

## Points of View

### Research Defended

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

Your issue of March 21 carried a letter from Mr. E. O. James, rather amusing in its style but trite in its matter and I think unfair in its implications. As an embryo literary scholar I am moved to mild protest. It is all very well to speak superciliously of "the baled hay of research," and to laud the little girl whose innocent delight in Shakespeare is never polluted by her being forced to "see Abbott." It may even be well to shed a few tears occasionally for the poor young men who, in order to get graduate scholarships and academic advancement, are compelled to prostitute their sensitive souls by doing research. I am very much convinced, however, that this sort of thing may be overdone. That the academic world is far from perfect, we will all admit. As correctives for its evils, satire and sincere censure should not be discouraged, but they certainly ought to be supplemented and guided by sane, constructive analysis. Otherwise we shall have mere ineffective railing, and not the least of the resulting evils will be an increasing sense of martyrdom in the academic world itself. There are plenty of contributing causes for this feeling of self-pity which so obstructs the path of many good teachers, without adding the conviction that research is only a millstone hung about their necks.

The letter of Mr. James raises the whole question of the relationship between research, teaching, criticism, and the appreciation and creation of literature. Mr. James's attitude of contempt for research is an easy and obvious one, affording the opportunity to indulge in pleasant wit, and the thrill of a defiance which is free from the usual responsibilities of revolt. Many will applaud and few will question, for "pedantry" has always been the cry of the shallow, the lazy, and the sentimental at the pains of scholarship. It is continually objected that scholars are interested in facts rather than the interpretation of facts; that narrowness rather than breadth is emphasized; that everything about literature is studied and artistic merit ignored; that fine literature is too often subordinated to the study of the study of the writing of the present day is neglected; and that in general scientific study excludes æsthetic evaluation. It might be argued that after all, scholars best served their generation by these very faults, which are at least opposed to some of the worst features of a blatant age. Fact is worth emphasizing when the universal art is "salesmanship." Narrowness is preferable to a superficial breadth. To understand, even coldly, is better than to sentimentalize. The present generation, with its blare of advertising, may profit by being snubbed. The scientific attitude at least displaces the dilettante.

But even if we admit that too often scholars merit the criticism directed against them, we ought not to ignore the frequently successful efforts to harmonize the apparently conflicting currents in the study and teaching of literature. To carp at the ills of scholarship without accrediting its services is the grossest pedantry, even though it is rarely so labelled. Admitting that scholars are as fallible in their calling as doctors, lawyers—or even business men!—in theirs, I believe that there are many hopeful signs of renewed vitality. The increasing number of bibliographies, articles summing up the accomplishments in special fields, articles on *desiderata* in such special fields, and a closer, better organized coöperation among those of special interests seem to indicate a genuine effort toward a synthesis of results which cannot fail to exercise a helpful guidance over future study. Upon the basis of such a synthesis of knowledge a new and sounder criticism can arise, and doubtless it will. American literature is coming into its own, and in the opinion of some observers the study of contemporary literature is coming into more than its own. I know of one Middle-Western university where nearly a third of a large number of elective courses in the English Department are devoted to literature written chiefly since 1890. Certainly contemporary literature deserves some emphasis, and with less need for remote historical approach the study of it may very well lead to a more æsthetically critical viewpoint. The teaching of contemporary literature will allow a greater contribution from academic circles to the professional criticism of present day writing.

I believe that some interesting and very valuable articles might be written on various phases of the study and teaching of literature in the colleges and universities of the

present day. The extent to which modern literature is taught would surprise many people not in intimate contact with academic affairs. A serious and fair-minded appraisal of the Ph.D. thesis as it is now being written might even prove interesting. After all, there is much to be said in its favor, and it is rare that a good word is ever said for it outside of academic circles—it has even been criticized within the cloistered halls themselves! A calm look at faculties, past and present, would prove, I think, that researchers like Gummere and Schofield might clear up for some of us the problems of those who try to combine the two activities. The views of some men who have left the academic world for larger or at least other spheres of usefulness, might help in getting at the fundamental faults of the situation, and might possibly reveal that their academic training was, after all, one of the larger factors in later success.

Meantime a wider recognition of genuine and fine scholarship when it appears, as even the pessimists must admit that it sometimes does, is in order.

B. R. McELDERRY, JR.

## The Reader's Guide

(Continued from preceding page)

this month, to say what a thrill it gave them to come unexpectedly upon their books in this department, are informed that it is not a circumstance to what agitated the Guide when she guilelessly bumped into the above paragraph.

