by Standing Order for 2017 and beyond will they please contact me.

As a reminder for this and any other matters my contact details are

ianandbreeda@btinternet.com /07557 653691 / 01934 835357/ 21 Verlands,
Congresbury, Bristol, BS49 5BL

Communications

To keep members up to date there will be two possibly three news notes issued each year in addition to the main Journal. To help in controlling the cost of these and speeding up distribution, they are emailed to members who have given their addresses to the membership secretary. At present we have about 100 addresses. As with all other members' details these are never shared with any other organisation or other members. If you have not already done so, please would you give further consideration to doing this? By clear vote of the membership the main Journal will not be sent by email but continue to be printed and distributed by post.

Birthday walk and AGM

The 2016 Birthday walk will be on Sunday 6th March. 10:30 start. There will be morning and afternoon walks followed by the AGM in Steep church which will be at about 16:00 hrs. As explained in your latest news note (November 2015) lunch is not being provided but we have booked the village hall where you can eat your own meal. However drinks will be available. Details will be on our website soon.

Also there will be supper at the Jolly Drover, Liss on the evening on Saturday 5th March. You do need to book for this as numbers are limited to 20. Please contact me to book.

Committee Activities

The following is a brief summary of your committee's activities in 2015

Events organised; Birthday walk (March), erecting a plaque at 113, Cowley Road Oxford (May), Study day (June) and the weekend at Steep (September)

Edward Cawston Thomas Poetry prize was awarded to Jo Peters (2014) and to pupils of Steep Primary school in 2015.

Planning started for the weekend at Borwick Hall, Lancashire in autumn 2016 and continued for the visit to Agny in 2017.

Work continued with the representatives of Petersfield museum towards the establishment of the Tim Wilton Steer study centre which is to be part of the extension/rebuilding of the museum planned for 2017.

The committee was much diminished by the death of David Gervais and the resignation of Pauline Wills for personal reasons.

Eleven Book Reviews by Edward Thomas

Liverpool.

Painted by J. Hamilton Hay.

Described by Dixon Scott.

With Twenty-five Full-Page Illustrations in Colour.

(6s. net., Black.) x.1907

At first sight, this "Liverpool" might seem to belong to the same class as Mr. Symons's "Cities." Speaking, in his dedication, of certain continental cities, Mr. Symons says that they "have given up to me at least something of their souls, like the people I have loved and hated on my way through the world. At least they have given me what they had to give me: my part of their souls"; and in the chapters that follow we feel that their strength, yet also the weakness that denies them excellence, is due to the passivity of the writer; for he did not go to the cities, but waited for them to come to him, and they came, dressed, as it were, for the special occasion. Mr. Scott also tells us that he relies chiefly upon the private reports of his own senses. It may be so, but it is not long before we have a feeling that he has not "respected the sight of his eyes and the judgment of his senses"; that he has put himself into things rather than persuaded them to give up their secrets. His style is so rigid, mannered, and without delicacy that it would make Canterbury and York much like Liverpool. Yet it would be doing Mr. Scott an injustice not to point out that he has made efforts to approach Liverpool as it really is. Intellectually, he is willing to see everything and to conceal nothing. In reality, we can well believe that he dislikes the city, or likes it only during rare sunsets or when he is in certain languid moods. But with great courage he has gone out to the docks, the offices, the shops, the superior suburbs, the slums, and "envisaged" them and reported on

them. No man's view of things is to be disregarded. A man may write standing on his head, or with no clothes on, or in a soup tureen. Yet we should not be prepared to consider very seriously a long series of studies of modern life written in any of these conditions, unless they were quite natural and customary to the author. Now Mr. Scott is not eccentric, yet his relation to his subject does seem as a rule to be not more important than it would be if he had adopted one of these devices. We are disposed to think that in passages like the following we have an author whose concern with words is sufficiently active to promise results when he has forgotten it:

“It is a region, this seven-mile sequence of granite-lipped lagoons, which is invested, as may be supposed, with some conspicuous properties of romance; and yet its romance is never of just that quality which one might perhaps expect. It is not here, certainly, in spite of the coming and going of great ships, and the aching appeal of brine, that the mind is moved to any deep sense of kinship with the folk who wielded the river-weapon in old days. [...]”

