



ENVOY

THERE are certain elemental forms of life, whose way it is after some solitary wandering silently to flow together, uniting their microscopic forces into a vague semi-fluent mass. This at first shows only that apparent quiescence which in life is needed for internal rearrangement, or at most some of those external symptoms which express an internal clearing up, though they may superficially suggest the opposite. By and by these associating lives awaken to the world without; they arouse to new activities, they rise into new forms, protean yet individual. These die in their turn—that is, float into new young life; much, it may be, to perish, but enough at least to germinate anew elsewhere.

Such is the life-history of our little group of townsmen and gownsmen, who for these ten years past have been quietly gathering themselves together among the nooks and byways, the ways and outlooks of our ever ruinous, ever renescent Old Town. From this grouping of studios and studies, from solitary cells and friendly meetings, there readily arises this or that collective effort; thus at length have developed a gathering-place, a scriptorium, even a publishing-house: whence, following the tradition of our old home and city, we may send forth things new and old.

Of this the 'Evergreen' has been the initial outcome. Be it good or bad, frankly experimental at least it has been, from cover to cover. As in the semi-collegiate group amid which it arises, there has been no central authority, still less constraint; without individual or continuous editorship, its artists and writers have been each a law unto themselves.

In such an unwonted mode of life and publication, the absence of mechanical order cannot but obscure, at least to many, the element of organic unity, not yet manifest in form and substance, but working in life and growth.

Not only in the old association of artist and man of letters, not only in the newer

parallelism of natural history and social studies, not only in the profound and renescent unity of local and regional survivals and initiatives with racial and cosmopolitan ones, but through all these together, an increasing purpose runs. Hence the association of all these in the 'Evergreen'; which has sought, however dimly, to express a certain conception of science, a certain associated view of life; not indeed a set of opinions, but a way of looking at things, that increasingly reveals the unity of science and literature and art. To see the world, to see life truly, one must see these as a whole; and only those who see this in movement do see it in whole. Our arts and sciences are but so many specialised and technical ways of showing and seeing the many scenes and aspects of this great unity, this mighty drama of cosmic and human evolution. The naturalist evolutionist then, like his artist brother, who would know this House the Sun Built, must follow its changes through the Seasons; and the social evolutionist (again with the artist) must see that human life, like simpler life, is in harmony and tone with these. An old truth, patent in the history of individual plant or animal or man, but latent in the evolution of family, variety, or species; patent through rustic life and labour, latent through urban life and thought; patent in the history and literature of locality, latent through the history and the philosophy of the world. Heredity and variation, survival and initiative, conservation and innovation, decline and renaissance, each has its time and season; so Art and Science are but the following of Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter, and yet again of Spring, in Nature and in individual Life, in the wide World, and in the world of Home.

Our first season-cycle then is ended, and though its experience has made the possibilities and plan of a new series clearer, the time for this is not yet. The loosely grouped initiatives of this first venture have now to separate, to develop apart for a season. Naturalist and sociologist may thus re-elaborate their natural and their human biology of the seasons, while the Celticists listen alone to the elemental voices, or strengthen the surviving and renewing unity of Brython and Goidel; and so with each. Not in books only, but in life also, these separating activities may prepare for new reunions and new comradeships, new colleagueships and new collaborations: for science and history in outlook-tower and museum, for art in studio, in school, and exhibition, in building and decoration; for all in fresh gatherings and meetings, studious and joyous, Scottish or cosmopolitan, in new initiatives at home or afield.

For a season then it is the turn of a different mood of thought, a different mode of action which needs its corresponding expression also—different from the 'Evergreen' and complementary to it.

This time, though the keynote is still of evolution, the standpoint is changed; no longer primarily cosmic and outward, but primarily human and inward; no longer primarily of material observation, but of moral interpretation and of action. In this way, too, some promises of the 'Evergreen' may, it is hoped, be more fully kept. Hence the 'Evergreen' sleeps for a season, and the 'Interpreter,' from his different outlook, will have his say for the time.

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