

chapter of intimate revelations. It thrills one, like a key to things seen but not previously understood. It is impartial, simple, tense, pervasive. It saturates the reader with a consciousness of fellowships grim yet tolerable, destinies undesirable yet beyond redemption. The downfall of Hurstwood is handled with a touching simplicity quite in contrast with Mr. Dreiser's early sententiousness and pretentiousness, with his own nostalgia for success whenever he discusses it, his bumbling elucidation of "woman."

Because Carrie ceases very soon to be an "honest working-girl," first becomes the mistress of a genial drummer and then is carried off by the absconding Hurstwood, there is an air of dire realism about Mr. Dreiser's novel. The question is whether it is realistic enough. Mr. Dreiser apparently starts out intending to show that Carrie wants pleasure ("her craving for pleasure was so strong that it was the one stay of her nature"), but works it out in the utterly sentimental ending that she was always "emotional," "responding with desire to everything most lovely in life," pursuing "beauty," pursuing the "radiance of delight," and so on. "Not evil," says the apologetic novelist, "but longing for that which is better, more often directs the steps of the erring." This is mush. His grip on Hurstwood's character is entirely different. That man's transition from a cold and successful "swell saloon" manager to a bum on the Bowery is firmly interpreted, and the novelist is master of every stage of it, Hurstwood's theft, his partnership in a cheap saloon, his aboulia, his chair-warming in hotel lobbies, his cadging, his effort as a strike-breaker, his exit. Mr. Dreiser makes Hurstwood a terrible and pathetic figure without faltering in any detail, and there is no Laura Jean Libbey nonsense such as "Oh, Carrie, Carrie! Oh, blind strivings of the human heart! Onward, onward, it saith, and where beauty leads, there it follows." And so on.

Ever since the realists, so-called, left the parlor and the drawing-room to interpret the aims of instinct as something other than merely reprehensible, there has been a desperate misunderstanding of modern fiction on the part of many idealistic people. It is one of the unfortunate aspects of Mr. Dreiser's work, as it seems to me, that he has promoted this misunderstanding by giving us a series of persons with sclerosis of the affections under the guise of persons obeying their instincts and going their own way. In *Sister Carrie* herself, for example, one misses all the warmth of human intercourse that is generally meant by "emotional," and Mr. Dreiser's interpretative moonbeams are no substitute. It is not that *Sister Carrie* is cool. It is not that she regards Drouet and Hurstwood as stepping-stones to higher things. It is that Mr. Dreiser takes this incompleteness of personality with such complacency, and says, "it is but natural that when the world which they represented no longer allured her, its ambassadors should be discredited." There we suspect that Carrie's sclerosis is more than Carrie's, that her author is impervious to certain aspects of character and deficient in crediting certain springs of action. But if Mr. Dreiser's sentimental gush about "beauty" is an imperfect equivalent for a large sense of woman's character, especially when it is undeveloped, his portrait of Drouet and his absorbing drama of Hurstwood are beyond cavil. In Hurstwood an American novelist came royally into his own.

The disintegration of Hurstwood is so graphic, so clinching, that one regrets every instance of Mr. Dreiser's direct critical analysis of life. The gift that distinguishes Mr. Dreiser is a peculiar and limited one, and it is only when he employs it that *Sister Carrie* is notable. He is

