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Books of Special Interest

Childe Hassam's Art

THE ETCHINGS AND DRYPOINTS OF CHILDE HASSAM. With an Introduction by Royal Cortissoz. Scribner's. 1925.

Reviewed by FRANK JEWETT MATHER, JR.

BEFORE giving his first exhibition of etchings, in 1923, Childe Hassam had been working on the copper for some thirty years. Thus we had instead of the usual piecemeal revelation of a talent a sudden and thrilling confrontation with a life-work. On inspection the thrill diminished, for the etchings merely told us in a new idiom precisely what we already knew from Mr. Hassam's paintings. There was no such sense of surprise and of new understanding as one gets when he passes from the paintings of a Whistler or a Daubigny to their prints. There was instead a confirmation of Mr. Hassam's extraordinary athleticism in his ready mastery of a new and difficult discipline. We now have all his prints (238) carefully catalogued in beautiful form with appreciations by Royal Cortissoz and Pennell. Some fifty-odd halftone cuts are welcome memoranda of typical compositions, but no one should take them as satisfactorily conveying the zest and precision of Mr. Hassam's workmanship. For that one should consult constantly the frontispiece, the original etching, Cos Cob, No. 32.

The immediate impression is of a skilful and joyous craftsmanship in the service of a rather slight gift for design. One feels an etcher of the type of Lallanne. Mr. Hassam, however, usually ignores the linear tradition, for his theme, as in his paintings, is flickering light and dappling shadow. So the lines fuse into webs of shimmering tone after the fashion of Whistler's "Doorway." Not but that the line can be expressive in its own right, catching with sure and summary indications the poise of a nude, the swirl of surf or tideway, the uprightness or the sagging of old buildings. In short his technical resourcefulness is amazing. His inventive resourcefulness is less so, but here scrutiny revises a too generalized first impression. Among numerous fine etchings there are exceptionally a few fine inventions that take Mr. Hassam at his best out of that class of artists whose ability is merely professional.

The best prints are mostly those of inhabited places—old New England houses, churches, barns, fish-shanties, wharves, or bridges. Apparently Mr. Hassam's most complete affection and application are for such themes. We feel that his early paintings of Paris, New York, and the Isles of Shoals are still his finest in mood, though technically he has surpassed them since. And among his prints of places those of Portsmouth, Gloucester, and East Hampton are not only most skilful but also magically invested with mood—real treasures for the temperamental amateur. The *tours-de-force*, however, are in the Cos Cob series—such as the dock with tossing skiffs or the crinkled tide-way appropriately called "Old Lace"—marvels of delicate precision in touch of needle and of acid. The numerous figure subjects, including a long series of nudes by the sea, seem merely clever, and uninterestingly so. Indoors or outdoors, Mr. Hassam lacks the gift of making his figures belong; they have an inserted quality. Yet even here he is capable of creating exceptionally a composition of such Fantin-like fascination as No. 150, "Summer."

In short, when he is good he is very, very good, in etching as in painting, but too facile and prolific to be often at his best, possibly too much engrossed with his own talent to give himself generously to his theme. It is when the theme really hits him hard that we get a fine Hassam. To pick the one very fine print from the ten that are misleadingly good is ever the collector's delicate task. In the present instance he will find it rewarding. This record of what has been only a minor activity though in itself a substantial life-work for an artist of weaker fibre, is impressive from its sustained competence as it is precious for its occasional moments of inspiration.

Largess

THE RED CORD. By T. G. SPRINGER. New York: Brentanos. 1925. \$2.

Reviewed by OLIVER HERFORD

THERE are some communications that, like eggs, cannot possibly be broken gently, and this, which I am about to make public, is one of them. No amount of circumlocution will absorb the shock or soften the impact of the news that a publisher in this year of nineteen twenty five and this town of Manhattan is distributing largess in the shape of real coin to all who will accept it, without discrimination, without any hope of return and no questions asked.

The actual face value of the coin—errant with which Mr. Brentano—for that is the publisher's name—is playing ducks-and-drakes, is of no consequence; it is the principle or rather the variation from principle that provokes our admiration. When Mr. Rockefeller at published intervals bestows a dime upon an entire stranger it is not the amount of his largess that excites our wonder, indeed were it to be multiplied by ten or even a hundred our wonder would still remain stationary.

As a matter of fact the exchange value of the coin that will make Mr. Brentano preëminent among publishers to the end of time, is somewhere between one tenth and one eleventh of one cent. Some numismatists rate the Chinese ventilated coin known as a *cash* as high as one fifth of a cent, but generosity is one thing and prodigality quite another and in justice to Mr. Brentano I shall adhere to my own computation.

