

Conferences

THE NEW YORK RENAISSANCE CLUB held its first meeting on November 11 at the home of Richard Harrier. The Reverend Walter J. Ong (St. Louis U, Visiting Professor, NYU) spoke on 'A Long-Range View of Humanism.'

THE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA RENAISSANCE CONFERENCE has elected the following officers for 1966-67: Chairman, Robert McNulty (U of California, Berkeley); Secretary, Lawrence V. Ryan (Stanford U).

THE RENAISSANCE SEMINAR of the University of Chicago held its first meeting for the academic year 1966-67 on October 18 at the Quadrangle Club. The speaker was Eric Cochrane (U of Chicago) on 'Florentine Culture at the Time of Cosimo I.'

News and Notes

RENAISSANCE QUARTERLY is to be the new title adopted by the quarterly journal of this society beginning with Volume xx (Spring 1967). An envelope for payment of dues for 1967 has been included in this issue for your convenience: members please note.

BIBLIOGRAPHIE INTERNATIONALE DE L'HUMANISME ET DE LA RENAISSANCE is the title of a new bibliography to be published annually by Librairie Droz under the auspices of the Fédération internationale des Sociétés et Instituts pour l'étude de la Renaissance. Containing a list of books and articles relating to all aspects of the Renaissance (music, literature, history, art, philosophy, and science) published in the preceding year, the volume will include an index of places, authors, and principal subjects. The bringing together of recent scholarship in Eastern and Western Europe, together with that produced in the United States, will enable scholars on both sides of the Atlantic to be readily informed of activity in their special fields of interest in the Renaissance. It is also a signal example of international co-operation. Professor Robert E. Taylor, bibliographer for *RN*, served as the American contributor, and the Renaissance Society has arranged for its members to receive a substantial discount.

The current volume, totaling 286 pages, including indices and a supplement of articles that appeared in 1958–1964 arranged according to authors, was published in December. Members may address their orders and checks for \$5.90 (including handling charges and postage) to the Renaissance Society of America, and the Society will forward the orders to the publisher.

THE UNIVERSITY TEACHERS OF ENGLISH in Great Britain will hold their next annual conference at the University of York on April 3–6, 1967. The general theme, 'Allegory, Metaphor and Symbol,' will be concerned in part with Renaissance Literature. RSA members are cordially invited to attend. Particulars may be obtained from C. A. Patrides, Langwith College, U of York, Heslington, York, England.

THE AMERICAN ACADEMY IN ROME is offering a limited number of fellowships in 1967–68 in Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Environmental Design, Musical Composition, Painting, Sculpture, History of Art, Classical, Post-Classical and Humanistic Studies. The fellowship in post-classical and humanistic studies is offered in the fields of Political, Economic, Cultural, and Church History, the History of Literature, and Musicology. Interested persons should get in touch with Miss Mary T. Williams, Executive Secretary, American Academy in Rome, 101 Park Avenue, New York, New York 10017.

THE ROSENBACH LECTURES FOR 1966 were given by Dr. Louis B. Wright, Director of the Folger Shakespeare Library. His two lectures under the general title of 'Living Libraries' were delivered at the Van Pelt Library, University of Pennsylvania, on November 2 and 9.

THE GOVERNMENT OF FRANCE recently decorated RSA member Klaus Berger with the *Palme Académique*.

THE WALTERS ART GALLERY, Baltimore, offered in October a special exhibition of British portraits, including some fine portrait miniatures of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The exhibition, in honor of the British Cultural and Export Festival, included works in cameo, ivory, and wax, as well as oils. Also shown were some portrait miniatures from the A. J. Fink Collection, given to the Gallery in 1963. Among the painters represented were Nicholas Hilliard, Peter Oliver, and Samuel Cooper.

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, New York, placed on exhibition on September 20 three recently acquired paintings by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo (1696–1770). These monumental mural paintings, unequaled in the United States, were done when Tiepolo was little more than thirty years old, and portray subjects taken from Roman history: *The Triumph of Marius*, and at either side, *The Battle of Vercellae*, and *The Storming of Carthage*, the largest measuring almost eighteen feet by eleven feet. Until about 1870 these three canvases, with seven others now in Leningrad and Vienna, decorated the great hall in the palace of the Dolfin family, just off the Grand Canal in Venice.

