

DRAMA OF THE NAPOLEONIC WARS



REVIEWING the book just issued by Thomas Hardy, "The Dynasts: A Drama of the Napoleonic Wars," the London Times says:

In war time the stationers' shops or newspaper offices show in their windows large maps stuck with little flags to mark the advance or retreat of the opposing forces. As if from a great height, the passing pedestrian looks down on a vast stretch of country, and he may actually see a hand appear and move a little flag an inch forward or half an inch backward. He is probably glad or sorry, according as the change indicates success or failure for the side which has his sympathies; but his head is more engaged than his heart. Then he turns away, to buy an evening paper for the details of the little flag's movements, and as he reads it the mention of a name he knows or a snatch of descriptive writing bears in upon him with a rush the remembrance that these are not little flags at all, but bodies of men. Each little flag stands for how many hundreds or thousands of sentient men, every one of them with hands as large and as compact of flesh and blood as the hand that moved the little flag so easily. And that swift inch or half-inch forward or backward means how many days and nights of toil and terror, death and agony, awful din and more awful silence. It is some hours before he can soar again to the height from which the armies become little flags; and then he can only do it by forgetting that armies are composed of men.

Mr. Hardy at once soars and remembers. He has brought us now to the close of his great drama of the Napoleonic wars; and, soaring so high as we may above the complete work for a bird's eye view, we see nothing more prominent in this remarkable achievement than his success in unifying what for our passing pedestrian must remain two different points of vision. He can see Napoleon's Russian army as

A dun-piled caterpillar
Shuffling its length in painful heaves along;
but he sees that the heaves are painful, and he remembers that the caterpillar is composed of men, "tattered men like skeletons," men with "icicles dangling from their hair that clink like glass-lustres as they walk," men who sob like children or burst into raving songs of madness when they learn that their Emperor has deserted them—till the frost stills them into eternal silence as they crouch exhausted round

their dying fire. He sees the field of Waterloo like our map with the little flags on it; but he overhears Napoleon's thoughts as he stands in the wood of Bossu alone after all is over, Marie Louise's sobs and the Prince Regent's oaths are as loud in his ears as the cannon of Leipzig. And this unity is not achieved by sudden soarings and swoonings. In spite of the language of the stage-directions ("the point of vision changes," and so forth), we are not conscious of being snatched hither and thither, up and down; and the eye, as it were, is not wearied by sudden alterations of focus. The vision of the mind and the vision of the heart are unified. We see little flags and men at once, and the unity embraces not only the warriors but the passing pedestrian himself—all who are affected by the events.

The secret lies in Mr. Hardy's choice of Phantom Intelligences—Spirits of the Years, of the Pities, of Rumor, and others—as his chorus, the spectators through whose senses he shall follow the story of his drama. But it is one thing to choose a point of view, another to get to it, and yet another to keep it; and first to have risen to such a point as this and then to have held to it throughout the long and crowded work appears to us an intellectual feat of rare worth and power. From these dizzy heights we see armies like caterpillars; but the supernatural sensibility with which our author endows us for the time enables us to see also the minutest workings of the brain and the heart of every man in every army. After reading the first part of the drama we hazarded a guess that the complete work would prove to be a drama, not of men, but of nations. The guess was at once too wide and too narrow. The Dynasts is a drama not of nations only, but of human life; it is also a drama of individual persons. And in the drama of human life, according to Mr. Hardy's philosophic theory, there is a sense in which Napoleon's valet and the rustic who came to Casterbridge to see Boney burned are as important, and as unimportant, as Napoleon himself. Each and all are the puppets of the blind, senseless, Immanent Will, the

Will that wills above the will of each,
Yet but the will of all conjunctively.
It matters not that of all the characters, named and nameless, in the drama Napoleon alone is conscious of being a puppet in the control of that Will. Of the rest, each one contributes his share without knowing it; and each one, therefore, by a strange perversion, as it might seem, wins dignity and being, not their opposites.

