world,' for whom France appeared only to exist since the Revolution. Accepting the monarchy in the past should not imply condemning the republic, as such, in the present. Nothing made Péguy more indignant than the way the leaders of Action Française talked of 'l'ancien régime' as though it were their private property.. But, he says, 'in the ancient world, under the old systems, there was life everywhere. What is dangerous is this great dead carcase of the modern world. Spirit could always slip in somewhere, carry on somehow, make itself felt; improvise, invent, spring like toad-flax in a crack in the wall—and starting from there, prosper and flourish. . . . . All the ancient forms of power were penetrated as by a marrow of spirit—all but one, the only one that has survived the advent of the modern world: the power of money.'

From thinking that the modern disorder and the decline of Christianity were two manifestations of the same principle of decay, Péguy came to hold that the modern disorder in thought and life is directly traceable to the decline of Christianity. Mercifully, he says, there are all the little people, all the quiet, inarticulate crowds of workers, who, day in day out, go on working often, still, for the work's sake, and living lives that are plain but by no means petty, and certainly not safe in the modern sense. So long as these go on, in all the remote corners of all the provinces, there is hope for France.

RUTH BETHELL.

THE HEATHEN ARE WRONG[1]

'I WAS there when France fell; and I have written this book to mourn her.' Many English-speaking people were there when France fell, and many have written books, to mourn the collapse of her army, or the dissolution of her political machine, or the capture of Paris, or the surrender of her navy. But the France mourned here, with this pall of many colours and many patterns, is not the agony of events that announced her painful death, but the reality of France, dying beneath the suffering of the last fatal illness: France as men of the French way of thinking loved and understood her. This reality is not widely, or at any rate not fully, understood in England and America; it is not understood what has died, nor what is the loss

[1] 'The Heathen are Wrong.' An Impersonal Autobiography. By Eugene Bagger. (Eyre and Spottiswoode, 12/6).

caused by that death, nor the true nature of the disease from within and the enemy from without which combined to bring about this disaster. These are the three leading strains of Mr. Bagger's ' Impersonal Autobiography,' which he calls ' an account of the End of Our Time in terms of one man's life,' likening himself to a scribe hurrying away from the sack of Cnossus, that most modern and urban of ancient cultural centres, to tell the Egyptians ' to look to their fences and defences.' For Mr. Bagger escaped with difficulty to New York, and there they said to him, what they had said in France : ' It cannot happen here.'

This is neither a historical treatise, nor a philosophical essay, nor humorous reminiscence, nor a traveller's diary, nor an epicure's observations—it is all of these things, and much more. It is much more, because all these kinds of writing are woven together in a lively and powerful narrative, which gaily carries the reader, now along one strand, now another, though it always winds in greater or lesser circles around the background of France.

He writes first about his two homes in France, the travels he made with his family, the conversations he had with numerous Frenchmen of all kinds, and about his sixteen-year-old wire-haired terrier Tosca, describing everything with vigorous freshness and no clichés. He writes too of his hatred of the Germans, his vision of the historical evolution of Europe as an unending struggle between the Builders and the Wreckers, France and Germany, his observation of the growth of despair, and his knowledge of the disaster that was impending. Yet when it happened, like the rest of the refugees the suddenness took him by surprise, and there follows a magnificent account of his expulsion with his wife from their home near Bordeaux and their flight to the Spanish border, across Spain and Portugal to Lisbon.

He was born in Budapest and spent his early life in Copenhagen He was early devoted to absorbing various philosophies; he had himself baptised a Catholic in a fit of short-lived enthusiasm. He moved to the United States during the Great War and as newspaperman and author became a fervent preacher, in sympathy with his contemporaries, of what he calls ' the great empiricist-positivist-pragmatist racket, called the Empire of Man.' It was only after a stay of three years in Vienna, where he came to know Alfred Adler, that he settled in Provence and began to absorb the Latin outlook which lies at the root of the old European and French civilisation. ' The knowledge that the truly great and important things in life are the things that never change, that are what they are, and endure in being from the beginning of time to time's end, and beyond; and

