

the best English publicists are sure of their facts when they touch on American history. The time has long passed, of course, when educated Englishmen confuse the Southern States with Costa Rica and Bolivia; but still there is an exasperating carelessness of detail—as shown, for instance, in Lord Charnwood's valuable biography of Lincoln and in Mr. Wells's pages on the American Revolution—which is a sad contrast to the mastery which English writers have of the history of the Continent. We may hope that one of the results of the happier relations between England and America in the last few years may be a more thorough study of American history in British schools and universities—of which, indeed, an auspicious beginning has already been made. Then men of Mr. Trevelyan's accomplishment will no longer make such statements as "when, at length, in October 1862, Lincoln proclaimed the freedom of the slaves" (p. 334), or "Texas and California, which the United States annexed after the Mexican War" (p. 292), or "in the late seventies, when the full (economic) development of America had at length taken place" (p. 276), or "the defence of New Orleans... when 6,000 Americans under Andrew Jackson held a line of strong entrenchments against 6,000 British infantry" (p. 177).

Although the book is packed solidly with facts, the author has most successfully avoided any suggestion of the encyclopedia. His sense of continuity and proportion is unailing. The style is Trevelyan at his best—rich in allusion, brilliant in comment, masterly in summary, fruitful in speculation, just in judgment—the finished instrument of a furnished mind. Such books as this show the legitimate power of imagination in history.

DAVID SAVILLE MUZZEY.

The English C. O.'s

Conscription and Conscience, a History (1916-1919), by John W. Graham. London: George Allen and Unwin. 12s. 6d.

TO the minds of most people conscientious objectors are of course shirkers and cowards. Others, while not agreeing with them, believe that they should not be coerced, and that, because the objectors are so tiny a fraction of the population in war time, such a course is practicable. Some, while not caring to follow the objectors' example now, think that war will only disappear when enough people in each country have become conscientious objectors to it. And a few, who may admire an irreconcilable idealism in others, feel that "to be willing to die for an ideal is to set a rather high value on one's own opinions."

Any decent minded person who reads Mr. Graham's account of the C. O. movement in England cannot go on believing that the C. O.'s were cowards. To the high moral courage required of anyone who tries to swim upstream against public opinion they often joined just that sort of physical bravery which they were most accused of wanting. There were about 16,000 men in England who claimed exemption under the Conscription Act on the ground of conscience. Not all did so on religious ground, for some belonged to no church, and some were socialists. Of this number all but 1,350 accepted alternative work. This iron-willed remnant, the "Absolutists," carried their convictions to the utmost point of logic, and as a result had to endure unbelievable sufferings. All of them were im-

prisoned at one time or another. Seventy-one died—mostly as a result of imprisonment—and thirty-one lost their minds.

It is of course no great surprise to learn from Mr. Graham's record how often the government lost its mind as well, how consistently its good intentions were lost in transit, how its dealings with the objectors were now dishonest, now cruel, now muddled. The worst muddle was the tribunals, composed usually of the butcher, baker and candlestick maker, which decided on the genuineness of the claims to exemption. The stock catch-question was, What would you do if a German assaulted your mother? If the applicant "said he would resist, he was a war-man; if he said he would not, he was a liar and a humbug." And Mr. Graham quotes this as a not exaggerated instance of what members of the tribunals often said: "But the very essence of Christianity is to fight. The old Testament is full of fighting." This reminds one of the army chaplain, quoted later by Mr. Graham, "who deduced from the fact that Paul made tents the conclusion that he was an army contractor, 'proud to do his bit for his empire.'"

Naturally such tribunals went wrong and sent into the army a number of men who were sincere. Several of these went to France, refused to obey orders, were kicked about with the filthiest brutality, sentenced to death, and would have been shot but for quick work by their friends in England. Those who accepted the home office scheme, the alternative of "work of national importance," found themselves doing something of a penal character, or useless work, or work for which they were unfitted. The Absolutists went to jail, where they underwent the usual insults, starvation, torture of mind and body, and degradation of civilized prisons. Only four percent of them weakened in their convictions under the ordeal. For the most part they maintained the intense solidarity of early Christians. They managed, by all the ancient subterfuges of prisoners, to communicate this spirit to one another, and from prison to prison. Little magazines, written on sheets of brown toilet-paper, were secretly circulated. A national organization, the No-Conscription Fellowship, smuggled to them letters, news, encouragement.

These C. O.'s were in violent opposition to public opinion. Yet they were by no means alone. They had behind them the public opinion of a small group which thought as they did, and made their fight seem worth while. This fact kept many of them from changing their minds who otherwise might have believed, as a few of them came to, that it is more important to save others than not to sin yourself, that the place of the C. O. was beside the soldiers, where he might, though fighting himself, be teaching many others how useless and criminal it was to fight.

Hysteria breeds counter-hysteria, and it is a pleasure to find in Mr. Graham's history no trace of such a state of mind, but rather a restraint, a dignity, a willingness to let facts speak for themselves that command the greatest respect for his account and sympathy for the men whom it concerns. We are unlucky in not having as good a book on the same movement in this country. It is more than an account of a few thousand stubborn and ardent souls, it is history, and as a record of men's minds in war-time deserves that name far more than those stories of how their bodies crossed this line or captured that town which are accepted as the history of wars.