It was natural, perhaps—it was certainly pardonable—to protest, earlier in our acquaintance with "The Dynasts," that dramatic interest, human interest, was likely to suffer from that apparently deadening notion of the blind, senseless, purposeless force ruling these men and kingdoms. It was not so clear then as it is now that this philosophic notion was to be the great bond of unity between all the myriad scenes and persons of the drama. Moreover, in this last volume, more completely than in its predecessor, Mr. Hardy has answered that objection in another way. Not only are the doings more exciting—that was only to be expected as the drama drew to a close and we came to Moscow, Leipzig, Elba, and Waterloo, the pity and the horror and the humor of those doings are more concentrated and more clearly exhibited. The little scene of the French flight after Vitoria, racy droll; Napoleon at Fontainebleau after Leipzig; the Prince of Wales worried by the Princess at the opera; the women's camp near Waterloo—all are full of that firm and vivid truth of poor humanity which has long been associated with the name of Thomas Hardy. And of all the written descriptions and pictures of the retreat from Moscow is there one that contains anything so tremendous as this little passage?—

ANGEL I.
Harassed, it treads the trail by which it came,
To Borodino, field of bloodshot fame,
Whence stare unburied horrors beyond name!
ANGEL II.
And so and thus it nears Smolensko's walls,
And, stayed its hunger, starts anew its crawl,
Till floats down one white morse, which appeals
What has floated down from the sky upon the
Army is a flake of snow.

The characterization, too, is wonderfully distinct for a drama in which the men and women speak only in snatches and are scarcely described at all. When Mr. Bernard Shaw wishes his readers to understand a character, he prints his history, his appearance, and his views on life in a stage-direction. Mr. Hardy does not; yet, if we wished to pick a character in the drama whose personal flavor and ways are not absolutely clear, we could only hit on Napoleon. True, we see Napoleon taking snuff and sipping grog, Napoleon when *pittuita molesta est*, Napoleon humming tunes; but not even Mr. Hardy has succeeded in seeing Napoleon without, as well as with, his destiny and catching him as a mere man. But with the others the case is different. There are, of course, thanks to the form the author has adopted, a score of people, generals, aides, and others, who must depend upon their relation to the Immanent Will for their identity; but

Wellington is no figurehead, no portrait d'apparat, and Picton, Marie Louise, all the persons for whom space allowed and dramatic need demanded character, even down to the nameless mother of a nameless girl who fell in love at the Duchess of Brunswick's ball, and the Vicar of Durnover who has only to speak twice and to spit twice, are as roundly human as could be. There is one unquotable remark of Wellington's after Vitoria which seems to bring the whole man before us in a flash; and what of a little touch like this?

Wellington goes in the direction of the hussars with Uxbridge. A cannon-shot hies past.
UXBRIDGE (starting).
I have lost my leg, by God!

WELLINGTON.
By God, and have you! I felt the wind o' the shot.
Could any two lines give us so much of Wellington and of war? These men may be the puppets of the Immanent Will, but they are men for all that, and their joys and sorrows rouse our sympathy none the less because the Will is purposeless. Mr. Hardy is justified. At the same time, it is interesting to note that he makes things as easy as possible for those to whom the Immanent Will is a nightmare. He may jeer with the Spirit Ironic; with the Spirit of the Years he may be coldly impartial; but the Pities have the last word. Through them, all along, we have suffered with the sufferers; with them we are encouraged—or, at least, allowed—to hope.

But—a stirring thrills the air
Like the sounds of joyance there
That the rages
Of the ages
Shall be cancelled, and deliverance offered from the
darts that were.
Consciousness the Will informing, till it fashions all
things fair!

So ends The Dynasts; and whether the author—the Immanent Hardy—agrees with the Pities or not, we are profoundly grateful to the dramatist who chooses that note—the only tolerable, the inevitably right note—on which to close his great work of art.