one of those men who undoubtedly feel beauty but he gives less sense of it, shows less effect of enchantment, than any novelist of equal account. His tone is one of dour, humorless, almost sullen matter-of-fact. He takes life as some people voluntarily take goulash in a restaurant, with a gloomy hunger for it that would make a Savarin weep. It is not his love of beauty, nor is it his capacity for subtle and sensitive psychological disclosure, that makes *Sister Carrie* a living book. The psychological disclosure in the case of Hurstwood is largely implicit, and we really never are able to put ourselves very easily in *Sister Carrie's* shoes—as we are always able to translate ourselves into the shoes of Tolstoy's or Dostoevsky's people. It is not philosophy, either, explicit interpretation of life, that enriches Mr. Dreiser. His almost complete ignorance of the co-operative element in life, his clanking mechanistic generalizations, rather destroy than promote the illusion of his stories. But there does remain, despite ugliness and bluntness and stub-toed philosophy, a thick-tongued passionateness of dramatic interest which arouses an undeniable response in the reader. Mr. Dreiser is an honest witness to those stubborn human eventualities which, after all, are the substance of fiction. He sees careers as a whole, and personalities in their unfolding, and the natural history of social incident. To say his gift, often a gift neglected and perverted, is plain narrative is probably to put the cart before the horse. But certainly when his creative moment comes it is thick and ramified narrative that rewards the reader, not any soulfulness. Mr. Dreiser knows what an Elk entertainment is like. He knows pretty well what a street-car strike is like, and the experience of a scab. He knows, though with a perturbed Delineator spirit, what a lunch at Sherry's might be like. When this information is fused by Mr. Dreiser's excitement about a character, we get his best work, particularly if the character is an American business man. That best work is so titanic that all sorts of dross cannot kill it. It lives, as *Sister Carrie* has lived, and will live.

F. H.

Lord Acton

Correspondence of Lord Acton. Vol. I. Edited by J. N. Figgis and R. V. Laurence. New York: Longmans, Green & Co. \$5.00.

LITTLE by little the editors of this volume are giving us to understand something of what the world has lost in Lord Acton's failure to achieve that history which, as a shrewd observer has happily remarked, is without exception the greatest book that was never written. Had we nothing save these letters by which to judge him it would be still clear that he was a figure of European significance. He belonged to that small group of cosmopolitan observers who constitute the unseen threads which bind together the society of nations. He influenced the course of politics in not a few of the decisive moments of the nineteenth century. If, in the greatest of his battles, he seems to have been upon the losing side, it is yet not today certain whether in the end victory will not belong to the cause he championed. To the outside world Acton seems but the greatest failure of his time. Yet that is in every sense of the word an inaccurate verdict. Most of his plans, it is true, went astray. He rarely completed any of the great schemes he undertook. There went with him

to the grave more unused learning than perhaps any man will ever possess again. Instead of the great *History of Liberty* we shall have three volumes of letters, two volumes of lectures, and two collections of reprinted pieces.

From men like Bryce and Morley we shall know that his intellectual counsel was of priceless value. From his correspondence with Mr. Gladstone's daughter we shall realize what a pillar of strength he was to the hesitating liberalism of that statesman. The Cambridge Modern History will stand as the fragment wrought by lesser hands from materials which he alone could have shaped to their true splendor. Certain prefaces from the works of pupils, and a few lines in the exquisite notice of Maitland will tell us of the inspiration he was to ten years of Cambridge students.

For an ordinary man this would be no light achievement. But, as a bare record it does Acton less than the merest justice. It does not emphasize, as nothing but intimate contact can adequately emphasize, the quality of the fragments he has left. Certain of his papers, as that on German Schools of History, and the fine study of Dollinger, set, each in its own sphere, the perspective of an age. The two great lectures on freedom are full of superb generalization which can only be truly appreciated by those who have tried to tread the same path. The famous, if elusive, introduction to Machiavelli's *Prince* is the best antidote to the poison it analyzes. The book on the French Revolution is not a book for beginners; but to anyone who is seeking the intimate causes of things it is unsurpassed in any language. And it contains an appendix on the relative value of the printed authorities which is, to say the least, a training in the true meaning of scholarship.

The scholar's mark is present, indeed, on every page that Acton wrote; and no other writer in the English language save Mark Pattison combines the same universality of interest with the same profundity of learning. The essay on the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew sets a model for Catholic historians. It is always scholarship that has a definite end in view. It is never the patient accumulation of facts for their own sake. It is always a realization that the true perception of causes must be based on the largest induction that life makes possible. There is a sense, perhaps, in which the reading of these mighty fragments can only deepen, at every stage, the sense of what we have lost. But, in a truer perspective, we must admit that few achievements have been their equal in inspiration.

