

Points of View

Defining Romance

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:
SIR:

Frank Swinnerton, in your issue of October 18, tries to define romance,—and nearly does it. May I have a try at filling out his definition?

Swinnerton believes that true romance is not essentially a thing of unfamiliar happenings and scenes of some far remoteness in either time or place, but that it is life itself, romantic because the author (Conrad in his illustration) "believed and makes us believe in the importance and reality of those actions and scenes which he describes," no matter when or where they occur.

So far, good. But this, in my opinion, falls just short of defining the essence of romance: of letting us into the philosophy that is behind the artistry of one writer, making his work true romance, and not behind that of another whose work thereupon shapes as realism or as some phase of the established which we call classical.

This philosophical secret behind romance is, I believe, a sense of the worth of life. The realist, you say, has that? Let us say, then, a feeling of the worth and transcendence of life.

This sense is often unconscious on the part of the author himself; it frequently appears as an overtone or, shall we say, as a fourth dimension shaping the work almost in spite of its expressed philosophy. Take Conrad—since Swinnerton has taken him. Conrad's prevailing theme is supposed to be the ironies of life. Yet his men are after all greater than the events which happen to them. If Conrad, in "Victory," had not felt an enormous significance in Heyst's fastidious chivalry, he could not so have made it the fabric of his story. For the cultivated Seyst to have lived the life of a picturesque failure in eastern seas was not significant in spite of the exotic setting and the irony of the situation. Nor even for Heyst, the cynic, to have refused life and then had it thrust upon him. But for Heyst to have possessed a spiritual quality which, meeting its likeness in a sordid woman musician, drew her to his level and in its little hour made them transcend fate in their mutual recognition—this is true romance. And Conrad's title, "Victory," advertises the fact.

So with "Lord Jim." In the completeness of Jim's spiritual victory is lost all sense of the irony of fate. And if the drama of his conquest of physical fear had played itself out in some New England village as a conquest of mortal shyness, the significance would be the same.

Whatever Conrad's apparent preoccupation with the fatalisms of existence, it is in suggesting the glory of this human transcendence of the natural that he again and again gets his effect.

And so, I believe, does every true romantic.

The other night I saw in the movies Victor Hugo's "Hunchback of Notre Dame" with Lon Chaney. (No doubt I was the only remaining person in the United States who had not seen it. 'Tis usually thus!) The thought that leaped at me as I saw it was: this is true romance; this is Victor Hugo at his greatest. The impossibly goody goodness of the priest and of Esmeralda and the equally impossible badness of Johan in the representation, went for nothing. The hunchbacked soul looked out of the eyes of Lon Chaney and grew to noble stature while I looked, and believed. I *had* to believe. True romance is that which makes us, in spite of appearance, of doubt, discouragement and cynical reality, believe and rejoice in the transcendence of the human soul.

This is no mushroom doctrine of mine. Let us take the usual recourse to the Greeks.

Aristotle's canon of fictional art was a humanness which made the auditor identify himself with the hero in pity and in fear, and a greatness of hero and event which made him significant; that is, a greatness which stretched ordinary human limitation in a degree which we could believe in and go with.

In short, Aristotle believed that the fictionist should make us marvel at the possibilities of human nature in the grip of circumstance.

Remember that the classical of our day was the romantic of theirs. A head "unbowed by time or fate" was a daring conception. Hence, the Greek does not go too far, and so we call him classical. But I believe that in the degree in which, since that day, transcending human qualities have

emerged, connoting to man his wings, i.e., a certain independence of time and fate, in that degree true romance has pointed the way to the human soul and will continue to point. Kipling has said it all in that great poem, "To the True Romance."
Carmel, Calif. CLAIRE BOTKIN.

Dickens as Physician

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:
SIR:

I wonder if the readers of the *Review* have ever looked upon Charles Dickens as a physician? . . .

