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and the rise of individualism. In an article on 'The Social Problem in the light of St. Paul's Theology' in *DER KATHOLISCHE GEDANKE*, Fr. Soiron, O.F.M., holds up St. Paul as an example of this social-consciousness and the great delineator of the Christian idea of society. His doctrine of the solidarity of the baptised in the Mystical Body of Christ, whose members are hierarchically organised on a purely vocational basis according to diversities of graces and ministries, presents us with the ideal conception of society. Nor is the Apostle's idea of corporate unity limited to the supernatural sphere and inapplicable to the natural community. His teaching regarding the transmission of original sin and its consequences supposes an organic unity of mankind in virtue of our common parenthood in Adam and on the purely natural plane. The social chaos into which individualism has led us 'can be overcome only if we return to the sense of social order which Christianity, and especially the Pauline theology, has given to mankind.'

It must, however, be constantly borne in mind that the opposition between Individualism and Collectivism is a false antithesis, due to false conceptions either of individual personality or of society. These are in fact complementary and mutually indispensable, for the perfection of personality can be obtained only in and by society, and society has no intrinsic value or rightful existence independently of the exigencies of personality. We need to steer a straight course between the nineteenth century philosophies which made an absolute of the individual and the new collectivisms, whether Communist or Fascist, which make an absolute of the community. The supreme Society, the Mystical Body itself, has value only as the instrument of salvation for individual personalities. Such is the thesis developed by Prof. Dietrich von Hildebrand in his essay on 'The Corporative Idea and Natural Communities' which follows directly on that of Fr. Soiron, and to which it may serve as a supplement if not as a corrective. Prof. von Hildebrand bases his argument on an analysis of the ideas of personality and of society as handed down in the *Philosophia perennis*. It is only with the guidance of such a philosophy, which identifies the *bonum commune* with the *bonum proprium* of the individual, that we can hope to harmonise the conflicting forces which rend modern society.

V.M.

RECENT ART EXHIBITIONS.

THE Henri-Matisse Exhibition (at Tooth's) and the Max Ernst Exhibition (at the Mayor Gallery in Cork Street) make an interesting contrast. Matisse's pictures are the records of impressions, visual impressions, Ernst's the result not of visual but

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of psychological reactions. Matisse is a very good painter because he is expressing something that can only be expressed in pictorial terms. Ernst is a bad painter because he is expressing something which is not unique to the pictorial medium. Matisse could only be Matisse, Ernst might be a Brecht or an Eliot or a miniature Strauss. Matisse records what he sees, Ernst records, or attempts to record, what he thinks.

The test of an exhibition is to be able to enjoy it without a catalogue. Without a catalogue Herr Ernst's exhibition is quite unintelligible. The majority of his pictures follow the single formula imposed by an inadequate technique, flat stripes of colour, that is, with a symbolic figure superimposed; his work is therefore without any pictorial significance whatever. It is questionable whether symbolism as distinct from allegory is ever compatible either with good music or good painting. One can dogmatise merely to the extent of saying that from a literary point of view symbolism in painting is justifiable only when it can be understood. All question of relative merit apart, the naturalistic symbolist, Davies or Sims, for instance, is at least simple and direct. Herr Ernst, however, has chosen to express himself not in generally accepted terms, but in the language of abstract modern painting. Dufy and Freud are an unhappy combination.

The Matisse exhibition contains no very recent work. Five at least of the thirteen pictures shown appear in Barnes' recent study, and all of them without exception reiterate Matisse's claim to be considered the greatest living painter. In spite of the warmth and range of their colour and their occasionally mannered designs, these pictures are impersonal as only very good paintings indeed can be. For Matisse art is the production of a good picture, not as for Ernst the expression of personality. He is not a theorist who imposes himself on his subject, splitting it up into cubes and triangles and squares; his subject imposes itself on him. His landscapes particularly have the spontaneity that can only come when there is no intermediate process between the exercise of the visual faculty and its statement, while in the larger pictures, where the design is built up more self-consciously, he attains by Cézanne's means his monumental impassivity. One of the reasons why Matisse is so great a painter is that one foot is always firmly planted in the past.

