

moments. The Press was never run for profit, but at times Walpole did try to make expenses, and then: "The London booksellers play me all manner of tricks. If I do not allow them ridiculous profit, they will do nothing to promote the sale; and when I do, they buy up the impression, and sell it at an advanced price before my face. . . . In truth, the plague I have had in every shape with my own printers, engravers, the booksellers, etc., besides my own trouble, have almost discouraged me from what I took up at first as an amusement, but which has produced very little of it." Still, it had been amusing to show the press to visiting ladies who, when they peered closer, found verses addressed to themselves. "You may imagine, whatever the poetry was, that the gallantry of it succeeded." Even Chesterfield, for whom Walpole had slight regard, upon strolling into the library at Strawberry one day found a printed sheet which hoped that "the friend of Pope" might "bless with some immortal page" the Strawberry Hill Printing Office. But these, of course, were trifles, and it is true that the gentleman-author's weightier works did involve him in a world of trouble and controversy. The very scarcity of his editions was often, in later years, an expense to him, and we find him complaining that when the King of Poland asked for the "Anecdotes of Painting" he had to pay thirteen guineas for a set although it had been published at thirty shillings less than twenty years before — a purchase which may give modern collectors of limited editions a certain perverse pleasure.

Walpole, with whom the collecting of memorabilia was a passion, kept a journal of the Printing Office. This Journal was recently discovered and has now been edited by the Prince of

Walpolians, Dr. Paget Toynbee. It is not only indispensable to collectors of Walpole, but to collectors of the private presses. The press at Strawberry Hill was not quite the first private press in England, twenty years before one had died in infancy, but it was by all odds the most famous. It is true that Mr. Updike, who must be allowed the last word upon typography, has called its printing "indifferent", singling out the Lucan from the rest as deserving of "moderate praise", but students of the period will find his strictures easy to bear. The present book with its editing which is beyond praise makes scrap paper of nearly everything that has previously been published about the "Officina Arbuteana". It shows how graceful a work of pure scholarship may become in the hands of a master workman. It has the further merit of having been done by the Chiswick Press, and so becomes, in its own right, a necessary "item" for lovers of good book making.

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Journal of the Printing-Office at Strawberry Hill. By Horace Walpole, with notes by Paget Toynbee, M.A., D.Litt. Limited edition. Houghton Mifflin Company.

## MEN, WOMEN AND MANIKINS

By Isabel Paterson

FOR me to assume an attitude of impartial criticism of "The Crystal Cup", or any other of Gertrude Atherton's novels, would be sheer pretence. I am biased, if not totally disqualified, by my enthusiastic admiration of the author, which cannot be set aside, even hypothetically, for the consideration of her work "on its merits", because her books are charged with her personality.

Not that they are intimate confessions nor factual autobiography; it is self evident that they are very far from being anything of the kind; but the dynamic quality with which she was so greatly and fortunately dowered by nature flows through the point of her pen; and her attitude toward life, which she has not only accepted but welcomed and enjoyed, determines her choice and treatment of material.

Always her characters are positive. Confronted by the dilemma which is prerequisite to a story, they arrive at definite decisions and act upon them with energy and even ruthlessness. And, though in some instances the power which moves them is felt as directly owing to the writer rather than to the fictive characters in their own right — which is the final achievement of creative art — nevertheless it is genuine, and it serves its purpose: to rivet the reader's attention.

The degree of illusion she creates varies considerably. In "The Crystal Cup", the problem is the main thing, rather than the subtleties of character analysis, although the story hinges on character. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that it is a question of a certain type breaking through fortuitous and adverse circumstance to find a normal channel of expression.

Gita Carteret, inheriting the beauty and charm which made the women of her family successively the reigning belles of their period, was warped by the unhappy experiences of her girlhood into a fierce antagonism toward men. Her father was a rake, a spend-thrift, and a drunken brute. Besides reducing his wife and child to poverty, he exposed them to the insulting gallantries of his raffish associates. Gita grew up hating her own femininity, wishing herself a man; and in self defense she dressed and acted as much

like a boy as possible. But at twenty-two, already an orphan, she found herself an heiress in a small way, through the death of her grandmother. The singular expedient to which she resorted to secure her share of life while excluding men from her personal scheme of things, and the unexpected result of it all, provides a very brisk plot, enlivened with a touch of melodrama and one scene (at least) of fine tense drama. It is safe to say "The Crystal Cup" will be among the best sellers. It marches.

The titular figures of Paul Morand's "Lewis and Irene" are symbols rather than types. They resemble the angularized conventions of modern painting, which returns to the archaic in search of novelty. Lewis and Irene occupy the whole picture, like Aucassin and Nicolette, with hardly any background or perspective; yet they are distinctively of the present — contemporary myths, with a basis of fact like all myths.