The fiction leaders are "So Big," Ferber; "The White Monkey," Galsworthy; "Passage to India," Forster; "The Little French Girl," A. D. Sedgwick; "The Old Ladies," Walpole; and tied for sixth place Donn Byrne's "Blind Raftery," Mary Johnston's "The Slave Ship," and Edith Wharton's "Old New York." For juveniles, the leaders are: Non-fiction, Colum's "Island of the Mighty," Hillyer's "Child History of the World," and Hodgkins' "Atlantic Treasury of Childhood Stories," Fiction: Nordhoff's "The Pearl Lagoon," Meigs's "The New Moon," and Lofting's "Dr. Doolittle's Circus."

A VOLUME of uneven merit but of great interest in certain of its essays has recently appeared in Vienna under the title, "Neue Oesterreichische Biographie, 1815-1918" (Wiener Drucke). The book contains a collection of biographical sketches of which those on political figures are illuminating and significant, reflecting as they do the last century of existence of the Hapsburg monarchy through the personalities of those who guided its destinies. Less valuable, however, are the studies of literary and scientific figures as these in many instances can hardly be taken as representative of anything essentially indicative of the Austrian genius. The book, nevertheless, is well worth the reading for the light it sheds on Austrian political history.

André Rouveyre, the French draughtsman and caricaturist, has used his pen with the same incisive, revealing, and mordant art in a novel just issued by him as he has shown in the past in his drawings. "Le Libertin Raisonneur" (Paris: Crés) is a vivid and searching portrayal of a soul at grips with itself, unafraid to face the reality, but bitterly aware of its shortcomings. It contains some moving and eloquent writing, and much clear-sighted analysis. It is essentially the work of a moralist.

Students of the drama will find interesting Paul Lang's "Bühne und Drama der Deutschen Schweiz" (Zurich: Fussli). Herr Lang presents a survey of the development of the drama in Switzerland, and then concludes his book with a discussion of the present status of the drama in his country, together with an analysis of the conditions which have made for its comparative insignificance and the means to its improvement.

According to a correspondent to the London *Times Literary Supplement* the first volume of the critical edition of all Petrarch's Latin works, which has long been under preparation under the auspices of the Italian Government is soon to be published (Florence: Sansoni). It will contain the "Africa," edited by Professor Nicola Festa, of the University of Rome, and will be followed by the first of several volumes of letters edited by Professor Vittorio Rossi of the same university. Another work under preparation that should appeal to scholars is a linguistic atlas of Italy, the plan for which has been drawn up by the Società Filologica Friulana G. I. Ascoli (Udine).

## The New Books

### Fiction

(Continued from page 764)

and achieving its material purpose. Christian science adepts will find the first two stories quite stimulating. Yet aside from parenthetical remarks, sort of background artifice, there is not much Russian in either story. The main idea that runs through them, that a spirit can come to life through immaculateness of purpose and strenuousness of endeavor, is undoubtedly beautiful, and not devoid of philosophical value; but it is not much to say that it was quite a commonplace in modern Russian literature.

The stories are advertised as "now mystical now humorous." The humorous part of them is the more adequate. "Tales that My Uncle Told" are at least of ethnographical value. They are undoubtedly genuine, for among them we recognized several our father told us some twenty years ago. They are not without interest to the student of folklore, these brief anecdotes artificially and not very skilfully strung together.

On the whole, a palish collection of little representative stories. If we want humorous stories, why not translate Averchenko, the incomparable, who died last month in Prague? If there is a demand for Russian mysticism, why not translate the almost apocalyptic Remizoff, obscure and elusive, or Grebenshikoff, now in New York, or the romantic, subtle stories of Auslander, Kuzmin, or the superb mystic dramas of Block? They have said things about the Russian soul that no outsider can ever dream of saying.

We must admit that the author's purpose is not clear in making the people in his stories speak a language that is neither Russian nor English in spirit.

"QUACK!" By Robert Elson. Small, Maynard. \$2 net.

SINGING WATERS. By Elizabeth Stancy Payne. Penn.

COPY. Selected by Blanche Colton Williams, Dorothy Brewster, Helen Hull, Kenyon Nicholson, and Glen Mullin. Appleton. \$2.

THE HOUSE OF MENERDUE. By A. C. Benson. Doubleday, Page. \$2 net.

SPINDRIFT. By Harold Titus. Doubleday, Page. \$2 net.

THE PRIMARY ALLEGIANCE. By Annie Lyman Sears. Brimmer. \$2.

THE STARKENDEN QUEST. By Gilbert Collins. McBride. \$2 net.

