

A Soap-Bubble Hero

TRIMBLERIGG: A BOOK OF REVELATION. By LAURENCE HOUSMAN. New York: Albert & Charles Boni. 1925. \$2.50.

Reviewed by an ENGLISHMAN

WHAT is an Englishman to say in an American review about a book which excoriates a British ex-Premier—for that in Jonathan Trimblerrigg the author exhibits David Lloyd George neither the contents nor the features on Mr. Publisher's wrapper permit us to doubt? He cannot defend him, for, fantastic though it is, the book goes straight to the central quality of its hero. He can only plead that the world which has allowed itself to be victimized is as much to blame as Jonathan Trimblerrigg himself. Indeed the book is a satire, and a terrific one at that, not so much on David Lloyd George, or on Welsh Nonconformism, or on the British party system, as on a civilization which can allow its destinies to be dictated, for however brief a period, by a film-star.

For that is what David Lloyd George is represented as being: what he is or rather has been. Measure him by any of the traditional standards of statesmanship, knowledge, foresight, prudence, moral courage—and his record is zero. But measure him by the qualities that "publicity" demands, and he is superb. He is, at any given moment, "what Mr. Public wants" and he is able to be so because he is nothing in himself. He is a dis-souled personality waiting for a rôle. He is a temporary soap-bubble on the world's public life. "After the rope had done its work," says his Creator at the close of the record, "when I looked for him on the spiritual plane, it was to find that he had vanished."

"Mr. Trimblerrigg" is painful reading for anyone who stops to reflect on what slapdash policies involve in human misery. The migration of a million or more homeless Greeks from Asia Minor is only one instance among many. But, even apart from its literary merits, its unerring eye for the details of its hero's stage properties, and its stabbing, Swiftian irony, it deserves to be widely read by Americans. For we do not want Americans to go on worshipping our broken idols; and in these days when truth follows slow on the heels of broadcasted fiction, to make America see David Lloyd George as Britian sees him is good internationalism.

"Free Coinage of Oil"

THE STORY OF TEAPOT DOME. By M. E. RAVAGE. New York: Republic Publishing Company. 1924. \$1.

Reviewed by ISAAC F. MARCOSSON

IN oil parlance the Teapot Dome eruption was the biggest scandal gusher that the industry has ever known. To adapt a popular phrase, it spilled the kerosene. It did more than this, however, because the attention of the country was drawn to a grossly unbusinesslike procedure in what might be called the national merchandising of the most precious of our minerals which happens to be as valuable an asset in peace as it is a vital factor in war. A public reserve of immense value to the people was shown to have become a private preserve.

Despite the fierce light that has beat about the oil scandal with its attendant destruction of reputations—in this respect it ran war a close race—Mr. Ravage's book is the first coherent and consecutive account of the incident. It is therefore valuable as a piece of contemporary history which, if capitalized at its full value, has been worth all the turmoil that it incited. No man can follow the greasy as well as uneasy course of these developments without wondering first at the laxity—I am employing the most charitable word—of certain governmental officials; second, without speculating on the receptiveness—again the softer word—of the magnates who made themselves the beneficiaries of what the author calls the "free coinage of oil." With regard to the Teapot Dome contract Mr. Ravage states that it was "a nest of contracts with a multitude of ramifications." The familiar provocation for the development of the naval reserves was that adjacent wells drained the Government areas. We now know that it was not so much a case of drainage of oil as of other things.

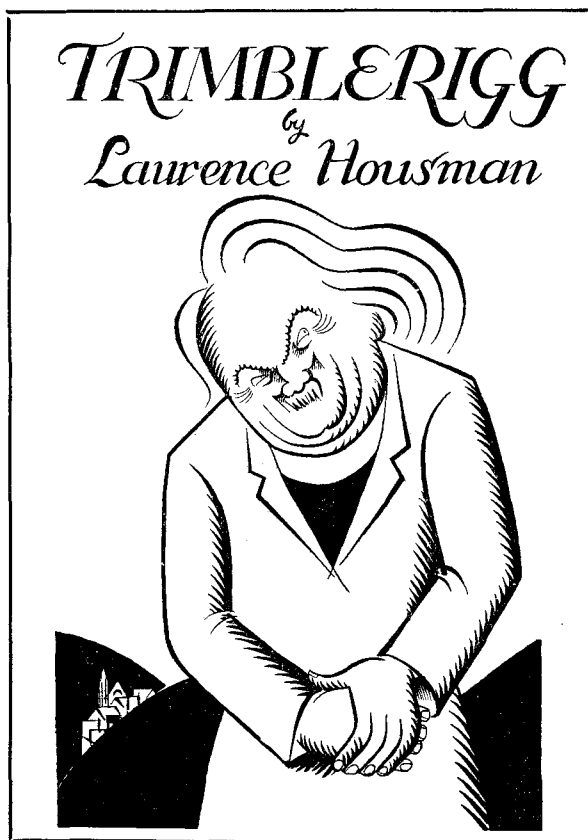
The real reprehensibility behind the oil exposures is admirably set forth. In referring to the method