Lewis is a composite portrait of the speculative promoter, nominally a Frenchman, but adventuring in the field of international finance. In taking up an option on a Sicilian sulphur mining property he found himself out-matched by a Greek firm, the Apostolatos Bank, represented by Irene Apostolatos, a young and classically beautiful Greek widow. Irene was a practical business woman, not a gambler like Lewis, but the daughter of generations of shrewd Greek traders and money changers. Drawn together by their unlikeness, Irene and Lewis fell in love, married, endeavored to give up their work in hope of attaining domestic happiness. Boredom ensued. Irene secretly returned to the bank. Lewis was unfaithful, with a discarded mistress, simply because it was not in him to be true. Becoming aware of his

behavior immediately, Irene left him without parley.

Yet though they could make an end of their marriage, they could not sever their business relations. When they ceased to be lovers they became partners. Whether this is meant as irony is not clear. Morand strives for detachment, carefully avoids any hint of a moral or a thesis. The sensualist Lewis is just a bundle of appetites and aptitudes without passion or real intelligence; he has the sleek sufficiency of a beast of prey. Irene is merely his opposite. Their behavior has no ethical meaning; it is like a series of chemical reactions. The book is clever, thin, and dry. Who would have thought these young men had so little blood in them?

Gelett Burgess has always been too far ahead of the literary crowd for his own good. By the time fashion catches up with his witty inventions, or even comes upon the track of them, his pioneer work has been forgotten by all but a few superfluous veterans with impolitely retentive memories. Almost two decades ago he wrote a deliciously impossible and farcical comedy, framed upon the vagaries of a fantastic dame called "Lady Méchante". This spirit of mischief satirized with a butterfly touch all the aesthetic fads of the moment, and a few which she foresaw — it was, for instance, an admirable spoof on "modern" art, though that was some time before even the first Armoury exhibit of Cubism.

After exhausting the resources of polite culture and the novelty of exoticism, Lady Méchante fixed her affections upon a heroic coal heaver, endeavored to tame him as a parlor pet, and finally, I think, was carried off by the recalcitrant hero on the back of a Percheron — whither and to what end, I now forget.

Campaspe Lorillard, the leading lady of Carl Van Vechten's "Firecrackers", is a dim reflection of that sparkling creature. Her perverseness is deliberate by comparison; her whims are bookish and derivative. She is a female Tomlinson. "Oh, this I have thought and that I was told, and that I have read, quoth he: and the other I heard that another man heard from a Prince in Muscovy."

Campaspe's coal heaver was a furnace mender, Gunnar O'Grady, who was seeking to realize the good life by the prescription of Hippias. Igniting at contact, their explosion had its effect upon other inflammable personages — for instance, Paul Moody, the young husband of an elderly but rich wife, and Wintergreen Whatshername, and more remotely, upon the acrobatic twins, Hugo and Robin — but space lacks to explain how or why. And even if it didn't, what's the use? Mr. Van Vechten quotes scornfully the dictum of a forgotten English actor, that "you must first tell the public that you're going to do so and so; you must tell them that you are doing it, and then that you have done it; and then *perhaps* they will understand you."

There is another way, though it is rather irregular. That is, actually to do it. Mr. Burgess did, hence I am able to hazard a guess at Mr. Van Vechten's intention. But I may be wrong; the resemblance is only partial. "Lady Méchante" was both witty and humorous. Well, there is still the sure refuge of invincible ignorance.

Coningsby Dawson's "Old Youth" is a denatured version of W. L. George's "Second Blooming". The best one can say of it is that it is perfectly innocuous — much ado about nothing. A widow at thirty-six, with money, good looks, and no reason to reproach herself for any undutifulness towards

her invalid husband while he was alive, Eve Carrington might reasonably consider herself free to search for her belated romance, even to marry again. As an obstacle, a dictatorial father-in-law fails to seem impressive; and Mr. Carrington senior becomes plumb ridiculous when he bursts out: "Create your own hell. Paint your face as you've painted your gown. Seek the lover of whom, all the time we've been wrangling, you've been dreaming. But I ask one decency — leave your husband's, my dead son's name out of your intimacies. You've won the liberty you coveted. You can go." Upon which Eve directed her chauffeur: "To New York — to my dress-maker's and milliner's."

Nothing could be more suitable; the rest is a parade of manikins.

An inappropriate and almost disastrous suggestion of the Victorian Sunday school story lurks between the lines of Margaret Wilson's valorous investigation of abnormal temperaments in "The Kenworthys". It brings to mind such gruesomely improving tales as Mrs. Sherwood's "The Fairchild Family", in which the Fairchild infants were taken to gaze upon the dreadful remains of a gibbeted highwayman, as an object lesson against disobedience or stealing apples or the like juvenile peccadillo. Miss Wilson is obviously alarmed by the spread of feminism and the demands of the new woman; but her warning is so emphatic it sounds hysterical. One cannot but reflect that the actual story of the Kenworthys might have been exactly the same if Mrs. Jim Kenworthy had been an anti. None of the action depends upon any of her abstract opinions.

