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Books of Special Interest

A Useful Work

JEWISH INFLUENCE ON CHRISTIAN REFORM MOVEMENTS. By LOUIS ISRAEL NEWMAN. New York: Columbia University Press. 1926. \$7.50.

Reviewed by SIDNEY S. TEDESCHKE

THIS work represents an enormous amount of compilation and research unusual in this day of Outlines. It is a valuable mine of material to students and investigators who are interested in studying the various heterodox and reform movements both Jewish and Christian during those centuries.

At this time when people are consciously seeking to understand each other it is stimulating to find so well expressed in Dr. Newman's work that people in the Middle Ages were just as amenable to the laws of human nature as they are now or as they were in Alexandria when Platonism and Mosaism were fusing in the crucible that was to produce Christianity. Dr. Newman's aim is to determine the resulting strands of Jewish influence in the Christian fabric in order to offer definite evidence to "those who later desire to attempt a critical interpretation." His volume is divided into four books.

The first contains an exhaustive treatment of the men Jewish and Christian who helped bring about a return to the simple interpretation of the Biblical word. This return to original languages and sources of the Bible through reciprocal contact and instruction played havoc with orthodox doctrine. Each wider dissemination of the Bible through translations into the vernacular has given rise to heterodox and reform movements. Christians made these translations usually after instruction in Hebrew by Jews or Jewish converts, thus establishing valuable points of contact.

The second book gives a pellucid and replete account of the rise and history of the heresies. These were explicitly demarcated from each other but their common denominator was a "thorough-going opposition to the Catholic Church."

The third gives a detailed account of John Huss, Ulrich Zwingli, and Michael Servetus along with their followers, showing the Old Testament and Hebraic elements in their reforms as well as their personal associations and relationships with Jews. The reaction of the times to "The Battle of the Books" is also dealt with here. Book IV contains brief studies concerning the Jewish rôle in the iconoclastic controversy; Martin Luther's debt to Jews and Judaism; Hebraic and Mosaic aspects of American Puritanism.

Dr. Newman as he stated in his preface, has given us a compilation of facts rather than a critical estimate or commentary. He leaves "to those who come after, a critical interpretation of the facts he has gathered." With this as an aim it might have been better to entitle the thesis somewhat differently as "Influence" implies causation. There is, however, a tendency to attempt such a critical interpretation and not always with fortunate results, because of the meagreness of evidence extant. After all the mere fact of a Christian studying Hebrew usually in order to refute the Jews out of their own mouths, or quoting from the Old Testament rather than from the New, is not sufficient proof of Judaizing or Jewish influence. Yet these two standards are frequently taken as the sole norm of judgment, (e.g. "pro-Jewish influence" in the character of Simon of Montfort because he seems to have been piously interested in the Old Testament). This our author realizes when he says he is "left in a quandary as to which side Judaized" in the iconoclastic controversy because both sought vindication for their doctrines in the Old Testament.

With reference to doctrine and theology it is also difficult to determine Jewish influence, as for example concerning the Passagii and their Dietary Laws. Adherence to a literal interpretation of the Old Testament when we consider the origin of the Christian faith in general is not necessarily conclusive, especially when we note only a superficial resemblance between the dietary laws of the Passagii and those of the Jews as then practiced. Judging from the words: "The use of meat . . . was prohibited," the Passagii appear to have been vegetarians, so the discussion as to whether they possessed "their own ritual slaughterers" seems hardly relevant. Dr. Newman realized the uncertainty of this proof when he states: "This observation . . . must not be pressed too far."

Woman's Equipment

WOMAN'S DILEMMA. By ALICE BEAL PARSONS. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company. 1926. \$2.50.

Reviewed by OLIVIA HOWARD DUNBAR

THAT Havelock Ellis, so long accepted as a godfather of the feminist movement, should be subjected to analytic pricks from a proponent of the feminist cause, seems almost unfilial. Yet Alice Beal Parsons, attempting to get at the root of her chosen matter, finds herself obliged to state her difficulties with an authority who has, as she interprets him, confused the question by arguing both ways:—by shifting ground, for instance, on the question of variability, and by asserting both that women are more infantile and that they are more evolved, than men. The implied warning is valuable to students of a subject wherein we need to be more than naturally alert, so befogged are we by tradition and taboos; for if Ellis can momentarily doze, into what conscienceless comas may we not find lesser writers sinking. Shouldn't indeed each fresh investigator feel constrained to begin at the beginning, —although by beginning one doesn't, of course, mean the conjectured life of that prehistoric tribal family of which one knows too little and hears too much.

