

acter: he sees it only in brilliant flashes; when he has learned to deal more calmly with people, he will not need to rely on these fireworks. And, though Mr. Gorman employs conscientiously some of the special tricks of "the master" in calling attention to, for a mild example, the dirt under people's finger-nails, his heart is not in it. The fact is that he is not disgusted with life at all, but in love with it. That, indeed, is what makes his book so unusually readable. Its final impression is one of beauty and—in spite of its tragic efforts—everyday delight in living. The pain and the (using the word in its literal sense) dirt, not being profoundly meant, fade out of one's memory, and only the beauty and the delight remain. Wasn't it Chesterton who remarked that we find ourselves humming to a merry tune Byron's lines: "There's not a joy the world can give like that it takes away"? Mr. Gorman's novel is a little like that!

Mass History

A HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH PEOPLE IN 1815. By ELIE HALVEY. With an Introduction by GRAHAM WALLAS. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1924. \$6.00.

Reviewed by WILBUR CORTEZ ABBOTT

Harvard University

IT is not often that one is inclined to say that "here is a great book," but if he were, he would not be far wrong in saying it of this work of that experienced, judicious scholar and entertaining writer, M. Halévy. Nearly thirty years ago he published a study of the "Théorie Platonicienne des Sciences." In 1901 he began a three volume study of the formation of philosophical radicalism, interrupting it with a little book on Thomas Hodgskin, one of the lesser known early "radicals." In 1912 he began this monumental history of the English people in the nineteenth century, of which he has published three volumes in French, the first of which is here translated under the somewhat peculiar title which it bears.

It may be hoped that the succeeding volumes will also be translated, that the work may be completed to the time originally announced—1895—or, better still, to 1914. For it is not merely a monument of scholarship, it is an extraordinarily entertaining work to any one interested in that interesting political and social phenomenon, the English people. To that study the present volume is, in appearance, only an introduction. It professes to describe the three great divisions of Political Institutions, Economic Life, and Religion and Culture in the three "Books" into which it is divided. It is packed with facts; it is knee-deep in footnotes; it has a fifty-page bibliography; and it would therefore seem peculiarly repellent to even a tolerably "intellectual" "general reader."

Yet nothing could be farther from the fact. It is, in the first place, far more than a mere catalogical description of the English people in 1815, for it endeavors to explain how and why they came to be what they were then, and in that process it surveys the field of their preceding history, especially in the eighteenth century. In the next place, though it derives its material from a list of sources whose very contemplation is enough to discourage the energy of hardened scholarly workers when they reflect on what it has meant to go through these documents, extract from them their important information, and to digest it into history; though it has within its pages a mass of facts,—a mountain of fact, a very mountain-chain of facts,—incredible as it may seem, one is not oppressed by them. Indeed he grows interested in them; he reads on and on through them with no sense of exhaustion. For they have been conquered, ordered, organized, arranged, drilled, and disciplined by a master. They have not overpowered him, as is the way of facts in the case of too many historians. They are marshalled and marched in the direction which he sets. They are subordinated to his purposes. In consequence he has provided not an encyclopædia but a history.

It is a history very different from much that has gone before. It is in the truest and best sense, mass-history. Its hero is the people, not even its statesmen, much less its politicians. Its subject is the development of that people. Its essence is what you may call "psychology" or "ideas" or "consciousness" or "movements," or even "soul." It is concerned with external manifestations of that "spirit" in the form of events but merely as manifestations. It is the

thing behind the apparent "facts" which interests M. Halévy; it is the greatest fact of all with which he is concerned, the fact of the development of a people. For he has a mind, not merely a memory or a mass of notes, with which he writes his history; and a historical mind is a rare and precious thing. It does not always exist, even among professed historians; and it is not always used by them even where it does exist.

Reviewers will undoubtedly seize upon the extraordinary description of eighteenth century Anglicanism and the Methodist revival, of the influence of the Dissenters, as a peculiarly apt expression of the book's method and purpose, of this effort not merely to know but to understand history. But the chapters on economic life will interest and instruct many no less, perhaps more, than those on religious experiences. That study and its conclusions may profitably be compared with the work of the Hammonds for more reasons than one, but for one most of all; it is preëminently scientific, not polemic. It does not seek to make a case. It takes in all the evidence and passes a judicial not a partisan judgment. And it is filled with entertaining observations.