“Garn away with yer!” says the man in the street, and there are a hundred and fifty pages like that, some of the writing pleasantly if trivially opulent, but usually giving us only such satisfaction as would the encasement of the city in sugar icing or breadcrumbs. It is an attempt to veneer the city with words – collector's words – and a successful one, so serious, consistent, and intense that we are led to expect much better things from Mr. Scott at last. Mr. Hay is an artist, and an accomplished one. His pictures of the docks, the streets, and the environs do not suggest that these are the things upon which he has set his heart at any time, yet he has honestly seen them, and his delicate and skilled gifts have in no case failed to make an interesting record, while the series as a whole is a desirable possession.

*Chester.***Described by Francis Duckworth**

(London. A. and C. Black, 7s. 6d. net.) v.1910

In aim and spirit Mr. Francis Duckworth's book on Chester is above the ordinary book of this class. He knows Chester, and the legends and literature connected with it, and he has obviously despised the thought of merely arranging these afresh after the hack writer's manner.

But whether he had a really strong and definite impulse to write on the subject may be doubted. Perhaps he had, and his ability was not equal to his will. At any rate, his achievement is not a remarkable one. It avoids the dulness of the guide-book and the vulgarity of the picturesque writer, but does not rise to an individuality of its own. It is the monument of an honest and spirited attempt.

[...]

he has given all of his attention to the earlier period of Chester's history when it was a compact and picturesque, an obviously individual entity, or appears so now that the irrelevant has been worn away by time. But no; there is no personality of Chester created here - only a courageous and very frank attempt to create one. There is no lack of subjects for a painter in Chester, and Mr. Compton has chosen twenty of the best. They are precise enough to make a fair record of the place, and they yet have attractiveness as pictures.

Oxford.

Described by Robert Peel and H. C. Minchin

with 100 illustrations in colour.

(London, Methuen, 6s.) 21.xi.1905

There are a hundred coloured illustrations in this six-shilling book – six of them from Ackermann’s “Oxford,” the rest by living artists, viz., Mr. W. Matthison, Mrs C. R. Walton, Mr. Walter S. S. Tyrwhitt, Mr. Bayzant, and Miss E. S. Cheesewright. It is wonderful. But it surprises us, that, by this time, artists or publishers should not have discovered a kind of picture peculiarly adapted to the illustration of small books. With few exceptions the pictures used for this purpose were never designed for it, or, if they were, they succeed very ill. They do not endure the necessary reduction in size.

Pictures in Little.

It would seem obvious that pictures three feet square, however good or bad, are not usually meant to be reduced to four inches square and to be looked at like a page of print. Nobody expands miniatures and hangs them high in a gallery; yet to do so would be as reasonable as to reduce pictures and put them within two feet of the eye. And these pictures of Oxford are at least as much open as their predecessors to this objection; Ackermann’s least of all, we would remark. They are not fine enough – their atmosphere is too large and suggestive – to be looked at in this way. But, comparatively, they are good. They are faithful and appropriate to a guide; and, to judge from the vogue of picture postcards, there must be millions whom the colours will not offend. All the well-known things in Oxford are here, and most purchasers will be too glad of the abundance to cavil.

The book is “not intended to compete with any existing guides to Oxford; it is not a guide-book in any formal or exhaustive sense.” The pictures are to reveal “the chief beauties”; the text is to explain the pictures and “indicate whatever is most interesting in connection with the scenes which they represent.” There is a chapter on “Oldest Oxford”; one on the University and its buildings; one on St. Mary’s; one

on the Cathedral; one on the streets of Oxford; one on the river; and one on each of the colleges. The authors do not aim high; their authorities are Alexander Chalmers, Mr. Lang, and Mr. J. Wells; and they tell again the story of Matilda's escape across the snow and the fight on St. Scholastica's Day, 1354. But what they set out to do they do more peacefully than could have been expected. We have tested their work and found it accurate, though, of course, incomplete, and not free from such gaps as will puzzle the stranger.

*

By Thames and Cotswold. Sketches of the Country.