All will agree that Dickens was a man with considerable powers of observation. It will be interesting to note that this statement is handsomely, and even enthusiastically supported in the *British Medical Journal*. In it writes one Dr. C. G. Strachan, with expert admiration of the way in which Charles Dickens described in "Great Expectations," the illness from which Mrs. Joe Gargery suffered as a result of being struck on the back of the head by an unknown assailant.

Dickens's account of the effect produced on the unfortunate lady may be found in the novel itself. The point which has evoked Dr. Strachan's very interesting tribute, is the accuracy with which Dickens described clinical details of her condition at a time when physicians themselves had not the knowledge of cerebral surgery which would have enabled them to define and explain her symptoms. The language of Dickens is, naturally, that of the layman, but Dr. Strachan goes over the case in detail and shows how the novel faithfully represents the symptoms which would now be recognized as a natural consequence, to use the doctor's own words—"of a widespread lesion of the posterior aspect of the brain."

The explanation is that Mrs. Gargery's illness was one which Dickens observed in real life. "The extreme accuracy of the description shows him to have been possessed of powers of medical observation far in advance of the clinicians of his days." This will be very pleasant reading to those who hold that great writers really see more than the vast tide of humanity, and sometimes see it more clearly than those who have been trained to look for it.

Yours very truly,

MAURICE E. BALK.

Chicago, Ill.

The Reader's Guide

(Continued from preceding page)

Chapdelaine, has been followed by "The Lake Superior Country" (Century), which is, as nearly as a book can make it possible, taking the actual journey through this wilderness, meeting Indians, oldest inhabitants and lighthousemen. "Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada" is one of the publications of the Toronto house of McClelland & Stewart, to whom and to the excellent Public Library at Toronto it would be well to write for information about Canadian authors and their books: their number is far greater than most people in the United States realize, and includes names that we may have been claiming for this side of the line. An article on Canadian literature appeared in the *Saturday Review* on December 20.

Racial and national problems, so important in the present and future of Canada, appear in more than one book. "The Evolution of Franch Canada" (Macmillan) is by Jean Ch. Bracq, whose "France Under the Republic" (Scribner) is still one of the most lucid accounts of the conditions out of which the French Republic came and under which it functions. "The French in the Heart of America," by John H. Finley (Scribner), and "When Canada Was New France," by G. H. Locke (McBride), should be included, and "The Clash!" by W. H. Moore (Dutton), a study in nationalities.

There is a new holiday edition of "Marie Chapdelaine" (Macmillan), that with illustrations in pen-and-ink and page decorations in tint makes the first attempt to give the heroine of Hémon's tale a picture other than in words. And the lover of Hémon should know that his "My Fair Lady" (Macmillan) has short stories second only to his novel, though some of them may disturb the idea some people have that he must have shared the religious fervor and certainty of a community he so well understood.

The New Books

Poetry

(Continued from page 436)

THE END OF FIAMMETTA. By RACHEL ANNAND TAYLOR. Holt. 1924. \$2.50.

Mrs. Taylor has the distinction of being included in one of Quiller-Couch's anthologies, doubtless from her "Poems," 1904. She has also written "Rose and Vine," "The Hours of Fiammetta," and a study of certain aspects of the Italian Renaissance.

Her poetry shows a scholarly and cultivated mind; weaned on Scotch ballads, her hand achieves a somewhat studied excellence of technique. The heart wars with the mind through her verse in high romantic fashion:

Woman am I?—I am not sure.

A muse, a spirit, a lover in vain!

My heart is broken, the shards are pure.

There's a deathless diamond in my brain.

So begins "The Scholar-Lady's Complaint," and on the very next page we come upon the powerful:

Between the stones I have been ground,

Upon the loom I have been wound,

Upon the wheel I have been bound;

There is no more to say.

