

THE QUEENDOM OF THE UNITED STATE

ROYAL CELEBRATIONS IN OLDE YORKE

An Englishman's reflections on The American Monarchy

by

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Lesser London, 21 October 2000
IT IS with pleasure that I accede to the request of ENCOUNTER to describe my recent visit to the United State. The occasion was pleasant and august: they were celebrating the fortieth anniversary of their Monarchy. The crowned heads and Party Secretaries of Eurasia, Africa, and the two Arctics were gathered in Olde Yorke to do honour to the American Queen: from Truro² had come our own King Charles the Third, with a suite in which I had the honour to be included. We left London in the early afternoon; the Royal rocket bore us smoothly across the Atlantic and deposited us in 45 seconds less than the scheduled time of 27 minutes at the stratoport of Olde Yorke.

After the perpetual sunshine of London the chilly Olde Yorke drizzle struck one unpleasantly at first: even the tall Federal Guardsmen, splendidly immobile at the en-

trance to Wall Street, seemed to shiver in their greatcoats and bullskins.³ Yet nothing could detract from the gaiety and brilliance of the scene.

Americans used to boast of their triumphs and excuse their mistakes by saying "We are a young country." Now, in A.D. 2000, this is no longer the fashion. Life in the United State moves at such a pace that it is hard to realise that it is only forty years ago to-day that it became an Olde Country. A recent General Knowledge⁴ test among teenage children revealed that more than half of them supposed that Queen Marlene was directly descended from King George III; that the United State had always been a monarchy and that the glorious House of Dietrich was closely allied to the House of Windsor.⁵

It seems therefore worthwhile at this important climacteric of American and global affairs to look back over the past and examine

¹Great-grandson of Sir Winston Churchill and grandson of the late Mr. Randolph Churchill.

²Under the short-lived Socialist government of Sir Aneurin Bevan (1965-1966) the fortunes of the Royal Family had for the first time in English history become liable to death duties (these are an archaic equivalent of what modern Americans more sensitively call "farewell tariffs"). In consequence, in the 'eighties, the Royal Family were glad to accept a takeover bid for Buckingham Palace from the Second Viscount Clore, who speedily transformed it into an emporium for footwear. For the last twenty years the Royal Family have found it more prudent and convenient to inhabit a bungalow in Truro, ancient capital of the Duchy of Cornwall, the only part of the royal estates which has not yet been nationalised.

³In England we call this type of headgear a "bearskin." When it was adopted by the Brigade of Federal Guards the name was changed; since Queen Marlene's accession the Dow Jones Industrial Index has never stood at less than 5000 and all references to bears are strongly deprecated not only on Wall Street, but throughout the nation.

⁴An American friend tells me: "Knowledge, distinguished World War III veteran, introduced these culture spot-checks while professing pedagogics at Germany's Heidelberg University."

⁵During World War I British monarch King George V changed the name of his family from Saxe-Coburg-Gotha to Windsor. The Dietrichs, like other great American families, the Eisenhowers, the Roosevelts, and the Schiffs, have consistently refused to anglicise their name.

what were the key factors in the establishment of what is now universally regarded as the most powerful, if not the most long-established, Queendom in the world. The whole of this mighty constitutional transformation was "sparked," as old-fashioned Americans still say, by the visit to the United States, as they were then called, of the English Queen Elizabeth II in the autumn of 1957. Exceptional publicity waited upon the occasion. An attack had recently been made upon Her Majesty by the second Lord Altrincham, who to show how up-to-date he was, borrowed a now obsolete transatlantic metaphor and said that his Queen's voice gave him "a pain in the neck." Naturally the citizens of the American Republic were agog to hear the Queen speak so that they could judge for themselves whether the criticism was justified. A nation-wide Gallup poll, sponsored by the Little Rock, Ark., College of Osteopathy, showed that 74.2 per cent. of Americans were captivated by the Queen's diction; that 12.3 per cent. agreed with Lord Altrincham; while there was the usual 13.5 per cent. who "didn't know" or had never had "a pain in the neck."