By William Holden Hutton, B.D.

(Westminster: A Constable and Co. 10s. 6d. net) 17.xii.1903

Undoubtedly Mr. Hutton is a happy man. He says little about himself; he has no ecstasies; he has a way of recording his impressions as if they were those of someone else. [...] We have therefore the exhilarating spectacle of an author who is moved, not by dyspepsia, but by pure good nature, with perhaps a slight fear lest he should remain the only man who has not written a book about the country.

In order to illustrate the happiness of which we speak, we will not quote his more serious work, which should have been reserved for a local antiquarian paper. We prefer to give a specimen of his descriptions of the Cotswold country:-

[...]

No one could deny that a fellow of an Oxford college and a history lecturer, who can write like that, and print it, must be happy to the verge of ecstasy. One moment of melancholy would have compelled him to blot the whole passage. In another chapter he writes of "two Cotswolds statesmen," Falkland and Warren Hastings. Concerning the former he merely quotes from Clarendon; of the latter he writes a tender eulogy: but what he has to say is of no importance compared with the blithe indolence of his manner of saying it. [...] "Cirencester" attracted us, but we find only happiness in the pages about that fair, white town.

*

Bohemia in London.

By Arthur Ransome.

With illustrations by Fred Taylor.

(London: Chapman and Hall.) 3.x.1907

Mr. Ransome does not try to define Bohemia, Bohemians, or Bohemianism, which is a pity, because, though he would not have succeeded, his jovial digressiveness would have led him to some pleasant places on the way. He simply quotes the dictionary definitions – “A certain small country,” “the gypsy life,” “any disreputable life,” “the life of writers and painters” – and leaves us to discover his own view. But it may be taken for granted that by Bohemia he means the scattered communities and bright particular stars which all together make a country where persons connected in some way with literature and art lead, more or less intentionally, unconventional lives, and express by clothing, by manners, and even by ideas a revolt, essentially a transient one, against what is accepted by those about them. In his preliminary survey Mr. Ransome seems to make Villon the first Bohemian, though Alcibiades or Catullus or the authors of Mediæval student-songs would have done as well. He does not say whether he would count as a Bohemian every man of genius and half the men of character. Apparently not.

[...]

Mr. Ransome was very young, mad “to be a Villon” (he wrote verses), hungry to have “a life of his own.” He was a countryman born or by tradition, and, as is natural to a countryman, found the life of the suburbs no life at all, and so had to go to the real London. [...] Thereafter, in a pageant of summer, he met artists, actors, models, reviewers, poets, novelists, editors in studios, garrets, bar-parlours, and restaurants. He saw some things undoubtedly of real romantic beauty, as, for example, the little Gloucestershire girl, a model, who smoked his cigarettes and sang

two genuine Gloucestershire folk songs, of which the words – alas! not the melodies – are given here.

[...]

There are portraits of a painter, a novelist who drank sour milk, a poet who was a gypsy, and long and enthusiastic chapters on the life of Mr. Ransome, disguised and undisguised.

It is not a particularly beautiful or difficult or unusual or wicked life, and we are inclined to ask what would “*Scènes de la Vie de Bohème*” have been like if Schaudard had written it instead of Murger. It would not have been unlike “*Bohemia in London*.” It is not always that the writer’s genuine high spirits and delight reach the reader without any lowering of their temperature. He not only drinks his wine but he dips his pen in it. Yet the end is calm enough. Bohemia, he says, “is only a stage in a man’s life, except in the case of fools and a very few others,” and nothing so much disgusts him as the men “who live out their lives in Bohemia (to paraphrase Santayana’s definition of fanaticism), ‘redoubling their extravagances when they have forgotten their aim.’” He has flung his roses riotously with the throng, he says contentedly, and his life will be the happier for it. Some of the dew of that joyous morning has been left to sweeten that book that closes it.

*

Nature Books for Children,

by Arthur Ransome,

illustrated by Francis Crane.