THE NEGLECTED CLUE. By Isabel Ostrander. McBride. \$2 net.

### Miscellaneous

"MARGERY," THE MEDIUM. By J. MALCOLM BIRD. Small, Maynard. 1925. \$4 net.

Modern science, to which the public looks up as to an omniscient God, has been scandalously at fault in its haughty ignoring of the phenomena of the séance room. The large number of scientists who scornfully assert that, since such phenomena simply do not occur and only gullible idiots would believe they do, therefore they will not waste their time in investigating them, give no very edifying exhibition of the "scientific spirit." They would do well to heed Professor Karl Pearson's admonition that wherever there is a chance for the human mind to know something, there is a legitimate problem for scientific investigation. And when one considers the immense body of scientific study of such phenomena by Geley, Richet, Schrenck-Notzing, and Crawford—scientists all,—to say nothing of the work of William James, Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir William Ramsay, and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, it seems incredible that science can so scornfully hold itself aloof from a careful and unbiased investigation of the séance.

To the large body of evidence assembled by the scientists just named, this report of the phenomena produced by the now famous "Margery" must be recognized as a highly significant contribution. Every scientist, whatever his prejudices, can learn something of value from Mr. Bird's clear and utterly fair-minded first chapter on "Psychic Research—What it Means." He avows frankly that his primary interest is to prove that such phenomena actually do occur in the presence of rigidly controlled conditions. Then, and only then, must we consider the problem of their cause.

This is not the place to outline the results achieved by Mr. Bird and the Committee of the *Scientific American* in their many sittings with Margery, but they are of extraordinary significance and importance, and in large part corroborate the findings of Geley and Crawford. And those who were convinced, by Houdini's thumping vituperations in the press and

from the vaudeville stage, that the Margery sittings were all fraudulent, would do well to read Mr. Bird's amusing and good-tempered revelation of the tricky and disingenuous rôle that conjurer-member of the committee really played.

The book is most highly to be commended as not only admirably arranged and written, but as a contribution to our knowledge of psychic phenomena that cannot be ignored.

GASOLINE. By T. A. Boyd. Stokes. \$2.50.

THE BOOK OF DIVERSION. Compiled by Franklin P. Adams, Deems Taylor, Jack Bechdel. Aided and abetted by Helen Rowland and Mabel Claire. Greenberg. \$2.50.

SECRETS OF THE SALMON. By Edward Ringwood Hewitt. Scribners. \$3.

REST AND GROW STRONG. By Edward Huntington Williams and Edward Bryant Heag. Bobbs-Merrill. \$2.50.

THE SOIL AND CIVILIZATION. By Milton Whitney. Van Nostrand. \$3.

FIRST STEPS TO CLIMBING. By George D. Abraham. McBride. \$1.50 net.

REDUCING MENUS FOR THE HOSTESS OF TODAY. By Edna Sibley Lipton. Appleton. \$1.

EVERYMAN'S GENIUS. By Mary Austin. Bobbs-Merrill.

THE EXPERT DICTATOR. By Conrad J. Saphier and Thomas J. Smyth. Pitman.

SHORTHAND READER. No. 1. Pitman.

SHORTHAND CATECHISM. Pitman.

DICTATION TESTS FOR SHORTHAND STUDENTS. Pitman.

### Poetry

AZRAEL AND OTHER POEMS. By ROBERT GILBERT WELSH. Appleton. 1925. \$1.50.

Charles Hanson Towne's poem "Around the Corner" has for its theme the difficulty of maintaining a friendship in thronging, hurrying Manhattan. And now, as if in illustration, comes his touching preface to this book of poems by his friend the late Robert Gilbert Welsh, a scholarly dramatic critic whose talent for verse was hidden from most of us by the day's pressing concerns until his heroic death in saving a stranger from drowning cast an illuminating glow back over his career. That a man with the power to do notable work in verse could die almost without recognition in this field is one of the many little tragedies of New York City's art life. Yet Welsh's talent was not wholly obscure, for a number of his poems appeared in magazines which have high standards as to the verse they select.

The volume, with its moving preface, and its poems that reflect a cultivated mind and feeling heart, make an appropriate keepsake of a brave life. The poem "Azrael," which opens the volume, is in itself sufficient reason for the publication of the book. The verses are chiefly in a romantic vein—some of them have the flavor of Stevenson and some are in the mood of Aldrich, although the poet's personality is in them also. Welsh could be realistic too, and the poems, "Readers" and "Democracy," inspired by scenes in the New York Public Library, show a happy combination of a journalist's keenness of observation and a poet's penetration and sympathy.

