

# THEME AND VARIATIONS

By NIGEL GOSLING

AS summer ripens the galleries put forth exhibitions in profusion: the variety is perplexing, and it is not a bad plan at such a time to take a theme and note the variations on it in the different collections.

The Expressionist pictures at Roland, Browne and Delbanco set a tune which, as it happens, is rather richly echoed elsewhere. This is hardly the show to make converts to that depressing school which, sworn to make its work the vehicle of violent feeling, then limited its range to the bottom of the emotional scale. Only Van Gogh, the godfather of the movement, gave the loud pedal to enjoyment and he is, oddly, not represented here though a wide net has been cast and several birds of doubtful feather included. The general quality is low: Munch, the most notable of the group, has only a woodcut.

One of the artists included is Gaudier-Brzeska, who can be seen to better advantage in a one-man show at the Beaux Arts. His drawings, when seen like this in bulk, make a real impression, and the sculpture has power as well as promise. Had he lived, he would very likely have proved the large-scale sculptor which modern architecture demands.

Another genuine expressionist is Affandi, an Indonesian artist whose pictures have been on show at the Imperial Institute (they go this week to Bristol). A born painter, he seems to dash at his pictures with an intuitive frenzy not unlike that of Kokoschka. Inevitably they are uneven, but the best are better than most of the official Expressionist collection. Perhaps a series of works on a single subject would consolidate his gifts.

Music

It certainly seems to have done so in the case of Ivon Hitchens, who has a show at the Leicester Gallery. The grasp of complicated organisation shown in the early "Garden Conservatory" gave way to a looser, freer style in the woodland scenes which have made his reputation. In them the tasteful colours seem to flow smoothly and effortlessly—too effortlessly—from his brush. But a recent series of "exercises on a theme" of daffodils and lilies shows a renewed tenseness and control.

One last painter can perhaps be related, though distantly, to the Expressionist theme—Alan Reynolds at the Redfern. This talented young artist has found in his native hop-fields a patterning of verticals which he plays off against the horizontal lie of hills or houses with great skill. It is the sombre colouring of greys, blacks and dull reds which joins him to the introvert band. He has already experimented with Klee-ish delicacies of design: it will be interesting to watch whether he learns to widen his range. Osbert Lancaster shows some of his distinctively crisp little designs (mostly for ballet) in the same gallery.

The other exhibitions remind us of Expressionism only in so far as they show the material against which it was a protest. Gimpel Fils have some charming minor examples of French nineteenth-century art (besides two big Monets and some moderns): but the full splendour of that age is revealed in what is incomparably the finest show of the week, at the Lefevre Gallery. Here the big guns go off with magnificent reverberation. An important Cézanne, a large, strange and wonderful Daumier, a superb Renoir cartoon for "Les Grandes Baigneuses"—these by themselves prove the values of discipline and tradition.

By ERIC BLOM

# TABLE TALK

By Pendennis

## Hem-stitcher

IN Indonesia, the traditional Muslim disapproval of all art is still strong. It is therefore understandable that when the Indonesians produce a painter who has a modern Western, rather than a traditional Oriental style they should wish to display his talents to the West. Affandi—a little smiling Indonesian with a wide mouth and a wisp of black beard—has been here for several months sponsored by his Government. This week he moves to Bristol and, later, to Europe.

Scorning brush or palette, he squirts the paint direct from the tubes on to rough canvas. He cannot afford frames, but hem-stitches the pictures with string or makes a border from strips of pocket handkerchiefs. He painted one of the biggest in forty-five minutes in a snow-storm outside South Kensington station.

He seems pleased with his modest success. Sitting every day last week in the stifling gallery at the top of the Imperial Institute he meticulously counted the visitors. "Sixty-two to-day—not counting children of course." He has had his troubles; one day he was nearly arrested for painting in Hyde Park. Sadly he went home and painted a self-portrait shown under the title: "I am disappointed by a policeman."

Sayings of the Week

Aye, it was a nice bit of luck