More significant perhaps than the poll was a statement made over C.B.S. Television by Mr. Edward R. Murrow, who, interviewing Lord Altrincham at the time, observed that that nobleman gave him "a pain in the ass" (*sic*).⁶

Lord Altrincham's attack was not the only one. *Time* magazine wittily, succinctly, inaccurately stated: "Retiring funnies-editor Malcolm Muggeridge (now chiefly remembered as model of sculptor Epstein's controversial gargyle on West Front of Hampstead Garden Suburb's modernist cathedral) timed a similar attack on the Queen to coincide with the Royal visit. Prime Minister Harold Macmillan (who had left presidency of mammoth publishing corporation, Macmillan Inc., to head Cabinet at personal request of 5th Marquis of Salisbury) hastened across

Atlantic to his sovereign's defence, telling reporters, 'I'll Punch that fellow's face.'"

EVERY quizz-kid is, of course, familiar with the important amendments to the American Constitution which were necessary to establish a Queendom. The 23rd authorised the President, with the concurrence of a joint committee of Congress, to select the future sovereign. The 24th defined the powers, naturally more copious than those of a British sovereign, that the new monarch should exercise. Among the powers vested in the new royal prerogative, sole discretion was reserved to the monarch in the appointment of ambassadors. In consequence, the distinguished industrial magnates who still adorn the foreign embassies of the United State are no longer exposed to embarrassing General Knowledge interrogations by a Senate Committee, a process which was such a distressing feature of the Eisenhower régime.

It was as recently as 1975 that the Re-Founding Fathers, meeting in Philadelphia under the chairmanship of Mr. Adlai Stevenson, logically decided that under a monarchy, which means the rule of one, the United States should cease to be plural. They were singularised by the 25th Amendment to the Constitution. In consequence, this amendment changed the name of the Flag to "Star and Stripe." This gave particular satisfaction in Texas where it is still widely believed that the only star surviving is that of the Lone Star State. By good chance no alteration was needed in the wording of the National Anthem, "The Star Spangled Banner," which by strange and singular premonition already foretold the destruction of State Rights and the ultimate triumph of the Federal authority. Monarchy, as has been observed, implies the rule of one person. Great stars, not least Miss Dietrich, are usually happiest when they shine alone. Indeed it was quite early in her reign that Queen Marlene was heard to exclaim in the faultless French of which she has long been mistress, "Les Etats sont moi."

At the time when the new Constitution was still in the melting-pot, the idea was

⁶Spelt in English "arse." To-day this word is spelt correctly in the American Federal schools and correctly pronounced with a long "a."

agitated that an hereditary Earl Marshal should be appointed to preside over Queen Marlene's forthcoming coronation at Fort Knox. A quietus was imposed upon this agitation by the sensible suggestion that since the Chief Justice of the United State, the Hon. Earl Warren, already possessed a title, he and his family in the female line should be indefinitely confirmed in the appointment. As he was the father of three extremely attractive girls the Matriarchy was thus assured of continuance in important new ceremonial functions no less than in those which were merely justiciary. King Charles III was, I know, particularly impressed by the efficiency and impartiality with which the 3rd Countess Warren dispensed justice when he attended a session of the Supreme Court on his recent visit.

Another amendment, the 26th, provided for an hereditary aristocracy to buttress the new monarchy. Mr. John Foster Dulles,⁷ long retired from public service and legal practice, busied himself with a study of the English Constitution and he concluded that part of the strength of our monarchy was that it was not the only hereditary institution in the realm. It was on his research that the 26th Amendment was based. Americans in the '70's detest privilege every bit as much as they do to-day and almost as much as Englishmen have always done. Accordingly Mr. Dulles devised a system by which peerages would, even in the first generation, be entirely fortuitous and independent of personal merit. It was decided that they should all stem from those whose Christian or surnames were Duke, Marquis, or Earl. But Mrs. Clare Booth Luce, who epitomised the spirit of American matriarchy, at this stage pointed

⁷ Her Majesty Queen Marlene was graciously pleased to decorate Mr. Dulles with the Order of the Blue Angel (2nd class) for his services. The first class was naturally restricted to women. Early awards to the First Class included Mrs. Arthur Miller, Mrs. Gilbert Miller, Mrs. William Randolph Hearst, Junr., Mrs. William S. Paley, Miss Bankhead, Mrs. Clare Booth Luce, Mrs. "Grandma" Moses, and Mrs. Frances Liberace Casadonte, mother of the eminent pianist. It was widely believed at the time that Miss Gloria Swanson had declined the honour with the remark: "I never feel blue, and I am no longer angelic."

out that since the monarchy was to descend through the female line the same prescription should apply to the aristocracy; hence the vast proliferation of Duchesses, Marchionesses, and Countesses, who are the glory of the modern United State.⁸