No one can understand Lord Acton's work who does not grasp the significance of the fact that he united a passionate belief in the Catholic faith to a trust in liberalism not less passionate. He believed that his religion, in its purest form, had an infallible recipe for the spiritual ills of mankind. He never doubted that behind the acts of its ministers, which he had too often to condemn, there remained the great body of the faithful who collectively represented religious truth. He cherished the ideal of a great church which should be the fostering parent of social progress and scientific advance. He denied that she had anything to gain by the suppression of truth or anything to lose by its discovery. He was the determined and untiring opponent of ultramontanism. No one, save Lamennais in the generation before, and Dollinger in his own time, fought more nobly against the obscurantism of Rome. He hated the economizing liberalism of Newman hardly less than the egregious autocracy of Manning. He understood from

the outset that scientific truth, whether in the history of theology or in the history of chemistry, must be made objective and not subjective. The question as to whether Pope Honorius III was a heretic, or whether Gregory XIII struck a medal to commemorate the massacre of Saint Bartholomew, was for him a problem to be investigated exactly as one investigates the nature of the earth's crust.

Because he did not love Thomas à Kempis, that did not make him hate Darwin. If there was one thing he did detest, it was the calm pretense to scholarship that so easily passes current for learning. If there was one thing for which he had no mercy, it was the prostitution of scholarship to polemic purposes. It was for this that he drew up his unanswerable indictment against ultramontanism. It was for this that he drew up his forces in strenuous battle against the definition of papal infallibility. The material with which he and Bishop Strossmayer supplied Dollinger forms, in the *Letters of Quirinus*, the most overwhelming indictment of Roman policy that has ever appeared, with but one exception. The difficulty is to understand how he was able to remain in the Roman church. Partly, perhaps, because the minimizing tendencies which prevailed deprived the decree of its sting. Partly, also, because, as a layman, he did not think it his duty to invite a challenge that was not offered. But few who hold the character of Lord Acton as one of the great possessions of the Victorian age can avoid a dim regret that, whatever the personal cost, he did not take his stand with Lamennais and Dollinger, with Tyrrell and Loisy, in that magistral protest against the vices of ecclesiastical autocracy.

His view of history has been the subject of bitter controversy; and certainly we are no nearer the decision than when he wrote. The whole burden of Acton's teaching was the fervent belief that the divorce of politics from ethics is at every point disastrous. The standards of public conduct cannot differ from those of private life. We must judge the statesman as we judge the man of business. For the condition of the time no allowance is to be made. What is wrong in the London of the nineteenth century is wrong in Athens four hundred years before Christ. *Raison d'état* is, not for him, an admissible defense; it is only a dishonorable method of obtaining release from an honest engagement. So he would have made of history the axe of Rhadamanthus; and sentence would have been delivered at every trial. He denied that the highest demands of conscience must give way before the lower exactions of expediency. If he were told that political death may be involved in the decision, he would have answered with Royer-Collard that to perish is also a solution. He was told that it is not a creed for practical men; even Lord Morley has admitted that politics is a matter of half-measures. The potency of the Machiavellian faith has, it is asserted, its justification in its realistic perception of human nature. Yet the guess may perhaps be hazarded that at no time was the warning more sternly needed against the confusion of right with expediency. The moral law may lack the unchanging content he would have given it; yet one thing is certain in our time, it is the danger that confronts any social organization of which the moral practice is not at every point instinct with the highest motive.

The most permanent aspect of Acton's work is that in which he accomplished least. He had a high passion for liberty such as few can understand; and it was perhaps

because he understood it so deeply that he loved it so well. What to him liberty above all meant was freedom of conscience; and he did not shrink from the admission that he was bound thereby to deny the paramountcy of the state. "By liberty," he said, "I mean the assurance that every man shall be protected in doing what he believes his duty against the influence of authority and majority, custom and opinion." It is perhaps a counsel of perfection. Certainly it is a counsel that at every stage will encounter acute difficulties of practical operation. Yet it is a maxim of which, not least in these times, we have good reason to take heed. Acton saw clearly the danger that confronts us lest the state, being identified with society, becomes the Leviathan of Hobbes's imagining.