employed in awarding the contracts the fundamental fact is disclosed as follows:

Both law and long-established policy, to say nothing of all-round fairness and the dictates of good business, had confirmed the custom that government contracts should be awarded upon open, competitive bidding. Mr. Fall, with the coöperation of Mr. Denby and without opposition from the President, threw all these considerations to the winds, and not only leased vast national resources but entered into a complex series of contracts for the sale of Government property, the purchase of enormous quantities of supplies, and an entire program of public works involving more than a hundred million dollars, by secret negotiation. Incidentally, by inserting these varied agreements into the leases and so giving them the appearance of something that they were not, one of the very basic principles of republican government was neatly circumvented. It enabled executive departments to spend the people's money without the bother of securing appropriations from Congress.

In nearly every scandal which has shocked American sensibilities some individual has been made the goat. With the oil revelations the government was the real victim but only because of the system of allocation adopted. The misfortune has been that the whole industry was crucified because of the shortcomings of a few individuals in it.

In the course of my work I have had to study commercial and industrial enterprise in nearly every part of the world. I have yet to find an activity more animated by vision, courage and enterprise than petroleum production, as a whole, in the United States. We not only lead in the quantity of output but are responsible for practically all scientific advance in both development and refining.



A Certain British Statesman

From the drawing by Covarrubbias for the jacket of "Trimblerrigg," by Laurence Housman (A. C. Boni)

One of the most amazing phenomena attendant upon the oil scandal is the agility of Mr. Fall to land invariably on his feet. His agility in acrobatics is only matched apparently by his wizardry in high—I should say low—finance. On this subject and in connection with the much-discussed "loans" to him, Mr. Ravage says:

While, of course, it still remains to be proven absolutely that the alleged loans made by the lessees to Fall were in fact something else, the circumstances attendant are, to say it gently, suggestive. Aside from the improbability of hard-headed business men lavishing sums of five and six figures without interest or security upon an impecunious, nearly bankrupt official, a man with a clear conscience would, as soon as the matter was brought into question, have made a clean breast of it. There is nothing particularly disgraceful about borrowing money from anybody, even though the lenders, the dates, and the manner of conveyance are somewhat remarkable. Mr. Fall did not come out with a straightforward explanation. He tried with all his might, by standing on his dignity, by browbeating, by denial, to avoid discussion of the subject altogether. Having failed there, he became panicky and made desperate efforts to cover up the source of his newly acquired fortunes. He sent his son-in-law to Cleveland to ask an old friend and business associate to say that he had loaned him one hundred thousand dollars. While this man declined to deceive the Government and the public Mr. Fall applied to the good-natured McLean. Only when he saw himself confronted with perjury was the latter driven to retreat. And even then the truth had to be blasted out of the parties concerned piecemeal and almost by dynamite.

All scandals reek of the garbage heap and, like publicity of income tax returns, give the morbid and

the curious too much opportunity for the gratification of their unwholesome desires. The only justification is when some constructive lesson is impressed. If the American oil industry profits by the unholy advertising that it has received, it will make publicity its god and advise Mr. Doheny and Mr. Sinclair not to take the back stairs when they negotiate with Uncle Sam again.

One final detail remains to be emphasized. The oil investigation really failed of its purpose because, like most other similar adventures in this country, it degenerated into a capitalization of issues for political purposes. The shadow of a presidential election hung over the hearings and the records were converted into campaign documents. Thus the real and permanent significance was obscured. Happily Mr. Ravage has not been diverted to any extraneous matters. Let me repeat, his is the first and only dispassionate account that I have yet seen of an episode that should point a moral for all business.

