

its progressiveness is confined to matters of theology and ritual, and fails to flood the fields of economics and industry where there is drought and sore need of water today. The pillars of the "temples" will not bat an eyelid at the wildest of theological heresies; but they grow stiff and stony at the mildest political radicalism. Even so guarded a liberal as Rabbi Stephen S. Wise is looked upon by many of the laity as a "Bolshevist." The newer generation of rabbis, of course, is leading the revolt, and just as Isaac M. Wise and his colleagues thundered against orthodoxy in ritual a half century ago so do these younger rabbis cry out against it in economics. Perhaps it is in large part because these younger rabbis are still in the minority that so many American Jews are still unsynagogued. Perhaps if the ministry, both Christian and Jewish, were utterly free to preach the truth, these "back to the church" and "back to the synagogue" movements would not only be greatly accelerated but would in brief time become altogether unnecessary.

Waterbury, Connecticut, January 26

LEWIS BROWNE

From an Editor and a Gentleman

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: I have a letter today from the Hon. Frank F. Miles, editor of the *Iowa Legionaire*, inclosing a copy of a letter he has sent to you in response to my recent modest contribution to your instructive columns. Mr. Miles seems to be in fear that you will decline to print his letter. I surely hope that no such intention is in your heart. Mr. Miles is the accredited spokesman of Iowa Kultur, and he deserves to be heard freely.

Baltimore, January 21

H. L. MENCKEN

January 18, 1923

MR. H. L. MENCKEN,
1524 Hollins St., Hohenzollern, Md.

DEAR SIR: Inclosed is a carbon copy of a letter I have written to *The Nation*, in reply to your idiotic attempt to wax clever at my expense in *The Nation's* last issue.

I doubt very much if the whining but supercilious and hypocritical Mr. Villard will print it, as he twice returned one of my letters that was too hot for his Hun hands, but if he plays fair in this matter it will adorn his otherwise sordid and sinister pages in an early number.

You, as associate editor of *The Nation*, which might be more fitly named the Kaiser's Klack, if you want to let those who read your letter read my answer, will use your good offices toward seeing that Mr. Villard does do the square thing on this, difficult as I know any action that even looks square is for both of you.

FRANK F. MILES

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: Herman Schmidt was born in Iowa. When the United States declared war on Germany Schmidt left his farm here, sneaked out of the country, went to Germany, and joined the German army. He was slain by an American sergeant who caught him bayoneting wounded Americans on the battlefield.

H. L. Mencken, another American-born pro-German, who insults his home city, Baltimore, by calling it Hohenzollern, was too craven to let his body follow his heart into the German military. Now he takes fiendish delight in stabbing legionaires, all of whom offered their lives and many of whom gave of health and limbs, in defense of the one nation in the world so free it would tolerate a citizen like Mencken.

Schmidt and Mencken will undoubtedly be bosom friends in hell; they will have everything in common.

Kind-hearted as we are by nature, we cannot be sorry that until Mencken passes to that hot place, where he probably will be chosen kaiser, he will have to continue to suffer excruciatingly over realizing that the *Iowa Legionaire* has no fear of its readers reading all kinds of literature, because we know they are such good Americans the reading of un-American material only strengthens their Americanism.

Des Moines, Iowa, January 18

FRANK F. MILES
Editor *Iowa Legionaire*

Books

Shakespearean Studies

Character Problems in Shakespeare's Plays. By Levin L. Schücking. Henry Holt and Company. \$3.50.

Shakespeare's "Hamlet." By A. Clutton-Brock. E. P. Dutton and Company. \$2.

The Shakespeare Association Papers: *The Beginnings of the English Secular and Romantic Drama.* By A. W. Reed. *The Seventeenth Century Accounts of the Masters of the Revels.* By Mrs. C. C. Stopes. *Dryden as an Adapter of Shakespeare.* By Allardyce Nicoll. Oxford University Press. 70 cents each.