OF COURSE the royal visit of Queen Elizabeth II in October 1957 would not have been sufficient in itself to persuade American citizens to cast away their birth-right and become subjects. But under the 22nd Amendment of the Constitution it was impossible for President Eisenhower to run for a third term. When some rock-ribbed members of his Party suggested repealing this amendment to permit of a third term the idea was quickly scouted as impracticable. The decisive argument was founded upon the report of 48 psychiatrists, one drawn from each State in the Union, as it then was. These psychiatrists reported unanimously that if the citizens of the great Republic were to be deprived under the Constitution of the father figure to whom they had so long been accustomed and if a monarchy were to be introduced it would be very much more satisfying to the citizenry to have a Queen rather than a King, a mother figure being more reassuring than a father figure.

At this time only 70 per cent. of the property in the United States was owned by women (compared with 99.92 per cent. to-day). Nonetheless the embryonic U.S. Matriarchy was already aborning and was tough enough to insist that descent should be through the female line and that the heiress-apparent should normally be married to a son

⁸ Some of these ladies are able to trace their ancestry even beyond the founding of the Dietrich dynasty; for Queen Marlene has never forgotten the friends of her early youth. She revived many titles which had fallen in abeyance, and so it is that among the most flamboyant of political hostesses in Washington to-day may be discerned the Duchess of Ellington. It is gratifying for visiting journalists to find that the memories of some of their former Press colleagues are still kept green in the capital in the person, for example, of the Marchioness of Child. These latter titles, of course, originated subsequently to the 26th Amendment passed in 1970 and carry a social prestige inferior to that of pre-Dietrich creations. See Emily Post, 8th edition, 1982. Funk and Wagnall, Co.

of the President, or failing such issue a son of the Vice-President. If by ill chance both President and Vice-President should be without male issue at a time when the Constitution required a consort for the heiress-apparent, lots would be drawn among all U.S. Senators with sons of marriageable age.

The joint committee of Congress which produced the report calling for a Queendom, shortly after the visit to the United States, as they were then called, of Queen Elizabeth II of England, inclined, at the suggestion of Senator Kefauver, who was at that time aspiring to the Vice-Presidential nomination of the Democratic Party,⁹ to the idea of offering the throne to Princess Margaret; not only on the grounds of her beauty and charm but because of her partly German origin. Just as the Founding Fathers imitated in many respects what they conceived to be the principles of the English Constitution, so the joint committee of Congress decided that the success of the English Monarchy was partly due to its German origin, and thought that this ought to be taken as a pattern.

Congress ultimately decided to adopt the suggestion put forward by Senator Kennedy; namely, that the throne should instead be offered to Miss Marlene Dietrich, who was not only of German origin but a grandmother to boot. A grandmother figure was exactly what the age demanded. The success of the monarchy established at Fort Knox in 1960 was thus automatically assured in the female line for three generations. And it is only in this year, A.D. 2000, that for the first time a Presidential Election has been affected by the question of which candidate is more likely to produce a suitable consort for her Federal Majesty Marlene's great-granddaughter.

Vice-President Kennedy's unexpected decision to decline re-nomination for the Vice-Presidency at the recent Democratic Convention in Boston, Mass., is responsible for this turn in events. Vice-President Ken-

nedey's sons will now be eligible to marry the sixteen-year-old Princess Marlene, great-granddaughter of the Queen. President Roosevelt's son is only two, and the disparity in age between himself and Princess Marlene makes it unthinkable that he could seriously sue for her hand. No one thinks that there is a possibility of a Republican victory, but the Republicans have never "despaired of the Republic" and have chosen as Presidential candidate Senator Herbert C. Hoover IV. Their candidate for the Vice-Presidency is a hitherto unknown Texan cowhand called Vice H. President who claims, under the 26th Amendment (q.v.) a prescriptive right to this traditionally elective office. The Democrats, of course, reject this interpretation of the amendment: but so obscurely is it worded that both parties have been involved in costly litigation which has now reached the Supreme Court.

As this article goes to press Countess Warren and her colleagues have not yet delivered judgment. But since the Court has long been stuffed by the Roosevelts with Democratic nominees, the Countess is likely to find herself in a minority of one if she should have the audacity to put forward a judgment favourable to the Republicans.

THE departure of Senator Kennedy from the Vice-Presidency will leave an ugly gap in the administration. The six Roosevelts who have occupied the White House since 1960 have only been figureheads. The effective government of the country has for forty years been in the hands of Vice-President Kennedy who sensibly took as his pattern for power the career of Vice-President Nixon.