It is in starting afresh and disregarding prevalent assumptions that this lively book may serve as a model. The "dilemma" that it discusses is naturally a multiple one; and it is not new. What work may women do, and under what conditions? And if these questions are answered as feminists would have them answered, then what about bearing children and caring for them afterwards? And there is that old matter of the Home. It is the later chapters of the book that deal with these familiar themes, but the writer prefaces them, as by no means all writers do, by the inquiry that should logically precede them. "How different are men and women?" she pertinently asks, at the outset; and proceeds throughout the more significant half of her book to review certain important accumulated evidence. Women were conceded a few years back, as we remember, to be "people;" but a lesser people. Why is that earlier status not yet entirely done away with? Why is an entire sex wriggling to free itself of an inferiority complex? Since it is not feminists alone, nor indeed women alone, but every living being who is affected, and at every turn, by the current notion, whatever it may happen to be, of differentiation, one wonders that all thinking adults aren't engaged upon it, and one looks eagerly toward the outcome of every honest effort to consider it.

Briefly stated, this study of Mrs. Parsons minimizes sex differentiation. Endeavoring to avoid "men's incorrigible habit of theorizing about women on slender grounds," she quotes liberally from recent investigators, biological, medical, psychological, and thus buttresses the arguments, implied and stated, that lead to her own conclusions. These conclusions are challenging, but in accord with the current development of feminism, Mrs. Parsons believes it to be established that there are, roughly speaking, no mental and emotional and but inconsiderable physical differences (not of an artificial sort) between the sexes. "Woman freed of her purely artificial disabilities is quite as able as man to pursue a taxing career without giving up her function of bearing children." "Women are neither constitutionally inferior to men, nor constitutionally so different that their activities must be different." "If, as the evidence seems to show, the biological differences between the sexes are less immutable than we had supposed, their problematical and undemonstrable effect on mental traits becomes shadowy indeed." The writer finds also, after considering sex and genius, that "it is possible that sex has nothing whatever to do with the individual's ability to crystallize experience into words, or form, or color, or sound." And finally, she dooms domestic life.

It goes without saying that the foregoing statements will be questioned by lingering obstinate believers in the inferiority, or in the superiority, of women. They will also perhaps be questioned by persons of cautious habit and speculative temper who cannot believe that the fascinating question of sex differentiation is as nearly determined as this book implies.

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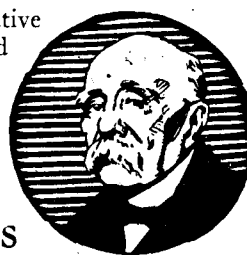
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The Novel Crop of 1926

By WILLIAM LYON PHELPS

I CAN think at this moment of only two years in my novel-reading life that can compare with 1926—they are 1894 and 1920. In 1894 came "Esther Waters," "Lord Ormont and his Aminta," "Jude the Obscure" in serial form, "Pudd'nhead Wilson," "A Traveller from Altruria," "The Jungle Book," "The Ebb-Tide," "Pembroke," "The Prisoner of Zenda," "Under the Red Robe," and in 1920 appeared "Main Street," "The Age of Innocence," "Youth and the Bright Medusa," "Miss Lulu Bett," "The Third Window."

Practically all the British and American veterans have produced in 1926 novels that are, either in fact or in intention, important works of art. The most pretentious book of the year is "The World of William Clissold," by H. G. Wells, which appeared in England in three volumes, its only similarity to Victorian manners. I surmise that its author already regrets that he allowed the first volume to appear in advance of the others; it received a general slating, and put the reviewers in a hostile attitude towards its two successors; in America we were given the whole work at once, and in two volumes.



I wish to pay two compliments, neither of them to the author. In a time when nearly all new books are marred by inexcusable typographical errors, the American publishers printed these more than 800 pages without any mistake. At first I thought "ascendancy" was a slip, but I find there is authority for that spelling, though I don't like it. The only other possible slip I noticed was "St. Simon" when "St. Simeon" is surely more common, but the former may be, for all I know accurate. To launch such a leviathan without a mishap is an achievement; and our American publishers should be proud.

The other compliment is to Mrs. Padraic Colum, whose review in this periodical was an admirable critical essay, full of thought and insight. Mrs. Colum is one of our foremost living critics—she is well equipped by knowledge and judgment, and commands a prose style truly distinguished.

Some of the English reviewers complained that the book was dull. I did not find it so. It is portentously long, filled with summaries and repetitions taken from the author's previous works in fiction, history, and philosophy; but I found it continuously interesting, not at all difficult to read. There is a physical vitality in Mr. Wells's temperament that gives fire and heat to the whole work, like an efficient central-heating plant in a vast edifice. He writes, as he lives, with inexhaustible gusto.