(London, Treherne, five vols., 1s. 6d. each.) 20.xii.1906

Mr. Ransome is no naturalist, but a hearty lover of children and the open air. His books are full of genuine and delightful chatter between himself, the grown-up "Ogre," and a boy and a girl, the "Imp" and the "Elf." It is not easy to point to any specially great passages, nor even to make a list of the writer's virtues, but at the end of each book we have a distinct feeling that we have been in the company of children and an author who got on very well together.

[...]

Each chapter is the same inconsequent hodge-podge that ordinary jolly life is, except that the children and even the young "unclish" author are continually amusing and being amused. These books, by the way, imply an utter revolt from the sublimity of condescension which used always to be adopted towards children in print. The many bright illustrations are superficially ridiculous on account of their extravagant colours and unlife-like details; for example, the artist has not the least notion of what a rabbit is like. But we have come round to like them as possibly representing a child's crude emphatic view of Nature; an expressive child might have drawn and painted them; children like them and are delighted to correct the inaccuracies.

Stories by Gustave Flaubert,
with introduction by Arthur Ransome.

(London, Jack, 1s.) 6.viii.1910

These "Stories by Flaubert" are translated from "Trois Contes." They are among the best of all short stories; perhaps "Un Cœur Simple" is the very best. Nor is any of Flaubert's work better suited for translation into English, and Mr. Frederic Whyte's English is not the less readable for being unlike Flaubert's French. What that was like Mr. Arthur Ransome does not exactly discuss in his excellent introduction, though it is chiefly about Flaubert's style, and the man as martyr to the style. It might be said of Flaubert that the man was the style.

[...]

Flaubert's difficulty arose not from the attempt to say what he thought, but from the attempt to say what he believed himself to have thought. His theory implies a permanence and firmness in the impressions and in the observing faculty which do not exist in ordinary persons, and possibly did not exist in himself.

But it is probable that though his theory implied contempt for the usual mental processes in speech and writing, his own may not in practice have differed from them nearly so much and the difference was in his self-consciousness. Had he really composed according to his theory he would either have written only a hundredth part of what he did, or have committed suicide, or have been unintelligible.

The Novels and Stories of Ivan Turgenieff
Translated from the Russian by Isabel F. Hapgood,
with an introduction by Henry James
 (London, Dent, 16 volumes, £4 16s. net.) 13.xii.1905

This new translation of Turgenieff has been carefully prepared. Every story that we have tested has been pleasant to read, and the translator's notes are unobtrusive and adequate. Here and there we have found a vague expression, and some words – probably American – which mean nothing to us, and a few which are inaccurate. We cannot say that the translations are entirely free from an uncomfortable translator's manner; they are less free than Mrs. Garnett's, we think. The illustrations, one to a volume, are good, if not obviously necessary. But altogether the volumes are worthy and likely to do Turgenieff's fame some good.

As One Reflects.

In reading Turgenieff, as in reading some other great writers, it often happens that we reflect on the very nature of our satisfaction in reading with no desire for information; or rather, it does not happen, but it is inevitable. We ask ourselves by what force we have been compelled to take such pleasure in the company of fictitious persons, some of them not at all likely to have attracted us in the flesh. [...] The habit of reading is a more common and developed one in most men than the habit of looking at life. But that does not entirely answer our questioning. For Turgenieff gives no illusions. He is a great Russian, as well as a great man; but there is very little strangeness in his atmosphere, and a modern Englishman is never in the unknown with him. Not his matter, nor his manner, nor his medium, creates an illusion like Shakespeare's, or Chateaubriand's, or Mr. Hardy's. No; the explanation is the simple and obvious one; it is that his knowledge is profound and his choice fine, and that, therefore, behind all the stories we apprehend more or less clearly the great character of Turgenieff himself.

Perhaps Impersonal.

It is usual to speak of him as an impersonal writer; if we compare him with Mr. Meredith, perhaps he is. Not more than once or twice in his work are we sure that he is having his own way with the events which he describes. His conclusions about life, except the great ones – as that not health, nor power, nor beauty, nor courage, nor honesty, is bound to succeed – are rarely visible. When he generalises, he always surprises us, or leaves us in uncertainty, as when he speaks of a solitary bachelor entering –

that confused, twilight period, the period of regrets which resemble hopes, of hopes which resemble regrets, when youth is gone, and old age has not come.

