



They swayed about upon a rocking-horse, and thought it Pegasus.—Keats.

This is a public book-review department,—a forum americanum for the airing of opinions about new publications. In response to our invitation in November, numerous readers have submitted notices, of which a selection is printed below. The invitation is a standing one. Reviews should not exceed three hundred words, and the editors reserve the privilege of abridging whenever it seems advisable. Payment is at the rate of two cents a word.

Please don't damn with faint praise, nor eulogize with faint deprecation. The object of throwing this department open to the public is to avoid faintness, and to reveal the views of the lay, rather than the professional reader. Damn, if you must, in good round terms. Eulogize (if you have the heart, after reading Mr. Benchley) with equal vigor. Above all things be sincere,—and let those who can, be clever!

LAWRENCE REBUKES US

"Americans revel in subterfuges," declares Mr. D. H. Lawrence (*STUDIES IN CLASSIC AMERICAN LITERATURE*, Thomas Seltzer, \$3.00). He then proceeds to rebuke American traditions and to reveal the true American soul of the future. To interpret this soul, he analyzes certain writings by Franklin, Crèvecoeur, Cooper, Poe, Hawthorne, Dana, Melville, and Whitman. All of these writers, according to Mr. Lawrence, were liars in varying degrees, and concealed the truth of the art that was in them beneath reprehensible conventionalities and subterfuges. But art tells the truth despite the artist. This essential truth Mr. Lawrence detects, and ingeniously contrives to identify with his own pet sentiments and convictions. In accomplishing this, he has fallen into the snare of giving more information about himself than

about his subject, of calling autobiography criticism, thereby exemplifying one of those subterfuges which he denounces. Furthermore, one can hardly avoid the suspicion that Mr. Lawrence has excluded Emerson from the *Studies* because he was afraid to grapple with that philosopher, afraid that Emerson couldn't be properly pulverized for his crucible. The inclusion of Crèvecoeur strengthens the suspicion: Crèvecoeur is so terribly easy a target for his artillery. The style of the book is meretricious and vulgar, with a self-consciousness that removes from vulgarity its only defense; the eloquence seldom rises above rhodomontade; and, if one may be meticulous, Mr. Lawrence's grammar gives the lie to grammarians,—which perhaps is his intention.

Yet the book is decidedly worth reading. The principle of criticism enunciated by the author should be applied to his own product. As he proposes "saving the American tale from

the American artist," so must his critic rescue these Studies from their writer, and remember that though Mr. Lawrence does not tell the truth, his art (or its equivalent) does. The individual assertions are generally false; but the fact that he has selected these particular falsities deserves to be pondered. To hold the book negligible is to validate it. It merits antagonistic consideration.

CLINTON MINDIL.

IN DEFENCE OF PAGE

Walter Hines Page confesses (*A PUBLISHER'S CONFESSION*, Doubleday-Page, \$1.50) much more than the reviewer of this unpretentious little volume (see *THE FORUM* for November) would have his trusting reader believe. Namely, that "the publisher cannot do his highest duty to any author whose work he does not appreciate;" that a book ought never to have the imprint of a publisher who is not a true partner of the author; that "every great publishing house has been built upon the strong friendships between writers and publishers;" that "it is a *personal service* that the publisher does for his author;" and that an author had better stick to one publisher unless there is a very good reason why he should seek another. Mr. Page had a feeling of personal responsibility towards his authors, and expected a corresponding loyalty from them in return.

Book reviewing, in my opinion, makes two distinct claims on the reviewer. The first is that he select the idea which the author wished to emphasize; the second, that he accord first place in his review to this idea, rather than to the mass of less important detail which accompanies it. The previous review is not written in fairness either to author or reader, as these principles are obviously disregarded.

Mr. Page makes a strong plea for better relations between author and publisher, affirming that upon this relationship rests the ultimate success of both parties. As such, his book is valuable. It is a thoughtful expression of sane publishing philosophy. Authors and publishers would do well to read it and absorb the sound ethical judgments with which it abounds. As a work of a practical nature the book is less valuable; written nearly twenty years ago, it has lost much of its timeliness. Those, however, who are mem-

bers of the great fraternity of authors and publishers will find these chapters interesting as a basis of comparison with the actualities of the present day. Admirers of Mr. Page will find in them the same directness, sincerity, and ease of expression characteristic of his *Life and Letters*.

DALE WARREN

RUSSIAN COURT MEMOIRS

The old saying "God preserve us from our friends" was never better illustrated than in the volume in which Anna Viroubova, the only intimate friend of the unhappy Czarina Alexandra Feodorovna, tells the story of her relations with this tragic woman of destiny, whom fate had linked with the last Russian Autocrat (*MEMOIRS OF THE RUSSIAN COURT*, Macmillan, \$3.50). While it is natural that she should try to vindicate both herself and the mistress whom she helped to lead towards destruction, from the accusations levelled at them, she presumes too much on the ignorance of her readers concerning both Russia and the Russian Court.

To begin with, the family of Anna Viroubova was far from belonging to what was called the smart set of St. Petersburg society. They were distinct types of that most hated and despised class in Russia, despised alike by the nation which was continually suffering from its exactions, and by the old aristocracy who looked upon them as intruders, the class of Tchinovniks or Employes. Added to this, the Tanieffs had always been dreaded on account of their propensity for intrigue, and for the spiteful manner in which they made use of their official position to try and harm those in whom they saw rivals for Imperial favor. The author of the *Memoirs* never misses an opportunity to make some sarcastic remark concerning this high society in the magic circle of which she had always and vainly tried to be admitted. Her allusions to the Empress Dowager are about as nasty as decency allowed her to make. The whole incident of Mlle. Tutcheff, the governess of the young Grand Duchess, is equally unpleasant, when one knows how worthily this lady had fulfilled her duties, and how, instead of being summoned by the Emperor for a remonstrance, she had gone to him of her own accord, to tell him that she could not