The Creator of "Sam Slick"

THOMAS CHANDLER HALIBURTON ("SAM SLICK"): A Study of Provincial Toryism. By V. L. O. CHITTICK. New York: Columbia University Press. 1924. \$4.

Reviewed by RALPH GABRIEL
Yale University.

THE first third of the nineteenth century was for the American people a time of ferment and growth. The frontier settlements west of the Appalachian mountains were swept, from time to time, by vast religious revivals and were dotted with communities experimenting in communism. A multitude of schemes for human betterment entered into the gossip of the older society in the East. Prison reform, temperance, woman's rights, and anti-slavery were but the more conspicuous phases of a nation-wide humanitarian movement. Jacksonian Democracy, originating in the West and aiming at the political power of the masses, gained headway until, in triumph, it put the hero of New Orleans in the White House. In the same years in which Boston Unitarians were revolting against the outgrown orthodoxy of Puritanism Joseph Smith in western New York was gathering converts for his new American religion, Mormonism. A growth of national feeling went hand in hand with a sharp defining of sectional interests. Out of this confusion of currents and cross currents came, in the middle of the century, a few well defined and significant developments, the anti-slavery crusade, the realization of the dream of Manifest Destiny, and the first great era in American letters. Not the least important of the signs of a fuller national life was the growing consciousness among Americans of the peculiarities of their national types. The down east Yankee appeared on the stage and the western "ring-tailed roarer" became the chief figure in the cheap tales of the Mississippi valley and the Rocky mountains. In the thirties, while the people of the United States were reading Cooper's stories of the forest and the sea, a volume appeared from a Nova Scotia press introducing Sam Slick, an itinerant Yankee clock-maker from Connecticut. The author was Thomas Chandler Haliburton.

Haliburton was born in Nova Scotia in 1794 of American Loyalist stock. In his family were the bitter memories of the sufferings which the Revolutionary War brought to those people of the revolting colonies who remained true to the old allegiance to Empire and King and who, stripped of property and position, were driven from their homes to start life afresh in strange lands. He was educated to the law, became a member of the provincial assembly, held for years a judgeship in the Inferior Court, and, upon the abolition of these courts, was appointed to the Supreme Court. Soon after the victory of liberalism gave responsible government to his native province he abandoned Canada for England. He became a member of Parliament, a Tory of the Tories. In the summer of 1865 he died. His fame rests on neither his judicial nor his political career. He was chiefly known to his contemporaries, as he is to posterity, as the originator of Sam Slick, the most popular Yankee character of the day.

In a series of volumes published in the thirties, forties, and fifties Haliburton developed the character of the itinerant clockmaker. His droll stories, shrewd observations, ready wit, and inimitable lingo won for Sam Slick a wide fame in Canada, the United States, and England. Even Thomas Carlyle

once referred somewhat testily to "these vagrant Sam Slicks." The memory and the popularity of Sam Slick is even yet alive. The success of the character has led to the claim that Haliburton was "the first and only creator of a unique and distinct species of fictional characterization and speech and humor." The tradition is still handed on that Artemus Ward once referred to the Nova Scotian judge as "the father of the American school of humor." Professor Chittick in his volume on Haliburton proves himself an earnest and thorough destroyer of illusions. In a single blunt paragraph he assails a whole group of Haliburton myths.

Neither on the score of priority nor on that of paternity can the claim that Haliburton was "the father of American humor" be substantiated. He was not the pioneer American humorist. He was not the creator of the comic Yankee. He was not the first to write the Yankee dialect. He was not the earliest to attain exceptional popularity by exploiting the eccentricities of the Yankee genius. He set no fashions in American humor. He inspired no other American humorist. He made no impression, except of the most trivial nature, on the work of another. He effected no change in the traditional character of the "genuine" Yankee. What Haliburton did for the reputation of that worthy, however, entitles him to an honorable place among the many who have resorted to New England caricature as a means of either the entertainment or the edification of their readers. For he found the "genuine" Yankee, though widely known and highly valued, both as mountebank and pedagogue, ordinarily little different from a novice's low comedy figure, and though frequently utilized for the purposes of journalistic satire and music-hall burlesque, with little more than national appeal, and he left him elevated to the dignity of a recognized standing in the literature of odd types, listened to and applauded by a public that was truly international, and with fame and favor that give promise of becoming permanent.