A great work of art—the title cannot be denied to The Dynasts; yet it is given under compulsion. By all the rules the enterprise should have been a colossal failure. The dramatic form is the most difficult to read; it is not meant to be read. And when it is used as in The Dynasts—scraps of dialogue in rugged, sometimes bald; sometimes stiffly conventional blank verse interspersed with long and often complicated descriptions! In prose, the scene abruptly shifted from Salamanca to Moscow, from Casterbridge to the Tuilleries; the characters now armies and now men, and the whole cut up by commentative songs, ballads,

odes, and what not, in the kingdoms of the air—the effort to read it ought to be as irritatingly "jumpy" to the mind as the several kinds of print sometimes make it to the eye. By all the rules The Dynasts should be chaos, a drama impossible to act (that, indeed, it remains), a book impossible to read. Perusal of the three volumes together proves it a great work of art, unified by its philosophic conception, its vision, and its workmanship, in which poetry constantly keeps "breaking in" through the businesslike directness of both verse and prose. It would be too much to say that The Dynasts succeeds in spite of its form; but it is true that the daring which chose that form is only equalled by the skill and mental supremacy which have brought it to success. Looking back now, it is difficult to see in what other form Mr. Hardy could have done what he set out to do. There were so many requisites—swiftness, spaciousness, vividness, compression, intensity, comprehensiveness, shock, surprise—that no form of narrative, whether in prose or in verse, could have encompassed them all. The only way, as Mr. Hardy has convinced us, was to make a large demand upon the reader; to ask him to imagine himself a spectator, using his eyes on certain things shown him and all the knowledge and thought at his service to fill in and connect the pictures. It is a large demand—there is no denying that. The Dynasts is not an easy book to read; it is not a book to read at all without a previous working knowledge of the story it tells (only a very confused idea of the action of Waterloo will be gained from these packed yet vivid stage-directions), nor without a willingness on the reader's part to bring all he has to the task. If he does so, he will be rewarded. He will learn that through intellectual and emotional mastery of his subject, and especially through that commanding unification of what in the average man are two points of view, Mr. Hardy has achieved a work of art by doing violence to a form, and has sublimated a vast and infinitely various material into a single shapely whole. For a like achievement we can only go back to one thing—the historical plays of Shakespeare, where great and small are, as here, seen with a single eye, and where, as here, the common life of common humanity is made a part of the progress of history.

The thing has been done. Could it be done again? We would advise no lesser mind to try. And by which would Mr. Hardy's fame and his readers' good have won the greater increase—The Dynasts, or the three novels which might have taken its place? Speculation is fruitless; and at least we have got The Dynasts.

Powers and the Balkans

THE Berlin correspondent of the London Times writes as follows:

A considerable section of the German Press—consisting, however, of journals whose attitude cannot compromise the Government—is making a great fuss over the railway question in the Balkans, and is endeavoring to convey, by direct assertion or by insinuation, the impression that an entirely new grouping of the Powers has been told me afresh on unimpeachable authorities of Great Britain and Austria-Hungary are concerned, there is not a vestige of truth in these innuendoes. Your Vienna correspondent could doubtless at any moment confirm what is well known in Berlin and what has been effected or attempted. So far as the theory, that the traditional relations of cordial friendship between London and Vienna are unimpaired. There is, therefore, no basis for the attempt of the *Vossische Zeitung* to read Austria-Hungary a lesson upon the mutability of human affairs and to persuade the Austrians and the Hungarians that the attitude of Great Britain towards them has undergone a change, in connection, "perhaps with the feelings of a section of the British people towards Germany." There is no section of the British people which is animated by unfriendly sentiments towards Germany. The relations of the British and German governments are friendly, and have in the course of recent years been placed upon a far sounder basis than ever before. But even if the situation were different in this respect, the political and national friendship between Great Britain and Austria-Hungary is not dependent upon Anglo-German relations. There would be more truth in the converse proposition, since Austro-British friendship was anterior in date to the establishment of the present German empire, and has undergone none of the vicissitudes through which the relations of Great Britain with various other Powers have passed.

It is easy to see why the Berlin organ of the German parliamentary bloc indulges in speculations of this character. It says this evening, for example:—

"There may have been here and there in Austria-Hungary an inclination to under-estimate the value of the alliance with Germany. Especially after Algeiras, the opinion began to be entertained in isolated quarters that the real advantage of the alliance was on the German side. Many a politician on the Danube took to boasting that Austria-Hungary enjoyed the best relations with England and, also with France, and that it was possible to reckon upon the permanence of these relations. The recent discussions on the Sanjak railway have shown that it is of the highest importance for the Hapsburg Monarchy to have Germany behind it. It will be recognized that the alliance,

now as in 1879, serves the interests of the two Powers in equal measure. Herein its strength has hitherto lain, and herein also lies the guarantee that the alliance will endure, and that it will give proof of its solidity whatever may be the attitude of the other Great Powers, and however they may be grouped."