Also there is a string to this largess of Mr. Brentano, but happily the string has no retrogressive tendency, it is no string in the vulgar, mercenary sense of the word, it is a Red Cord attached to a book of that name and looped through the Chinese coin serves to draw it into the hand of each and every purchaser of this delightful romantic novel by Mr. Thomas Grant Springer. It serves too as a book-mark for the use of such unfortunates as must for one reason or another be compelled to lay the book down instead of finishing it at one sitting as I very nearly did.

I have never, until Mr. Springer's book came into my hands, read a Chinese novel written in English. I have always felt that Chinese books should be written only in the Chinese language and read only by Chinamen and Chinawomen.

But now I am convinced that all the Chinese novels should be written by Mr. Springer and read by everybody.

Wo Loie, the heroine of the story is the Virgin Wife of . . . but his name has escaped me . . . that is the only fault I have found with "The Red Cord" . . . the Chinese names are not as Mr. Christopher Morley would say, Chinese to remember, and when the name begins with a syllable that sounds like an adverb such as *So* or *Yet* it becomes entangled in the syntax with a result that is oftentimes perplexing.

Wo Loie (if I may be allowed to finish a sentence) is a most alluring little almond-eyed Becky Sharp—and when I say almond-eyed I do not mean salted-almond-eyed (whatever Mr. Morley may say). Wo Loie for all her mishaps never sheds a tear. I like her much better than Becky Sharp and I forgive her her wiles (one in particular that you will suspect but never know) because of her fortitude.

There is a witty and erudite preface to "The Red Cord," written by John Luther Long, but it must not be read until the story is finished because Mr. Long has most indiscreetly hinted at the dénouement and why should other readers be spared the suffering I endured (without a murmur) in resisting the temptation to read the last page before I was quite come to it.

The second series of the "Bibliographies of Modern Authors," published in sequence to the volume edited by Henry Danielson in 1921, has just been published in a limited edition of 750 copies. The American publisher is the R. R. Bowker Company. The second volume has been compiled and edited by C. A. and H. W. Stonehill, and includes full collations of the works of John Davidson, Ernest Dowson, Katherine Mansfield, Alice Meynell, Walter Pater, and Francis Thompson, in all 178 items of six authors.

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Books of Special Interest

Aliens In Our Midst

ON NEW SHORES. By KONRAD BERCOVICI. New York: The Century Co. 1925. \$4.

Reviewed by ANNIE MARION MACLEAN
Author of "Modern Immigration"

ALL those who read Mr. Bercovici's "Around the World in New York," following him upstairs and down, through densely crowded sections in quest of colorful foreigners, albeit naturalized Americans, have eagerly awaited "On New Shores," his story of aliens in the main hidden away in national groups on our broad acres far from the glamour of cities. Although statistics are not ignored, this book deals largely with the human elements involved. In this lies its strength.

The whole field of immigration has been carefully worked over by scholars, like Commons, Fairchild, Jenks to name but a few. What is needed now is someone to go up and down the land singing of work and the foreign man. This Mr. Bercovici has done with grace and charm. He went into alien settlements in remote parts of North Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Texas, and other states in his quest for first-hand knowledge of land hungry European peasants. He saw and understood the older men hoarding pennies for more acres, frowning upon pleasure, yes, and schools for their children, for are not schools a disintegrating force with their new language that opens up vistas of phonographs, radios, and Fords, a triumvirate of iniquity according to German-Russians in North Dakota? He understood, too, youth with roving eyes, hungering for untasted joy. There are few who can follow dim trails to small hamlets, as he has done, visiting the families therein to describe their manner of living to other Americans. The average person knows more about industrial groups in or near large cities; they are within range of vision. But who knows about Essexville, Michigan, where Belgians, Frenchmen, and other racial groups have to learn Dutch to do business with Hollanders? It is small wonder they are mystified by the English language.

Like Dr. Carol Aronivici in his scholarly Americanization Studies, the author of "On New Shores" emphasizes the importance of recognizing the contribution alien races have made to American life. Foreigners do not become Americans by figuratively thumbing their noses at foreign princes and potentates, especially their own, followed by genuflecting to the Constitution. It is not thus new loyalties are made. The Iowans in Southern California would readily die for their adopted state any day in the week, yet they gather a hundred thousand strong at an annual picnic to shout the praises of Des Moines. The psychology of the stranger within our gates is not different.