We have heard much of late of "the new history," a history which too often does not trouble too much with facts, but is concerned with doctrines, or "ideas," or opinions, or mere dogma, an "open mind," a "forward-looking" attitude. It has been assumed that facts and ideas are somehow incompatible. But if we are to have a "new history," let us have this kind, where ideas are based on knowledge. It is at least as interesting, and it has one enormous advantage—it faces the facts.

Artist and Humanitarian

THE LETTERS OF OLIVE SCHREINER.

Edited by S. C. CRONWRIGHT-SCHREINER. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1924. \$5.

Reviewed by AMY WELLINGTON

ONE closes this large volume of Olive Schreiner's letters, profoundly interested, yet troubled and doubtful. Would Olive Schreiner have given her consent to the publication of her most private thoughts and feelings? There are certain notes to Havelock Ellis which it seems almost a sacrilege to print. Did she foresee this danger? In 1917, we are told, Olive Schreiner began to insist, with tears and at the risk of breaking a thirty-three years' friendship, that Ellis should either destroy or return her portion of their correspondence. He burnt the later letters. Did she sanction the publication of the earlier and probably more unguarded ones?

Mr. Cronwright-Schreiner says that in writing his biography and in making this selection of extracts from thousands of his wife's letters, he has been guided, not only by "loving interest and tender devotion," but by a "reverential scientific ardor." Possibly, here is the cause of his most injurious blunders. For to study your closest and dearest with "scientific ardor" is a task before which both scientist and writer usually quail. Some say it cannot be done. It certainly requires an extraordinary degree of disinterestedness and personal detachment, qualities which the present editor and biographer does not conspicuously possess. Plain sympathy and understanding would, one thinks, have served him better.

It was a "little Boer school-teacher" (so she described herself), teaching five hours a day and at her books till ten or eleven at night, who found time to write "The Story of an African Farm." There is a fiction which persists even to this day (it was printed in Mr. Squire's *London Mercury* after Olive Schreiner's death) that Meredith revised the novel for publication. "It cuts me deep," wrote Olive Schreiner to Havelock Ellis when first she heard the story in 1890.

I think nothing in life has ever cut me so deep—I wish you would write to Mr. Meredith, and I am sure he will give you permission—to say it is a lie—I know it seems little to you, but the best and most loved book I have ever written I would throw into the fire if any human being were to add not one sentence but one word to it.—I think Meredith will understand this, even if you don't. He is the only man in England who has given a blind, life-long devotion to his art, careless where it leads.

Olive Schreiner met Meredith only once, for a few minutes, in the office of Chapman & Hall, and she did not know he was the author of "Diana" until several years later. He was introduced to her as the firm's reader; but they did not mention the con-

tents of her book. He gave her the advice (too late!) to be cautious in all business transactions with her publishers. "The Story of an African Farm" was printed exactly as the author wrote it.

For Olive Schreiner was a most exacting artist in her stories and allegories. Throughout her life, there were two great impulses, sometimes at war, within her,—the humanitarian and the artistic. Her social and political interests did not hurt, they only strengthened and deepened "Dreams" and "Trooper Peter Halket," but they prevented her from writing a South African epic. There was a division in her work. She was capable of such a torrent of political oratory as that letter (happily included in the appendix to this volume) read at a Cape Town meeting in war-time; and she could dip her pen in beautiful, glowing colors and, with utmost economy of words, set down "Dreams." She, herself, was perfectly aware of this division.