PROFESSOR SCHÜCKING possesses a truly teutonic sense of the Real; the guiding principles of his admirable book are an insistence upon "a more literal conception of the sense" of Shakespeare's text than has been grasped by most commentators; a rejection of the subjective romantic criticism that insisted upon reading modern thought and feeling into Shakespeare; and a recognition of the extent to which the crude and unsophisticated technique of the earlier drama survives in the plays. He begins his study with an examination of some of the more obvious ways in which Shakespeare was influenced by contemporary stage conditions, such as collaboration and anonymity, the retention of antiquated popular elements like the marching armies and the severed heads, the clown and the "trunk-hose wit." He then proceeds to an examination of the phenomenon of direct self-explanation by characters in the plays. Such speeches, descended as they are from the earlier direct address to the audience, are to be accepted at their face value. When Caesar pronounces upon his own greatness the effect upon a modern audience is very different from what it was upon an Elizabethan. No boastfulness was intended; the stage character was merely conveying necessary information to the audience. And when villains such as Iago or Cloten or Edmund speak so naively of their wickedness their words prompted no thought of cynicism to Shakespeare's contemporaries, who accepted the information thus stated in soliloquy without any consciousness of a psychological difficulty.

When we come to the question of the reflection of a character in the minds of other characters a like general principle holds good: that statements made by lesser personages, when unchecked by information derived from other parts of the play, are to be taken as literally true, not merely in expository introductory speeches but when scattered through the play. And so, also, positive statements made by any person about happenings which we have not ourselves witnessed on the stage are to be accepted as unquestionably correct. Professor Schücking refutes much subjective criticism; for example, of Troilus, by citing the analysis of his character pronounced by Ulysses. There are of course misleading descriptions, especially of the heroes by the villains, as when Caliban speaks of Prospero; but upon these checks are provided. Yet the villains often naively acknowledge the worth of the heroes, as when Oliver speaks of Orlando or Iago of Othello. Professor Schücking offers an excellent review of the opinions of Hamlet expressed by other people in the play, especially Laertes. In that same review, however, there are examples of the errors of which the critic is guilty despite the flexibility with which he employs his method. Thus he remarks that had Shakespeare intended to depict Hamlet as "of a peculiarly noble disposition he would assuredly have put this idea into the mouth of some other person." He *does*; one thinks instantly of Ophelia's speech: "O what a noble mind is here o'erthrown," etc. Again, offering an example of information not to be accepted because contradicted elsewhere, he cites the gravedigger's statement about Ophelia's suicide which, he says, "is not to be taken seriously by anybody," for there would be no purpose in the Queen's earlier narration unless it contained the truth. Professor Schücking forgets that the priest, too, insists on her suicide; nor does Laertes deny the fact. The truth of

the matter is either that Shakespeare means us to realize that the Queen had been misinformed or else that his liking for episodic elaboration has here led him into a contradiction.

On this very matter of episodic elaboration Schücking writes illuminatingly. The dramatist seems to proceed scene by scene, his concern being rather with a vivid presentation of the separate scene than with a complete harmonious whole. There are of course instances of complete uninterrupted harmony between character and expression, as in the case of Shylock; but often there are detached episodes quite out of harmony with the general conception of the character, as when Polonius gives advice to Laertes. The *scene unit*, with its tendency to intensify episodes, even fastens upon some characters absolutely contradictory traits. Professor Schücking illustrates this by a long and masterly analysis of the Cleopatra of the earlier acts (the voluptuous courtesan) with the same person in the later acts (the noble queen).

Despite his efforts to avoid rigidity in interpretation and not to push his method too far, Professor Schücking does not always succeed in carrying conviction. He rightly protests against the old-fashioned sort of criticism that discussed Shakespeare's personages as though they were real people and wrote books about the girlhood of his heroines and articles about, say, the earlier relations of Macbeth and his Lady. Nevertheless, though in real life people often speak by implication, Professor Schücking never admits that the *dramatis personae* imply, unless the fact of the implication is elsewhere stated. He shows that Claudius is really endowed with finer qualities than Shakespeare intended: "It is certain that in reality all he says would necessarily be false, but in the drama hypocrisy would also have to betray itself in some form or other." Why? How do we know that Shakespeare did not plan some stage "business" here as in other places that would make the hypocrisy clear?

In his little brochure on "Hamlet" Mr. Clutton-Brock makes much of this fact, that the text as we have it is only one part of a work of dramatic art; the dramatist instructed the actors, whether in person or by indications on his manuscript, in the necessary "business." The formula which Mr. Clutton-Brock offers as an explanation of Hamlet is that the shock which the prince suffered on hearing of his father's murder and on realizing the full horror of his mother's remarriage "made, as it were, a wound in his mind" and served as an inhibition whenever he tried to put the resolve to take vengeance into action. "The more he tried to force himself into action, the more his unconscious invented pretexts why he should delay to act." There would be no space here to discuss this formula even were it so novel as Mr. Clutton-Brock supposes. Nor is there room for consideration of the points at issue between this critic and Mr. J. M. Robertson and Professor E. E. Stoll. The two latter scholars have perhaps exaggerated their "case," but beyond doubt the way toward a clear understanding of Shakespeare lies through their historical and textual studies rather than through the essentially subjective criticism offered by their opponent.