On October 14 the Museum placed on exhibition 106 Italian drawings of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries from the Art Museum of Princeton U. Included were works by Guercino, Salvator Rosa, Giambattista and Domenico Tiepolo, and Carpaccio. Princeton's strength in this area comes largely from the gifts of two major donors, Frank Jewett Mather, Jr., and Dan Fellows Platt. The exhibition, organized by the Metropolitan Museum, will later travel to the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard U; the Yale U Art Gallery; the Art Museum at Princeton; Washington U, St. Louis; the Chicago Art Institute; the Cleveland Museum of Art; and Vassar C.

On October 24 the Museum placed on exhibition a rare series of fifteenth-century Flemish tapestries depicting episodes from the story of Helen of Troy. Loaned to the Museum by Norton Simon, prominent industrialist and art collector, they will remain on view for an indefinite period.

COMPARATIVE DRAMA, a new quarterly journal for articles treating the dramatic literature of all nations and all periods, will begin publication in March 1967 and appear regularly in March, June, September, and December of each year. The editors particularly encourage studies which are international in spirit and interdisciplinary in scope.

The Advisory Board includes: George L. Anderson, John Cutts, Horst Frenz, Herbert Howarth, R. J. Kaufmann, Joseph Kerman, Bernard Knox, Robert Ornstein, Leonard Pronko, and Richard B. Sewall. The editors are: Clifford Davidson, Robert S. Davis, C. J. Gianakaris, Wallace H. Johnson, and John H. Stroupe.

Subscriptions are \$3.50 annually and \$6 biannually; \$4 and \$7 outside the United States and Canada. MSS should follow the MLA style sheet in matters of form and be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed

envelope. Address all correspondence to: The Editors, Department of English, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan 49001.

THE BAROQUE PLAYERS OF NEW YORK have scheduled two concerts of baroque music, featuring compositions of Frescobaldi, Purcell, Scarlatti, and Bach, for March 1 and March 8 at St. George's Church, 207 East Sixteenth Street, New York City. No tickets are required for the concerts, which have been made possible through the courtesy of the Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund for Music.

COMMITTEE TO RESCUE ITALIAN ART is the title of a national committee established to raise funds to assist in the salvaging and restoring works of art, books, manuscripts and archival materials damaged in the recent destructive floods in Italy. The Honorary President of the committee is Mrs. John F. Kennedy. Professor Bates Lowry (Brown U) is chairman of the Executive Board, and Professor Millard Meiss (Princeton U) is chairman of an advisory subcommittee composed of university professors and museum directors which will be especially concerned with selecting the monuments and objects, including books and manuscripts, for which the funds will be allocated.

Members of the RSA are urged to contribute as generously as they can. Checks should be made out to CRIA and sent to the committee's headquarters at 1 East 78th Street, New York City, 10021.

LIBERTY AND LAUGHTER:
CERVANTES, RABELAIS AND BEN JONSON

*A report of the Symposium at the University of San Francisco,
August 4-6, 1966, by Germain Marc'hadour*

The Symposium, organized by William Monihan, s.j. (Director of Libraries, University of San Francisco), around the theme *Freedom and Authority in the Sixteenth Century of Sir Thomas More* (see RN XIX, 97-103) was such a success that everybody insisted the experience should be repeated. The success of the 1966 Symposium has confirmed that it must become a tradition. The two summers were linked together by site, staff, and theme and through the presence of many former participants. Once again, the chairman was Dean John Burchard.

Rabelais, Cervantes, and Ben Jonson were this year's triumvirs. Professor Harry Berger (Cowell College, U.C. at Santa Cruz) analyzed

Cervantes' masterpiece by appropriately concentrating on the prologues to each of the two parts. Their difference in tone provides a key for what follows. 'The whole novel is at once serious and playful, but in Part I seriousness is controlled and contained by play, while in Part II seriousness tends to threaten and envelop the play. . . . Most of the first prologue is given over to poking fun at the pedantry and elaborate fanfare in which authors of the time decked their books: sonnets, epigrams, eulogies. . . . The implication is that a worthy book is its own advertisement. The focus in Part I and its prologue is on the man-as-poet, the man reduced to poet. . . .' His personal life, the facts of his biography, etc., are screened out; the 'facts' he mentions have reference only to his experience and consciousness as writer. Prison is mentioned, but only to exemplify the effect of a writer's conditions on his art. *Recreation* is the key-word: the author withdraws from the cares of life in stepping into his novel; hence the holiday tone, the mardi-gras tone; author and (idle) reader are about to enter a play-world.

