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of LITERATURE

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Amy Lowell

WE have lost by the death of Miss Amy Lowell not only a poet and critic of astonishing virility, but (when we could least afford it) a great personality.

Miss Lowell belonged to the family of Dr. Johnson. Her personality was never recessive. There are writers, like Shakespeare, or Edward Fitzgerald, or Hermann Melville—to gather together a miscellaneous group—whose rich inner life never seems to have reached full coruscation except in marriage with the written word. If you look for them, seek them not in biographies, but in their works. But sometimes genius is too full-blooded, too immediate to wait upon composition. It pours over urgently into life, which in its vicinity takes on livelier colors and sparkles with electricity like October air. The first run with such literary personalities is sometimes the best. They may make fine prose or great poetry; but nothing quite recaptures the vivid enthusiasm of voice and gesture, the play of a highly charged imagination running free. Dr. Johnson was such a personality, Charles Lamb another, and Miss Lowell belongs in their company. She would have held the Doctor at bay, and Elia would have stammered as he shaped epigrams to toss into the flow of her talk.

This age is too inhibited to breed many like her. We are tender of each other's feelings for fear of violent reactions. We are afraid to air experimental opinions lest they prove unsound. Skeptics and cynics are as common as weeds in a pasture, but they have no convincing scholarship, no confident force, and are more likely to make faces at society than to attack by strong argument. When they take poetry, or anything else, seriously, they will ape the reticences and amenities of mediocrity rather than be caught with an opinion.

There was not an ounce of mediocrity in Amy Lowell. She lived as she saw fit, exercised her privileges with aristocratic disregard, kept her brains sharp as naturally as lesser folk keep their faces clean, and was always willing to spend her whole self on what was for her the whole business of living—creation, criticism, controversy. Her Keats is a magnificent outpouring of unmeasured effort. It is diffuse, and that is its fault, but not because of lapses into dullness. Into every aspect, even the most trivial, she charged with head high and eyes sparkling, never sparing either herself or her documents. Her chapters are sometimes overloaded, but always alive, and often triumphant.

It was Miss Lowell who gave morale to the renaissance of American poetry in the early nineteen hundreds. She injected vigor and excitement, and made its creed of fresh imagery and new rhythms seem important, as indeed it was. Critics differ as to the future of her own poetry. All agree that it is original and stimulating; all agree that its intellectual edge is keen, its emotions vivid, and, where the mind is involved, passionate. But pressed further, their opinions blur and break into confusion. There have been a score of essays on Amy Lowell's verse, and not one definitive.

So it is with all great literary personalities of the immediate sort. Their voice and manner are so dominant as one reads that the poetry becomes too personal for definition. It may be overestimated easily; it may be underestimated almost as easily, because the ringing voice of the controversialist sounds too idiosyncratic for permanence. The readers of Amy Lowell have read her poetry with their critical senses aroused, aware that they were

The Feathery Phoenix

By HERBERT S. GORMAN

THE feathery Phoenix rising from
Ancestral flame would dare to come
Athwart the rising orb of day
With shining wings spread either way.

Singing against that lovely fire
His funeral song of old desire,
He rushes on a blazing tomb
Prophetic of ecstatic doom.

And on his wild eyes falls that meat
Of which he is the Paraclete,
And memory assuages fear
As he soars perilously near.

A thousand deaths cry in his tongue
Whose wings from flame are broadly flung,
And in his heaving breast he hears
The genesis of unborn years.

He mounts couragèous to vaunt
The terror of his dearest want,
And stares into the sun to see
His burning bath of mystery.

This Week

"This Mad Ideal." Reviewed by
Louis Kronenberger.

"The Black Soul." Reviewed by
Padraic Colum.

"Table-Talk of G. B. S." Reviewed
by *Ernest Boyd.*

"California Vignettes." By *Christine
Turner Curtis.*

Next Week, or Later

Thomas Hardy. By *William Lyon
Phelps.*

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in the presence of a dominating mind which they must either yield to, or resist. Now that she can talk to us no longer, we shall perhaps read her better, seeking for the poet, rather than the critic and the friend.