Yet it is, in many ways, a detestable book. The peevish preface (before the title-page) in which he attempts to score off those who have attacked his previous books and to forestall adverse criticism of this one, is filled with appalling statements. He protests that Clissold is not Wells; he protests too much. He maintains that the work is a novel, when it is really a novel only in name. It is a gigantic tract for the times, and its interest lies in its strictly contemporary flavor—it belongs to 1926, and will perish like the almanacs and calendars of this present year.

If he were not a man of genius, he could not have written this book at all; if he had even elementary good taste, ability to appreciate points of view opposed to his own, and anything akin to sound culture, he could not have written the book in this way. Clissold's attacks on the Catholic Church, on Socialism, on classical education, on standards of morality, are marred by crudities and by a kind of bumptious conceit that is happily all his own. The details of Clissold's various amours are not nearly so offensive as the boastful complacency with which they are recorded. He is forever telling us of the "adult mind," which will relegate theism in religion and monogamy in morals to the ash-heap; but this same adult mind, in love-affairs at sixty, forces us to reflect that there is no fool like an old fool. I refer of course to Clissold and not to Wells.

Mr. Wells has an enormous audience in many nations and exerts a powerful and wide-spread influence, chiefly on immature minds; he wrote to Henry James that he preferred to be regarded as a journalist rather than as a novelist. For my part, I am grateful to him because he wrote "The Wheels of Chance," "Kipps," "Mr. Polly," "Tono-Bungay," and "Mr. Britling." When he wrote those books he was a novelist and

a literary artist—and Clissold's crude ideas on religion, morality, politics, and education cannot destroy the earlier works.

Immediately after reading "The World of William Clissold" one should read Hugh Walpole's "Harmer John." The author has completely recovered from his sudden attack of Red Hair, and has written a novel ranking with his best, with "The Green Mirror," "The Cathedral," "The Old Ladies." This is realism and idealism combined; and the spiritual values of life, missing in Clissold's world, are here restored. Man is an incurably religious animal; man is as instinctively religious as he is instinctively lustful—for there are good instincts as well as bad. Harmer John cannot endure the thought that the same town which has a cathedral should also have slums; and I suppose towns will have slums until all churchgoers feel responsibility for them. It is an interesting coincidence that simultaneously with the publication of "Harmer John" came a plan to rid New York city of its slums, a plan that decorated the first page of the metropolitan newspapers.

John Galsworthy, whose passionate sympathies with the oppressed and whose fierce hatred of injustice cannot spoil his art, has given us another instalment of Forsyte family history in "The Silver Spoon." If he



James Esch
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Dimitry Ditt.
22

A drawing done in youth by Aubrey Beardsley for "Pickwick Papers"
Courtesy of the Anderson Galleries

were not an artist in spite of himself, his novels would suffer from propaganda—and they never do. It was not until some time after I had read "The Silver Spoon" that I discovered that he himself believed in the scheme of emigration therein discussed—so nicely did he balance the scales. Mr. Galsworthy has two consciences that somehow do not interfere; a moral and an artistic conscience. Tolstoy finally sacrificed the latter for the former, as many others have done. A minority have managed, on the other hand, to stifle the former altogether. But Mr. Galsworthy loves something even more than he loves justice—he loves the truth.

"The Silver Spoon" I found a more interesting narrative than anything he has written since "The Man of Property." In that novel Soames was the most detestable character—in "The Silver Spoon" he is the most admirable. It is a fine instance of development.

I do not know whether Arnold Bennett's "Lord Raingo" is a good novel or not; I read over a hundred pages, and was forced to desist, owing to invincible boredom. It is strange that a man who has written two or three high-grade novels and at least twenty diverting ones, can be so dull as in "Lord Raingo." Perhaps it is better farther on—I haven't the courage or the curiosity to find out.

In certain quarters I am regarded as a little unbalanced because of my enjoyment of the novels of Archibald Marshall; if to admire works that are completely normal be a sign of abnormality in the admirer, then I plead guilty. I like Mr. Marshall's books because in these sensational days he has the audacity to fill his books with natural people, natural situations, and natural talk; and I like "The Allbrights" better than anything he has written since the Clinton Series.

C. E. Montague's "Rough Justice" is a well-wrought, thoughtful novel, stocked with ideas; a good picture of English life. May Sinclair's "Far End" is a condensed

novel, with a house as a hero, and an unconvincing conclusion—the best thing in it is her omission of the tags, "he said," "she wept," "he kissed." Jane Austen proved the value of omitting them.

W. J. Locke in "Perella" turns off another competently-written story, with a good fable and amusing characters, nothing more or less. Warwick Deeping's "Surrell and Son" is very fine to its mathematical middle; its latter half is deplorable. Compton Mackenzie, Sheila Kaye-Smith, Frank Swinnerton, Rose Macaulay, Robert Hichens, have each and all produced new books in 1926. I really ought to read before reviewing, for although this is quite out of style, I am still old-fashioned enough to do it. If I had the creative gift of some reviewers, which would enable me to discuss books I had not read, I should become a novelist and leave criticism to others.