The Shakespeare Association continues to issue valuable papers, three of which have been lately published. Mrs. Stopes reopens the controversy which she carried on with Mr. Ernest Law a decade ago, and by carefully checking up the statements in the Revels Accounts in the years 1604-1605 and 1611-1612, seriously damages Mr. Law's claim that these records are authentic and that the old charge against Peter Cunningham that he had forged them is unfounded. This problem is of course by no means a matter of mere dry-as-dust antiquarianism, for upon the evidence of the records the dating of several of Shakespeare's plays rests in part. Mr. Reed writes attractively of the little circle of humanists and dramatists who gathered around Sir Thomas More and in the early years of the sixteenth century opened what proved to be a false dawn of the romantic drama. Mr. Nicoll divides the reasons for the Restoration adaptations of Shakespeare into several categories and illustrates these categories by reference especially to Dryden's adaptations.

SAMUEL C. CHAW

Some Looks at Life

The Driver. By Garet Garrett. E. P. Dutton and Company. \$2.
Valley Waters. By Charles D. Stewart. E. P. Dutton and Company. \$2.

Valiant Dust. By Katharine Fullerton Gerould. Charles Scribner's Sons. \$2.

Quest. By Helen Hull. The Macmillan Company. \$2.

DO we not first ask of a novel that it give us, for a few hours after dinner, a different life to lead? If this be true, the performance of a novel is to be judged by whether its author commands poorly or well the gift of life and whether the life he is able to give is, by its interest or significance, worth leading. Our elementary demand is for bare, mere experience, experience of the heart and mind; after that we will require of the author illumination or understanding or beauty or what else our degree of sophistication asks.

The professional expertness of Mr. Garet Garrett, in "The Driver," gets experience before us deftly, and somewhat in the star-reporter manner; his story is another snappy tale of the Caesars of Wall Street. As a black and white of Henry M. Galt, speculator and railroad wizard, it is well taught of its kind, which is really reporterese. It rings real with experience, however; Henry Galt is bodily there in all his shabbiness of habit and personal force. He is in fact all the book; where he is not, except for his daughter Vera, who has temporarily a certain sullen distinction, there is but lame going. Galt's career, his Machiavellian struggles are related breathlessly, like war correspondence, and with the zest so special to the literature of achievement. But despite speed the tale is not unskillfully handled, and for a while commands attention; the interlude before the end, a diverting examination of Galt as a malefactor of great wealth, by a congressional investigation committee, is not without some choiceness. If a clever paean to success and some boldness that looks closely like fact is what you want, here it is; but not reflection, or merits particularly sophisticated.

"Valley Waters," by Charles D. Stewart, is better considered although less dashing in its experience. It shows no great conflagration of feeling or vivid or magnetic personalities; though the author evidences, in his lucid picturing of character, an excellent and humorous sense of persons: see the remarkable drawing of Vose, the blind piano tuner. The story is a gray-hued variation of the old recognition motif, a tale of how a son searched for his mother, from whom he had been kidnapped when he was a child too small to remember distinctly; how as a soldier in hospital recovering from shell-shock he had dredged up a few broken bits of memory; how he pieced them together, and adding other fragments, traced himself back to his native locality and found his mother. It is a psychological tale, a study of memory, against an excellently seen background of quiet people moving peaceably about ordinary business amid pleasant scenes in the Muskingum valley of Ohio. It is subdued in key, experienced, contemplative, not aimed at distinction; but it is also soundly written in a sincere, scrupulous, real mood, with humor, and with fineness of understanding. We do not turn from it, however, with a completely fed sense of life.

If "Valley Waters" sounds a subdued personal note, "Valiant Dust," a collection of twelve short stories by Katharine Fullerton Gerould, thumps resoundingly the embellished brasses of respectability and punctilio. These are relatively short stories, but the reader will feel that they could profitably have been shorter. With an able and incredible pounce their author is upon some poor rag of a problem in conduct and so worries it with discussion and patronage that it yields utterly the ghost; so a tale ensues and at some length. Yet if you can get over your irritation at being lengthily edified, you will find here rather robust story telling, somewhat hindered, it is true, by discursiveness and a style like stiff plush. Sea Green is a commendable extra-dry piece, perhaps best in the collection; The Knight's Move is an elaborately ethical affair, Habakkuk a