The lesson is enforced by reminiscences which are adduced on the authority of Prince Bismarck with regard to the origin of the Austro-German alliance. Bismarck told the Reichstag in 1883 that shortly after the Congress and Treaty of Berlin, Russia had exerted herself to the utmost to prevent the Austrian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in accordance with the terms of the Berlin Treaty. The Russian government, according to Bismarck, even attempted to compel Germany to intervene actively against Austria-Hungary, and the Russian pressure reached the point of "actual menaces of war from the most competent quarter." "That," continued Prince Bismarck, "was the origin of our treaty with Austria." It was on September 8, 1879, that the Austrians marched into Novi Bazar; on September 11 Prince Gortchakoff exhorted the French to be prepared; on September 21 Prince Bismarck arrived in Vienna; and the Austro-German alliance was signed on October 7 of the same year.

This whole argument, whatever may be its historical basis—and that basis might repay examination from more than one point of view—is seriously weakened in its bearings on the question of the day by the fact that Austria-Hungary has repudiated all political designs in connection with the project of a railway to connect her Bosnian system with the existing main line to Salonika at Mitrovitza. In the Austrian view the construction of this comparatively short connecting section is as natural as it would have been to connect Newcastle and Berwick if the lines from the north and the south had respectively stopped at these places. The railway system of Austria in the Balkans would remain a mere torso if the projected connection were not effected, and its economic value would be seriously impaired after all the sacrifices which have been made with such conspicuous success for the development of the occupied provinces.

With regard to the Danube and Adriatic scheme, I am assured that its realization would be welcomed by Austria-Hungary, but also by Germany. It remains to be seen what support this scheme will receive from Austria, and more especially from Germany, if it is submitted to the Sultan for his approval. In the meantime I hear that in certain important quarters there is considerable scepticism with regard to the existence of any serious intention on the part of Russia to bring forward the project in a practical form. Serbia is known to be

keenly interested in it, but it need hardly be said that the scheme would have little chance of realization if it were backed at Constantinople by the unsupported diplomacy of the Serbian government. It has been suggested that the transverse Balkan railway would be a bar to the development of what are commonly described as German "commercial interests" in a south-easterly direction. This suggestion is vigorously repudiated, and it is maintained that there is absolutely no divergence between the views of Germany and Austria-Hungary with regard to the economic and political bearings of a project which primarily concerns Austrian, Balkan, and Russian interests, and in the discussion of which German diplomacy would not have any direct voice.

A REMARKABLE BLAST

One of the methods of quarrying granite is to dislodge a huge sheet from the surface of the formation through the medium of a powder mine. A large perpendicular shaft is first blasted to a depth of about thirty feet. At the bottom of this and radiating horizontally, like the spokes of a huge wheel, long holes are drilled.

The extremities of these holes, says Popular Mechanics, are then shot with light charges of dynamite in order to create chambers large enough to receive large quantities of black powder. This takes weeks of ever-increasing charges.

Then the final charge is loaded. The now huge chambers at the extremities of the spokes are packed with hundreds of pounds of powder, numerous electric wires attached, and the whole mine tamped with fine material. A misty roar and rumble in the bowels of the earth and the huge sheet is detached from the ledge.

FIGHTING LIGHTNING

Much trouble has been experienced with lightning on the power transmission lines, carried on steel towers, in the States of Michoacan and Guanajuato, Mexico, but recently the difficulty has been largely overcome by the use of lightning rods and the device of suspending a steel cable above the transmission lines, each cable being brought to earth at each tower. Before these means of diverting the lightning were employed, the insulators were often bored with holes an inch in diameter by bolts of lightning. The shielding cable is regarded as affording much more protection than the lightning rods.

Miss Caustique—You evidently have a pleasant disposition, Mr. Sapleigh. At least you seem to be easily pleased.

