

Entre Nous.

Anatole France.

How many of Anatole France's readers will confess their preference for *Pierre Nozière*? Their preference, mind you. For there is no great historical or psychological revelation in that fictitious autobiography. It is nothing more than a book of sketches of very ordinary human experience. Yet it finds its way right to the heart. These funny French people are our very kith and kin. Their ups and downs in life, so impossible to us in outward circumstances, are altogether ours in spiritual and sinful fact. They misunderstand Providence; but it is only an additional attraction. The pity of it! you say; and you go closer to them to help—and to get help. *Pierre Nozière* has been translated into English, into the very choicest of understanding English, by Lewis May (John Lane; 6s.).

J. J. Pearson.

Mr. J. J. Pearson has written a book to which he gives the title of *Arazenos, his Wanderings, Trials, and Discourses* (Blackwell; 4s. 6d. net). He himself calls it a prose poem, and says that it must be interpreted as such. Is it an answer to Nietzsche? In a conversation between Arazenos (who stands for Zarathushtra) and Nietzsche we read:

Nie. Then in what form would you suppose the Divine Ruler, God, would be most likely to operate, since we have concluded that he is, in essence, love?

Ara. I should say that he must necessarily operate through himself, since only God is pure love; only that which is a pure essence of himself could represent him.

Nie. Then whatever was done by that essence, you would say was done by God.

Ara. I would say so.

Nie. Then could an angel so represent God?

Ara. I know not the nature of angels, but I should not like to commit myself thus, but I should think that God would consider such an evil world the greatest danger to his power, and would therefore feel a great good effected by conquering it.

Nie. You mean then he would spare no pains in such a work?

Ara. I should think not.

Nie. Then what do you suppose God would hold most dear of all that he possesses?

Ara. I should judge, a son, or a daughter, as they are the closest of kin, and I think the most dear by the ties of life, except it be a father or a mother.

Nie. But I do not see how we can conceive of God as having a father or mother, since he himself is father of everything that doth exist.

Ara. That is true, then as for me I should be content to say a son.

Nie. Then suppose a son is to God the very dearest, what would constitute a son of God since there is no maternity in the Godhead?

Ara. That is a great mystery, but we cannot deny to God the right of a pure son who is very God in himself.

Nie. I agree, and I think that we do well to cease there—granted that God can give forth of himself a son having his very being bound up within him, heir to all things the Father is heir to, possessor of the worlds . . .

H. Rex Freston.

The young poet, known as H. Rex Freston, who was killed in action in France, January 24, 1916, has not made the impression which Rupert Brooke made. But he is scarcely less a poet. His first book he called *The Quest of Beauty*, and of that book so good a critic as Dr. Farnell said, 'I have read it, and with more real pleasure than I have read any of the published verse of young Oxford.' The posthumous book is called *The Quest of Truth* (Blackwell). 'After I am dead,' he says:

After I am dead,
And have become part of the soil of France,
This much remember of me:
I was a great sinner, a great lover, and life
puzzled me very much.

And he wrote this poem on

THE SINNER.

I dreamed I sat by heaven's gate,
And watched the good men go
All comfortless in robes of white,
That had no stain to show.

For, fearing greatly, they on earth
 Scarce dared to draw a breath
 —Their single talent still unused—
 And now their life was death.

Then I descended to the depth,
 And watched the sinners go,
 With faces shining like the day,
 And scarlet robes aglow.

And there among them as of old
 Walked One, whom I knew well,
 Who opened wide His arms to me:
 I found my Christ in hell.

Edith and Osbert Sitwell.

Is it possible to get behind the mind of a spider? The imagination would require to be plentiful and peculiar. In the first long poem of the book called *Twentieth Century Harlequinade* (Blackwell; rs. net), Miss Edith Sitwell tells us what a spider is thinking all the time as he weaves his web and catches his fly. This is the end of the spider's reflections:

He never can escape from me.

Yet still I never know what thought
 All fly-like, in his mind lies caught:
 His face seems some half-spoken word
 Forgotten again as soon as heard,

Beneath the livid skin of light;
 O, just an empty space of white
 Now all the meaning's gone. I'll sit
 A little while, and stare at it.

The rest of the book is just as out of the way and imaginative. The last three poems have been written by Mr. Osbert Sitwell.

Arnold F. Graves.