He prefers to give us the material, and to laugh, as life does, at maxims and epitomes. The ripest generalisations are apt to become prejudices, even when they cannot be traced to prejudices. Turgenieff is never influenced by them. We feel constantly that he would not answer a general question about life. He would be likely to say that lack of character is terrible – and so is character. But he is like nature. Apparently he has no preferences, except for what is real, if that can be discovered. As a rule, to criticise him is to criticise the way of things. We come to admit that “things happen so.” But this is not to prove him impersonal so much as to announce the greatness of his personality. Even if we deny him sympathy, we cannot deny him personality.

[...]

No Time to be Just.

Time after time he rebukes the ordinary man who judges by prejudices or according to traditional romantic types, and plainly says that he chooses to make this or that man his hero and others subordinate, simply because he has not time to be just to all. He would not willingly pass any one by. He sends us continually out into the fields and streets to men and women, reminding us that not long ago the

ordinary man was discovered, and that he is great. We can hardly believe that a writer who went along with life with equal steps can often have saved his readers the trouble of living, as some others do; he urges us to live and to see.

Everyone who has tried to write, and nearly every one who has read, knows that the writing which is tolerable is not a simple record of things that have happened or might have happened. We all have some notions of the necessity for "style," for arrangement, and so on. But Turgenieff's writing seems constantly to assert that everything human has its value and charm, that poetry is only a kind of transcription, that events, when properly seen carry their own special savour and significance. He seems to be setting down life and allowing it to exhale its own poetry, which we accept or reject according to our capacity.

He is surely not arranging at all. He has not set out to produce certain effects; but he has had to record a number of events, and behold! in the end, each sequence produces its own effect without any of the labels, the insistence, or the paraphernalia of intentions, of the majority of writers. Take, for example, that description of a summer night in the "Memoirs of a Sportsman". The chapter is called "Byezhin Meadow," and it relates how the sportsman loses his way, comes upon a group of boys who sat round a fire and herded horses, and spends the night within hearing of their conversation. The reader never detects an intention in the narrative. There is no effort, no persuasion towards a certain mood. It appears not to differ essentially from a practical man's report; no sentiment obtrudes. Yet, when it is finished, even if we neglect the folklore and the portraiture, that night steals into the brain, rich in magic and life, and takes an important place there which very few of our own memories achieve. It seldom occurs to us that Turgenieff is imaginative while we are reading him, because it is clear that his observation is supreme. There is no greater praise to be given to an imaginative writer than that.

Artemis to Actæon, and other Verse.

By Edith Wharton

(Macmillan. 4s. 6d. net.) 14.vi.08

Poems and Verses.

We do not remember seeing any verses by Miss Edith Wharton before, and her "Artemis to Actæon, and other Verse" certainly bears on it some of the marks we should expect from an experiment. She has practically no natural feeling for verse, but she respects the form and does her best to be worthy of it by aiming at a concentration next to impossible in prose. But this effort of hers is almost as painful as other verse writers' facility and that notwithstanding that she always has something to say and has the colour of a personality behind it. The most obvious effect is upon her vocabulary. This is a curious compound of incongruities and seldom for more than a few lines at a time is the same tone maintained. Hundreds of her words do not blend with their company at all and express little but effort. They are the compliments which this gifted writer pays to poetry, as when Vesalius the anatomist speaks -

But mine the ductile soul
That wears the livery of circumstance
And hangs obsequious on its suzerain's eye,

where "suzerain" is explained by "sovereign" four lines below, or when "An Autumn Sunset" is swallowed up in words like these -

Leaguered in fire
The wild black promontories of the coast extend
Their savage silhouettes;

[...]

Writing like that cannot produce any artistic effect, as word after word and image after image shatters whatever was forming in the mind. This defect ruins a fine poem in "Moonrise over Tyringham." The writer's method seems to be to labour the details and let the whole take care of itself. Despite these faults, "Survival," "Life," and "Margaret of Cortona," and "Versalius at Zante" are very well worth wrestling with, while "The One Brief," a sonnet is free from them and is admirable.

*

Fraternity.

