

Man is matter and spirit—both real and both good.

Gill is often represented as entertaining some phantasy about a return to a medieval way of life, medieval technology and so on. These passages make it quite clear that this is not the case. Gill's views on modern industrial methods of manufacture were not simply a blind hostility to innovation and modern life. His opposition to the technology of mass-production arose from his insistence that every workman was called to be an artist. If he was not free and responsible he was merely a slave. A factory hand is prevented by the technology of production from working freely and

responsibly. Under such circumstances, the worker ceases to be the subject of labour and becomes a mere adjunct of the capital of his employer, what Marx called "the personification of the thing and the materialisation of the person". The Pope, in his encyclical *Laborem Exercens*, makes just the same point—"the proper subject of work continues to be a man", rejecting the system under which "man is treated as an instrument of production." Gill was no escapist dreaming of a golden age, but simply a Catholic worker trying to make sense of his faith in the way he worked, trying to effect "the beginnings of a reasonable, decent holy tradition of work."

GILBERT MARKUS O.P.

IN THE DORIAN MODE: A Life of John Gray, 1866—1934 by Brocard Sewell.
Tabb House, Padstow. 1983. pp xiv + 240

Fifty years ago two of the most enigmatic writers and aesthetes ever to feature in English literary and artistic history died in Edinburgh within four months of each other. They had been the closest of friends for 42 years. André Raffalovich, born in Paris of an extremely wealthy Russian-Jewish family, had made his way to Edinburgh by way of fashionable Mayfair drawing rooms and the cultivated and self-conscious decadence of London cafe society to the austere and well-ventilated gravity of Edinburgh. His friendship with John Gray had drawn him to the Athens of the North, then afflicted with some of the worst problems of poverty and deprivation in Western Europe.

John Gray's road to Edinburgh, as chronicled by Father Sewell, had, in some ways at least, been more complex than his subsequent path to Rome and Catholicism. Unlike Raffalovich, Gray had been born into a family of modest means and humble pretensions. His father was a wheelwright and carpenter in the naval dockyard at Woolwich. At the age of 13 John was obliged to leave school to become an apprentice at Woolwich Arsenal in order to contribute to the family budget. despite long hours at work and difficult domestic circumstances

John, fired by an unremitting ambition to better himself and gifted with an able intelligence, took up the study of languages, music and art. He was eventually to pass the Civil Service entrance examinations and within six years was working at the Foreign Office, the workshops of Woolwich a long way behind him.

Father Sewell gives us many details of Gray's social life in London, his association with Oscar Wilde, so close as to fuel speculation that John Gray was the original of the Dorian of Wilde's novel. An association that was soon broken by Gray's distancing himself from Wilde in the years immediately preceding the latter's disgrace. It is perhaps typical of Gray and the circle in which he moved at that time that he should have heard the news of Wilde's condemnation through reading a telegram from his London hairdresser in the lift of a Brussels hotel. Father Sewell richly describes the number and variety of Gray's contacts and activities of these years, Beardsley, Beerbohm, Arthur Symons, Verlaine, Mallarmé, Pierre Louÿs, Ricketts and Shannon. The list is almost endless and includes almost everybody who was anybody, and some who became nobodies, in fin de siècle London and

Paris. Yet, Gray's own personal financial situation as well as his social origins must have been influential in determining the character and quality of his life. Father Sewell describes how Gray later confessed to having incurred heavy debts in the 1890s, his Foreign Office salary was only £120 per annum, but we are nowhere told how he was able to support himself in circumstances of considerable ease, if not extravagance. In 1892 Gray met Raffalovich and the implication is made that the latter supported the former at various times during his life, but nowhere is this made explicit and nowhere do other possible patrons and benefactors appear. The enigma of Gray's social success and apparent economic solvency remains.

The further puzzle of Gray's conversion to Catholicism and discovery of a vocation to the priesthood also remains. Father Sewell does very well with the evidence that survives, both Raffalovich and Gray were careful in safeguarding their personal lives from the enquiries of later biographers. The author tells us that Gray was never a theologian, his course of studies was short, he did not enjoy preaching and yet during his exercise of a curate's ministry in the most densely populated urban area of Western Europe of the time, St. Patrick's parish in Cowgate, he served the people with care and devotion. Fr. Sewell suggests that Catholicism and priesthood for John Gray were means to achieve discipline and

curb an excess of passion and sensibility. At times in his life he had come close to breakdown; the structure of Catholicism was to be the means he chose to form his destiny. However, if much of the charm and vivacity of his early life seems to disappear under the formal and aloof manner of the Canon of St. Andrew's and Edinburgh still one feature remains constant. Father Sewell describes this carefully and discretely, that is Gray's gift of friendship expressed loyally and consistently. His care for Beardley remains an example of true fidelity in adversity.

Those who are looking for an exposé of the decadent nineties will be disappointed in this book. All the ingredients for popular success, religion, sexual ambiguity, social scandal, conversion and subsequent respectability are all here, but dealt with in a sober and serious, if sometimes disjointed and repetitive fashion. Father Sewell is to be congratulated on this work in that not only does he present an interesting, if somewhat idiosyncratically over-sympathetic, account of a man's journey in friendship and faith, but also provides a vivid picture of the world in which he achieved significance. Nevertheless, at the end of the book the enigma of Canon Gray remains, an enigma which even Fr. Brocard, though he comes close, has failed to solve. But it is an enigma unlikely ever to be solved.

ALLAN WHITE OP

NICOLAS ZERNOV, SUNSET TEARS *The Fellowship of St. Alban and St Sergius*. London 1983. pp. 192. £4.00

Nicholas Zernov was a major interpreter of the Russian Orthodox tradition to the English speaking West. His *The Russian Religious Renaissance of the Twentieth Century* remains a unique guide to the brief efflorescence of creative Christian thought in Russia before the Great War, a revival tragically cut short by the October Revolution, in whose wake Zernov and a large proportion of the Russian intelligentsia fled their country. *Sunset Years* is a series of final meditations on the private and public events of his life,

and on the Gospel. I am not sure how satisfactory they will seem to those outside the huge ecumenical circle which Nicholas' genius for friendship gained him. To me, their lack of literary coherence is more than compensated for by the many valuable judgments and *aperçus* on Church life they contain. From this point of view the most important section of the book is perhaps pp. 62–81 where Zernov outlines a proposal for the re-union of Orthodoxy with Rome (and also with Canterbury).