We have opened the volume in the middle and these quotations illustrate the virtues of Mrs. Taylor's work. But to read "The End of Fiammetta" throughout, tracing in red thread on the loom of this poet's singing the laborious argument of love, is to feel one's interest flag and tire. There are moments of passionate protest from which emerges verse which almost justifies the effusive *London Morning Post* in saying: "She takes her place in the singing sisterhood with Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Christina Rossetti." But a more judicial study of this volume must surely considerably modify that appraisal, a loose classification at best. "Versing and loving" was she born—Rachel Annand. She has a decidedly acute ear for the rhythms of noble verse, and at times a braw Scots tongue, and she has the rich old ballad background and a mind sometimes lit by furious fancies. But her execution is very uneven. She can strike out a genuinely fine and original verse such as:

There's an end to the duel long fought in the Dark,

In the dangerous moonlighted Past,
Monseigneur, my God, a chivalrous lady
Surrenders at last.

And she can also wail tediously through lesser verses. We place her work with that of Margaret L. Woods. Both poets have written much—somewhat too much—have merited encomia and have received it—and a selection from the very best of both would display them as finer poets than their age has yet, perhaps, discerned. But also, they fail of the heights.

MAVERICKS. By EARL H. EMMONS. Oswald Publishing Co. 1924.

This is a volume of western poems in dialect. The verse is neither more distinguished nor less distinguished than the average of its type; it is realistic somewhat as Robert Service is realistic, and deals with elemental characters much after the manner of Bret Harte; but it has the fire and energy neither of Harte nor of Service. Most of Mr. Emons's work, indeed, could more properly be designated doggerel than poetry; and this despite William Francis Hooker's confident introductory prediction that "it is a book which will live." The following lines, selected virtually at random, are typical of the author's style:

I have seen some mighty actors in some great and grippin' parts,
Which could drive you dang near loco with their mellerdramatic arts;
But for wranglin' men's emotions to the ultimate degree
None could touch old Sandy Hanson singin' "You'll Remember Me."

THE SWALLOW BOOK. By Ernst Toller. Oxford. 85 cents.

POEMS. By Charlton Miner Lewis. Yale. \$1.50.

FLAME AND DUST. By Vincent Starrett. Covici.

THE IRON STRING. By Albert Draves. Dorrance.

VOICES OF THE WIND. By Virginia McCormick. White.

CHRISTCHURCH. By Robert P. Tristram Coffin. Seltzer.

COLUMN POETS. Edited by Keith Preston. Covici.

THE POINTED PEOPLE. By Rachel Lyman Field. Yale. \$1.25.

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON POEMS. First Series. Selected and Edited by Glenn Hughes. Seattle: University of Washington Press. \$1.75.

DRIFTED LEAVES. By Hugh Erwin. Marmor Book and Art Shop, 832-6th Ave., N. Y. 50 cents.

A FAR LAND. By Martha Ostenso. Seltzer. \$1.50.

Religion

MARY, THE MOTHER OF JESUS. By ALICE MEYNELL. London: The Medici Society. 1924.

This beautiful volume illustrated with eight plates in color by R. Anning Ball, R.A., is a fine memorial of the late Alice Meynell. The book was first published in 1912. It begins with the words of the gospels, dealing with Mary, and proceeds with a discussion of "Mary in the Scriptures," of "The Virgin," "The Mother," tradition and popular legend, the tribute of painting and poetry to Mother of Christ, Mary as the touchstone of religious art, her representation in the Churches, and what Mrs. Meynell called "The Effectual Influence" of a Woman and a Child throughout the history of Christian civilization. In this last chapter she says, beautifully and truly:

All sorts and conditions of men turned in homage to the two helpless persons of the human race. Even when the Byzantine and early Italian Virgin was figured rigid in her hierarchic enthrone, it was known that her innocence and her simplicity had placed her there, and had set the young Child upon her magnificent knees. No other two, in the history of human art, have so nourished the sense of generosity and of forbearance in the adult and manly heart of mankind.

Mrs. Meynell's prose was always distinguished. Treating the Virgin Mary as "Our tainted nature's solitary boast," she has wrought a delicate shrine to Her in her devout analysis of Marian legend, literature and worship. The spirit that informs the book is ardently Catholic, the style rich with allusion, noble and serene.

INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN MOVEMENTS. By CHARLES S. MACFARLAND. Revell. 1924.

This excellent handbook by the General Secretary of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America will be of especial value to those who are interested in present tendencies in organized religion at home and abroad. It throws a revealing light upon the effort of modern Protestantism with its multiplicity of divisions to consolidate its resources and heal the world's wounds.

Most laymen and even many professional teachers of religion will be surprised to learn how widespread is the coöperation now existing between the churches in various national and international federations, foreign missions, foreign relief, and education. Much thought is being given to the problem of peace and though church leaders have a weakness for mistaking pious resolutions for actual achievement, the discussion of the methods by which a better understanding between nations can be brought about cannot be other than beneficial. In a day when nationalism is receiving a new and perhaps a false emphasis, it is refreshing to learn how many institutions such as the Church Peace Union, the Y. M. C. A., and the International Missionary Council, to give only a few random illustrations, are international in their sympathies and aims.

None can read this book of reference without reaching the conclusion that the church is groping its way toward a wider outlook and trying to practice the ideal of human brotherhood. The value of the volume would have been enhanced by the addition of an index.

MYSTICAL ELEMENTS IN MOHAMMED. By John Clark Archer. Yale. \$1.50.

THE INTERPLEADER. By Lewis B. Sawyer. Kansas City: Franklin Hudson. \$1.50.

Travel

TRAIL LIFE IN THE CANADIAN ROCKIES. By B. W. MITCHELL. Macmillan. 1924. \$3.00

"Beans" is a word to conjure with. A tradition to the Bostonian, and symbol of the plebeian to the Middle Westerners it becomes the word of life to the sojourner in the wilderness. Mr. Mitchell's book is the saga of beans and the pean of the Canadian Rockies. More explicitly it is a dissection upon the trials and whimsies of camp and trail, particularly the delight of food after a hard day's packing, and a setting forth of the wonders of the glacier bound fastnesses of the Canadian North West. In style it is too overlaid with adjective and simile to be truly excellent, but the author has approached his task with such enthusiasm, and there is so much of native interest in his subject, that the book makes very agreeable reading.

GRECIAN ITALY. By Henry James Forman. Boni & Liveright. \$3.

The World of Rare Books

By FREDERICK M. HOPKINS

AT THE ANDERSON GALLERIES

SELECTIONS from the library of Herbert D. Ward of South Berwick, Maine, and from the library formerly owned by Mrs. Florence Webb of Westbury, Long Island, together with other consignments, were sold at the Anderson Galleries December 16 and 17, 598 lots bringing \$5,069. These selections contained good editions suitable for the readers library, but only a sprinkling of rarities of interest to collectors. The prices for this kind of material were very good.

A few of the more important lots and the prices realized were the following:

Audubon (J. J.). "The Birds of America," 7 vols., royal 8vo, morocco, New York, 1859. \$190.

Beaumont and Fletcher. "Works," with Notes" and "Bibliographical Memoir" by Dyce, 11 vols., 8vo, calf, London, 1843-46. Best library edition. \$38.

Dibdin (T. F.). "A Bibliographical, Antiquarian, and Picturesque Tour in France and Germany," 3 vols., royal 8vo, straight-grain morocco, London, 1821. First edition. \$52.50.

Gould (John). "A Monograph of the Trochilidae," 5 vols., atlas folio, morocco, London, 1861. With the Baroness Burdett-Coutts bookplate. \$135.

Grolier Club. Richard De Bury's "Philibiblon," edited by A. F. West, 3 vols., small 4to, vellum, New York, 1889. \$28.

Humphrey (H. N.). "The Illuminated

Books of the Middle Ages," atlas folio, morocco by Wright, London, 1849. \$45.

"Liber Scriptorum," second book of the Authors Club, folio, morocco, New York, 1921. One of 251 copies, the first to appear at auction. \$35.