By John Galsworthy.

(6s. Heinemann.) v.1909

In "Fraternity" we get, as we are sure of getting from Mr. Galsworthy, a book of admirable form and of a grave intellectual beauty. [...] Excellently clear and proportioned is the total picture painted of Kensington by day and by night: the luxurious houses, the big shops, the passing crowd, the squalid streets, the gardens delicately fair in spring, the sky overhead, the wind blowing through the world.

[...]

The book is like an elaboration of one of Mr. Galsworthy's masterly studies in "A Commentary." They were personifications rather than character studies. In "Fraternity" there are no characters. Mr. Galsworthy touches nobody in the middle class without belittling them. In real life these "amateur" people, whose nerves of action are atrophied, are powerless and indefinite enough; but Mr. Galsworthy has all but dissolved them into molluscs in his irony. In a day or two we forget them and remember only that they were pretty virtuous and well-intentioned, intelligent

persons, and that one of them collected coins and another wore Harris tweed. That is inevitable; he is interested not in persons, but in ideas and the state of society. In a few weeks we shall remember only that they were all helpless, and that Kensington is a district of hell. In a year we shall perhaps remember Mr. Galsworthy's precise and thrifty style and his sad interest in humanity, and perhaps a whiff of spring in Kensington Gardens or a saying of old Mr. Stone's or the picture of Hilary standing by while the model was buying herself a complete new set of clothes at his expense.

The author regards the class he chooses to write about most as half dead. His book is a deathly book; untrue, but too mildly untrue to be of much value as satire. Considering Mr. Galsworthy's rare talent and the ineffectiveness of this book, we cannot but conclude that his method is astray.

*

Briton and Tory.

"Musings without Method." A Record of 1900-1901.

By "Annalist."

(London: Blackwoods, 7s. 6d.) 16.xii.1902

There is much method in the musings of the clever and unrelenting Tory who is known as "Annalist." His subjects are always men and books, events and questions, of the day. He is incapable of digressing when he has once set out. Modesty, or a too serious seriousness, forbids his personality to appear. Running through the whole book is a backbone of Toryism, alternately impressive, cruel, delightful, and absurd. Indeed we have seen no book that so fully and pleasantly explicates what a German might call "the idea of a Tory." That may be called its method or mission. From one point of view it might have been entitled, *The Compleat Tory*. He is a patriot, and despises all patriots who are not as he is.

Dancing girls with the Union Jack “emblazoned on their petticoats” fill him with disgust; likewise those patriots of Fleet-street, whose journals he does not habitually read. Being a patriot, he finds that the French are “lovers, of false news,” as they were in Caesar’s time, ill-mannered, spiteful, and so far as the truth is concerned they are “blind-eyed,” which is not so much a vice as “a moral obliquity of vision.” He pours a stern and abundant pity upon this infelicity of our neighbours. The French mob, of course, is not to be mentioned in the same breath with the English crowd and its “reasoning admiration.” Yet he admits that “no country in the world is so profoundly and so justly satisfied with its power of entertainment.” He is of opinion that Napoleon was a great man, and that Radicals should think so perplexed and annoys him. For the French genius for order he has unbounded admiration. The Théâtre Français, again, rouses him to a sane and glowing eloquence. “It never ceases,” he says, “to recall to the world a glorious past, of which it is still and will ever be mindful.” How different, he remarks, is this French stage from the English, with its astounding and yet imperfect realism, its impertinent “stars,” and “that absurd business called *mise-en-scène*”; and its authors at the feet of actor and upholsterer. Everywhere, as in the case of the house of Molière, he upholds tradition, and never more powerfully than in his defence of Universities against encroachment. Oxford and Cambridge seem to him to send out “men able to master most situations into which they may be thrust.” [...] He has small regard for such innovations as the school of English literature at Oxford; literature is unteachable, and even critics are born, not made. Modern languages at the Universities – “let me not think on’t.” Of a piece with this view is his detestation of all that is merely “new and shoddy and American,” whether millionaires – horses bred merely to win races – jockeys perched like *chignons* on those horses – professional oarsmen and cricketers – or those who covet Marble Hill. The masses, we need hardly say, are contemptible, except when they are cheering a general or a prince. Tolstoy is a fanatic because he finds the peasant admirable. Our democracy is a failure because it has produced the war correspondent and the magazines for what is bright, chatty and unnecessary. As for anarchists, he is as blood-thirsty at the thought of them, as they at the thought of a king. He talks of their “trifling grievance,” and has never understood the force of the hate which a possibly morbid person may feel for the

crowns and moneybags that seem to crush the world. But he is well-pleased with the "order and decency, honour and honesty" which he finds unalloyed in the letters of Chesterfield.