It is unfortunate that in the United State, no less than in England, the monarchy tends to be dragged into politics. All God-fearing and Queen-loving Americans will resent the fact that the Republican National Convention should have put into its programme a plank calling for the admission of non-*divorcées* to the Royal Federal enclosure in Madison Square Gardens. Senator McCarthy of Wisconsin, a collateral descendant of the Senator of the early 50's who did so much uncon-

⁹ He was edged out by Senator Kennedy who sponsored the Dietrich Dynasty and was thus overwhelmingly elected to the Vice-Presidency, which office he has held ever since.

sciously to make the Monarchy a necessity in the American system, has gone so far as to drag Queen Marlene into the controversy. He has pointed out that the august founder of the Dietrich dynasty has not herself been divorced. In the democratic, Democratic age in which we live it is preposterous and indecent that such matters should be revived and it is a comfort to all those who endorse the American way of life to know that the 5th Lord Altrincham, lineal descendant in the male line of the 2nd Lord Altrincham, who did so much to tone up the British monarchy in mid-century, will soon be going to the United State on a lecture tour at the invitation of the Granddaughters of the American Counter-Revolution.

In 1970 the capital was moved to New York.¹⁰ The name of the city was changed to the more dignified and monarchical-sounding Olde Yorke; and shortly afterwards the Union was reconstituted as an Incorporated State by means of a vast flotation (reputed the largest in the history of the New York Stock Exchange) of Uncommon¹¹ and Preferred Stock in the Federal Monarchy. The civil rights problem, with which politicians had long failed to cope, was solved in a trice by the distinguished committee of investment bankers who, for a modest commission, handled the flotation. Coloured citizens were only permitted to subscribe for non-voting "A" shares, *on which however a higher dividend was guaranteed*. This statesmanlike stroke had the curious result of starting among the white citizens of the South a movement for racial integration, with the slogan "Whites Demand Vote Ban Too."

The establishment of a Matriarchy in the United State has been particularly fortunate to the Roosevelt dynasty. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt served for a mere four terms and it was partly his appetite for office, combined with his exceptional electoral prowess, that led to the introduction of the

22nd amendment. Despite this hostile piece of legislation, plainly directed at the Roosevelt family, holders of that name have held office continuously at the White House since Queen Marlene's accession. All four Roosevelt sons together with their widowed mother associated themselves with Senator Kennedy's political embracement of Miss Dietrich as the proper candidate for the throne. Having thus early ensconced themselves on the bandwagon they and their descendants have succeeded in making a private preserve of the Dietrich dynasty very much as the Whig Lords in the 18th century in England were able to appropriate the Hanoverian dynasty to themselves. In a sense the family have become Mayors of the Palace and it is not wonderful that the Republican Party should now have become truly Republican. The Roosevelts, it is true, have not yet succeeded in altering the Constitution to make their family a permanency in the White House. But their ascendancy is unlikely to be challenged in our lifetime, least of all by the aged Senator Kennedy who now has been Vice-President for close on half a century.

ONE of the difficulties which Queen Marlene skilfully circumvented in the early years of her reign arose from the natural desire of each of the forty-eight States to provide her with a home. A similar difficulty had confronted the Founding Fathers in their choice of a capital. These wise men thought they had solved the problem by carving the district of Columbia out of the boundary states of Maryland and Virginia. But by 1970 Washington had spread so far in all directions that, shortly before the capital was changed to Olde Yorke, the Governess of North Carolina remarked to the Governess of South Carolina in the gubernatorial castle at Columbia, S.C., "Pass the port, and don't let these damn Yankees come anywhere south of the James River." Queen Marlene was, of course, crowned at Fort Knox, Ky. The Blue Grass State inevitably evoked in the Queen's mind nostalgic memories of the Blue Angel, excerpts from which were freely played dur-

¹⁰ "Let the capital be where the capital lies."

Sir Pierpoint Morgan IV.

¹¹ The usual designation "Common" could not, it was felt, properly be applied to the equity of the Monarchy.

ing her coronation.¹² Kentucky has something romantic about it, and there is something solid about Fort Knox. The combination of romance and common sense made an irresistible appeal to the whole populace and amid the general jubilation there were few who were captious enough to find fault with the locale.

