

BLACKFRIARS

and technique and imagination freed from the shackles of academic conventions and worldly valuations, is both illuminating and stimulating, though we think he is not altogether right in supposing that imagination before the Renaissance was less disciplined than it has been since. In our view it was as much subject to discipline, but of a more intellectual and less materialistic kind, hieratic, not academic.

But the following has never been more neatly or more truthfully said: "[The workman must] be paid for his services, but the pay is not his end, but a means to enable him to keep on working. With the man of commerce, the reverse is the case. With him the work is not the end, but a means to enable him to keep on getting paid" (p. 65).

ERIC GILL.

CHANNEL CROSSING, 1838

"LONDON was a bumper," wrote old General Dyott in his diary for 1838, "foreigners in abundance." Here are some of them. Dr. Mathew starts with *Queen Adelaide*, 677 tons, a Deptford built schooner-rigged paddle-wheeler with the new feathering floats, riding alongside the stone quay at Calais, and tells of her passengers, most of them crossing to attend Queen Victoria's coronation. In previous works his treatment has been admired of the little Carthusian world before the Reformation, of the Celtic peoples about Queen Elizabeth, of the English Catholic minority in the seventeenth century. Now he evokes the decade after the Reform Bill: chokers and oysters and muffins and grog, fretwork iron verandahs, the London and Greenwich viaduct railway—"the enginemen are most judicious and the carriages are accompanied by guards in the livery of the company"—steamers so new-fangled that in rough weather it was feared the machinery might break loose.

The book is a delicate and allusive study of the different conventions and temperaments displayed when the vessel runs aground in a fog. Serene round the whist table

¹ *Steam Packet*, by David Mathew (Longmans; 6/-).

sits privilege, the Austrian Ambassador, the Russian Envoy Extraordinary, the Minister of the brand-new Hellenic kingdom, and Lady Augusta born a Somerset. A shabby Carlist courtier is less assured, though he stands for a polity older than the Holy Alliance and Badminton House, more defined than the bourgeois monarchy of Louis-Philippe represented in the first-class saloon by M. Gratry. For a European order more ancient and secure, Mgr. Beccaria is writing in his cabin, "in an even light he could see his reports and their weaknesses and their passage through the Congregations in Rome, the venerable prelates and the gradual and sometimes retarded victory of balanced argument." There are, besides, Mr. Burnaby with his gold seal and fob and mind improved by the *Annual Register*, solid in his hope of industrial Progress and satisfied with the contract he has secured for railway construction in France; Mr. Copleston, with his memories of Edgworthstown and anticipations of high table at Magdalen, his taste for a sound Madeira, a prosaic dignity even in his snores; Mr. Willcocks bearing a deficient young Honourable; Miss Stourton, recovering from her illness and the miseries of foreign bedrooms, "a relief to feel that to-morrow night she would lie at Ford's Hotel in Manchester Street and on the next day would be at Wardour."

The second class saloon supplies the excitement and movement, a democracy seen close at hand; the polyglot servants, English, Croat, Russian, Styriote; servile yet distrusting their masters. Here, too, is Padre Atanasio, a Passionist for the English mission, uncomfortable in his new English broadcloth, more confused than frightened by the dangers of the sea; and Miss Barlow, the personal maid of Lady Augusta, "the hunting and the gentlemen's evenings were naturally of course beyond her experience and she had always reproved the footman who tried to give her details of these doings." Her knowledge of the precedence of rescue comes to her assistance, what a relief to be an Englishwoman in an English ship.

This study, to adapt Dr. Mathew, offers material apposite to an elegant reverie, a tasteful piece of work with the delicate mother-of-pearl upon the dark background and the subdued nacreous tint. The style, like the sea, is calm,

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not stormy. Of contemporary expression the tone is more that of

The cool café, the cabriolet,
Cigars and macaronis,
And rouge et noire, and eau sucré
And conversaziones.

than of

Oh Jimmy Greenacre,
You shouldn't have done it, Greenacre,
You knocked her head in with a rolling-pin,
You wicked Jimmy Greenacre!

The cheap tallow and dirty thick fingers and the sweat marks round the nostril, these are noticed, but the author writes with the fastidiousness of one of his first class passengers. The humour is quiet and unwavering, like the walk of a cat. Count Lombay remembers "how the *abbés* of adequate birth would gather, breathing in the atmosphere of opportunity, moving slowly round as soft and buoyant as gold fish in a pond, carefully and quickly breaking the surface. There in the ante-rooms of the Sicilian court they were pressing gently, waiting for morsels. And then they had their perpetual interest in moral questions, the soft and questing phrase, the encroachment on the individual. An intimate disgust arose within him at the thought of the clinging line of the soutane, the buckled shoes."

The flash-backs we expect from the author are too naturally and variously contrived to be reduced to a formula; his touches of detail always serve to suggest a complete situation, Miss Barlow thinking of the sedlitz powder and camphorated ointment, Mr. Willcocks descanting on that masterpiece of Mr. Landseer entitled *The Old Shepherd's Chief Mourner*, Tom Rattenbury, the ship's boy, dreaming of beating up the Java channel in a typhoon.

THOMAS GILBY, O.P.