FIRST POEMS. By EDWIN MUIR. Huebsch. 1925. \$1.50.

Mr. Muir wistfully deplores the pathos and incomprehensibility of life. Time passes, he seems to say, beauty goes, and the stark loss is left, to rattle, and to turn, at length, itself, to half-forgotten misty bitterness. To this fragile and tenuous mood, he brings a manner that is often exquisite, always sure, but sometimes a little questionable.

In the handling of delicate internal rhymes and subtle assonances, and a haunting ripple of melodious rhythm, Mr. Muir is signally successful. A disquieting preponderance of abstract and general words tends to disturb the clear impression of his image. Occasional eccentricities in metre, such as staggering the stress in a somewhat English spondee, piling up, with no inevitability, an excess of syllables; and end-rhymes of "pool-beautiful," "move-above," "strove-love," "bird-sword," "fell-terrible," "sky-suddenly," are almost offensively noticeable, when Mr. Muir reveals elsewhere so assured and gratifying a command of the traditional implications of his medium.

The two poems, "Horses," and "On the Mediterranean," are the high-water marks of the volume. "Horses," in particular, captures a lyrical ecstasy and translates with sudden hidden light and beauty the concrete aspects of a simple scene. The two lines of retrospection:

Where the blank field and the still-standing tree

Were bright and fearful presence to me—

end "Horses" on a note of fearful wonder and imminent revelation.



# The World of Rare Books

By FREDERICK M. HOPKINS

## AT THE ANDERSON GALLERIES

FIRST editions of English authors from the library of the late Bertha L. Bolton of Rochester, N. Y., Kelmscott Press books from the library of a Boston collector, and standard sets in fine bindings from the library of the late Viola C. Lyman of Syracuse, N. Y., were sold at the Anderson Galleries in an evening session April 27, 259 lots realizing \$11,941.50. The highest price for a single lot was paid for Fitzgerald's translation of the "Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam," small 4to, original brown paper covers, London, 1859, a copy owned by Bessie Howe, Fitzgerald's housekeeper, which brought the record price of \$2,050 and was purchased by James F. Drake of this city. There was only a sprinkling of rarities in these selections but there was much spirited bidding and many good prices were paid for the more important lots.

A few unusual items and the prices which they brought were the following:

British Poets, 76 vols., 12 mo, levant, London, n. d. An extra-illustrated edition, \$770.

Byron (Lord), "Hebrew Melodies," 8vo, levant by Sangorski and Sutcliffe, London, 1815. First edition and author's presentation copy. \$195.

Conrad (Joseph). "Twixt Land and Sea Tales," 12mo, original cloth, London, 1912. First edition, presentation copy from the author. \$135.

Aesop and Gay. "Fables," 4 vols., Imperial 8vo, levant, London, 1793. Stockdale edition. \$110.

Greenaway (Kate). Collected set of "Almanacs" with variations, 25 vols., 16mo

and 24mo, as issued, London, 1883-97. First editions. \$150.

Johnson (Samuel). "Works," 16 vols., 8vo, levant, Troy, 1903. Bibliophile edition. \$110.

Keats (John). "Endymion," 8vo, levant by Maclehose, London, 1918. First edition. \$495.

Keats. "Lamia," 12mo, morocco, gilt edges by Reviere, London, 1820. First edition. \$140.

Moore (George). "The Strike at Arlingford," 12mo, cloth, London, 1893. First edition, presentation copy from the author. \$60.

Fitzgerald (Edward). "Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam," small 4to, polished calf by Gruel, in case, London, 1879. Fourth edition. \$90.

Fitzgerald, "Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam," with an introduction by A. C. Benson, reproduced from a manuscript written and illuminated by F. Sangorski and G. Sutcliffe, small folio, vellum, richly gilt tooled, London, n. d. \$155.

Oriental Series. Brinkley's "Japan," 8 vols., and "China," 7 vols., elaborately extra-illustrated together with water color marginal drawings, in all 15 vols., 8vo, levant, Boston, 1902. One of a few copies sent to Japan and ornamented by native artists. \$440.

Poe (Edgar Allan). "Works," edited by Stedman and Woodberry, 10 vols., 8vo., levant, New York, 1903. Autograph edition. \$115.

Rossetti (D. G.). *The Germ*, 4 numbers in one vol., 8vo, levant by Doves Bindery, London, 1850. Rare first edition bound up

from the original numbers with the scarce wrappers preserved. \$200.