Olive Schreiner lived in or near London for six years following the publication of "The Story of an African Farm," part of that amazing "sunrise" in English social thought and action of the 1880's. She was always poor, never really well. From the age of fifteen, she had suffered increasingly from asthma. Social revolt distracted her from the novel she was trying to complete, "From Man to Man," which Mr. Cronwright-Schreiner now promises to publish. The servile, torturing life of woman was the subject of absorbing interest. She wrote "ferociously" on prostitution. A free-thinker, in profound reaction from traditional religion, yet profoundly religious (a true daughter of Gottlob Schrein, the German missionary), her life was full of contradictions. Solitary, celibate, living in the midst of every kind of sex theory and adventure, she wrote, after a refusal to marry: "I must be free—I must be free—I've been free all my life.—Oh, they can't cut my wings." Yet, at the same time, she was "more and more" convinced that "no kind of sex relationship can be good and pure but marriage." The monogamous ideal strengthened with the years. She encountered all the difficulties, tragic and absurd, of the solitary woman living in Victorian London. Many of her "dreams" were written in Italy—in Alassio, where she felt most happy, and in Paris where she felt most alien and free.

So the story of a great and unconventional life continues in these letters; the return to South Africa, marriage, the death at birth of an only child, absorption in South African politics. Olive Schreiner became, as one of her countrymen truly put it, "a national possession for all South Africa." Unconditionally pro-Boer, and held a prisoner by the English through part of the Boer War, her home looted, her manuscripts destroyed, no sooner was the war ended than she began to feel that the Boers no longer needed her. The old love and inclination turned her towards England. (She was part English by birth, wholly English in culture.)

The author of "Woman and Labor" lived in London from 1914 to 1918, a pacifist with a German name, alienating friends, persecuted by the ignorant, poor, solitary, and an invalid. Life had become for her an almost continuous struggle to breathe. Still, she remained intensely alive to all the great social and political issues, and with poetic genius unspent. She died shortly after her return to South Africa in 1920. One is glad that Olive Schreiner lived to see the beginning of woman's freedom, she who visioned, with such poetic beauty, the end.

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Literary Independence

(Continued from page 642)

unless our youngest generation decides not to go excavating for Troys in our still rather shallow past. Perhaps our younger generation has found that an age which must be rescued from columns of vulgar writing and pages of vulgar photographs resists them almost as tenaciously as trousers resist sculpture, and perhaps, instead of following Henry James across the sea, they are cherishing the idea that all the ages which have been laid away have been laid away in lavender, or in myrrh and frankincense. "Linda Condon" is almost the only novel which could possibly be called a successful effort to make a work of art with our modern American life as its model, and Linda Condon herself is hardly more than a beautifully finished paper doll with three frocks and one perfect hat, who must be surveyed only from the front. And when our youngest generation realizes that the characters in our novels who have three dimensions have usually been drawn from a mirrored reflection, and that those reflections are usually surrounded by paper dolls who have not always three frocks, they must surely discover the impossibility of reproducing the minds of two or three centuries ago, even if they cannot look into "Romola" and see that Benvenuto Cellini made the labors of George Eliot unnecessary and the labors of her readers ridiculous. And then they will have only to discover that there are charming people and charming places in America, and that there are even charming relations between people, and that there are spinsters quite as depraved as Cousine Bette and students not much less wretched than Raskolnikov, and that there are whole countrysides of Emma Bovarys and towns full of Sir Willoughby Patternes. There are even Elizabeth Bennets and there are hundreds of Candides—but there are not any Jane Austens and there is not quite one Voltaire, though perhaps we need only three things to produce them, and to prove the advantages of a land where no one is sufficiently convinced of his low estate to feel it a justification of bad manners and bad clothes and bad grammar, and where very few people are sufficiently convinced of their high estate to feel it a justification of exactly the same attributes.

Perhaps, with just time enough for two more younger generations, we may celebrate the second centennial of our separate and equal station with a whole library of the literary form which must always be the fine flower of a civilization—perhaps we may prove again that a self-made nation can survive long enough to triumph over the disabilities a self-made man has never yet lived down. We need only schoolmasters and schoolmistresses who will know genius in its infancy, and who will forbid it to read the homespun prose of Cooper and Mark Twain, the cotton prose of Dickens and Scott and George Eliot, and the mercerized prose of Sinclair Lewis—schoolmasters and schoolmistresses who will realize that the brains of Americans are in much greater danger than their morals. And librarians who will also realize that self-evident truth, and who will hide away "Ivanhoe" and "Our Mutual Friend" and "The Rise of Silas Lapham," and bring them out only for those persons whom a careful intelligence test proves incapable of understanding "Tristram Shandy" or the introduction to "The Egoist." And more critics whose limitations will not be the limitations of their subjects, who will know first drafts when they see them, who will recognize imitations and even influences, and who will demand at least a respectable mediocrity before they compare novelists with Tolstoy and Anatole France and playwrights with Sophocles and Ibsen.

