

shall decide? The answer is obvious: Be your own final critic. Make the reviewer your guide and helper, but be your own court of appeal. The best review is that which, without being a bare account of a book, shows the reader what kind of a thing it is, to what tastes it most appeals, whether it has distinction or mere thrill and sentiment. The reading public has a keen eye to distinguish the review that has something to say from that produced as part of a journalistic job or in order to surprise by the smartness and cleverness of the reviewer.

It is easier to praise carelessly than to discriminate. The book-reviewing that is worth while is not the old-time savage slating of some wretched thing, or the long-drawn analysis of some trifling production of the here-to-day-and-gone-to-morrow order, but the selection for comment of that which is of literary value or informative substance or imaginative stimulus.

The right review brings together the right book and the right reader.

"What Do You Make of that Situation?"

IS the marital relation a concern of the community?

Or is it the concern only of the individuals involved?

Or is it perhaps the concern of both?

If so, where is the line to be drawn?

These are questions which we think will arise in the minds of all those who read Mr. Hagedorn's story in this issue. What does it mean to be good neighbors to Pete and Hilda? Is such a situation to be dismissed with Lockjaw Luke's remark, "Oh, I guess that's all right"?

We hope our readers will ask the question that was put to Luke: "What do you make of that situation?" And we hope that some of our readers will be inclined to write us brief letters telling us the thoughts that have occurred to them in reply to that question. We cannot promise to print all of these letters; but we do promise that if the results from this story prove interesting, we shall revert to the subject again.

Clarke Bill is not what it advocates, but if Mr. Davey says it is a good thing I am for it after reading his speech. The speech was not political, nor did it urge the interests of any special State or community; it was just about trees. Having described what a tree is—a living thing with a breathing system, a digestive system, a circulation system, and even a sexual system—Mr. Davey did speak in a most effective manner about the danger of forest devastation. Here are some of the interesting things he said:

This is what happens out in the native woodlands. The rain comes down through the leaves and settles into the loose, porous soil and finds its way into the subsoil, and from there to the springs which feed the little streams, and they in turn feed the rivers. But man comes along and cuts away the forest covering, leaving behind him the debris, the leaves and chips and small branches, making a veritable tinder-box and a constant fire hazard. Then the fire sweeps over the land and destroys the remaining vegetation. Then, when the rain comes down, it sweeps across the surface of the land and takes with it the fertile top soil that nature has taken centuries to build up. It is said that it takes nature ten thousand years to make an inch of fertile top soil. The whole lower Mississippi Delta, in fact the whole lower valley, is made up of rich top soil that has been swept down from the interior.

There is in Vinton County, Ohio, one township of 10,000 acres that tells the sad story of what has happened. I have this on the authority of a representative of the Forestry Department of Ohio. He told me that two years ago he went down to this place that was once covered with a magnificent growth of trees. The large trees had been cut away for lumber purposes and the smaller trees had been cut down to be used as mine props. Then the fire swept over the land and destroyed the remaining vegetation, followed by floods that took the fertile top soil. He told me that just three families exist in this whole township of 10,000 acres, and he went out across this land looking for other signs of life. He said, "I could not find a bird and not even a rabbit." So the destruction of timber is of more far-reaching importance than merely the loss of lumber.

I am reliably informed that the city of Columbus, Ohio, was threatened with a water famine a year ago last summer, just as many other cities have been threatened in the recent past. The people of Columbus were warned that there was a bare three days' supply in the reservoir. Their water is taken from the Scioto River, which

Shall the Trees Save Congress or Congress Save the Trees?

By LAWRENCE F. ABBOTT

Contributing Editor of The Outlook

NOT long ago I spent a Saturday and Sunday in the country—a week-end, I suppose I should say if I were not so hopelessly mid-Victorian—with a friend who is jubilant because he has saved a black-walnut tree in front of his house by the most careful medical and surgical treatment, although at least one expert had given it up to death. On my friend's library table I found a reprint from the "Congressional Record" of a speech made on the floor of the House of Representatives last April which quite revived my faith in Congressional government. The speaker was the Hon. Martin L. Davey, of the village of Kent, in the State of Ohio, and his speech was about trees.

The first session of the Sixty-eighth Congress was so Episcopalian in its character—that is to say, its members might truthfully have repeated from the General Confession of the Book of Common Prayer, "We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we

ought not to have done; and there is no health in us"—that the country at large has been disinclined to spare the miserable offenders. Unfortunately, there is a common impression that, while there is a large quantity of vociferously expressed opinions in Congress, there is very little knowledge or wisdom. Mr. Davey's speech ought to go far to correct that impression. It is wise, based upon expert knowledge, and, what is most hopeful of all, apparently aroused the interest and commanded the approval of his fellow-Congressmen, or such of them as heard it. Congress is human, and when one of its members makes a speech based on first-hand and accurate knowledge and free from prejudice or vituperative partisanship, he generally gets attention.