The author of *The Long Retreat* has written another book. He calls it *The Turn of the Tide* (Murray; rs. net). It is written in the same metre, in the same unliterary language, and with the same closeness of observation. Mr. Graves thinks it is better that we should know the truth, however bitter; so he writes this:

While we were clearing out a trench
 Holding our noses from the stench,

Cursing the crimes of the invader,
 A woman, naked as God made her,
 Came flying up: no thought of shame:
 Her staring eyes with hate aflame,
 As to her mutilated breast
 The body of her babe she pressed.
 Again I seem to hear her cry:
 'My God! Why don't you let me die?
 Look what the German dogs have done,
 They killed my child, my only son,
 And see? what they have done to me.'
 She bared her bosom. We could see
 The levelled breasts. 'That's not the worst.'
 And then the murderers she cursed.
 I never felt so strongly stirr'd
 By any words I'd ever heard.
 It seemed as if her pains I shared;
 And as wide-open-eyed I stared
 A shrapnel struck her like a flail
 And dropped her head as a door nail.
 God heard her pitiful request.
 Now till the judgment day she'll rest;
 And then in Heaven her babe she'll nurse:
 While on their heads will fall her curse.

Thomas Tiplady.

Mr. Thomas Tiplady is a Methodist Chaplain who sings, first because in the East End of London skies are grey and streets narrow, and the soul must sing or die; and next because the war has come and 'no man knoweth what shall be.' The simplest songs in his volume *In the Trenches* (Booker; rs. net) are the best. This is one of the simplest:

AN EVENING PRAYER FOR CHILDREN.

Jesus, see Thy children
 Kneeling here to-night,
 Waiting for Thy blessing
 In the fading light.

We are young and helpless,
 And we need Thy grace;
 Help us, gentle Saviour,
 From Thy holy place.

Oft within the temple,
 In the days of yore,
 Thou didst with Thy parents
 Worship and adore.

Hear us, then, O Saviour,
Ere we go to rest;
Lay Thy hand upon us,
Make us truly blest.

Keep our loving parents
In Thy tender care;
Guard them from all evil,
Hearken to their prayer.

Comfort all sick children,
Fold them in Thine arms,
With the little orphans
Safe from all alarms.

In the silent watches
Of the starlit night,
Keep us calm and fearless,
Ever in Thy sight. Amen.

W. J. Cameron.

Mr. Cameron has some of the attributes of a poet. He lacks finish. He sends poems out of his hands every one of which contains some carelessness that mars its perfection. We shall quote from *War and Life* (Chapman & Hall; 1s. 6d. net) one that has scarcely a fault, but in quoting it we are bound to say that it stands nearly alone. Read the third line in this stanza:

By the lads through Hate laid low,
By the maids that homeless go,
By the life 'neath seas swept shaken—
Babe and mother—now are taken
These our vows of heart and hand,
Steadfast, soulfast still, to stand.

The poem we quote in full is

FAITH IN SPRINGTIME.

Far removed from this our world of weeping,
Warm beneath the blanket of the snow,
In the earth the flow'rs of 'Spring are sleeping;
That is all we know . . .

See them marching, young and brave and lusty,
Lads we cherished, now to manhood grown,
Challenging the future with the trusty
Sword they made their own.

Bright its blade as that King Arthur wielded,
Pure their hearts as ever knight's of old,
Waging war that so the right be shielded
From evil men and bold.

Arthur, dying, by three Queens attended,
On the barge of Change was borne away
To the Happy Isles where pain is ended
And shines the sun all day.

Aye, and e'en as out of sight he drifted
Rose the cry, 'Behold, he is not slain.
When of war and wounds the spell is lifted
Arthur will come again.' . . .

Watered by the tears that we are weeping,
Blooms the flow'r of faith through Winter's
snow:
Flow'rs o' Spring will waken from their sleeping.
This is true, we know.

Eleanor Tee.

On the Edge of the Earth (Saint Catherine Press; 1s. net) is the title of a small collection of verses by Eleanor Tee. They are inspired chiefly by nature—trees and winds and flowers and gardens.

A PLEA.

'You do not work,' said one to me.
'When in a garden you must be
At leisure, just to look or read,
Or dream. If you would only weed!'

I do not weed—a garden-way:
I'm occupied from day to day
With shaping out a pleasance where
I'd have no weed, nor aught not fair.

My pleasance lies within. It takes
A lot of work for others' sakes,
To make and keep it really fair;
I want them always happy there.