The Return of Harlequin

(Continued from page 641)

ious scavenging of realism, these developments meet us at every turn. Artifice and artificiality have danced in upon the heels of waddling Naturalism, that sweating and heaving behemoth. We can welcome Harlequin once more,—aye, even when he thumbs a knife for our vitals behind his brightly-lozenged back. We can better bear today the cut and thrust of flashing, malicious satire than any more bludgeonings at present from the profoundly "significant writers." For fantasy too, is significant, in a more real sense. A pin can puncture a balloon, and against our gaseous modern buncombe it is not entirely necessary to muster cannon and battering-rams.

The BOWLING GREEN

Bertha and Her Pottage

OF course there must have been others also for whom the word *Brooklyn* has always been a gramaryl and a spell. Probably it was Walt Whitman who long ago cast a magic over that name, so that not Stratford, Stoke Poges, Weimar, Valley Forge, Walden,—not even Cockeysville, Md., where the Sherwood rye used to be distilled—none of the traditional shrines had a livelier music in my skull. Since then some of the most unawaited excitements have transpired for me in that borough which Mr. Lawton Mackall ungallantly called the butt end of Long Island. And my actual entry into Brooklyn is demurely associated with what I thought was the discovery of the amazing literary merit of Bertha M. Clay. (I wonder what the M. stood for?)

It was a day, then, much like this; a drowsy forenoon of early spring; and calm Brooklyn byways whose names I have forgotten, perhaps they had none, lay mild and yellow. I had been sent by a publishing house to collect information, for publicity purposes, about one of its authors who had died. The author (I can see very plainly the picture of him we used, again and again, it was the only one we had, in our broadsheets sent out to the press; his moustache was finely waxed) was an Englishman, but he had a kinsman who lived in Brooklyn. From this kinsman, a veterinary surgeon, I was to glean some biographical details. It is a bit vague in my mind, but I remember that near the house was a stable or some sort of quadruped dispensary and the doctor and I sat in a pleasant whiff of strong nostra and horse. There was a glass of beer somewhere in the picture, very cool and pleasant beer, blonde like so much of Brooklyn's charm, and in the conversation I learned that the vanished author had been one of those who wrote the novels signed with the great name of Bertha M. Clay.

This may or may not have been exact; but young men in the publicity professions are not gruesomely concerned with doctrines on the fallibility of human transmission. In any case it was a good "item" and I knew that my boss would be pleased. And I resolved to make the acquaintance of Miss Clay's works.

This was not immediately easy, but one day I found myself in the neighborhood of Ninth Avenue and 28th Street (Manhattan). This time I believe I was on some errand for the editor of the *Garden Magazine*, something to do with a flower show, and the wholesale florists were along West 28th. You have no idea, incidentally, how many quaint errands are devised to keep active and alert the young apprentices of the publishing business. In a stationery shop on Ninth Avenue I found a fine display of Bertha Clays. I bought one, perhaps, "The Shadow of a Sin" or "Thrown on the World," though I admit that Charles Garvice and Charlotte Braeme had more skill in titles. Why didn't I buy "Neither Maid, Wife, nor Widow?" The title has haunted me ever since. For the conclusion was irresistible, she must have been a Cartesian, as Mr. Clem Hawley would say. In that region there is a park, whose name escapes me; and there I sat on a bench reading my first Bertha Clay. I rapidly came to the conclusion that it was dull twaddle, and left it on the seat.