Liberty and laughter suffer a decline as we approach Book II, published ten years after Book I. Not the artist, but the man Cervantes speaks in the second prologue; the old and wounded 'manco' is no longer able to sustain a contracted view of himself. He cannot bracket out the feelings, motives, past, and social involvement of the 'historical' Cervantes. The distinction between man-as-author and author-as-man becomes much harder to make, as also the distinction between the self 'behind' the novel and the self presented in the novel. Thus his art is placed in a different context—not merely disembodied, recreative, gratuitous play, but as something *used* by the author-as-man, used as a weapon, or as relief, or as an effort to keep sanity, to cope with the uncertain world, or to show it for what it is. There is rough play in Book I, but the hardships suffered by the knight errant are 'blows to his head and body, mainly harmless mischief, seldom, as in Part II, to his feelings.' The appearance of a spurious sequel to Book I raised the whole question of the uncertain boundary between fiction and falsehood, intensifying the confusion between literature and life, between make-believe and slander. Cervantes' hero, a Lord of Misrule in Part I, is less funny, more human, more complex and enigmatic as he progresses through Part II. Foul play has made him diffident. It has hurt the author first, who is self-conscious in his prologue: 'We may even be made uncomfortable by his nervous groping for the right tone and posture. The dark and problematic contemporary world is allowed to infiltrate the

novel, threatening author and hero alike.' Some of the evils alluded to are 'poverty, lawlessness, war, the decadence of a bored and idle aristocracy and the eviction of the Moors from Spain.' The battle of Lepanto, that Himalaya in Cervantes' map of world history, is described in the captive's tale of Part I, at least semi-detached from the author's experience. But it dominates Part II, where the 'manco' proudly and angrily shows his scars. Enchanters and their magic recede, illusions fade away, the hard facts of life remove the scales from our eyes. The 'intermediate ground between earnestness and fun' has shrunk on the side of fun, and at times it borders on tragedy.

'Wherein lies the cure for sadness? Madness!' Cardenio sings in Part I. Two dog-fables in the second prologue illustrate a dangerous and unloveable type of madness: not the high-spirited folly of 'the mirror of all knight-errantry,' but an inglorious and unglamorous mania. Liberty in the context of Don Quixote means freedom from involvement and from the fear of involvement: most characters—especially in Part I—are thrown together as casually as Chaucer's pilgrims. But are they proof against sinister encounters? From one of the sinister maniacs, the one who blows up dogs, Harry Berger borrows his conclusion: 'Do your worships think it's an easy thing to blow up a nine hundred page book?'

Professor Walter Starkie, the Irish *expertissimus* on Cervantes, voiced the congratulations of the audience, and he himself took them for a long trip across La Mancha, with emphasis on Sancho Panza and on Cervantes' family background: his father, his 'tía María,' his sisters, of easy virtue, but devoted to him. His personality comes off rather improved from a closer examination of his checkered career. As Sancho and his master evolve, their view-points, without fusing, come closer to each other; this character development, partly read into the novel, perhaps, from experience of later fiction, e.g., the *Bildungsroman*, is foreshadowed in the episode of a head-gear, which Sancho from a distance identifies as a barber's basin, Quixote as a helmet, before finally agreeing to call it basin-helmo-halo. The *hidalgo*, 'son of something,' becomes not only the son of his own deeds but also the son of his dreams, because our unattainable ideals are no less revealing of our true self than our actual achievements.

The ending, concludes Harry Berger, need not nullify all that precedes it; it can be construed as an ultimate withdrawal into self and escape from life. The hero's recognition of his folly may indeed be seen as increasing the pathos and sadness; also there is an air of the palinode

or *retractatio* about the ending—a necessary dissociation of the author from his work, as of the hero from his, a sense that it is becoming too painful, that the pain itself is infiltrating the atmosphere of fiction, another example of the author's sense of failing control.