Like his pictures, Matisse's drawings are built up in tones. Mr. Duncan Grant's drawings, on the other hand (forty-five of which are shown next door at Agnew's), exhibit a lamentable contrast. The most important of them are a series of nude

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studies for the *Bathers*, academic in conception and not always irreproachable in execution. With one or two exceptions (and in particular that of a lovely Giorgionesque figure of a woman) the colour is mere tinting and the forms without solidity. *The Tug-of-War* (No. 30) is typical of several sketches in which Mr. Grant sets himself a far harder problem than he can solve; in this case the illusion of stress and stance is so completely absent that all Mr. Grant has done is to represent with tolerable accuracy two independent bodies falling backwards. Mr. Duncan Grant's peculiar talents do not fit him for realism of this kind.

The imaginative designs, however, are in an entirely different category. They show a taste and sureness of touch which no other contemporary English painter can quite equal, decorative and light and pretty, with a real understanding of medium and real imaginative charm. Though essentially pictorial, these designs stand their transference to textiles with complete success, and at the Industrial Art Exhibition, at Dorland House, it is unquestionably those textiles after Mr. Grant's designs that are the most remarkable exhibits.

The Industrial Exhibition tells one very little about modern design that was not self-evident before. The furniture shows the usual inability to synchronise practical and aesthetic qualities. Simplicity does not inevitably make for beauty, nor beauty for utility, and certainly the mimetic theory explains quite adequately why it is so hard to get aesthetic satisfaction from a chair with no back legs. Every kind of material is used, glass beds, a stone dining-table, and so on, the more imaginative uninhabitable, the remainder drab and machine-made. The common denominator of the rooms is an unhealthy fear of ornament as something that can no longer be controlled.

Of the pottery very little is modern in feeling, and what is not positively old-fashioned is uncompromisingly imitative, sham celadon, sham slip-ware, and so on. The textile department in fact is the only completely satisfying part of the exhibition. With a few exceptions the designs reach a very high standard indeed, perhaps because in textiles alone the artist is more or less unhampered by technical considerations. Unquestionably these are as good as anything of the same type being done at the present day—the more pity that the prices are prohibitive.

The policy which this exhibition represents has been advocated repeatedly, by Mr. Paul Nash and others, in *The Listener*. The textile, and for the matter of that the carpet, is plainly a valid and suitable medium for artistic expression. Where, however, there is a closer connection between design and its

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execution, where both are in practice interdependent, it is difficult to see the value of calling in the artist to replace deficiency in craftsmanship. Theoretically the artist is someone who produces things that people do not want and the craftsman a person whose supply is regulated strictly by considerations of utility. This exhibition shows, what we all know, that there are in England to-day several artists of outstanding versatility. It shows also that never has English craftsmanship been at a lower ebb.

JOHN POPE-HENNESSY.

THE PLAY

MISS Clemence Dane deserves commiseration. In *Wild Decembers* she has written a sound, sensitive study of the Brontë family; Mr. Cochrane has been at pains to ensure a production of the very highest quality. And it is their misfortune that the play follows and coincides with Alfred Sangster's *The Brontës*. For, as the public have been quick to realise, *The Brontës* is the better play.

It is another instance of the advantage of the actor-playwright over the literary dramatist. Clemence Dane has an historical conscience; she selects and interprets but does not alter recorded facts. Mr. Sangster's conscience is a purely dramatic one; his approach tends to the symbolic rather than to the realistic, and, in a play, which must condense half a life-time into two short hours, that approach gives a paradoxical impression of truer values, as well as a coherence otherwise unobtainable.

Thus Branwell Brontë has more significance in *The Brontës*, where his brief role culminates in a wild prophecy that his disorders have been the yeast of his sisters' lives, that their books will live because of him, than in Miss Dane's more thoughtful study, in which she shows him as the real first begetter of *Wuthering Heights*. The character of Mr. Brontë, whom Mr. Sangster has made a rich part for his own playing, gets across better than Miss Dane's more human and probably far more truthful version. His Emily (though he has used his imagination freely) is the more convincing, and the more vivid, and if his Charlotte lacks certain elements of the Charlotte of *Wild Decembers* and of life, he gives the better impression of the poet and novelist.

In *The Brontës* the Brussels episode forms a comic interlude. In *Wild Decembers* it is treated in three scenes of much power, including the strange episode of Charlotte's confession. One is grateful to Miss Dane for her portrayal of M. Héger, that