But if her power over verse had been, like Dr. Johnson's, ordinary instead of extraordinary, Miss Lowell would still have been a luminous figure in this age. Her personality was in itself a magnum opus, and her brilliant instigations, which never deserved so gross a term as influence, have awakened the intellectual being of others as skillful as she, though never so magnificently human. She was not only poetical, but the cause of poetry in others. She, as well as her poetry, will take a place in American literature, and that is a tribute few can expect.

Woodrow Wilson, Teacher

By ALEXANDER MEIKLEJOHN

WHAT was Woodrow Wilson's contribution to American college education? His papers and addresses, dating from 1877, when he was a sophomore at Princeton, to 1913, when he became President of the United States, which have been recently published by Harper and Brothers, reveal in him two dominating interests. He wanted to understand and so to share in the leadership of a democracy. He wanted also to prepare young people for the same understanding and leadership. As to the relative strength of these two emotions, the papers are, I think, fairly clear. Only a few weeks before his death I had the privilege of talking with him about plans for educational work. At that time he said to me, in words that were soon to take on a quality of pathos in spite of their gallant courage, "You know I have still a great deal to do in this business of our international obligations; but when I have finished that I am going back into education." The balance of interest in that statement is, I think, the balance disclosed by these papers. He had the teaching impulse and the teaching power. But primarily he was a leader in social and political action. The zest for teaching and study was directed by the zest for leading. Running through all his studies of administration there was a grim and passionate determination to get administration improved, to make government serve the public welfare. Woodrow Wilson was a great teacher because there was something that he wanted done, that he wanted to do.

It was chiefly from this practical enthusiasm that Mr. Wilson's general contribution to college work in America came. "Princeton for the Nation's Service" was the war cry of his Inaugural Address. And it was clear at once that he was a man in a hurry. It was a time when college studies seemed to be losing their connection with working values. Into this situation he brought the demand that studies be made vital. Both by preaching and by practice he gave to the college a sense of responsibility, of the urgency of its issues, the importance of its success or failure.

His favorite and most significant statement of his own program for the college was that he planned to make it a community and to do so on the basis of its only fundamental interest—the intellectual. He found the college falling into separate parts. He found the parts dominated by social interests quite foreign to the intellectual. He was determined that the college should be again one institution and that it should be an institution of learning. The specific lines along which he sought to achieve this unity had to do (1) with the course of study, (2) with the methods of teaching, and (3) with the social organization of the college, with especial reference to its arrangements for residence. It is interesting to see how different in quality and in success were his dealings with these different phases of his general endeavor.

As to the course of study, Mr. Wilson was facing the confusion which followed the breaking down of the old curriculum. Required studies were giving way to elections; freedom of choice was taking the place of prescription. In the midst of this process

PUBLIC PAPERS OF WOODROW WILSON; COLLEGE AND STATE (1875-1913). Edited by Ray Stannard Baker and William E. Dodd. New York: Harper and Brothers. Two Volumes. 1925. \$7.

he stood as a stalwart champion of general training. He was troubled to see that elective studies, when they were genuine, constantly tended to become professional or vocational. As against this, he demanded that professional study be preceded by and founded on liberal study; he declared that the liberal college must forever be the heart of the university; he argued that all students in a liberal college should take those essential studies which fill and enrich men's lives. The college, he was fond of saying, deals not with the fortunes but with the spirits of men. At the basis of all its work he found an ideal, a compelling moral purpose.

Mr. Wilson's proposals with respect to teaching methods and residence arrangements came from a common observation and a common motive. He often said that he found the American undergraduate a schoolboy; he was determined that he should be, and should be treated like, a man. What he meant was that the life of the undergraduate had broken in two. On the one hand, the studies were mere tasks, imposed by a faculty. On the other hand was the life of real interest, the activities in which men were trying to succeed, in terms of which they found their social groupings, in which also they aspired to relations with the graduates and with what seemed to them the spirit of the institution. It was Mr. Wilson's purpose to break down that dualism. He wanted to centre college life about the studies. He wanted to bring the faculty into living contact with their students. And by implication he wanted to destroy or transform a certain type of connection between undergraduates and graduates. He wanted, as he said, to subordinate the side-shows to the main circus.

As a corrective teaching method, Mr. Wilson secured the adoption, with some modification, of the English tutorial scheme of instruction. Students and teachers were to be brought into contact and intimate conference concerning the studies. The undergraduate was to be made to feel that he must take the initiative in his own work. He was also to discover that he could talk with his teacher as a fellow-student working in the same field and in the same spirit. True education, Mr. Wilson said, is by contagion. His plan was that the faculty should, by personal contact, set the students on fire with intellectual enthusiasm.

The proposal with respect to residence arrangements was a further development of the same motive. In a very real sense Mr. Wilson wanted to take the undergraduates from the graduates and to affiliate them with the faculty. He found the interests of the college determined largely by the "clubs." In these clubs the social lines of undergraduate life were chiefly drawn; in them the sentimental connections with the graduates were established and strengthened. Mr. Wilson's plan was that the undergraduates should live in relatively small residence groups, that members of the faculty should be friendly and accepted dwellers in these groups, and that the clubs should be abandoned or should be transformed into the moulds of the new arrangement. The social life of the university was to be formed and shaped by the interests of the teachers. Mr. Wilson did not oppose the "activities." He did, however, wish them to be the activities of students.

As one surveys these proposals and achievements of Mr. Wilson, two contributions to the college stand out as of very great importance. His preaching of the gospel of an intellectual community devoted to the public welfare was sorely needed and it was magnificently done. He was a great preacher.

And secondly, the establishing of the tutorial plan of teaching marks a turning-point in college instruction in America. He put his finger upon the greatest weakness in our teaching method, that of the failure to develop intellectual initiative, and he pointed the way along which with pitiful slowness we are seeking the remedy.

If one asks as to the limitations of Mr. Wilson's contribution it is to be remembered that he was President of Princeton only eight years. Apparently also he met with opposition all along the way he went. But on the other hand frankness compels the admission of limitation in his own point of view. After all, he was an administrator and a student of administration. In a very unusual de-

gree he was of a non-philosophic type. This quality, or lack of it, appears at two points. First, in his advocacy of "general training," of the necessity of studying those fundamental things which nourish the spirit, one finds a peculiar lack of certainty of touch. His lists of "essentials" are apparently arbitrary and variable. His mind did not reflect upon the work of knowledge as a whole, did not contribute to the discovery of that unity on which he felt that the organization of the course of study must depend. He was not a student of the theory of the curriculum. And again, it must be noted that the tutorial plan of instruction was not substituted for the older plan of teaching. It was simply added to it, superimposed upon it. There was here no drastic policy of removing causes of trouble.

It is interesting and very significant to find so startling a contrast between Mr. Wilson's dealing with study and teaching and his dealing with the clubs. In the latter field he did not propose addition of the new to the old. He demanded that the old give way before the new; he insisted on the transformation of the residence arrangements to the very bottom. Why was he so radical in the field of social organization and so lacking in radicalism in the field of educational theory and practice? Was it because he was so much more at home in one field than in the other? Was it because of the knowledge that however dangerous the graduates may be, the teachers are still more deadly when jolted from their ruts? The field of speculation is a fascinating one and a proper understanding of it would throw much needed light, not only upon Mr. Wilson, but also upon the residence situation within which he worked. But whatever the explanation, two things may be said as to Mr. Wilson's dealing with college teaching. First, he led all American colleges by his introduction of the tutorial plan. But second, that plan was not radically established; it was not considered in relation to other teaching methods and to the course of study. And this is what the American college imperatively needs. We must have radical reconsideration of what we should teach and how we should teach it. If we can teach properly, clubs and other such things will take care of themselves.

One cannot read these papers without feeling the charm and mastery of the man who wrote them. He had a gay wit that startles and fascinates. He dealt with hearer and reader in words of challenge and defiance, and yet with graciousness and courtesy. He speaks to bankers and tells them what bankers might do and do not do. He has the same message for the lawyers, for the teachers, for the ministers. And when he speaks to the descendants of New England he gaily explains the virtues which New England did not possess. All in all, whether or not one agree with him, one must admire and thrill at the gallantry of his spirit.