Cervantes remained in the forefront during the first twenty minutes of Professor Henri Peyre's lecture on Rabelais on the second morning. The most Christian writer of his age, Cervantes was torn between this world, so real yet so unreal, and a higher one, in which *vida* is not *sueño*: hence his wonderful grasp of *realidad* on one hand and yet a deep *soledad*, a sense of alienation. Rabelais was not a man of such magnitude and complexity. The creator of Pantagruel and Panurge is a non-Mediterranean genius, who finds his kin among Northern artists, such as Breughel, and especially Rubens. Where his greatness lies has been hotly disputed. Abel Lefranc, in the *Revue des Etudes Rabelaisiennes*, thought him great chiefly as an observer and copier of his environment. Lefranc's phenomenal erudition saw allusions in almost every line. Lucien Febvre correctly emphasized sensibility: moods and mentalities loom larger in life, and consequently in literature, than do theories and creeds. Rabelais reflects the sensibility of his times. Therefore he could not be anti-religious. He was a Christian in his own way, without much sense of the tragic, worshipping in Christ the veritable Pan, the triumph of life. *Do what you will*, the first and the only commandment in the abbey of Thélème, is the motto of life-worshippers.

Discontinuity in the composition of the giants' saga accounts to some extent for its lack of unity. There was a twelve years' interval between the *Gargantua* of 1534 and the famous Book Three, the most amusing and most profound of all: the heroes by now have become near human. Book Four came out in 1552, the year before Rabelais' death, and the posthumous *L'Île Sonnante* (The Ringing Island), published in 1564 from unfinished notes, forms the nucleus of Book Five. Was this ex-Franciscan friar, this ex-Benedictine monk, who ended up both a qualified physician and a duly appointed parish priest, a second Democritus, laughing at everything?

It is impossible to trace a neat pattern through every page of Rabelais; yet from the ensemble there emerges a forceful plea for sanity and sense, for a harmonious relationship in man between body and soul, reason and instinct, as well as between man and the world into which he is born and in which he should be free to work. Rabelais advocates freedom, not for himself alone or for a small élite, but for all his fellowmen.

In the seeming chaos of the universe, there is a potential cosmos; it is for man to discover the seeds of order, the polarities and tropisms, and to promote the order of nature. God the great Pan is present everywhere. His mind is the key to the riddle of the universe, which is not meaningless, even though it is disconcerting. Men are God's spies, assiduously deciphering the enigma of their world and themselves, before setting about, strenuously and cheerfully, to extend the frontiers and to shape the face of the universe.

The leading discussants on Rabelais were Professor John Lapp (Stanford U), Dr. Saunders (Medical Center, U.C., San Francisco) and Henri Peyre, who made a number of interesting points: 1) The sixteenth century was 'neither soft, languishing, nor idle,' but insecure and brutal, like ours. 2) The main source of the comic, according to Bergson, is 'le mécanique plaqué sur le vivant': the mechanic element, which automatizes man. 3) For Rabelais woman is man's companion, almost his comrade, in charge of the household, an unromantic but not an inhuman figure. Rabelais' misogyny is perhaps shrewdly tactical. 4) The spoof of the Pantagruelion parodies current disputes about anatomy and the virtues of plants, a technique which does not rob the word of deeper significance or other levels of meaning. 5) Some of Rabelais' coarsest jokes smack of the dissection room and are of a type perennial in medical circles: physicians seem to need them as a fence against emotion. But even from the pulpit of his convent, Rabelais no doubt heard a good deal of language which would shock a modern congregation. In connection with this Rabelaisianism, parallels were sketched with D.H. Lawrence, James Joyce, Henry Miller, Diderot, two of whom also somewhat emulate Rabelais' mastery of language. 6) Rather than Bacchic, the right epithet for Rabelais is Dionysian, a term which brings out the aspects of his 'joie de vivre.'

Last, and probably least, was Ben Jonson, introduced by Professor Alvin Kernan (Yale) on August 6th, the anniversary of Jonson's death in 1637. The auditorium for this third day was a theatre, appropriate for this dramatist's dramatist. 'One of the great crises of Renaissance drama and poetry turns around the question whether man and matter will rise to one of the great traditional shapes of order or fall to chaos: a Shakespeare accents the positive, but Jonson's satiric world tends toward chaos. His plays emphasize folly, vice, and dullness. Even his "heroes," if such a term can properly be used of any of Jonson's characters, are tainted with cruelty, greed, ineffectiveness, and cynical opportunism.

