

living on an impassable road, and existing on rough food, hard work, and an urgent spirit of self-reliance." Mr. Woodward emphasizes the marked social stratification of that day, the cleavage between the gentry and the mob. He is aware of the fact that a primitive life, such as the frontiersmen lived, is a very complicated life. Repeatedly he shows his ability to summarize some of these complications in a single pregnant paragraph:

Great families of strapping boys and husky wenches, quickly outgrowing their clothes, and passing them on to new and lesser waves of progeny. Desultory reading, writing, and ciphering. Huge apples. Red apples. Hard cider. Tame wolves. Foot-races and athletic games. Religious conversion. Bear traps. The hottest peach brandy in the world. Hymns howled. Country frolics. Bastards. Shotguns. The air was full of quarreling and laughing, of praying and fighting, of loving and drinking.

✱ ✱ ✱

Till the last of its 460 pages the volume remains engrossing, with much vivid writing and many shrewd judgments. Unfortunately, at the commencement of the Revolution Washington the man begins to fade from the picture. Mr. Woodward takes up the political and military history of the time, and goes into each with great detail; and his exposition, however profitable to the ordinary reader, will seem to the historical student a little elementary. As a biography, moreover, the book is rather badly proportioned. Lodge gave almost half his work—almost the whole second volume—to Washington's career after 1789. Mr. Woodward gives it about thirty pages, and offers an utterly inadequate sketch of the eight years in the Presidential chair. With many of Mr. Woodward's military judgments the student of strategy will be inclined to disagree. He follows Charles Francis Adams in asserting that the Americans would have done well, in 1776, to do what the Boers did in 1897; that is, to fight in irregular bands, such as Marion and Sumter formed in South Carolina, and harry the enemy by a partisan warfare rather than to attempt to defeat him in pitched battles. It may be commented that Washington won his war, while Botha lost. Mr. Woodward is unable to understand why both the British and Americans placed so much value upon the line of the Hudson. But both of them knew that the New England States were the chief source of provisions, men, and fighting spirit for the Revolutionary cause, and that to cut them off would strike the cause a fatal blow.

✱ ✱ ✱

Mr. Hughes is content, in 500 pages, to deal with the first thirty years of Washington's life. His volume, much more thoroughly and carefully documented than Mr. Woodward's, is the fullest collection of facts upon these thirty years which we possess. It carries the hero through childhood and youth, through his early commands and his share in Braddock's ill-fated expedition, through all his love affairs and his marriage with Mrs. Custis, to that interlude of peaceful life as a Virginia planter which preceded the Revolutionary storm. Once more we have a book which can fairly be called engrossing. There does not emerge from it, however, so clear and lifelike an impression of Washington's personality; while again and again it challenges dissent by its interpretations of his actions, and its view of the political and military operations of the time. Even more than Mr. Woodward, Mr. Hughes seems to lay exaggerated emphasis upon Washington's relations with Mrs. Sally Fairfax. It is quite possible that his heart was by no means so fully engaged as they assume. The author's warm championship of Braddock is an engaging feature of the volume, and he performs a valuable service in correcting the popular impression that this was a defeat into which a mule-headed British martinet blundered, against the advice of wise Americans, and from which American bravery extricated the terrorized redcoats. The facts are that Braddock showed much sound sense, that the colonials were as blameworthy for the disaster as the British, and that after the fight (which was not a surprise ambush) began, many provincial troops behaved no better than the regulars. But here and elsewhere Mr. Hughes pursues his unconventional thesis too far, and lays himself open to criticism.

One fact should be noted in conclusion. It is regrettable that two novelists of experience, who can fairly be called men of letters, should take so little pains in writing these important volumes, to achieve a reasonably dignified, accurate and polished style,

## A Doctor's View

THE DOCTOR LOOKS AT LOVE AND LIFE. By JOSEPH COLLINS. New York: George H. Doran. 1926. \$3.00.

Reviewed by ARTHUR W. COLTON

DR. COLLINS'S titles to his earlier collections of essays ("The Doctor Looks at Literature," "Taking the Literary Pulse") have seemed to assume that there was such a thing as a medical view of literature. Perhaps there is. Perhaps there is such a thing as a literary view of medicine. But there is also an antecedent doubt about the value in either of them. There have been men of letters who have attempted to deliver oracles on medical matters—oracles more noisy than useful. There have been lawyers and theologians, as well as doctors, who have been men of letters. But neither the legal nor the theological view of letters is an attractive or suggestive caption. The "Religio Medici" had little if anything to do with the physician and everything to do with Sir Thomas Browne. However, the title here is "The Doctor Looks at Love and Life." Why not forget the author's adventures in literature with the advent of a more hopeful heading?