It is interesting to see how dominating was a single motive, a single idea, in all his writing and thinking, even from the earliest days. From the beginning he was thinking and writing about great public leaders. He dreamed of the power of a man's mind and speech to guide his fellows into proper action. And always over against such high and open leading by individuals there was for him the manipulation of men and affairs by groups of men who plan in secret. This was the principle of the amazing paper on Cabinet Government in the United States, written while he was still a graduate student. It was the basis of his attack upon the Trusts when he was running for the Presidency. He said that when men rule by committees and boards it is the small, shrewd man, the manipulator, who controls and who does so in terms of self-interest which cannot bear the light of public debate. But Mr. Wilson believed in leadership by individual men, who must perforce command the confidence of their fellows by open avowal and advocacy of their motives and beliefs. His hostility to "Secret Diplomacy" was not a late development. It was the permanent motive of his thought and action.

Growing out of the attitude just described was one of Mr. Wilson's virtues which has been made to serve as a bitter reproach against him. He was more devoted, we are told, to his own ideas than to his friends. In a time and country in which

"party" is made more and more to mean a group of men bound together by common interest, seeking to find or devise some idea or shibboleth by means of which they may secure for themselves victory over other like groups, such disloyalty to one's friends is unforgivable. That he met this reproach seems to me to show how high Mr. Wilson rose above the partisans around him. For him a party was a group of men joined in support of a common idea or common ideal. If men were not, or if they ceased to be, so joined, then, as mere matter of course, they separated and went their honest ways. He was essentially in public life a man of principle, willing to take whatever private consequences the following of principle might involve. I doubt if any lesson which he taught was more sadly needed than is this lesson for which he has been so bitterly condemned.

One other point should perhaps be noted. In all these papers one gets no impression of an interest in general popular education. Rather casually Mr. Wilson speaks of those who do not go to college as doing mechanical tasks, as needing to be led by men of ideas. But his mind dwells upon the leading and upon those who do it well or ill. Always he hates dishonest, self-interested, cunning leadership. Always he has the passion for directing well the affairs of his fellows, for doing it openly, honestly, and with intelligence.

It is, I think, quite evident that Mr. Wilson was the sort of man who sooner or later fails in what he undertakes. But that means that he was of the resolute, fierce-fighting type that takes desperate chances and is not dismayed by fear of personal failure. More fundamentally, I think, it means that he was one of the men who set their hearts on the greatest causes which cannot be achieved by one man or by one endeavor rather than on the little tasks which even little men can do and finish. It means also that he was on the list of those among whom the world seeks for and finds its greatest heroes.

If any one reads what I have here said I hope he will remember that these impressions are based upon papers written before the greater period of Mr. Wilson's life. I should like also to express thanks to the editors of the books for making these papers available in such usable form for general reading. We shall look eagerly for the like publication of the writings and sayings of Mr. Wilson during and after his Presidency of the United States. He is a man whom Americans need to know.

Paving the Way

THIS MAD IDEAL. By FLOYD DELL. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1925. \$2.

Reviewed by LOUIS KRONENBERGER

FAR from carrying Floyd Dell beyond his achievement in "Moon-Calf," the latest of his novels is only a reworking of the old material, less effective and less convincing because it rather seems written from a formula. "This Mad Ideal" is the story of a girl, "Moon-Calf" of a boy, but however different their outward lives, they are roughly actuated by the same philosophy and ideals. Yet Felix Fay, I think, comes far more vividly to life than Judith Valentine; his growth is more natural and personalized, his childhood and adolescence are penetrated with an admirable insight, his ideals have maturation. Judith seems to move toward a predestined point.

Judith was the daughter of parents who separated because they felt that marriage was hampering their freedom and ideals. After the death of her mother, she lived in a New England town with her uncle and aunt. Later she fell in love with Roy Sopwith, the son of a narrow-minded principal, and the two conspired to be free of their surroundings. Inheriting the belief that marriage would injure their developments, Judith refused to marry Roy, and he went to study art in Boston. She met a second man who wanted her to be his wife, but a second time she refused, and went to see Roy, whose progress in Boston is not recorded. She found it necessary to marry him or break off; and still faithful to her "mad ideal," she refused again, and went to New York to begin a new life.

One of two things, or both of them, prevent