

is clumsily worked out and not readily understood. The outstanding features are that the permissible exemptions are low, and that progression is limited so that the highest rate can never be more than three times the lowest rate. Admirable from the lofty point of view of approximate equality of public rights and public burdens, but a red rag to those who look upon our economic system as one of exploitation of the mass of the people by the rich. There is little doubt that the proposed provisions are too rigid, and if adopted they will probably not stand for long without change. It is difficult to say how any agreement could have been reached on any plan both definite and positive, and also satisfactory. The provisions should be compared with that we have: personal property taxation in theory confiscatory, but in practice made relatively light by rough administrative equity and favor, a system Oriental in spirit—but people seem to like it for that very reason. The revenue plank will not greatly help to carry the ship into port.

There are a number of minor changes, which are made points of attack; a slight alteration in the bail provision, which may be construed as reducing the constitutional guaranty; and a provision, inserted for the purpose of nullifying a court interpretation, permitting the Bible to be read in public schools without comment. It is quite obvious that in so far as these changes will affect votes at all, they will do so adversely.

The whole situation illustrates the working of the constitutional referendum; present to the people a comprehensive and lengthy instrument, and even the intelligent citizen will consider it his sovereign prerogative to vote "no" because this or that provision is distasteful to him. As one of a hundred legislators he would know that there can be no law-making without compromise, and would act accordingly; as one of a million he acts largely on prejudice and impulse, and, at best, as if an honest impression was a sufficient warrant for an adverse vote. Perhaps the "fifty-lines" constitution, often urged as a counsel of perfection, may again become a counsel of political wisdom. Or constitutional conventions will have to do what Ohio and Massachusetts did, submit separate proposals. The proposed constitution is better than the one we have. It is not as good as many good people (the writer being among them) think they could have produced. But if any one wants a new constitution, the only valid reason for voting against this one is the hope of getting something more radical drafted and carried in the not too distant future.

ERNST FREUND.

## After-Dinner Autobiography

*The Print of my Remembrance, by Augustus Thomas. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. \$4.00.*

UNDER the charm of the friendly and clear and amiable and anecdotal I read straight to the end of Mr. Augustus Thomas' near five hundred pages. We begin with the boy in St. Louis, with rumors of the Civil War, with that delightful grandmother, that fine, gentle father and his half practical, half visionary shrewdness; we hear of the job on the railroads, the service in Washington as page to the Hall of Representatives, the return to St. Louis, to amateur theatricals, and dreams of the arts, of poetry, the theatre. And as years pass there come the adventures with road companies, the friends, the flights in authorship; and then New York, and actors and managers, Maurice Barrymore, Julia Marlowe, Charles Frohman and a hundred others; and the success of *Arizona*, the triumphs of *The Earl of Pawtucket* with Mr. Lawrence D'Orsay in it. And finally we have chapters on travels, on life in Paris, on sources of inspiration, on *The Witching Hour*, and on influences, books and men.

About the whole book there is first of all a kind of sanity, a certain well-aired and healthy view of life—though life seen from the big end of the horn, from an assured success. The temperament revealed is balanced, intelligent and lovable. The natural affections appear simply and gently and often tenderly expressed. The memory for past fashions and movements is lively. The theatrical sidelights are both informing and diverting; the record of by-gone days and once famous idols is rich with fading tradition. And then when I have got all this, there comes all of a sudden the realization that I have been reading the autobiography of a worker in art.

With this realization I have a rush of amazing instances out of the book. There were indeed hints of young dreams, dreams of being an author, an artist, a player. There are accounts of plays, how they originated, how they went off when the public had a chance at them. But so far as one can see, these were the droll high hopes of a lad. These plays had no inner necessity for coming to life. There was no struggle and no darkness behind them. They had no urgency, no fling of the spirit; they are not dear to their creator, they are not his children. Plato wrote of the artist's creations once. "And everyone," he said, "who considers what posterity Homer and Hesiod, and the other great poets, have left behind them, the sources of their own immortal memory and renown, or what children of his soul Lycurgus has appointed to be the guardians, not only of Lacedaemon but of all Greece; or what an illustrious progeny of laws Solon has produced, and how many admirable achievements men have left as pledges of that love which subsisted between them and the beautiful, would choose rather to be the parent of such children than those in a human shape." Evidently Plato liked to hear himself talk.

No, when the dramatic urge arises in one's breast, what happens might be this; you hear that Mamie Miles, who is a capital actress and whose wink became famous from coast to coast in the eighties, needs a play; perhaps her manager, impersonating the muse, comes to you. So you get a pot of coffee and shut yourself up in a hotel room and write the play. Or you get interested in the popular interest in some question and you make a play out of it that the public wants. This play runs two years; that is the way you describe the result of your creation. Or you take

it to Charles Frohman: "Altogether I read or proposed many plays to Charles Frohman. Some were accepted, many were refused, both in script and in projected story. Charley one day said to me: 'It's always a great pleasure to refuse a play of yours, because it seems to get the thing off your mind, and then we have an interesting conversation.' For my own part, as I look back, I can add that the pleasure was not altogether one-sided, because Charley never refused a play or a story without proposing some project for another one." What a comment on the theory one hears sometimes of the creative necessity behind the artist's mind!

The solution of all this might be that we are dealing not with an artist but only with a craftsman. But the fact is the author of *Arizona*, *The Earl of Pawtucket*, *The Witching Hour* has no such negligible talent. These plays have a plot interest, they have animation, and a much more than average excellence in combined idea, character and stage device. They may not be the greatest drama, but I cannot imagine a man setting about them as if he were getting up a real-estate scheme on Long Island. And yet Mr. Thomas may modestly think of himself as a mere craftsman and so write modestly.