This is the conclusion at the end of two chapters of thorough discussion of the origin of the Yankee type in American literature and the closeness with which Sam Slick approximated the true Yankee. The reviewer feels that the author has proved his points. Upon analysis the clockmaker is found to mingle the vernacular of the New England pedlar with the "tall talk" of the frontiersman of the Mississippi valley. Stamped indelibly on his personality are the characteristics of the Yankee and of the melodramatic western hero of the Crockett type. Haliburton, it seems, was a diligent collector of humorous stories drawn from both phases of American life. But perhaps the most surprising of Sam Slick's idiosyncrasies was his distrust of the democracy of his country and his staunch advocacy of the reactionary principles of a Nova Scotia Tory. It must be remembered that for Haliburton Sam Slick was not an end but a means. And Haliburton, rather than his literary creation, is the central theme of the book.

Professor Chittick sets his story of the Judge against the background of the Blue Nose politics of Halifax. At times, like the one when Lord Durham published his famous report, the scene broadens to a general view of the Empire. In all this provincial struggle for local autonomy and responsible government Haliburton appears, after his early experience in the assembly, in the guise of a Tory who seeks to oppose the inexorable advance of liberalism. Perhaps it is impossible for a generation reared in the environment of modern democracy to deal sympathetically with early nineteenth century Toryism. Professor Chittick certainly does not. He gives Haliburton scant credit for a long and vigorous support of a doomed cause. Yet the Judge was not a reed shaken by the gusts of popular emotion; he set his face unflinchingly against what he called popular clamor. There is a certain splendor in the fact that when his cause was irretrievably lost the old man refused to surrender and went "home to England."

Professor Chittick's study of the public life of Haliburton is all that could be desired. He has made a valuable contribution to the political history of the British Empire and to the literary history of Canada and the United States. At the end of the volume he summarizes his impressions of his subject. He finds two Haliburtons, "the forward-looking and respect-compelling Haliburton" and the "backward-looking, contempt-provoking Haliburton." It must be confessed that this analysis is not convincing. The man Haliburton as he was known to his family and to his most intimate friends remains little more than a shadow in his own biography. His inner life and the emotions and purposes which controlled it are not revealed. This volume certainly cannot be accepted as a definitive analysis of what Professor Chittick himself calls "one of the more interesting and more colorful personalities of Canada's pre-Confederation era."

Taboos and Spontaneity

OUR CHANGING MORALITY: A Symposium.
Edited by FRED A. KIRCHWEY. New York: Albert & Charles Boni. 1924.

Reviewed by RALPH BARTON PERRY
Harvard University

EXCEPTION might be taken to the title of this book. In the first place, it is not clear that anything has changed. Miss Florence Seabury, for example, tells us that "as long as women are pictured chiefly as wife, mother, courtesan—or what not—defining merely a relationship to men—nothing new nor strange nor interesting is likely to happen. The old order is safe." Since Floyd Dell, W. L. George, H. L. Mencken, and D. H. Lawrence, all reputed to be exponents or symptoms of change, still conceive Woman after one or another of these "stereotypes," rather than as "human beings," there isn't any real change after all. This writer wants us to believe, not that morality is changing but that it ought to change; and this is sometimes, apparently, the meaning of her collaborators. On the other hand, assuming that there is a change to be reported, it isn't always clear that it is *morality* that is changing. Thus the Editor tells us that "men and women are ignoring old laws" and are appealing to various sanctions, including "their own tastes and desires" and "elusive dreams of a loveliness not provided for by rules," with which to fill "the gap that was left when Right and Wrong finally followed the other absolute monarchs to an empty, nominal existence somewhere in exile." This suggests that while morality remains the same, some people are changing their relations to it. And finally, assuming that there is change, and that it is morality which is changing, there is still a third doubt about the title. For if we are to judge the title by the content of the book, then we must suppose that the relations of the sexes constitute the entire content of morality; for the book deals with nothing else.

There is too much variety and individuality in the book to judge it summarily, and too much talent to judge it lightly. Most of it is worth reading, and much of it was worth writing; there is a good deal of wit, and not a little wisdom. Such writers as Bertrand Russell, Elsie Clews Parsons, Beatrice M. Hinkle, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Alexander Goldenweiser, Floyd Dell, and Ludwig Lewisohn commend themselves to any student of the age, whether he takes them as seers or as symptoms. Edwin Muir and J. W. Krutch eloquently plead the cause of romantic love. Sylvia Kopold and M. Vaerting contribute solid anthropological studies of sex, the one in relation to genius, the other in relation to "dominance." Scattered through the book, and interspersed with patches of shallow nonsense, there is much stirring appeal for justice, freedom, and humanity, and much shrewd comment on the times.