Mr. Bercovici should be made minister plenipotentiary to our foreign groups, an

interpreter of race to race in the saturated solution of aliens we call the American people. "On New Shores" undoubtedly will be used as outside reading for college students who will forget their text books in its perusal. A copy might well be in the hands of every literate citizen.

Missionary Efforts

THE PEOPLE OF THE PHILIPPINES, THEIR RELIGION, PROGRESS AND PREPARATION FOR SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP IN THE FAR EAST. By FRANK CHARLES LAUBACH. New York: George H. Doran Co. 1925. \$3.50.

Reviewed by NORBERT LYONS

JUST about ten years ago there came to the Philippines a young missionary who had made quite a name for himself in the United States as a savior of lost men—that ever-shifting yet shiftless army of human derelicts known as "knights of the road," tramps, or hoboes. "Dominie Sawdust" the bright young men of the daily press called him, because of the fact that his saving process consisted of making the objects of his uplift manipulate a buck-saw on some hefty logs of wood before regaling them with a hearty meal. Thus he taught a useful object lesson and at the same time rendered a most commendable and most practical social service.

Had Dr. Laubach carried his doctrine of practical Christianity to the Philippines with him and applied it to the natives of the Islands, Uncle Sam's problems in the Archipelago would have been shorn of a great deal of their difficulty. It appears, however, that Protestant missionary efforts in the Islands since American occupation, when such efforts first began, have not had such a practical, materialistic background. Dr. Laubach in his new book gives the impression that the evangelistic work now being carried forward in the Philippines has as its main object the preparation of the Filipino people for what he calls "spiritual leadership in the Far East." Unfortunately, it is not spiritual advancement that the Filipinos need as much as material progress, and if every one of the 130,000 Protestant converts had been taught how to use the buck-saw instead of the Bible, the time, money, and energy expended on missionary effort in the Philippines would have been of far more value to the nation.

Dr. Laubach's book is in reality a brief religious history of the Philippines. The greater part of it is devoted to the story of Protestant missionary effort. Considering the fact that the author is a most devout and earnest member of the Protestant creed, his treatment of the important Catholic influence in the Islands may be said to be tolerant and fair, though, of course, it contains a number of statements to which bitter exception

will be taken by the Catholic reading public. Aside from these obvious sectarian ebullitions, the book gives a thorough and accurate account of religious development in the Islands, starting with the Hindu, Chinese, and Mohammedan influences and continuing through the Roman Catholic and Protestant phases. Considerable space is devoted to the Aglipayan schism, and Dr. Laubach furnishes much hitherto unpublished information on the genesis and rise of that strange, endemic outgrowth of the native spiritual complex.

Dr. Laubach, however, is so confirmed a Protestant and so conscientious, zealous, and enthusiastic a missionary, that he can view facts and conditions only in the light of his all-absorbing life work. This leads him to the expression of views and aspirations, which, if they were not so sincere and actuated by the best and purest of motives, might be regarded as bordering on the ridiculous. Thus, he not only sees the Filipinos as the future spiritual leaders of the Far East, but also the possibility of their assuming "the spiritual leadership of the whole world." Again, his gratifying evangelical contact with some of the younger Filipinos who have embraced the Protestant faith, leads him to form greatly exalted opinions of their characters.

As might be expected, Dr. Laubach is a fervid advocate of Philippine independence. He is impatient with the general policy of political neutrality maintained by the rank and file of the Philippine missionary field, and of course ascribes to a people, which, in his opinion, is capable of such great spiritual progress, equal political capacity. However, he does not stop to consider the fact that in the event of the Philippines becoming independent, the opportunities for Filipino "spiritual leadership" will naturally be vastly curtailed, since it would mean the replacement of a strong sovereign Christian power by a weak Christian nation and would thus materially reduce the resistance to encroachment by the non-Christian creeds of the Far East. Also it would increase the local influence of Catholicism as against that of Protestantism, since the former belief has an overwhelming numerical advantage.

For the religious worker in the foreign field, Dr. Laubach's book should prove an interesting and inspiring volume; but to the layman desirous of aid and further enlightenment toward orienting himself on the Philippine problem, it has little value. It displays thorough scholarship and arduous research, and in the introductory portion presents some facts of an historic and ethnological nature that have never before appeared in a book of this general sort; but, unfortunately, the author's evangelistic enthusiasm so completely dominates his whole thesis, that the book, in the final analysis, is little else than a monograph on Philippine religious history with special emphasis placed on the Protestant phases of the record. As such it doubtless will find an appreciative audience in the missionary field.

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