One of the best English novels of the present year is a first book by a young woman who refuses to divulge her name: this is "Miss Tiverton Goes Out." It is a novel that many writers of well-earned fame would be proud to sign. I confidently recommend it to intelligent readers.

I have not mentioned Rudyard Kipling's "Debits and Credits," for although Mr. Kipling is one of the most eminent authors now living, he belongs to the nineteenth century. He is one of the great Victorian novelists and in all probability will survive with his peers.

I have not had time to read many of the

America. I had supposed that it was a historical romance of modern times, and that the life it described belonged wholly to the recent past. But the author informs me that although the show boats have left the Mississippi, owing to the too abundant perils of that ungovernable river, there are plenty of floating theatres on the other rivers of the South; that they are at this moment more magnificent than Magnolia's, and also more profitable; those who own and direct them are literally rolling in motors and diamonds. Miss Ferber thinks that "Show Boat" is her best book, just as Hugh Walpole thinks "Harmer John" to be his masterpiece; it is natural, I suppose, for an author to love the latest child the most. Well, perhaps they are right; and both books are so excellent that their authors' pride is justifiable.

It seems clear that in America the women novelists have surpassed the men; indeed I do not know of any country in the world which has so remarkable a group of women novelists as our own. What collection of men in America and what list of women writers in any other nation today can equal an assembly composed of Edith Wharton, Anne Sedgwick, Dorothy Canfield, Willa Cather, Edna Ferber, Zona Gale, Margaret Deland, Ellen Glasgow, Elinor Wylie?

I have not read all of Ellen Glasgow's works, but of those that I have read I certainly put first "The Romantic Comedians," published this year. This is written with a subdued and chastened irony and never becomes obtrusive. A parochial group is shown up through the wrong end of the telescope; and that particular form of insanity which afflicts men of sixty, and takes the form of self-delusion, making them believe that they can still be objects of romantic attachment on the part of young women, is mercilessly diagnosed. Should any old man who reads "The Romantic Comedians" be suffering from this delusion, it ought to cure him, but if he is sufficiently infatuated, it probably won't. If his old man's sensitive pride is too severely hurt by Ellen Glasgow's truthfulness, I advise him to read Mr. Locke's "Perella," where the young girl sticks to her aged husband. Of which two things may justly be said. Mr. Locke does not write realistic novels, but romances; and it would be very unfair to submit his plots and characters to the verification of reality. Then too, his old man belongs to the scholarly type, like college professors, and every one knows that they are irresistible.

Margaret Widdemer's new novel, "Gallant Lady," is a study of the younger generation and the "young married set" from a new point of view, and is worth reading for that reason. It is unconventional and original; though it lacks the depth and vitality of the best work of Dorothy Canfield and Edna Ferber.



Two of our foremost novelists, Edith Wharton and Anne Sedgwick, have published this year collections of short stories; these are written with exquisite art, but they cannot rank with "The Little French Girl" or with "The Age of Innocence."

Sinclair Lewis, in "Mantrap" wrote a motion-picture story, the true value of which he knows better than any one else; he has a rod in pickle for us all, which will chastise us at the psychological moment. Joe Lincoln, whose Cape Cod resembles that of Eugene O'Neill only geographically—it is always the same world, but there are optimists and pessimists—has given us "The Big Mogul," which I shall read later. On my list to be read at an early date are "Tampico," by Joseph Hergesheimer, "Preface to a Life," by Willa Cather, "Trail Makers of the Middle Border," by Hamlin Garland, "The Kays," by Margaret Deland, "Galahad," by the amazing John Erskine, "The Orphan Angel," by Elinor Wylie, "Early Autumn," by Louis Bromfield, "Pig Iron," by Charles G. Norris, "Hildegard," by Kathleen Norris; and I shall not fail to read "Tish"—because Mary Roberts Rinehart always has a good story and the knack of telling it in a diverting manner.

This article is little more than a roll-call. I have meant to call attention to the fact that 1926 has had a bumper crop of novels, which are decidedly worth reading. How can any one book survive among so many? How many of these books, excellent as they are, will be read in 2026? Last week I read for the sixth or seventh time, "Pride and Prejudice," in which nothing happens; but everyone will be reading it in 2026, and with the same unspeakable delight. The only thing that can possibly prevent that novel from having readers in 2026 will be a total change in human nature. The only living man who really thinks human nature is going to change is H. G. Wells; and the only thing in the world I am absolutely sure of, is that it won't.