Even the least of Jonson's characters, such as the unnamed neighbor in *The Alchemist*, can suddenly open strange depths of idiocy when he remarks that he heard a doleful cry from Lovewit's house one night, "as I sat up a-mending my wife's stockings." The humorous twist is often so grotesque that Jonson appears to be straining awkwardly to find some novel form of idiocy, but as these grotesqueries accumulate, they begin to suggest the peculiar Jonsonian perspective on the human character.'

The plot of *The Alchemist* resembles a Rube Goldberg machine, incredibly intricate and complex in its working parts, but quite simple in its function. A city in the time of plague, a house abandoned by its rightful owner (Wit), and usurped by impudence and pretence (Face), low cunning (Subtle), and slatternliness (Dol Common), who pander to all the appetites which make man a willing gull. This is the moral fable which underlies *The Alchemist*, but so skillfully does Jonson elaborate it with realistic detail that we are scarcely aware of the allegorical spine.

The fools are the raw materials, the base matter, which alchemy transforms to gold. A web of cross references between alchemy and swindling, between the stuff of alchemy and the characters of the play, is carefully constructed. Not every piece of alchemical jargon refers to the act of cheating or the cheaters, but so large a number do that eventually enough is generated to cause the critical spark to jump the gap; alchemy becomes the radical metaphor which provides the crucial insight into what each of the characters is doing and thereby organizes the disparate parts of the play into a whole. . . . But the fools are not only the raw materials which the swindlers change to gold. Each of them is in turn his own alchemist who will, with the aid of Subtle, transmute his own base nature into something rich and strange: by means of magic and through a host of pretenses, masquerades, and dreams, the characters of the play try to change their very ordinary clay into the forms of their imagination.

It is, however, in the person of Sir Epicure Mammon that the desire for alchemical transformation reaches truly heroic proportions. Each of the petty fools of *The Alchemist* mirrors in a grotesque way the historical aspirations of some segment of English Renaissance society—the merchant, the landed gentry, the professional man, the left-wing Protestant, and the classless adventurer—but Sir Epicure, while he has English roots, is an archetypal figure who soars beyond place and time. His superheated dream is the eternal dream of mankind: old age will disappear, sexual vigor will be eternal, and children will become 'young giants' . . . thus making 'Nature ashamed of her long sleep.'

'Words are the true and ultimate alchemical tools here, and in Renaissance drama in general.' How true this is also of Cervantes and of Rabelais. Of the three Jonson is probably the most cynical and has least expectation of a metamorphosis: 'how can man's puny skills avail to shape that bottomless, turbulent mass of things which is Jonson's enduring pessimistic vision of nature, where the direction of all life is to slip slowly back into chaos?'

Rabelais called himself 'abstracteur de quintessence.' I dare not claim that this report has squeezed out the quintessence of the USF symposium. The best in it comes verbatim from the main speakers' papers. Perhaps the most refreshing impression of this type of functional recreation is that one truly is not learning for school, but for life: *vitae non scholae discimus*.

UNIVERSITY OF ANGERS

New Editions and Reprints

LES EDITIONS CULTURE ET CIVILISATION (115, Avenue Gabriel Lebon, Brussels 16) is making available through photographic reproduction a number of important Renaissance texts and scholarly works:

Robert Estienne, *Thesaurus linguae latinae* (1740-43 edition) in four volumes, \$117.

L.-C. Silvestre, *Marques typographiques* (1853-57 edition) in two volumes, \$34.

Alphonse Willems, *Les Elzevier, histoire et annales typographiques* (1880 edition), \$26.

Ambroise Firmin-Didot, *Alde Manuce et l'hellénisme à Venise* (1875 edition), \$27.

Joannes de Segovia, *Septem Allegationes et totidem Avvisamenta* (1664 edition), \$41.

Jean de Torquemada, *Tractatus de veritate conceptionis beatissimae Virginis* (1869 edition), \$39.

Antoine Arnauld, *Oeuvres* (1775-1783 edition), thirty-eight volumes, only Vols. I-III have appeared, \$32 per volume.

THE CLEVELAND PUBLIC LIBRARY, in conjunction with the photocopying and microfilming facilities of the Bell & Howell Company, is making available on Duopage (reproduction in full size on two sides of the sheet) and on microfilm a large number of volumes from its John Griswold White collection, a noted collection of more than 100,000 volumes of folk-lore and Orientalia. A catalog listing these works and other "out of print" items made available on Duopage may be obtained for \$5 from the Micro Photo Division, Bell & Howell Company, 1700 Shaw Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44112.