Mr. Davey was apparently not speaking in behalf of any bill, although at the close of his address, on being questioned, he said that the Clarke Bill—whatever that may be—is a start in the right direction. Now I do not know what the

was nearly dried up. Nothing but a providential rain saved them from the catastrophe. This condition is due very largely to the destruction of the woodlands around the head-waters of these streams. It is the woodlands that hold the water in check and allow it to seep out gradually. Without that there can only be alternating floods and droughts.

There is just one thing more that I want to say, and I would like to leave this with you as a concluding thought. All of us have heard for years past of the famine conditions in China. That country once had a wonderful covering of trees, very similar to that in America; but China, poor benighted land that it is, did what we are doing in America—cut away its trees and allowed the land to be burned over. The vegetation was destroyed over vast areas; then the water swept over the land and carried with it the fertile top soil. So there are millions of acres in China that constitute a barren waste not capable of producing vegetation. China has one crop in seven years, and in the other years of that period must look to the world for food to feed her teeming millions.

China has become, and will remain for long years, a land of perpetual famine because she has destroyed her forest covering, subjecting herself to the devastation of alternating floods and droughts, and has sacrificed the

fertile top soil over such a vast portion of her domain. . . .

Gentlemen, I beg of you to consider this problem as among the very great and far-reaching things affecting America. Oh, there are many things of small importance on which we waste our time in useless discussion, while we are allowing the process of devastation and deforestation and wastefulness to consume the heritage which has come to us under the providence of God and through the heroic sacrifices of our forefathers, and we have disregarded the safety and welfare of our heritage.

That is my plea to you. I think there is nothing that affects the future of America more, and very few things that are of equal importance. Gentlemen, I hope it may be possible for us here to do that thing which is so necessary for our children and our children's children. Even though we may not personally suffer within our lifetime, let us do the thing that is obviously our duty, and protect America, and keep it worth while for other men in the future to live in and to admire and to love. I thank you, gentlemen. (Applause.)

It is really quite delightful to see how Congress can lay aside partisanship when it comes to a question of fundamental human existence. This spirit, of course,

shows itself in time of war. A declaration of war is neither Democratic nor Republican; it is Congressional. While Mr. Davey is a Democrat, trees have no politics. Neither have birds. Seven years ago I commented in these pages on an extremely interesting speech that was made by the Hon. Edmund Platt, of Poughkeepsie, New York, then a member of the Sixty-sixth Congress, and now one of the Governors of the Federal Reserve Board. Mr. Platt was defending the game birds and song birds and supporting the legislation necessary to carry out the bird migration treaty between Canada and the United States. Mr. Mann, of Illinois, was then the Republican leader in the House, and in introducing Mr. Platt he said: "Mr. Chairman, I was to have five minutes, and I ask that the gentleman from New York, Mr. Platt, be recognized in my stead. He knows more about birds than all the rest of us."

We shall almost have reached the millennium when we elect men to Congress who are experts on at least one subject, and when the welfare of human beings is considered with as much wisdom and as little partisan prejudice as the welfare of trees and birds.

M. Herriot

A French View of the French Premier

By ERNEST DIMNET

WHAT do people outside of France think of M. Herriot? Some who regarded M. Poincaré as a martinet have welcomed his successor as a true Liberal, a politician no doubt, but one who is pre-eminently human and will listen to reason; a plain, direct man too, averse to the methods of old diplomacy and preferring an honest, good-natured, man-to-man discussion of difficulties. With such a man, well known to have been a frequent and admiring visitor of Germany before the war, peace must at last set in; the evacuation of the Ruhr should be a matter of weeks, and the Experts' Report, carried out in an atmosphere of good will, must replace the impossible Versailles Treaty. To people viewing him in this light M. Herriot is, above all, a pacifist.

But there is another conception of the French Premier. Is he not the leader of a party calling itself the Radical-Socialist Party? Does he not himself

refer to red as his color? Has he not been victorious in the election thanks to a combine with the Socialists? In fact, was he not returning from a pilgrimage to Soviet Russia when he visited America, less than a year ago? And has he not thought it advisable to explain in the latest issue of "Foreign Affairs" that he is less black than he has been painted, adding—which is neither perfectly true nor perfectly fair—that the gentle Briand sits in the Chamber with Deputies one shade redder than his (Herriot's)? The present writer recently found, to his surprise, that London is more apt to think of M. Herriot, the radical, than of M. Herriot, the pacifist, and if America does not do so yet, she soon will.

The truth of the matter is that M. Herriot is by nature an open-minded, open-handed man, kind and courteous, and one who would be sure to prefer frankness to tortuousness. He is a son of the people; his father died a major in

the army, but M. Herriot has a rather silly way of bragging of his aunt, who was a cook in the home of M. Maurice Barrès; hence his partiality for people raised, like himself, above their original station, and the emphasis with which he stresses his preference for a man-to-man or pipe-to-pipe diplomacy. But this is only his natural disposition. A man is not only what he was born, he is also what circumstances make him, and circumstances have placed M. Herriot at the head of a party which is neither gentle nor courteous, and which will support him only in so much as he acts according to the motto of all the French Radical politicians: "Being their leader, I had to follow them." To this I shall revert later.

A Man of Culture

ANOTHER distinct element in M. Herriot is his literary turn. In Anglo-Saxon countries when you say of a man