The Editor claims no more agreement among the contributors than is implied by their fearless willingness "to saunter up to the edge and see what moral disorder looks like," and by their alleged avoidance of preaching and dogmatism. But their aggregation isn't quite so casual as it sounds. If the authors "never announce or warn or reprove," and pride themselves on the fact, it is not simply because of their scientific temper or delicate consideration for others; it is because, as a group, and on the whole, they have a fairly definite attitude on moral questions. This might be summed up by saying that they don't believe in rules, either as an authority to obey, or as a standard by which to judge other people. They prefer spontaneity.

When people wish to imply their small esteem for rules they call them "taboos." But accepting the taboos as representing the moral rule in its most unpromising form, there are two things to be noted—in the first place, all human groups have them, and, in the second place, they have a way of turning out to be more or less rational when understood in terms of the group that has them, however absurd they may seem to an outsider. It is not an accident that morality assumes the form of rules, and that these rules are enforced by public opinion or by the state upon individuals that do not either like them or understand them. Morality arises from the primitive and inescapable fact that if appetites and other spontaneities are not controlled they will antagonize and destroy one another. Furthermore, most morality partakes of the nature of a contract, and requires of one individual a sacrifice which is rational only provided there is some guarantee of its being

kept by other individuals. It is only when life is lived under rules generally observed that it can be either fruitful or secure. This holds of most fundamental human relations, in which both parties have made concessions and commitments that would have no point from either party unless they were mutual and constant; and among these relations is the marital relation. A relation of this type is not debased by being legalized and guaranteed. No honest man feels that the legal prohibition of theft prevents his being honest from personal conviction. Similarly there is no reason why the existence of laws and penalties safeguarding marriage should be felt as destructive of the self-imposed restraints of honor and loyalty.

Arab Life

THE ARAB AT HOME. By PAUL W. HARRISON. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co. 1924. \$3.50.

Reviewed by C. E. ANDREWS
Author of "Old Morocco and the Forbidden Atlas."

THIS is the finest book on Arab life and character that has appeared since C. M. Doughty's "Arabia Deserta," of forty years ago. It is, in fact, a complementary study to the glorious book of that adventurous old poet-traveler, for Dr. Harrison shows us the Arab as he appears to a trained observer with an orderly scientific mind. There is no more romance and mystery in the east to Dr. Harrison than there is to the oriental himself, for in twelve years of contact, with the intimacy that only a physician may gain, he is able to see the Arab as the Arab sees himself. The book is not concerned with picturesque appearances but with realities; it has a well ordered command of facts and the well grounded generalizations of an impartial mind, that of a philosophic observer with love, charity, and understanding.

The first few chapters deal with keen and orderly presented impressions of five different types of Arabs in the different parts of the country in which the writer has lived and worked. The differences between the character of the Bedouins of the desert and the oasis dwellers are thoughtfully and entertainingly brought out, to the advantage of the former, for whom Dr. Harrison has the highest regard. The chapter on the pearl divers of the east coast gives an intensely interesting picture of a strange community. Then in extreme contrast we see the life of the mountainous district of Oman and the town-dwelling Arabs of Mesopotamia. The chapter on the Arab sheik is one of the most illuminating of the book. The author in his praise for the Arab system of justice and the Arab sense of justice shows himself a philosopher able to appreciate a way of life totally foreign to that of his own country. The explanation of the duties of the sheik, his method of carrying them out, and the check, balance, and recall to which he is subjected, deserves a careful reading by students of political science. It is a very great chapter.

Dr. Harrison's observations of the British mandate in Mesopotamia throw much light on the question of the rule of oriental peoples by western powers. It is impossible to govern Arabs like Europeans; they admit the superior efficiency of the British system but regret the days of the easy going and corrupt Turkish government which was at least that of orientals governing orientals. The western notions of the sacredness of life and property actually may result in weakness and injustice. The chapter on the "Religion of Western Heathenism" should be read by all hundred per cent Americans. Here

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