Jim Kenworthy was engaged to Emily Fiske, but in a fit of manly indignation, provoked by discovering a shocking book in her possession, he

rushed off and married a suffragist. Emily was entirely innocent; she had not yet read the book, had got it by accident, and had no notion what it contained. Jim knew at sight! The moral is — but no, there isn't any moral to that special episode; it wouldn't fit the author's thesis. Jim was a man, and chartered to read evil books. Emily was an angel, and the virtue of Victorian angels was more fragile than Venetian glass.

Jim and his feminist wife had one child, a boy who grew to be nearly six feet tall at the age of fourteen, and a genius in the mechanical line. No, that isn't the moral either — do not be hasty. No credit is due to young Bronson's mother for his genius nor even for his physique; that just happened. But she was wholly responsible for his headstrong egotism and his morbid brooding upon sex problems. She had divorced Jim and married again. The boy hated her and his stepfather, wishing to be with his father; but his behavior when he came to Jim for the stipulated annual six weeks was outrageous until Emily subdued him by the magic of feminine cajolery.

Emily, by the way, had married Jim's brother Bob, a weak, dishonest, maudlin fellow, who naturally had a very poor opinion of Jim's wife. Such men are always strong for the home and old-fashioned women who will take in washing or inherit money to support them. But about Bronson — Emily gave him back the faith his mother had shattered. Queer, because the first thing Emily said to Bronson was an obvious lie — it is quite confusing, like the incident of the wicked book.

Aside from these ethical tangles, including the general implication that anyone marrying a feminist runs the risk of gigantic and incorrigible offspring afflicted with genius, the story

is rather original and interesting. The author evades the real difficulties of her subject, by having a good many things happen off-stage; and she piles up the agony unscrupulously to secure an impressive climax; moreover, she never lets Jim's wife appear in her own defence, but keeps her just out of sight, to be taken on faith, like a nursery boggy. No matter; the whole book, with its earnest muddle of melodrama, propaganda, ingenuousness and ingenuity, is quite readable.

Simplicity is a highly desirable quality in fiction, but like all good things, it may be overdone. Knut Hamsun's "Benoni" suffers from this excess of merit. In "Growth of the Soil" Hamsun's method was ideally fitted to his subject. Isak, the pioneer farmer, was realized as an elemental force, possessed of the instinctive wisdom by which the leaves put forth in spring and the wild creatures know their paths. Hamsun understands the processes of nature.

The mysteries of business are beyond his comprehension. He nearly starved to death here in America, when he was a young man, which indicates a singular incapacity in any industrial effort. Anyhow, in "Benoni" he makes it plain that he believes success in money matters can only be owing to either of two causes, luck or sharp practice. By sheer blind luck, the peasant fisherman, Benoni, acquired a fishing schooner, a house, shops and wharves; and finally forty thousand dollars in cash fell into his hands for the mineral rights of a heap of rocks he had bought for next to nothing. But he got very little benefit of it all; it could not widen his range of satisfactions, nor even win him the girl he wanted, the minister's daughter. And he was always an easy prey of the local banker, one of the sharp gentry.

Except for the unreality of the financial deals, "Benoni" is a faithful and therefore slightly dull transcript of the daily and yearly round of existence in a Norway fishing village. Apparently it is the first of two volumes; the second will be awaited patiently.

The Crystal Cup. By Gertrude Atherton. Boni and Liveright.  
Lewis and Irene. By Paul Morand. Boni and Liveright.  
Firecrackers. By Carl Van Vechten. Alfred A. Knopf.  
Old Youth. By Coningsby Dawson. Cosmopolitan Book Corporation.  
The Kenworthys. By Margaret Wilson. Harper and Brothers.  
Benoni. By Knut Hamsun. Alfred A. Knopf.

## MODERN SPANISH LITERATURE

By Ernest Boyd

THE standard history of Spanish literature, both in Spanish and in English, is Mr. Fitzmaurice Kelly's familiar tome, but even in its most recent edition this work is entirely inadequate in its treatment of contemporary authors. In French and German there are similar histories, written by professors, with the usual incoherent last chapter, in which living writers are mentioned at haphazard and accorded a non-committal line or two. It was in order to remedy this peculiar state of affairs, largely due to the lack in Spain itself of a competent and succinct account of Spanish literature in the last half century, that Mr. Bell was invited to write the present work. Mr. Bell is the author of an excellent history of Portuguese literature; he has written extensively about Spain and things Spanish, and he is one of those Englishmen, like Fitzmaurice Kelly and Crawford Flitch, who have devoted their