A graver problem presented itself over the choice of maids of honour for the ceremony. For matron of honour there could be only one choice. With some difficulty the Duchess of Ellington was lured from Chatsworth, Ill., where she was engaged in building a replica, on quadruple scale, of the Duke of Devonshire's modest home in Derbyshire, England. But the question of the maids threatened to prove far more vexatious. Several T.V. commentators suggested that there should be a beauty competition in each state and that the 48 winners should be attendant upon her Majesty. Queen Marlene with a radical gesture solved the problem for her advisers. She said: "Let there be 48. But let them come from what legend in future years will believe to be my home town, Dietrich, Idaho. And let them be the 48 plainest girls that the mayor can find." In these circumstances, despite the difficulty of mustering 48 girls, even 48 *plain* girls, from Dietrich, Idaho (population 160), the coronation was an immense success. The 48 plain girls, each as plain as an Idaho baked potato, provided admirable foils for the Queen's majestic beauty as they supported the huge train of peacocks' feathers. This, out of patriotic sentiment, the Queen had procured from the boutique of Nieman Marcus in Dallas, Texas, and not from Balenciaga who, after the death of Monsieur Dior, and until her enthronement, had been her preferred couturier. It will be recalled that Queen Marlene was crowned in a Pan-Denominational chapel so that no offence should be given to any of the minority groups of which the United States at that time so largely consisted. The octagonal crown, newly wrought by Messrs. Van Cleef & Arpells on Worth

¹² This facility was granted by kind and patriotic permission of the copyright owners.

Avenue, Palm Beach, Fla., was placed upon Queen Marlene's head by a representative consortium which included a cardinal, an episcopalian bishop, a rabbi, an Imam, an elder of the First Church of Christ Scientist, an archimandrite, a Calvinist, and the patriarch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.¹³

QUEEN MARLENE was not so successful in choosing a royal residence as she had been in coping with her coronation. She was advised by the State Department, whose Protocol section had recently been moved for security reasons to Whitehall, Montana, that it would be a graceful gesture to make the central focus of her dynasty in a town called Windsor. But here it seemed impossible to give pleasure without giving tenfold offence. The Secretary of the Interior pointed out that townships with the name of Windsor existed in the states of Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Massachusetts, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Vermont, and Virginia. Some of Queen Marlene's advisers toyed with the idea of establishing a home for her in Windsor, Ontario, whose population far exceeded the populations of all the American Windsors. But this was before Canada had been annexed to the United State and would in any case have irked the subjects of Queen Elizabeth II, not only in Windsor Castle, Berkshire, but in Windsor, Quebec, Windsor, Nova Scotia, and Windsor, Newfoundland. The likely repercussions of such a choice of Royal Federal domicile had already been brought to Queen Marlene's attention by the 1st Baron Beaverbrook in the columns of the *Daily Express*, of which journal she had long been an addict. In the end the Queen sensibly decided to make her home in Bismarck, Mo., a small town where she vainly hoped for some privacy, whose name commemorated an important statesman

¹³ It is curious to note that the founder of this sect (better known as Mormons), Mr. Joseph Smith, Junr., was born in Windsor County, Vermont. This fact afforded another agreeable, if tenuous, link between the British and American Royal Houses.

of her race, and which was, unlike Washington D.C., "centrally located." Since the founding of her dynasty Queen Marlene has of course acquired many other homes; but the abolition of State Rights in the 25th Amendment has enabled her to live where she likes at different times of the year. Now that she is more than 100 years old she seldom cares to visit her shooting-box at Balmoral, Manitoba, which was presented to her on her coronation by the forward-looking inhabitants of that bleak province. In her middle youth she has found the greatest pleasure in living in her palace at Buckingham, Pennsylvania, a state which she has further enriched by the foundation of a university at Oxford and a casino at Roulette. Her great-granddaughter, who in the normal expectation will one day be Queen Marlene IV, is studying the laws of probability at the former while her younger brother John Jacob Dietrich IV puts his sister's theoretical knowledge to the test at the latter. It would be an un-American activity for any American who is a subject of Queen Marlene to break a bank, except on the Riviera. Loyalty to the Royal Federal Family therefore compels us to conceal the extent to which it has been enriched by the joint activities of Her Federal Highness and her Federal Brother.¹⁴