Or the solution of Mr. Thomas' attitude toward the life of his art may arise from some notion of art as a healthy thing of the people and nothing to be special about. A notion of art as a matter of what comes up to do, of watching the air for a job. That is partly true, but it is stupid or deceiving not to add that the artist's own relation to the matter is the mysterious source of whatever living creation he achieves. Making art easy for democracy cannot be done by pretending that it is merely a case of supply and demand and wits, though that might be a pat, fat, and comforting theory to go upon. An artist is like every man indeed. But the appalling truth is that the artist is more deeply like the man than the man himself can ever be.

Or is this a mere racial shyness on Mr. Thomas' part, an emotional modesty? Or is it the instinctive avoidance of the artist pose and all its shrewd and sloppy nonsense and bad taste? Perhaps it is both. But under such headings how shall we dispose of the tone of Mr. Thomas' many allusions to people in the various arts, to Clyde Fitch say, or Frederic Remington, Julia Marlowe, to the Barrymores and O'Neills, fathers and sons, to Charles Dana Gibson, Della Fox, John Fox, Lily Fox and Lillian Russell? They are all presented to the company of readers with the same level of praise: there is So and So the excellent actress or the well-known writer, and So and So the talented son of a talented father or the beautiful daughter of a beautiful mother; there is something that calls for So and So's brush or So and So's pen—as if we had no grades in art, no caricature, no prostitution, no precious sincerity and distinction. As if one were speaking at a great dinner, amiably, offending none, were making no illuminating and therefore in some quarters devastating point, were including numerous of those present with gracious bows and references to them. In Mr. Augustus Thomas has the accumulation of a very interesting and happily digested lifetime been spoiled by a malady of after-dinnerism? Or fine fellowism? Or is this lack of all artistic comment or meaning or significance or theory, so far the art of the theatre goes, in this hearty and entertaining book by the dean of the American theatre, an instinctive and winning concession to a democratic middle-class insistence that there shall be no eminence, no emerging from the mass except on its own terms? Or what is it that keeps Mr. Augustus Thomas from telling us more of what he knows so well and we should like to hear?

STARK YOUNG.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### In Justice to the Indians

SIR: When legislation affecting the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico has been introduced in Congress by a Senator from that state, with the alleged support of the Indians and apparent approval of the Indian Office; when it has been briefly questioned by Senator Borah and then accepted by the Senate unanimously, the American public might suppose the legislation known as the *Bursum Indian bill* to be an act dealing justly with the Indians and bringing credit to the state and the nation responsibly concerned. As it happens, the American public would be deceived. The bill, which has passed a misinformed Senate and is now before the House, is grossly unjust to the Indians, violates every official protestation that the government is their protector, and is, moreover, in such imminence of becoming law that only that vaguely accessible power, the public, can prevent a great wrong.

The Indians, helpless politically, have issued, with one voice from all the pueblos, a dignified but moving manifesto, asking fair play. Adding our voice to theirs in this emergency, we, the undersigned, who have had an opportunity to study conditions among the villages and to understand the faithless provisions of the projected law, and who intend doing our best to expose the facts, call upon the American people to protest immediately against the impending *Bursum Indian bill*, whether in its present form or with disingenuous amendments. We ask this for the sake of the Pueblos who, though probably the most industrious and deserving of all our Indian wards, are now threatened with the loss of their lands and of their community existence. We ask it even more for the sake of Americans themselves, as a test of national honor.

F. G. APPLEGATE  
MARY AUSTIN  
JOZEF BAKOS  
RUTH LAUGHLIN BARKER  
GUSTAVE BAUMAN  
E. L. BLUMENSCHNEIN  
WITTER BYNNER  
GERALD CASSIDY  
INA SIZER CASSIDY  
JOHN COLLIER  
ALICE CORBIN  
RANDALL DAVEY  
FREMONT ELLIS  
CHARLES K. FIELD  
LEON GASPARD  
STEPHEN GRAHAM  
ZANE GREY  
WILLIAM PENHALLOW HENDERSON  
ROBERT HENRI  
VICTOR HIGGINS  
DANA JOHNSON  
C. GRANT LA FARGE  
D. H. LAWRENCE

RALPH MEYERS  
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WILLARD NASH  
B. J. O. NORDFELDT  
MRS. FREMONT OLDER  
ELSIE CLEWS PARSONS  
SHELDON PARSONS  
B. G. PHILLIPS  
WARREN E. ROLLINS  
OLIVE RUSH  
CARL SANDBURG  
LEW SARETT  
ELIZABETH SHEPLEY SERGEANT  
J. H. SHARP  
WILL SHUSTER  
JOHN SLOAN  
PROF. FREDERICK STARR  
MABEL STERNE  
WALTER UFER  
CARLOS VIERRA  
HARRIET WELLES  
STEWART EDWARD WHITE  
WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE

CHARLES ERSKINE SCOTT WOOD

### Conrad Aiken's Review

SIR: Perhaps some of your readers, after reading the scolding review by Conrad Aiken of Robert Graves's little book, *On English Poetry*, might care to hear another and different opinion. If so, I offer mine.

The book is not merely the best contribution so far made to the study of the processes involved in artistic creation, it is the only book which deals with that subject both from intimate personal knowledge of those processes, and in the light of the most modern scientific knowledge of psychology. It will, I think, be found of the first importance by all serious students of the subject, and it should prove stimulating and enlightening to any creative artist. Mr. Aiken, in his review, denounced the book as "pompous" and "fatuous." I do not think it is either, but I regard Mr. Aiken's review as both. However, in a discussion of such a subject, wouldn't it be better if we all kept our tempers—and if the *New Republic*, in its book-review columns, set its correspondents the good example?

FLOYD DELL.

Croton-on-Hudson, New York.