

Les Nourritures Terrestres

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***The Fruits of the Earth**: André Gide, translated by Dorothy Bussy. *Secker and Warburg*. 9s. 6d.

The two volumes of *Nourritures Terrestres* published here under the title *The Fruits of the Earth** are separated by forty years. The first was written in the 'nineties during the period when Gide practised a philosophy of joy and complete personal freedom. It is, of all his works, the one which most influenced the rising generation of the 'twenties. Later he came to deny this philosophy in its exaggerated and most extreme form. The English translation includes the preface which he wrote for the 1927 edition at the moment when he was turning towards humanity and it repudiates some of his earlier theories. The second book belongs to the period of his belief in Communism and casts aside happiness which depends on the misery of others. To be happy himself he now needed the happiness of all and says that it is renunciation which brings all virtues to perfection. Though English literature lacks a simple

classical style of the limpid beauty of the French —this makes Gide's later works so difficult to render in English—it possesses a Biblical style and an *Arabian Nights* style without peer. Both these are needed for *Les Nourritures Terrestres* and *The Fruits of the Earth* have been beautifully translated by Dorothy Bussy, in a style that makes them works of art in their own right and not mere translations. Poems in prose such as *The Lay of the Pomegranate* might easily become ludicrous if not rendered with complete surety of touch, but here unerring perfection has been achieved. It is gratifying that Gide's works, which depend so much for their effect on their style, are to be translated in The Standard Edition by so expert and delicate a hand.

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