Shakespeare (William). "Works," edited by W. E. Henley, extra-illustrated, 20 vols., folio, levant, Edinburgh, 1901. Connoisseurs' edition. \$710.

Shelley (P. B.). "The Cenci," 8vo, levant by Zaehnsdorf, Italy, 1819. First edition of which only 200 copies were printed. \$320.

Thackeray (W. M.). "Vanity Fair," 20 parts in 19, original yellow wrappers, London, 1847-48. First edition. \$425.

## AT THE AMERICAN GALLERIES.

THE libraries of Veryl Preston and of the late Walter Learned, comprising fine sets of standard authors, collected sets of first editions, handsomely extra-illustrated works, Bibliophile Society and Grolier Club publications, books from Napoleon's library, and autograph letters and manuscripts, were sold at the American Art Galleries, April 28 and 29, 657 lots bringing \$48,352. The highest price, \$5,050, was paid for a unique collection of about 375 autograph letters of the kings, queens, and celebrities of France from the time of Louis XII to Louis XVIII, mounted and bound in ten folio volumes, full crimson straight-grain morocco extra.

Other interesting and valuable lots and the prices realized were the following:

Audubon (J. J.). "The Quadrupeds of North America," 3 vols., royal 8vo, morocco, New York, 1854. \$165.

Byron (Lord). "Letters and Journals," 4 vols., 4to, morocco, London, 1830. Extra-illustrated with 556 finely engraved portraits and views. \$225.

Byron. "Works," 17 vols., 12mo, polished calf by Root, London, 1832-33. First collected edition with 17 autograph letters of Lord Byron and his friends inserted, one in each volume. \$275.

Cervantes (Miguel de). "Don Quixote,"

4 vols., extended to 8 by the insertion of 450 engraved plates, imperial 8vo, morocco, Edinburgh, 1879-84. \$285.

Clemens (S. L.). "Complete Works," 35 vols., three-quarters French levant, New York, 1922-24. The autographed definitive edition. \$315.

Dickens (Charles). A series of five autographed letters addressed to his American friends Mr. and Mrs. David C. Colden of New York. \$425.

Disraeli (Benjamin). "Works," 20 vols., 8vo, levant by Stikeman, New York, 1904. The Empire edition. \$265.

## NOTE AND COMMENT

THE nineteen parts of the Britwell Court Library already sold have brought \$2,460,330, which gives it the distinction of being the most valuable library ever dispersed at public sale.

A complete set of the Kelmscott Press publications are seldom sold under the hammer in a single sale. A full set of 53 items was sold last week at Anderson's, bringing \$2,725.

Ernest Benn of London will bring out immediately Stanley Morrison's monograph on "Modern Fine Printing," devoted to the fine work which has been issued during the present decade, in many cases in very limited editions, from a number of distinguished literary and commercial presses in England, America, France, Germany, Italy, and Scandinavia.

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RARE BOOKS and Modern First Editions. Catalogues gratis. Antiquarian Book Company, Stratford-on-Avon, England.

DULAU & COMPANY, Ltd., 34, 35 and 36 Margaret St., London, W. I.—Latest catalogues, post free on request. 124, English Literature (60 pages); 125, Botany (5,000 items); 126, Old Books, privately purchased from the library of the Rev. Lord de Mauley and other sources.

FOR SALE—First edition Conrad's *Tales of Unrest*. Ex-library copy, cover waterstained, uncut, clean. Price \$45. First edition Darwin's *Origin of Species*. Loose, but clean, uncut, \$20. Parker Sherwin, Edgely, Spokane, Wash.

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BOOKS IN CLOTH, selected from the shelves of N. J. Bartlett & Co., 37 Cornhill, Boston, Mass.—Catalogue number 72, April, 1925. Write for our latest catalogue.

MOLNAR'S HUSBANDS AND LOVERS, \$2.00; Moore's MEMOIRS OF MY DEAD LIFE, \$2.75. Gotham Book Mart, 51 West 47th Street (Bryant 5812).

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CURRENT ENGLISH BOOKS. The Holiday Bookshop, 10 West 47th St., New York.

OSCAR WILDE'S INTENTIONS, Lady Windemere, Importance of Being Earnest; each \$1.15. Gotham Book Mart, 51 West 47th Street, N. Y. C.

OVERLAND NARRATIVES; the Indians; slavery; the Civil War. Catalogs on request. The Cadmus Book Shop, 312 West 34th Street, New York.

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FRANK HARRIS' Oscar Wilde, *Life and Confessions*, two volumes, \$5.00. Gotham Book Mart, 51 West 47th Street (Bryant 5812).

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