The inter-State jealousies which threatened to make Queen Marlene's reign at the outset so difficult were solved by the total abolition

of State Rights by the Amendment of 1975. Thenceforward the Queen could live where she liked; though of course the Roosevelts, who succeeded each other in a rhythmical fashion in the Presidency and were to some extent dependent on the popular franchise, were careful to spread their golfing and fishing activities across the United State. Queen Marlene has no need to condescend to anyone. It is now more than 25 years since she last visited Washington and nearly 15 years since she has resided at Fort Knox. Like Queen Victoria and Dame Greta Garbo she has acquired a passion for privacy, but she has never carried this passion to excess. While Dame Greta commutes regularly from the Riviera to her villa rented on one of the smaller Rothschild estates on the moon, Queen Marlene is content to live a quiet life in her private motel at Buckingham, Pa. Despite the urgent clamour of the press and television she only allows herself to be radiodiffused three times a day, and since becoming a centenarian, has restricted her medical bulletins, whatever the state of her health, to no more than one per minute. As Miss Haggerty recently informed the United Press, "Marlene says that in a free enterprise world she don't aim at out-smarting free enterprise. The Pennsylvania rocket road still proclaims the slogan 'EVERY MINUTE UPON THE MINUTE.' There could still be guys and dolls in Congress denouncing the Queen as a Commie if she tried to go better than the Penn." I understand that Miss Haggerty will be made a dame in the New Millennium Honours list.

¹⁴ But see *Fortune*, December, 1999, for some account of these transactions.

The Hero in Search of a Dramatist

The Plays of John Osborne

IN ONE of his modern parables, *The Woman Who Rode Away*, D. H. Lawrence describes the remote tribe of the Chilchui Indians, who according to local legend still offer human sacrifice to their ancestral god. The chosen victim is splendidly fed, clothed, and housed, treated with infinite solicitude, and in due course becomes, not merely resigned but dedicated to his eventual immolation. It must be just such a deity, one sometimes feels, who holds sway over the English theatre, with its public patiently awaiting a miracle, its grave and dexterous high priests in the person of managements and producers, and its insatiable appetite for a new playwright (the younger the better), whose sacrifice is demanded to prove that the cult of the drama is still alive.

No guess-work is called for to name to-day's candidate for this conspicuous and possibly unenviable rôle. All the same, Mr. John Osborne has arrived on the scene with unusual talents and in an unusual context. It seems likely that the Royal Court Theatre season of 1956, which brought him to fame, marked a change of taste at least as important as the historic Granville-Barker venture of 1904; at any rate it was certainly *Look Back in Anger* which did more than any other play to establish the new climate. Originality is an unmistakable quality and Mr. Osborne has demonstrated it, as most original writers do, by his capacity to seize upon and emphasise the essentials as he sees them, to the exclusion of all else that until then had been taken for granted. The theatre may reflect "the age and body of the time," but it is just as capable of becoming the grand repository of the obsolete and unreal in manners and social prejudices; and this is a particularly real danger for the West End stage, whose staple diet, so far as the British dramatist is concerned, has for so long consisted of plays about the behaviour of the upper middle-class in moments of mild crisis,

with mildly comic or mildly unhappy consequences. Perhaps this is one of the minor penalties we have to pay for the extraordinary stability of our institutions, for our immunity from the traumatic experiences of modern life—occupation, civil war, revolution, inflation, or even the collapse of the stock-market—which have so obviously left their marks on the drama of France, Germany, Russia, Ireland, or the U.S.A. At any rate the world of Shaftesbury Avenue has continued to thrive largely on what Mr. Nigel Dennis might call the "as-if" basis, as if it existed solely for a public whose investments had lain undisturbed for three generations or whose children are entered for the same house at a public school which their grandparents attended. Something of this kind, one feels, must lie behind the demure, unquestioning assumptions about life, upon which so much of our modern drama contentedly reposes.

Into this conspiracy of ghastly good taste Mr. Osborne has erupted indignantly and the howl of Jimmy Porter's trumpet, issuing from his dishevelled bed-sitter to rend the tedium of a wet Sunday afternoon, suggests a fitting symbol for his creator's overpowering desire to take the whole system apart. Admirers might claim that there is an edge to his writing, a certain ruthlessness and extravagance of conception which has not been witnessed in English drama since the 17th century; his critics could equally well detect in it an outrageous (for England) abandonment of decorum and a rising note of hysteria, a prolonged rictus worthy of Mr. Francis Bacon, set to words. ("Wrap it up, will you! Stop ringing those bells! There's someone going crazy in here!") Mr. Osborne is extremely skilful in the use of sound, and the metaphor of sound may suggest a clue here. The besetting weakness of our poetry and still more of our drama in the last two decades has been the failure to "connect," to capture, and hold an audience, especially a young