He realized that the real test of a people's freedom is the amount of security enjoyed by minorities. Few who are not blinded by prejudice can today doubt that he was right. The only real security for social wellbeing is the free exercise of men's minds; otherwise we have impliedly contracted ourselves to slavery. This assuredly is the only real democracy that the decision of the mind should have the sanction of the conscience. A state that usurps the function of either has already become a mask for despotism.

Defects, of course, Lord Acton had. He had too much of the massive stolidity of the German scholar, too much, also, of that oracular sententiousness which never descends to the level of the commonplace. His blindness to Mr. Gladstone's faults is as strange as his failure to appreciate Disraeli's virtues. His mind ranged so freely amid the eternal verities that he took no thought of the basic economic problems of his time. He never realized the noble effort that in men like John Stuart Mill and Lord Morley can go to the retention of religious scepticism. Again and again he fell into the scholar's luxury of proving the obvious by laborious text and counter-text. He was guilty of elusiveness. He tried to cast his net too far. The task he undertook no man could have performed in the perspective he set himself. The historian of liberty, when he comes, will be content to leave unread those chapters of the record that deal with witchcraft or the man in the iron mask. No man can make a specialty of omniscience and hope to write the book of which Acton dreamed. No one can wander, as he wandered, from the great highroads of history, and yet proclaim the truth that is in him.

Yet for what remains our one thought must be gratitude. These letters alone would display that too rare mind which occupies itself with the solution of the greatest questions in a manner that is worthy of the enquiry. He had the same passion for the discovery of truth that possessed men so diverse as Darwin and Huxley in his own age as Casaubon and Spinoza before him. Like the last of these it was his constant effort to see things under the microscope of eternity. Like the Dutch thinker, his life was a lonely search consecrated to the loftiest purposes. He bases upon a knowledge constantly more profound a unique passion for righteousness. He influenced the intellectual mind of Europe towards wisdom. Few of his contemporaries there were who understood; fewer still who gave that full meed of comradeship for which he yearned. It is to him that we shall constantly go back for inspiration in the understanding of the great truths he inculcated. If he judged humanity, he also loved it; and because he loved it he pardoned it. It is a pardon, as Maitland said, that we have still to earn.

H. J. L.

TIFFANY & Co.

JEWELRY SILVERWARE CLOCKS
WATCHES CHINA STATIONERY

FIFTH AVENUE AND 37TH STREET
NEW YORK

Marx and the Theatre

The Insurgent Theatre, by Professor Thomas H. Dickinson. New York: B. W. Huebsch.

The Art Theatre, by Sheldon Cheney. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

The Community Theatre, by Louise Burleigh. Boston: Little, Brown & Co.

The Little Theatre, by Constance D'Arcy MacKay. New York: Henry Holt & Co.

THE Insurgent theatre, the Art theatre, the Community theatre, and the Little theatre—four names, and they all mean the same thing. Evidently something new has appeared, significant enough to call forth a small shelf of books, yet inchoate enough to set authors groping for a definition and even for a name. It is, in fact, a spontaneous and independent theatre growth, now in its awkward, exuberant youth, half consciously clutching after an organization and a theory. Physically it comprises some dozens of local stock companies, a handful of traveling companies, some three score little semi-amateur theatres scattered over the country, two or three established houses on Broadway, half a dozen permanent college dramatic organizations, hundreds of sporadic open-air festivals, and innumerable amateur acting clubs. And each of these four writers means to include them all under his title.

It is difficult to suggest an inclusive name or definition for all these theatres. They can be defined only in terms of what they are not. They are not, for instance, the commercial theatre owned and controlled on Broadway; they are, in fact, its counter-product. They differ in every con-