We now skip several years. One evening, in a ten-cent store in Hempstead, L. I., I found a lot more Bertha Clays and determined to have another try. The volume I chose, at random, was "A Dead Heart;" The Arthur Westbrook Company, Cleveland, U. S. A., publishers; postage stamps taken the same as money. "A Dead Heart" was there, sure enough, but it was followed by another tale printed in much larger type, and I tackled the second one first. By the time I had read three or four paragraphs I got up from the couch in excitement. I've done Bertha an injustice, I said. There's something to her after all. Why, she's kidding them!

The story was about a young Scot, a graduate in theology and logic (only a Scot could graduate in both these simultaneously) who went to London to look for a job. He wanted to be private secre-

tary to a member of the Cabinet and "if time permitted he proposed writing for the press." He says goodbye to his Scotch sweetheart. "Andrew did not open the door for her, for he was a Scotch graduate. Besides, she might one day be his wife." The girl is briefly described. "Clarrie was beautiful and all that." Their parting:—

"Andrew stooped and kissed her upturned face.

"If a herring and a half," he said anxiously, 'cost three half-pence, how many will you get for eleven pence?'

"Clarrie was mute."

With growing enthusiasm I continued. Andrew, the hero, goes to London. "It was the first time he had set foot in England, and he naturally thought of Bannockburn." Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Chamberlain were too busy to see him, and he became embittered. He tried journalism:—

He sent one of the finest things that was ever written on the Ontology of Being to paper after paper, and it was never used. He threatened the *Times* with legal proceedings if it did not return the manuscript.

The *Standard* sent him somebody else's manuscript, and seemed to think it would do as well.

A certain amazement was taking hold of me as I scoured through these witty pages. Good heavens, here was Bertha Clay, whom I had regarded as a mere caterer of plum duff, turning off this graceful and highbrow burlesque. I felt I owed Bertha an apology.

Andrew was reduced to rereading his testimonials for consolation. He had a sheaf of them, from the Rev. Peter Mackay of Dundee and many other Scottish logicians and divines. "Had you met him in the Strand conning them over, you might have taken him for an actor. He had a yearning to stop strangers in the streets and try a testimonial's effect on them." "He had two pounds with him when he came to London, and in a month they had almost gone." He took to writing obits:—

When the newspaper placards announced the serious illness of a distinguished man, he made up characteristic anecdotes about his childhood, his reputation at school, his first love, and sent them, as the reminiscences of a friend, to the great London dailies. These were the only things of his they used. As often as not, the invalid got better, and then Andrew went without a dinner.

In his despair our Andrew joins the S. D. W. S. P.—the Society for Doing Without Some People—and earns a modest living by helping to assassinate public figures who have proved wearisome, to the members of this excellent club. The only personages exempt from possible removal are those who have been elected honorary members. The first man of any note that Andrew dispatched with his own hands was "Punch's" favorite artist on Scotch matters." He was on the track of the man who signs himself *Paterfamilias* in letters to the *Times*. To his great pleasure he learned that "none of these American preachers who come over to this country are honorary members."

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Well, as you see, by this time I felt it was too good to be true. I was carrying Bertha Clay round with me and expounding her as an unappreciated satirist. I went in to see a connoisseur of such matters. "Have you ever read Bertha Clay?" I asked. "She's immense." I read him some of it.

"What's it called?" he asked.

"It's called 'Better Dead,' it's the second story in this book 'A Dead Heart.' The great thing about Bertha seems to be her versatility. It's totally different from the first story."

"Bertha Clay!" he shouted. "Better Dead"! Why, you fathead, do you know what that is? It's Barrie's first book, published in '88. This is probably the first American edition, pirated. Darned valuable as a curiosity. Can you get me a copy?"

I went back to the ten-cent store. The counter where Bertha had reigned was devoted to Easter eggs.

"I'm sorry," said the young woman, "they were taken off sale last week. There's not much call for literature here."

But I often wonder what the readers of "A Dead Heart" can possibly make of that little skit of Barrie's when they find it masquerading under the name of Bertha M. Clay. And in the same volume, at the very end (just before the advertisement of "Napoleon's Oraculum") you'll find a yarn called "My Own True Ghost Story," written by a young man in Allahabad. But that also goes in as one of Bertha's. I begin to understand why so many people, including the Arthur Westbrook Company, regard Bertha as a great writer.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY