

'em, the old wise-crackers is so busy laying out waterfront lots on mortgage they has no time to picnic in the woods; land values goes to the sky and even Gloomy Gus starts a development. The old fourflusher on Long Island loses his jack in Wall Street an' has to come down to borrow from his brother and say he never meant it. They get him a job as a bellhop at Coral Gables. Just a grand hokum fadeout, and everybody happy.

(Laughter within. W comes back from doorway radiant.)

W—Ah, Frank, thou shouldst write plays.

F—Tush, these are but toys.

W—To hear the groundlings roar as they do now, Oh noble sport, sport royal!—Thou'rt too nice. To my gross Bankside wit, 'tis meat and drink To hear the addled citizens at their mirth— Their lewd and lackwit innocent noble mirth!

1ST D. J.—Yeh, it's a great show; a great play for the public.

W—I thought so once myself.

1ST D. J.—Would you believe, every critic in town panned it—

F—The intellect of man, then, is not dead.

1ST D. J.—Give 'em what they like, as they like it—

F (to W)—As you like it—

(Laughter within)

W—Nay, Frank, I see thou hast no playhouse heart; In this my mystery thou art not capable. Why even this hodge-pudding of poor dross Brings me my old ecstasies into mind— How from the moment of first entrance on To strike them with the sense of some suspension, Some contrivance of passion and desire So that without a guess of what's to come They feel the onward moving, and are thrilled—

1ST D. J.—Sure! You gotta have suspense—

W—To hold all this within the troubled wit

And ere a line be characterized, to feel

In airy storage in the delicate brain

Your creatures at their doing—

Not trammelled up with heavy circumstance

But actual and free—yea, this is godlike!

1ST D. J.—I've got a kid in Bushwick High, she said exactly the same thing. She's only sixteen but she's took a correspondence course in play-writing. Her mother was troupin' in East Lynne before she was born, I think that gave the kid a sorta litry slant.

(Laughter behind)

W—That uproar hath the proper vulgar note, Sweet in the playwright's ear. Your auditors Seasoned with mirth and ripe in apprehension Then curiously draw your tensions tighter, Let glamour tease them on.

1ST D. J.—That's right: get 'em laughing, you can do anything with 'em.

F—As Tully hath it, *Haec ego non rideo; non sal sed natura ridetur*; which is to say, meseems these cachinnations are not caused by wit but by mere animal heyday. Thou rememberest, Will, all motives of laughing have been anatomized in three: foreigners, bodily prostrations, and strong cheese; whereof the merriment of the third seems most difficult to construe.—Confound not these baubles with thine own heavenly stuff.

W—Then think you that the roister-doister vein Requires no cunning? E'en your fustian Must be just so; so filed and peized To weigh the voice and carriage of the speech, To throw the cranky jape just on the moment, Dibble the seedling theme in earthy sconces And plant it unawares; and get it over To a stamping coughing jostling stinking pit Of ragamuffins, grooms, and varletry, The cut and longtail of the populace— And still have grace for loftier quiddities To please the court and gentry—

There's an art,

Lord Chancellor, that statesmen in great place Might study to their profit.

(Laughter behind)

Mark you, the veriest groundling of the lot Must see himself, his inward hope or grievance, Active on the scene. Aye, this it is That makes our stagy antics quick and sheer: Lo, on the very instant of their doing They are transmuted to the blood and stuff Of every hearer; who admires the image

And hugs it as his own, or fashions it To suit his private fancy.

1ST D. J.—It's a fack; we have to keep a cop at the stage door to move on the bozos.

W—It is the varsal ego in men's bosoms

That gives 'em stomach, in their loneliness,

To chew and savour this our bright pretence

And take it to themselves.—Haply the author

Like the matron pelican of adage

Feeds his unsuspecting auditors

From the red artery of his proper breast.

F—Bravo, Will! Almost persuadest thou me!

Thou art, what's passing rare in playwrights, nigh as eloquent as thine own creations.

W—My stuff, you say? Fico! A peoplish vein,

With flashes of proud verse,

But farced and strumpeted for greasy ground-

lings.

Oh halidom, to think what these (gesturing off)

could do,

New fangles and devices for the scene

And women—female women—on the board

To play their lovely, elvish, tragic part

And draw the little nerves of tender feeling

So tight, so strange. Lord, Lord, what truths

and triumphs

Are promised for the workmen in this craft.



AN ELIZABETHAN WORTHY

Oh to be actual of it once again—(a pause)

Methinks we still might move a heart or two, And not o'ergild the fable.

GIRL (coming from box-office; she has her hat on)—Mr. Einstein, here's the report on tonight's business. Will you OK it please. (1st D. J. takes the paper and goes into box-office. W is looking into the theatre. The girl turns to F.) Well old sport, your friend's got quite a line. I been listening in. Gee, he talks like grand op'ra—

2ND D. J.—That musta been some party they were on tonight.

GIRL—Where do you sheiks learn all that new slang, up at college? That's a grand crack about the women, female women. Say, I'd like to have that bird meet some o' my girl friends—

F—Nothing, I trow, would give him greater solace. 'Tis our misfortune we have a journey to perform.

GIRL—Back to New Haven, I spose. Well, there's time for a coupla sundaes before the midnight—

W (coming from doorway; his eye kindles upon her, and I begin to see myself that she has her charms)

Ah, sweet chuck; in relenting mood? 'Tis o'er-

long since I have seen such brightness in an eye.—

Frank, these new tires do not so ill become them.

(He indicates her attractive close-fitting little hat)

A goodly porringer!—An we held converse to-

gether, duckling, deemst thou not we might find

topics of good cheer?

GIRL (who has quite succumbed to this mode of address)—I'll say so. What you doin' after the show? Do you Charleston?

2ND D. J.—Hey, I thought you were dated up with me—

W—We might repair to a tavern—

F—Will, our space is short. On the punctual midnight—

GIRL—Frank, you're an old iceberg. Damn the midnight. There's plenty of trains at Grand Central.

W—I had forgot. 'Tis true, we make a journey—(chaffing her genially) a journey that permits no baggages. (Then almost as if to himself) The dead shepherd spoke the seasonable line—poor Kit. (He quotes.) "That time might cease, and midnight never come."

GIRL—That's the idea.

W (Takes her arm, looks at her quizzically and tenderly)

—Sweetheart, I had a gust for frolic once.

Savor thy passing hours; may they be sweet—

(She leans toward him, meeting him clearly in the eye; it is even suspicious that a kiss is toward, while F watches in amused tolerance; what the 2nd D. J. thinks I don't care, he is only a puppet anyhow; but then, after just enough pause, comes a burst of clapping from within.)

GIRL—That's the curtain. Cheese it, here they come. Meet you here in three minutes.

(She runs off, into the auditorium.)

W (looking after her) And so, goodnight.

(A confused sound of movement from behind. W. and F stand a moment uncertainly.)

F—Come, Will. Here we have no part. We are but cuckoos in the nest—

W—Or those thin shadows on the whited screen. The word is exit.

(As they go toward the street, L, drawing their cloaks about them, 1st D. J. bobs out of the box-office.)

1ST D. J.—Well, so long, boys, glad to see you any time you're around.

(They make a polite salute, and are gone.)

(The advance guard of a typical musical comedy audience comes through the doorway, R; the men lighting cigarettes, women adjusting their wraps. They pause to utter comments, which must be very distinctly said and not hurried.)

MEMBERS OF THE AUDIENCE—

A great show.

Certainly was comical.

I thought I'd die laughing.

I could see that all over again.

How d'you suppose they think up them things.

I liked it, it was different.

It sure was original.

CURTAIN

## Faure in Translation

THE DANCE OVER FIRE AND WATER.

By ELIE FAURE. Translated by John Gould Fletcher. New York. Harper & Bros. 1926. \$3.

Reviewed by HENDRIK WILLEM VAN LOON

MILADY was the tragedy of my life. I was fourteen years old and some one had told me about Alexandre Dumas. And so I set forth to get me a copy of "The Three Musketeers." Alas! the local lending library charged ten cents for every volume taken out and their only edition of "The Three Musketeers" was a cheap Flemish reprint which came in five "to-be-continued's."

Five times ten makes fifty cents. My frugal parents bestowed upon me a weekly largess of ten cents. That meant that I must practice economy for five whole weeks to get to the end of the story. Once however I had made the acquaintance of d'Artagnan and Athos, I could not stop.

In that dilemma, I appealed to my Mother, and glorious to say, I finished M. Dumas's masterpiece in less than a fortnight. But the shock of the last chapter almost killed my faith in the human race.

A year before, a kindly aunt had given me "Ivanhoe"—a well-known romance by one Sir Walter Scott. That story had told me that all beautiful women were good and true, and at thirteen such a faith was very satisfactory.

But what was I to make of Milady? She was infinitely fairer than any of Sir Walter's heroines,



and yet she was wicked and evil and in consequence had her head chopped off by the brother of one of her humblest victims. It seemed very dreadful, and it will explain why I hate to review the latest opus of Elie Faure as produced by the rejuvenated House of Harper.

As far as outward appearance goes, this is a most beautiful book. Cover, binding, lettering—they are all of them perfect. But as for the text, Sancta Stultitia, have mercy upon my uncomprehending soul!

In my erstwhile native language, the word for translating is "vertalen." It means "to re-language something." It means that one takes a book written in a certain language and revalues the inner sense of this opus in terms that are understandable and at the same time pleasant to the ears of the unfortunate folk who were raised on a different tongue.