Sapleigh—Why do you—aw—think I am—aw—easily pleased?

Miss Caustique—By the way in which you laugh at some of your own remarks.

The Great Task of Canada

THE 20th century belongs to Canada. To whom will Canada belong at the close of the century?

Such was the question of Rev. Dr. Young in the course of his sermon at St. James Methodist Church, and it was asked in no vein of political speculation, but as a reminder that the forces at work in building the national character today will largely determine the calibre of future generations, says the Montreal Gazette.

The texts were Psalm 115, 16, and Psalm 24, 1, which in the Revised Version read: "The heavens are the heavens of the Lord, but the earth shall be given to the children of men."

These passages, said the preacher, served to emphasize first the greatness and glory of God, as suggested by the thought of that firmament which is beyond mankind's control, and secondly, man's duty and responsibility in developing the earth, which had been given to him wherein to exercise his faculties. God had given man dominion over the earth and its resources, as stated in the account of the creation, but had never given over the earth wholly to man. It was still God's earth, wherein man was but the agent, intended to fulfil the divine purpose. Man's dominion over the earth was not an ownership, but a stewardship. Men awakened slowly but surely to a sense of the power that was theirs. Man, while he might be said in a sense to be

"An infant crying in the night,
An infant crying for the light,
And with no language but a cry."

was also sovereign in his power to develop the resources of the earth. Sometimes the realization of this power brought a thought like that of the ancient monarch, who said: "Is not this Babylon which I have builded?" Men thus became proud and arrogant.

On the other hand was the sense of stewardship, by which man felt that he was bound rightly to use the gifts that had been given by God. When this sense took possession of a man, the result was a Paul, a St. Francis of Assisi, or another of the saints in history. It was the principle that produced the philanthropists in all ages. These were the two conceptions of life, ownership or stewardship, selfishness or unselfishness, and they dominated the nations of the civilized world.

It had been said that the 19th century belonged to the United States, and its truth would be confirmed in records of progress when history came to be written.

Now it was Canada's turn. It seemed the natural and logical sequence of her awakening to the powers that were hers that the 20th century must belong to her. Her people were awake to a new and vast sense of the oppor-

tunity with which God had entrusted them. To develop Canada and to ensure a future of Christian citizenship, that was the task divinely committed to her people. The awakening was of comparatively recent date. But it had grasped the world's imagination. Ambassador Bryce, in his recent visit, had spoken of the probability that in half a century more there would be 50,000,000 people in the Dominion, while Montreal, which from its geographical position, must be the commercial metropolis, would have a population, he estimated, of 1,500,000. One could almost wish to be alive to see those days of Canada's greatness. Yet though some of them there that evening were approaching the time when they ought to be "Oslorized," they might contribute in some way to the solving of those problems which must of necessity lie in the path of the nation's growth. When this greatness came, what kind of people would possess it? Would they be Christian citizens, possessed of that righteousness which exalteth a nation? It depended upon the ideals planted in the nation's heart today. Home life and reverence for its sanctity!—that was one of the first foundations of a people's greatness. There could be no strength, no greatness of character, no high development, except there were homes where holiness was found. Family life was instituted by God, not merely for mankind's enjoyment, but for a source of inspiration. It was the home that shaped the morals. History showed that from the gates of Eden nations had climbed upwards in proportion as their home life was pure and holy. The reverse had brought declension. In Gibbon's "Decline and Fall," it was shown how Rome's immoralities produced her decline.

Would Canada stand the test of material prosperity, which had commenced and would increase? Such prosperity tended to loosen the rivets that bound society together, to undermine the home. To pass from the cottage to the mansion, experience showed, was often to abandon the old pure influences. It was true that some could prosper and be unspoiled. "Young men," said the preacher, in closing, "it is yours to achieve success, but if you pass from the cottage to the palace of wealth, carry the family Bible with you."

From a French journal comes this little anecdote of a tutor and his royal pupil. The lesson was in Roman history, and the prince was unprepared. "We now come to the Emperor Caligula. What do you know about him, prince?" The question was followed by a silence that was becoming awkward when it was broken by the diplomatic tutor. "Your highness is right," he said, "perfectly right. The less said about this emperor the better."