Willughby (Francis). "Ornithology," folio, calf, London, 1678. Contains the two plates at page 28 usually missing. \$67.50.

At the same galleries the library of the late Walton White Evans, New Rochelle, N. Y., and the library of the late John Harper, Bennington, Vt., were sold on December 17 and 18, 617 lots realizing \$4,452.50. A few representative lots with prices were the following:

Daniell (T. and W.). "Oriental Scenery," Six parts complete. 3 vols., atlas folio, London, 1795-1808. The two volumes of text are missing. 135.

Huth (Henry). "Catalogue," 5 vols., imperial 8vo, cloth, London, 1880. One of 130 copies. \$18.

Maximilian, Prince of Wied. "Travels in the Interior of North America," 2 vols., atlas folio and 4to, half leather, London, 1843-44. One of the most important works ever issued on Western America. With slight imperfections. \$100.

Montanus. "America," 2 vols., folio, old calf, London, 1671. \$52.50.

Union Pacific Railroad. A collection of early reports and papers on the preliminary surveys, locations and engineering problems

of the Union Pacific Railroad, 19 pieces, 8vo, sewn, v. p. 1864-69. \$520.

Schoelcraft (H. R.). "History of the Indian Tribes of North America," 6 vols., 4to, Philadelphia, 1853-60. Complete with Vol. VI frequently missing. \$95.

"G. D. S."

IN the period beginning with the first session of the Hoe sale in 1911 and ending with the death of George D. Smith in March, 1920, more than one-half of the genuinely rare and valuable books sold at auction in this country were knocked down to "G. D. S." With the death of the great bookseller, in settling his estate, many of the rarities of his bookshop went back to the auction room for dispersal. During the present season the George D. Smith Book Company has been buying heavily of the kind of book stock that made the Smith bookshop famous. Again and again in the Chew sale old auction room attendants had the pleasure of hearing important lots go to "G. D. S." as in days gone by. Collectors and the trade wish the new organization unqualified success.

NEW BOOKMAN'S PUBLICATION

A NEW publication, *The Book Collector's Quarterly*, has just appeared bearing the imprint of Ernest Dressel North, rare book dealer, 4 East Thirty-ninth Street. It is edited by Gertrude W. Ridgway and is well printed on good paper. In a "Proem" the editor says that the "sole intention is to spread the microbe of collecting. It offers no cure. On the contrary, it is intended to work havoc among the impecunious and strengthen the ardor of the rich." The leading article is devoted to "Byron One Hundred Years After" and is followed by

short articles on William Harris Arnold and Beverly Chew as collectors. This little periodical is well worth the attention of booklovers and its publisher will undoubtedly send a sample copy to all who care to write for it.

NOTE AND COMMENT

FIRST editions of American authors of the last half of the nineteenth century are finding their way into booksellers' catalogues in increasing numbers," says *The Publishers' Weekly*. "Prices are advancing and apparently the number of collectors are increasing. A few who have had the initiative and good judgment to buy when prices were low will profit by it. The great majority wait for the procession; they like company."

In the introduction to his "catalogue of an Exhibition of One Hundred Famous Books, Ancient and Modern, in First Editions," Ernest Dressel North says: "The American collector is more of a sport than collectors of any other nationalities, he will obtain his library of rare books regardless of cost and he takes intense delight in his books, although he may perhaps miss the joy of discovery, that sudden feeling of exhilaration which comes to the man less endowed with gold, of finding a treasure in a jumble of old rubbish. The general estimate runs that only one book out of five thousand is worth more than waste paper and for the time and expenditure of gathering together these rarities the American will gladly pay and so encourage further research, and the final result is that most of the world's treasures are in the possession of American collectors."

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THE READER, a Club Bulletin, edited by Louise E. Hogan. Mentioned in the Phoenix Nest, October 11th, for sale at the F. C. Stechert Co., 126 East 28th St., and Wanamaker's N. Y. and Philadelphia stores; also through any bookstore.

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