The hope is not woefully disappointed. Part I, On Love, is concerned with sex questions as Dr. Collins has met them professionally, and he seems to write with that weight of temperate wisdom which is the fruit of wide knowledge and the specialized experience of a lifetime. Part II, On Life, ventures into politics, sociology, and (again) literature.

Why does one grow more emphatic and incautious as one's competence grows less? To bid a cobbler always stick to his last is a maxim too austere, but if he is to talk of carpentry ought he not be moderately modest? How does one whose profession demands accurate knowledge and tempered judgment come to assume that there is no demand for either in questions social and political, literary and biographic? Why assume authority where he has no authority?

In the essay that arraigns America as a case of "adult infantilism," he has in mind various phenomena often described and commented on, and sometimes with a diagnosis as journalistic as this. "Adult infantilism," I suppose, is a term in pathology, with a more or less technical and precise meaning. But spread out over a nation it becomes wild and misleading. Boyishness carried into manhood is not necessarily pathological. The best men are apt to carry a good deal of childhood into old age. "Our (American) impulsiveness, our egregious hospitality, are all hangovers from childhood." Maybe they are. So are the shapes of our noses and the color of our eyes. Such characteristics are no more infantile than adult. The man who wrote, "We are but children of a larger growth," was not speaking of Americans, nor unaware that it was a half truth only, the reflex of an immediate mood. Were Wordsworth's intimations of immortality Freudian complexes instead of trailing clouds of glory? Must we suffer a relapse into "adult infantilism" before we are fit to enter the kingdom of heaven? (Vide Luke 18, 17). Dr. Collins seems as unreserved and absolute for a half truth as for a platitude.

Adult infantilism accounts for the self satisfaction with which we hold aloof from the affairs of the other nations, and for that self esteem which leads us to believe in the superiority of our institutions and the righteousness of our conduct. It is the basis of our determination to regulate man's conduct by legislation—to say what he shall not teach and what he shall not drink. We have more colleges and universities than any country of the world, and yet we are the worst educated, the least cultured. We have more churches, chapels, and civic centers than any country of Europe, yet we are swayed by religious prejudices that transcend the understanding of Europeans. We have a climate that has no equal, yet we flee from it as though its atmosphere were mephitic.

Every one of these assertions is an intellectual mess. Americans have no more national self esteem than Frenchmen, or Italians, or Germans—at least before the war—or Englishmen, though they are apt to be more reserved in its expression. All nations have it and there is no way of measuring it. It is as easily proved a virtue as a vice. Nor is our conduct more regulated on the whole than elsewhere, in spite of ill-regulated attempts to regulate, and all the rubbish that is printed about the matter. Freedom of teaching, along with other

phases of obscurantism, is a live question in all civilized countries; prohibition in many of them. Are we worse educated than Tibet or Senegambia? Presumably Dr. Collins does not mean that, he only says it. Churches and chapels are not institutions for the abolition or mitigation of religious prejudice, and Europeans are too well acquainted with their own forms of it to let their understandings be so easily transcended. There are, or apparently are, more churches and chapels per population in most European countries than here. What are "civic centers"? We have half a dozen different climates, none of them indisputably good, but most of us stay at home reasonably contented with our own.

There is a point to be made behind all this, but Dr. Collins has made nonsense of it. One could construct, on the evidence of this essay, a better case for the adult infantilism characteristically American perhaps of the author, than he has made out for even the late venerable infant, William Jennings Bryan. One could argue as plausibly for the adult infantilism of people steeped in centuries of experience, like the Italians. And all these arguments come to a *reductio ad absurdum*.

The essay called "Do Characters in Fiction Behave Like Human Beings?"—the only one on literature—begins with some general statements about the history of the Romantic Movement, among them these: "We have had no great flood since the end of the eighteenth century. 'Götz,' a dramatized romance of chivalry, by Germany's greatest poet, was one of its own swan songs. The romantic movement did not reach flood tide in this country until early in the nineteenth century."

This can only be a medical point of view in the sense of an example of what may happen to a man who is off his beat and too courageous in the unknown. The usual literary view is that "Götz von Berlichingen" came at the beginning, not the end, of the German Romantic Movement; that the flood tide in Europe, if there was any such thing, was in the nineteenth, not the eighteenth century (probably the phrase would look to the era of Byron and Scott, of Novalis and the Knaben Wunderhornen, of Chateaubriand and Hugo's early dramas); that there was no flood tide of literature in this country of any kind in the early years of the nineteenth century.

