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But it is fundamental to M. GIDE's thought as the urgency which lies behind changes of attitude which might otherwise seem merely capricious. These changes are cast into a pattern by *Thésée*, his most recent imaginative work; and it is fortunate for English readers that so skilled and tactful a translation has been prepared, since the element in M. GIDE's work about which there can be no argument is the exceptional beauty of his prose.

The myth of Theseus, at first sight inappropriate, is soon seen to be exactly fitted to M. GIDE's especial fancy. That the Labyrinth should contain an ordeal by pleasure, and the Minotaur himself prove an object of beauty, gives the story an unexpected, but impressive, twist; for in such touches, and with the utmost economy, M. GIDE has been able to re-argue those questions which, in the Jammes correspondence, seemed so new; he has been able to draw the conflicting movements of his own lifetime into a single allegory; and, above all, he has done so without wrenching the delicate framework of this small masterpiece out of line in order to prove a case. His arguments arise quite naturally from the story itself, and end, fittingly, with a dialogue in which the blind Oedipus plays that part which, in youth, M. GIDE may have wished to attribute to Jammes: that of the wise man lost in lonely contemplation of the Divine. "Only since my eyes of flesh were torn with my own hand from the world of appearances," Oedipus exclaims to Theseus, "have I begun, as it seems to me, to see reality." And there is something moving in the consistency with which M. GIDE, at the end of a lifetime of reflection, replies as he might have replied at the beginning. "My thoughts can never march with yours along that road. I remain a child of this world, and I believe that man, be he what he may, and with whatever blemishes you judge him to be stained, is in duty bound to play out his hand to the end." The final words of the French text exactly sum up the whole of M. GIDE's apologia—*J'ai vécu*. Among the battle-cries of rival literary schools this modest claim only to have fulfilled the first intention of *Les Nourritures Terrestres* is singularly refreshing.

Wm. L. Gide  
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