that although men love, and cannot help loving, the things that change and pass, there is in their love for these things always an element of distrust and fear; but the eternal need not be feared . . . my mind was still enmeshed in that unconscious philosophy which I had absorbed in the course of my American years—the philosophy of pragmatism, which is one of becoming, not of being, and which teaches men to conquer and direct becoming, and not to accept and be grateful for Being. It is a Northern philosophy, the philosophy that is born at the fireside while out of doors the storm rages in the dark of a Northern night; and men who were born in the North and have the North in their blood must forever ponder how to make things better than they are, how to keep out the cold and the storm, and so they become pragmatists . . . But I was beginning to abandon myself to that Southern mode of thinking which does not want to improve things, but only to accept what is, to live, and to thank God for the gift of life.'

From this time he began to work his way through the psychologies of Freud and Adler—the atheist interpretations of the problem of sin—to the old realism by which he was more and more attracted. By an analysis of neurosis as a kind of superhuman greed and a study of the life of Stendhal, 'the first of the moderns,' he was able to open the way of release from the prevailing neurotic mood. And having grasped that this prevailing mood was the climax of a new way of thought which had been superimposed upon an older and very different way, he was able, as he puts it, to 'open new and fascinating vistas into the psychological understructure of atheism and agnosticism.' And this understructure, which is also the cause of what I have called above the disease from within and the enemy from without, is the growth of a philosophical egotism, 'the ideology of Man the Sovereign.' But 'the modern conception of truth as personal conviction and an outflow of sincerity has a double and not a single ancestry'—a Pelagian or Renaissance strain developed by Bacon, Descartes, and Rousseau, which has contaminated most of our democratic thought, and a Manichean or Reformation strain, the chief spokesman of which was Luther and which reached its final and logical conclusion in the rise of Hitler and Nazism. 'That evolution makes up the history of the western world from the early sixteenth century to our own day when the ideology of Sovereign Man collapsed with a suddenness and finality unparalleled in the annals of mankind, and brought down with it overnight the whole thousand-year-old political edifice of Europe.' Moreover, 'I saw that however widely the views of its four founders may have differed in every other respect, there was one respect in which Luther

and Bacon and Descartes and Rousseau were at one—their implacable hostility to the philosophy of Aristotle and of Thomas of Aquino, which is also the philosophy of the Catholic Church.' But France, throughout the greater length of her history, has held herself proudly among the leading examples and defenders of the old faith. And if the Heathen are wrong, what has happened to the Christians? Mr. Bagger answers that this question implies the very fallacy that has contributed so much to their downfall, the fallacy that right and truth will prevail spontaneously. 'History,' he says, 'is made and unmade by the free will of man.' Then why did France allow herself to be destroyed, and why have so many other societies committed a similar suicide? 'Civilisations,' he says, 'die when their religion dies. Such religion as they happen to possess; it is not necessarily a true religion.' But if European civilisation was constructed on Catholicism, and European civilisation has died, how can Catholicism be true, as you assert? And then comes the final answer, the only possible answer, which is not a proof, but an explanation: 'When a false religion is thrown overboard, it ceases to be a religion; but when the true religion is denied, men go on living in error.'

The importance of this book lies in its ruthless exposure of the errors with which we have been poisoning ourselves these last four hundred years. The author says of the flowering of 'the philosophy of Man the Sovereign' that 'it was a grand adventure while it lasted,' and the critic gladly uses the same words to describe the effect of this book. For it is not, like so many, the unadorned autobiography of a public figure whose life we know already, the personal account by a famous man of How He Did It. This is, as it is called, an impersonal account of the growth of a man's mind, with the grinding out of his thoughts and how he thought them, and why and where, a thinker, who has largely, by a combination of circumstance and temperament, kept his thoughts to himself. In style Mr. Bagger is a master of pungent philosophical epigram and also of great ten-line sentences that are as stimulating as a strong massage. The momentum of his punches carries you along, and all through there is never any doubt what the author means and that he means it. The book is dedicated to the memory of Chesterton, but it is written in the style of what I should like to call the perfected living word of a man who has learnt English in Hungary and talked it in England and written it in France and America.

J. J. DEAN.