But mainly this essay consists of Dr. Collins's reactions to a large selection of current novels, and these reactions are interesting. It is a pleasure to quote on a weak point in the psychological novel and the values of objectivity in fiction so shrewd a bit of criticism as this:

Our novel writing psychologists often handicap themselves tremendously, and render us a disservice by depending for knowledge upon self-observation. It is from observation of others and reflection upon it that one learns about human beings. One reason for Sinclair Lewis's deserved popularity is that he has a keen vision for the behavior of others and a blind spot for his own.

But here again we are "up against" Dr. Collins's indiscriminate language. He cannot mean that one never learns anything about human beings by self-observation, but he seems to say so. He does not mean by Mr. Lewis's "behavior" darkly to hint at misbehaviors of Mr. Lewis's unconscious personal delinquencies. He means something to the effect that Mr. Lewis is unaware that the glasses through which he observes so keenly are not clear but discolored; though the presumption is that he knows no more than I do whether Mr. Lewis is aware or not aware, of his somewhat jaundiced vision.

Dr. Collins's ability to be pungent and entertaining, and to write good English, is a valuable asset. There is no peril in good English, but there is in pungency. And there seems peril to a doctor looking abroad on society and literature that he will read too much pathology into their varied peculiarities.

### The Saturday Review of LITERATURE

HENRY SEIDEL CANBY ..... Editor  
WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT ..... Associate Editor  
AMY LOVEMAN ..... Associate Editor  
CHRISTOPHER MORLEY ..... Contributing Editor

Published weekly by The Saturday Review Co., Inc., Henry S. Canby, President, Roy E. Larsen, Vice President, Noble A. Cathcart, Secretary-Treasurer, 25 West 45th Street, New York. Subscription rates, per year, postpaid: in the U. S. and Mexico, \$3.50; in Canada, \$4; in Great Britain, 18 shillings; elsewhere, \$4.50. All business communications should be addressed to Noble A. Cathcart, 25 West 45th Street, New York. Entered as second-class matter, at the Post Office, at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 1, 1879. Vol. III, No. 20.  
Copyright, 1926, by The Saturday Review Co., Inc.



## History of the Screen

A MILLION AND ONE NIGHTS. By TERRY RAMSAYE. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1926. 2 vols. \$10.

Reviewed by JIM TULLY  
Author of "Jarnegan"

AS the first complete source book on the motion picture, this history has immense value. It is a badly written record of the tawdriest and the most fascinating business in the world. Some idea of the quality of the writing may easily be imagined when it is remembered that many of the chapters were first published by that Mencken of the morons, James Quirk, editor of *Photoplay Magazine*.

With none of the gifts of the writer, and with no sense of drama, Ramsaye has nevertheless compiled enough data to entitle him to the honor of being the first authentic film historian. An ex-writer of publicity for screen celebrities, he carries the vices of that unhappy trade into his work. It is too laudatory where it should be calm. It is verbose. His first five chapters could be condensed into one. Chapter Three begins:

We are come now down the path of many years until we stand at the threshold of the House of the Wizard. It is a place deep with awesome mystery and legends of Magic. It is said that strange deeds are done here at strange hours. Here weird lights and men toil like gnomes in their cave of the night while God-fearing people are asleep. . . .

Only a screen critic or a motion picture producer would be enthralled by such writing. Mr. Ramsaye's first volume is as dull as a film version of the life of Longfellow. And yet the subject is so mightily entrancing that one's heart aches for a Macaulay to write of it.

✱ ✱ ✱

The history of films is an epic of mediocrity. Much criticism has been leveled against the domination of films by the Jews. Yet I have always found them more open and kindly toward anything of genuine merit than any other of the sad races in Hollywood. It is true, they want "box-office attractions"—but from somewhere out of the dim centuries they have garnered more emotion and more deep feeling than any other race. The Jewish race is the only one I have found in Hollywood who will be tolerant of an honest opinion. After I had written a novel of defiance they greeted me with smiles, while enthusiastic players on all American Elevens of "Yes men" were bitter with denunciations.

Being Irish born—I would shudder if the Irish were to dominate pictures. It must always be remembered that a Jew is in back of every fine screen achievement in America. Being natural gamblers, they will take more chances on things artistic appealing to the great American mob than will any other race. The leading producers have come from the ranks of glove-makers, clothiers, and what have you. But as my teachers told me during my faraway religious days—the Twelve Apostles were recruited from a very ordinary crowd.

There has existed in Eastern centres of pseudo-culture, a feeling that all motion picture people are three degrees below morons. Indeed, it would not surprise me a great deal if film people were not soon admitted to the best circles in New York. They may even follow the dark gentry of Harlem in becoming a great fad.