As a rule, his judgment in literary matters is fine and liberal. He has admirable passages on Maeterlinck, FitzGerald, and R. A. M. Stevenson. And he is nowhere better than where he praises the late T. E. Brown, Clifton master, scholar, letter-writer, and poet, so well edited some years ago by Mr. Sidney Irwin, also of Clifton, who shared with the poet many of his most fascinating gifts. On the subject of Liberals, he is always entertaining. "The sanguine, flat eye of the Radical," he says, speaking of the experiences of canvassers, "is as easily recognised as his slightly-parted lips or his weak chin"; so different from the Tory with his "cleaner intelligence." He is never tired of proving Mr. Gladstone a callous, blundering rhetorician; Lord Rosebery seems to him, as he seemed to an Eton master forty years ago, "one of those who like the palm without the dust." Yet he admits that Hazlitt, a Radical, had not a sanguine, flat eye, and when he says of that essayist that he "looked on all things with the eye of a partisan" we may apply the words to himself. The number of Liberals who will read his book with delight is a sufficient rebuke to the less courteous elements in the author's Toryism. The most of the other elements, stripped of that condescension and scorn of criticism which make them Tory, will go very easily into a Liberal's knapsack and leave room for many things which will never honour the musings of "Annalist."

Other News

Little Toller's edition of *In Pursuit of Spring* with an introduction by Alexandra Harris will be published in March 2016. It includes a number of very interesting photographs that might have been taken by Edward Thomas – some of these photographs have been published before (see the 1997 Carcanet *Under Storm's Wing*). All of the photographs can be seen at Rob Hudson's photography blog: <http://robhudsonphotography.blogspot.co.uk/search/label/Edward%20Thomas>

Cardiff University will be hosting an Edward Thomas conference on April 19-21, 2017. Edna Longley and Lucy Newlyn will be plenary speakers

The Université d'Artois will be hosting an Edward Thomas conference, 'Edward Thomas 1878-1917: The Arras Conference', 6-7 April 2017. Deadline for proposals: 15 April 2016.

Bloomsbury's Outsider: A Life of David Garnett by Sarah Knights will be published in paperback in May.

Simon Heffer wrote an article for *The Telegraph* in February. Entitled 'Edward Thomas: The Father of Modern Landscape-Writing', it focused on the prose – 'most of his finest poetry was written in prose'.

Robert Macfarlane's Orphans, a homage to two writers, Thomas and Macfarlane, by Martin Johnson, has been published by Patrician Press at £7.50. 48pp.

Adam Phillips reviewed *Edward Thomas: From Adlestrop to Arras* in the *London Review of Books* on 5 November 2015 (volume 37, number 21).

Arthur Ransome and Edward Thomas, Extracts from a Letter

In Newsletter 71, January 2014, Richard Emeny reproduced an extract from a letter written by Myfanwy in September 2002 describing her stay at the Ransome's home in early 1917. It was on this occasion that Myfanwy last saw her father before he embarked for France. The photograph overleaf was taken during that stay. It shows, from left to right, Tabitha Ransome, her mother Ivy, Arthur Ransome's first wife, and Myfanwy in the snowy garden at Manor Farm, Hatch in Wiltshire. I suspect that the photograph was probably taken by the Ransome's maid, Kitty Gurd, but have no evidence for this.

This photograph is in the Ransome collection at Leeds University (*Ref: Brotherton Collection / Ransome / Photographs / FB1 / 1*) and is reproduced here by kind permission of the Arthur Ransome Literary Estate, who hold the copyright of the image.

Malcolm Morrison