This of course is very difficult and to do it well, the "re-languager" must have a profound knowledge of at least two vernaculars and must be possessed of a delicate sense of literary values.

Now with your kind permission let me open Faure's volume at random. The finger of bibliomancy points to the following passage:

There is necessary then, at close of the account, and after being deprived of that sly humility which is the least noble form of pride, to accept with resolution every new normal slavery which bears within itself lyric life, because it offers us with it the liberation of our enthusiasm and the means of organizing and disciplining our gifts. When order is organic, and not imposed, internal and not external, living and not arrested in formulas the supreme moment appears. Beyond the social discipline obeyed in the forward leap of the soul, there is no liberty for man as there is no liberty for the artist outside of the intellectual discipline conquered by the same leap forward.

Of course, this may be a faithful bit of "re-languaging," but in that case the French original must contain certain profound germs of obscurity. "Intellectual disciplines conquered by a forward leap," "forward leaping souls," are beyond my range of vision. I do not say that they do not exist. It just happens that I am not able to comprehend them and the more I read them and reread them, the more they begin to sound like the "Battle Hymn of the Republic."

"Mine eyes have seen the glory of the la-de-dee-dee," fine stuff to get a million men marching—but what do they really mean?

Once more the finger descends:

There is necessary then, at close of the account and being deprived of that sly humility, etc., etc.

To me this is just an ugly and grating sound. It may be because I did not learn English until I was twenty and because my ear is not sufficiently attuned to the hidden beauties of such prose. But try and sing this (and the musical test is still the most reliable of all) and see what happens to your breathing apparatus.

Or again, on page 33:

A world which would define itself, however slowly, like the chronic illness which constituted its history, heavily like its miseries accumulated in so great a number, and for so long a time, powerfully like a system finally emerging from so much force, ardor, crime, misery, and faith mingled.

When I have reread this four or five times I can get vaguely at the meaning of Faure's words, but I can only do so by "re-languaging" the whole thing back into French and trying to forget the English translation which hangs like a curtain of fog between the original text and the American reader.

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Now in such matters I have a sincere distrust of my own opinion. English is still a "foreign" language to me. After painful efforts I have learned to handle it much as an elephant who has been taught to play the trombone. Wherefore I have gone to my native neighbors, and in this happy community where the percentage of literacy is remarkably high I have asked, "Please explain this to me. Any page will do." As a result I slightly enriched my well-stocked vocabulary of short and picturesque expletives, but learned little about the dance over fire and water.

But now after a profound cogitation of at least three weeks, I think that I have reached a reasonable conclusion.

It used to be said of Isadora Duncan that she knew her art so well that she could "dance" the bill-of-fare of a Child's restaurant or the timetable of the Bridgeport-Norwalk trolley line.

There are Frenchmen who perform the same miracles in the field of literature. They turn on the torrents of their sprightly eloquence and presto!

the audience is enchanted. When the spectators return home and grandma asks "What did he say?" the answer is apt to be a vague paean of praise. "Ah, it was just too lovely for words! What did he say? I don't know and I don't care. It was just lovely! What else matters?"

M. Faure is a famous man in the field of French literature. I suspect that it were better for his reputation as a philosopher and a historian if he were to remain completely untranslated. Or if translated he must be, then let the job be entrusted to one of those journalistic sob-sisters who can turn an ordinary ghetto row into a story that will bring tears to the eyes of Calvin Coolidge.

## An Inaccessible Region

IN THE HEART OF ASIA. By P. T. ETHERTON. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1920. \$5.

Reviewed by KERMIT ROOSEVELT

THROUGHOUT the vast regions of Central Asia as comprised by Chinese Turkestan and the countries immediately bordering it, British interests are protected by but one Englishman who has his headquarters in Kashgar. He is known as the British Consul General, and usually is appointed from the Indian Civil Service. He is theoretically under the British Minister in Peking, but mail takes from four to six months to reach the Chinese capital by the overland route, and although there is a native telegraph line, the relays are so numerous and imperfectly administered, that it rarely takes less than three weeks for a telegram to reach Peking from Kashgar.

The most rapid method of communication between Kashgar and the outside world is across the Himalayan passes to Gilgit to Kashmir. Relays of mail runners bring the mail through once a week; it takes a month for a letter to reach Kashgar from Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir, which is itself two hundred miles from railroad.

It can be easily seen that with such lengthy lines of communication, the British Consul at Kashgar must be a man of resource who can act upon his own initiative without feeling that he must wait upon instructions from headquarters before making a move. In all the more important settlements there are to be found Indian traders, usually money-lenders from Shikarpur in Northern India. Under the terms of the extra-territoriality treaties these Indians are judged not in Chinese courts, but by the British Consul. In some cases the Afghan has the same privilege, though his status is not definite.

