

HENDERSON. What were your chief impressions of Drinkwater's play on Lee? I missed the production, but read the printed play. Drinkwater's Lee was a onesided and limited character, very unlike the lofty figure enshrined in the hearts of all true Americans, irrespective of section.

SHAW. The performance held me from beginning to end, as Drinkwater's plays always do. I could not ask for a better play: if the facts of history are to be accepted in it. But plays about fairly beaten generals are never completely satisfactory. They can only emphasize the weakness that produced the defeat. Even Masefield could not make Pompey exhilarating.

HENDERSON. Drinkwater makes Lee merely a Virginian, who casts in his lot with the south out of blind loyalty to his native state. A foreigner seeing the play might well imagine that the war between the states was a conflict between Virginia and the north. Lee didn't believe in slavery and didn't wish the Southern States to secede from the Union, but he firmly believed in the constitutional right of secession, which he had been taught at West Point in "Rawle on the Constitution". He was not a

tragic hero in the Drinkwater sense, foreseeing from the beginning the south's failure; he was a great soldier who fought to win. His victories — and against heavy odds — were spectacular; and he was fairly beaten in the end, only by overwhelming numbers. I should like very much to know if to you, an unprejudiced foreign observer, Drinkwater's Lee was the Lee of history?

SHAW. I have not made a study of Lee; and Drinkwater has. I have an impression of Lee; but I don't know where I got it; probably from some portrait. My notion is that Lee was a soldier, with a soldier's limitations, and a soldier's contempt for democratic fancies about individual freedom. Soldiering is the completest slavery possible in civilized society; and as Lee knew this professionally, he could hardly have felt very strongly about the slavery of Sambo. If Lee had been a political genius, he would have hoofed Jefferson Davis out and made himself Military Dictator of the Confederacy. Drinkwater's play was broken by the historical impossibility of making this the climax of it: the collapse of Lee in the scene with Davis was dramatically unforgivable.

CONSOLATION

By Hudson Strode

O H well, after all, man's lot is somewhat better than the sea gull's — For in *his* idiotic wheeling urged by sex and belly hunger, There come to him occasional flashes of a mystery called Beauty, Glimpsed in some unconscious thing, like a grey gull's grace of wing.

THE SKETCH BOOK

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HENRY JAMES AT THE REFORM CLUB

By E. S. Roscoe

HENRY JAMES, as a man and as a letter writer, has lately interested many who, from various causes, have been unable to follow him through his later novels. Of his life at Rye something has been told, though rather from the point of view of the weekend visitor to Lamb House than from that of the observer of James's daily round in the ancient Sussex seaport. Some slight notes of his later life at the Reform Club, London, may add to the knowledge of his attractive personality and be a slight supplement to his own "Middle Years". James was elected on the twenty third of May, 1878. He was proposed by C. H. Robarts, a well known member of the Bar, and seconded by Frank H. Hill, editor of the "Daily News". Both were strong Liberals, for at that time the Reform Club was a fairly active political centre in a quiet way. It was not, however, until November, 1900, that Henry James became tenant of one of the bedrooms which are let permanently to members. This was No. 6 Chamber, a large sunny room overlooking the gardens of Carlton House Terrace, which he furnished as a "bed-sitting room". He described it in a letter to W. E. Norris on December 23, 1900: "My cell is spacious, southern, looking over Carlton [House Terrace] Gardens, and tranquil, utterly, and singularly

well serviced and I find I can work there, there being ample margin for a typewriter and its priest, or priestess." The Reform Club thus became James's London home, where he spent varying intervals until 1912, though he did not actually cease to be a tenant of the Club until January, 1913. To this abode Henry James evidently became attached, for after he ceased to live at the Club, more than once he called on the chamberlain so that he might be allowed to look again at his old room.

James used to come into the dining room of the Reform Club for his breakfast regularly about nine o'clock. He knew few members, and he was not one of those who open a conversation with his neighbor on the subjects which are to be found in the daily papers. His reading of the morning paper was short, and thereafter he sat in silence. But when he had finished his meal, and before he started on the literary work of the day, he was usually ready for a few minutes' conversation. A chance and ordinary remark would set flowing a stream of acute, humorous, sometimes pathetic, observations. One recognized in such conversations the causes of his obscurity as a writer. He seemed overwhelmed by crowding thoughts which he found a difficulty in reducing into definite phrases. But since words in conversation are capable of change, as well as of immediate addition or explanation, especially if aided by a helpful interruption from the listener, the result was always memorable. It