

..... *Season*

Grey  
As a death, thin  
like his ancestors, pearl-  
white and cold, Winter edges.

Not yet is Winter here; only  
the memory of last. And promises  
underneath the lids, green pale.

Step by step, catching  
Careful with Jackfingers,  
Spilling silhouettes  
of glass on the open sky-  
Moor, Winter seeps beneath.

Then, there is only one warmth;  
Blazing, hotly pouring orange,  
the heart opens.

ALEXANDRA GRILIKHES

## *On the Terms "Left" and "Right"*

### *In Contemporary British Politics*

LINDLEY FRASER

IN AN ARTICLE in the Winter 1962-63 issue of *MODERN AGE*, Mr. J. M. Lalley traced the historical—and physical—origin of the terms "right" and "left" to the very beginning of the French Revolution. He showed how they developed, partly by a freak of acoustics, to symbolize conservatism, or a critical attitude towards change, on the one side, and on the other an attitude of radicalism, which is generally associated with reform or revolution.

Since the French Revolution, the terms "left" and "right" in Continental Europe have tended to characterize the contrast between "progressives" and "conservatives." The image behind this usage is of a familiar continental semi-circular Parliament hall in which revolutionaries sit literally at the extreme left (as seen from the rostrum) and reactionaries at the extreme right, while the intermediary groups

occupy the inner-left, central and inner-right benches, according as they are (roughly) progressive, moderate or conservative. Mr. Lalley has thrown a good deal of light on the illusory character of the terms. I am concerned here with their significance in the contemporary British political scene.

The terms "left" and "right" were relatively late in coming into general use in Britain. Before the First World War they were almost unknown. The Labour party was still regarded, except by its more extreme supporters, as the advanced wing of the Liberals, while on the Conservative side the main distinction was simply between those who, concerned primarily with the Irish question, called themselves "Unionists" and ranked as being prepared to fight to the end on that issue, and the rest of the party, which was prepared to