It was not until the early nineties that Great Britain established a consulate in Kashgar. The Russians were already there, and were most active in widening their sphere of influence in Central Asia. The Russian Consul had a strong Cossack bodyguard, which greatly increased his prestige and power. England was keenly interested in the possibility of Russia menacing her sway in India, and it was to combat such a contingency that the consulate was opened.

Sir George Macartney, whom Colonel Etherton succeeded, had held the post for many years, and left behind a record of achievement acquired in the face of heavy odds. Sir George's mother was Chinese, and this contributed to his success. His friend, Sir Aurel Stein, the great explorer and archaeologist, has, I believe, persuaded Macartney to write his memoirs. The appearance of the book will be eagerly looked forward to by all interested in Central Asia.

Colonel Etherton's present volume deals with his term as Consul from 1918 to 1922. During these years the menace of Bolshevik influence in Chinese Turkestan was peculiarly acute. Another and more active aspect of the mission is dealt with by Major Blacker in his book "High Patrol in Central Asia," which is filled with thrilling chases across unknown mountain passes. "In the Heart of Asia" deals more with general conditions, as the chapter headings show.

Chinese Turkestan is inhabited by many different races. The Chinese element is numerically insignificant. The governors of the districts, and the ambans or mayors of the larger towns are Chinese. There are also a certain number of celestials scattered about as shopkeepers. The army officers are sometimes Chinese and sometimes natives. The Chinaman feels himself an exile. But few of them speak Turki, whether this is due to laziness, or as matter of policy I could not discover; prob-

ably it is sometimes due to the one cause and sometimes to the other.

Among the other peoples are the Tungans, or Mohamedan Chinese, the Kirghiz, the Kazaks, and the Kalmucks. These last three are nomad tribes, living on the produce of their herds. The Kirghiz and Kazaks are Mohamedans; the Kalmucks are Buddhists. Numerically more important than any of these are the Turks—they are agriculturists and merchants and live in the plains country. They are an easy-going, unaggressive race, accustomed through the centuries to be ruled by outsiders.

Colonel Etherton was already acquainted with Central Asia and its problems, for in 1910 he journeyed from Kashmir to Siberia—a most interesting expedition which he described in his book "Across the Roof of the World." On that trip he had many adventures in the pursuit of ibex and wild sheep, and in some of his bouts with the cold and the snow he came out a poor second; for he had his legs badly frozen, and his Gurnali servant nearly lost both hands.

C. P. Skinker, who succeeded Colonel Etherton, has written an account of his experiences as Consul General that is shortly to appear, so that those who are interested in that inaccessible part of the world have now many opportunities to learn about it from first-hand sources. Great Britain owes a heavy debt to those who have protected her interests, serving for long lonely years in the far flung outposts of Central Asia. Endless patience, untiring tact, firm courage, and unswerving tenacity of purpose are only a few of the attributes that they are called upon to possess.

## Rake's Progress

SPANISH BAYONET. By STEPHEN VINCENT BENÉT. New York: George H. Doran Co. 1926. \$2.

Reviewed by THOMAS BEER  
Author of "The Mauve Decade"

THIS romance should be reviewed, through some hardy medium, by the immortal parts of Lew Wallace, Stanley Weyman and William—or was it Charles?—Harrison Ainsworth, all successful practitioners of the historical novel in the nineteenth century. Or, as "Ben Hur" is deliberately taught to helpless boys at Andover and other schools, it might be profitably reviewed by some surviving believer in the old style costume piece, by the eminent critic, for instance, who lately stunned some of us by referring to "Richard Carvel" as a "great" American novel. "Ben Hur" was always rubbish. "Richard Carvel," in distinction, contains some very agreeable writing and a deal of honorable historiography. But that Lew Wallace's pantomime and Mr. Churchill's pleasant tale should be ranked as blocks in even such a wobbling structure as American literature is a little dazing to discover in the year 1926.

Does anybody read "Richard Carvel"? It is the story of an Herculean and moral youth, heir of an aristocrat in old Annapolis and acquainted with Mr. Washington (George) of Virginia, who is shanghaied by his wicked uncle, rescued at sea by John Paul Jones, and who arrives in London to court his sweetheart, "the toast of the town." In London he met Charles Fox, Horace Walpole, David Garrick, Edmund Burke, and the rest of those people as inevitably as Weyman's cloaked thugs met Henri Quatre, Sully, the Guise family, and the other apparatus of the late sixteenth century, or as young Ben Hur met the archangelic son of a carpenter in Nazareth. Well, Mr. Carvel fought a duel in Vauxhall Gardens and was present at our Revolutionary seafight and then came back to Annapolis with his Dorothy,

## The Saturday Review of LITERATURE

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