ROBERT LITTELL.

A Page of Fiction

The Glimpses of the Moon, by Edith Wharton. New York: D. Appleton & Company. \$2.00.

IN *The Glimpses of the Moon* Mrs. Wharton has done no more, in fact rather less, than she has done before. She has established what her publishers call "the rich background of American 'society'" in Europe, and patterned against it the marriage adventure of two attractive parasites who propose to live on their countrymen for a year. As in *The House of Mirth*, the woman reveals herself on a lower plane in respect to standards and scruples than the man; but he comes wisely to see that as a parasite he has no business with standards and scruples at all, and in the end they agree to take their little cash and let their credit go. The book conforms to the classic type of American novel in which the hero and heroine love each other at the beginning, want each other throughout, and are in possession of each other at the end. They stand out in their purity in the midst of a notably wicked and adulterous generation, and should win for their adept creator the Pulitzer Prize for "the American novel published during the year which best presents the wholesome atmosphere of American life and the highest standard of American manners and manhood."

Mr. Prohack, by Arnold Bennett. New York: George H. Doran Company. \$2.00.

IN *Mr. Prohack* Arnold Bennett has repeated the problem of Kipps in a higher sphere. As Kipps was promoted from lower to middle, so Mr. Prohack is promoted from middle to upper class. He makes a better thing of it than Kipps, and though suffering from a certain whimsical boredom and peevish regret for his desk at the Treasury, he extracts enough enjoyment from the spectacle of his family to keep him going. The book is an illustration of Mr. Bennett's skill in reading the world from a single point of view. As in *Denry the Audacious* and *Buried Alive* the personality of the hero transmutes the common stuff of experience into something like adventure, so Mr. Prohack's detached, realistic mind submits his romantic good fortune to the light of common day. Mr. Bennett is a Thackeray working in terms of the novel rather than the essay. His satire develops through a character instead of being affixed as author's comment, but his world is the modern Vanity Fair.

Sareel, by Edith Dark. New York: Boni & Liveright. \$2.00.

SAREEL is a workhouse girl, a slave content to serve a cruel mistress, with only the Moorland in its "great protecting presence that was like a watching friend, changeless and steadfast," to comfort her sad heart. As has happened more than once or twice before, the success of the character is bound up with the background. When Sareel leaves her own country she not only falls into the hands of thoroughly unreal people; she becomes unreal herself with all the casuistries and complexes which have been the psychology of fiction since the novel was invented. But she comes back to the Moors and to reality. On the whole, a touching and winning story.

The House of Adventure, by Warwick Deeping. New York: The Macmillan Company. \$2.00.

A SOLDIER of the British Army in France, deserting from a hospital, becomes the Robinson Crusoe of a deserted village in the devastated region. Instead of the wrecked vessel, he has a dump of army stores from which to outfit. Instead of Friday, he finds the mistress of the erstwhile café returning to her home. Instead of the cannibals he finds an evil monster who would exploit the ruins for the tourist trade and black-hearted industries. Georges Clemenceau is the god out of the machine, arriving with a physician just as the hero succumbs to the mob. It would have conduced to that economy of material which is part of the art of fiction and of every other art if Mr. Deeping had remembered that Clemenceau was himself a physician, and allowed him to resuscitate the hero instead of merely haranguing the crowd.

A Vagrant Tune, by Bryan T. Holland. Boston: Small, Maynard & Company. \$1.75.

THAT the author is advertised on the cover as "A Grandson of Mrs. Gaskell, Author of *Cranford*," unfortunately serves to suggest the comment that family characteristics are transmitted by imitation rather than heredity. It must be said, however, that Mr. Holland has chosen a distinguished model and followed it skilfully. *A Vagrant Tune* is in the tradition of Arcadian fiction, which Oliver Goldsmith replanted in a realistic world and nourished and watered by a whimsical and kindly humor. The book has thus a literary significance as well as a charm of its own—a charm none the less real for being faint and evanescent.

For Richer, For Poorer, by Harold H. Armstrong. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.00.

WITH this his third novel Mr. Armstrong reveals his identity with Henry G. Aikman, the author of *Zell*. That book will be remembered as an example of realism shot through with the fantastic quality which the experience of certain people takes on—people who are none the less real for being perfectly adapted to fiction. In *For Richer, For Poorer* Mr. Armstrong does without this natural magic. His book is of the exact grain and color of life. It is built up out of commonplaces; the pathos is in the weakness of human endeavor, the humor in the irony of failure. It is a firmly knit story, rapid, vivid, economical with the exact relation of means to end—the novel of a craftsman as well as an artist.

The Breaking Point, by Mary Roberts Rinehart. New York: George H. Doran Company. \$2.00.

AT last! A pie like mother used to make. The kind you have always bought. An old-fashioned novel for old-fashioned readers. The hero, with the advantage of a dissociated personality, becomes the basis of a plot such as Wilkie Collins would have framed. The other characters have no obligation except to provide that novel-readers' satisfaction so well understood by Miss Braddon and E. P. Roe. From thousands of hearts and homes the cry will go up this summer: Thank God for Mary Roberts Rinehart!