✱ ✱ ✱

In conversation with Mencken a week ago that shrewd observer said, "As a matter of fact, I have met some very civilized people among them." The great critic's heart is as big as mankind. While the littler people trailed across the country and returned to their own narrow grooves in New York, writing their shallow views, Mencken saw culture and admitted it. It is true that he long had a phobia against pictures himself. The bars of his magazine were always up against film people. Alas—he let them down once—and the romantic Hergesheimer sold him an article on one of the Gish girls. It was a cruel trick for an author to play on a friend. Even at that time I was trying to interest Mr. Mencken in such a vast and dominating personality as von Stroheim. But Mencken would have none of him. *Vanity Fair* opened its pages to me.

Ramsaye's chief weakness is—he does not live up to the catch phrases of his foreword—because of, possibly among other things, a certain fear. All through this work there is evidence of the publicity man. Honesty is a hard road for a man who deals with living personalities. And then again, in spite

of the author's long contact with films, he is quite human. Many living men in the book have ingratiated themselves in his favor. Mr. Ramsaye finds it hard to say that Edison had not quite the vision many thought he had.

There are thousands of words in the first volume, which are aimed at one Eadweard Muybridge, who, whether accidental or not, was one of the pioneers in bringing motion to the camera. He was possibly an ordinary man, though his photograph in the volume would indicate a very remarkable fellow. He has a Whitman and Christ-blended face. He had committed a murder during the hot years. His wife had been unfaithful. He had killed her paramour. We are given a full page of a California daily paper which tells of his acquittal. Weird indeed are the workings of the human mind. Mr. Ramsaye seems to have an indefinable malice against poor Muybridge. His crime had nothing to do with his connection with a camera. His importance in the history does not justify the space he is given. But Mr. Ramsaye brings him back to us—very much alive—the one piece of character drawing in the book. I wish that Mr. Ramsaye had felt more malicious against many other ciphers in his arithmetic of the films.

As from the very beginning nearly every person first connected with the films has been a second-class accident of destiny, it would require the pity and irony of Anatole France to write of them. It is a sad profession of shadows. Even now—many of its leading people are as primitive as Attila the Hun. This would be magnificent—if they did not try to be "artists." So far as an intellectual and artistic background is concerned, it is a business in which nearly every high class man fails.

An inarticulate, almost stolid man like King Vidor is listed among the great directors. It is said that he will read no book that has not "action." Many other directors do not read at all. And yet, the very force, the very primitive way they have of looking at life enables them to make pictures that please multitudes who are little above them mentally. Their salaries for so doing range from fifty to several hundreds of thousands of dollars a year.

A contradictory business—it cannot be defined. It is the harbor of literary failures. . . . of backs who still retain a thin veneer of academic varnish. There are young maidens in Hollywood who talk glibly of Schnitzler. Fresh from interior meadows they have not yet outgrown Harold Bell Wright. All these things are charming, amusing, and lovely. Mr. Ramsaye does not catch them for his history. I think that a background for a history is essential. Hannibal's death by poison at seventy would not have the right proportion of drama had he not vowed at nine years of age to wage "eternal warfare against Rome."

But, as I have said before, certain portions of Mr. Ramsaye's work ran in *Photoplay Magazine*. Intelligent people, however, will find it valuable as a source book. Real histories will come later—interwoven with the lives of strong personalities whose stories are yet to be written.

## American Drama

THREE AMERICAN PLAYS. By MAXWELL ANDERSON AND LAURENCE STALLINGS. New York: Harcourt Brace & Company. 1926. \$2.50.

Reviewed by HULBERT FOOTNER

TO be read in solitude and quiet is a hard test on a play, and by no means a fair one. It is no test at all of its acting value. But acting value is not everything. We have too many plays that act well, and leave a flat taste in the mind upon leaving the theatre. Therefore it is well that plays should be printed. Plays are hard to read. Unless the stage directions are elaborate and cunning (as in Shaw's plays) one cannot expect to get more than about fifty per cent from the printed page. It requires flesh and blood actors, with graceful bodies, warm voices, and expressive faces to furnish the balance. On this account it is doubtful if the great public can ever be persuaded to read plays. But those having the slightest professional interest in the theatre will read them. In cold print the soldier qualities become apparent. The published play will foster and consolidate the reputation of a real playwright, and demolish the pretensions of a showy fakir. Thus one hopes that the quality of our plays may gradually improve.

The three plays under consideration read surprisingly well. Had they never been printed one

might not have guessed that they possessed so much style. I do not mean "literary quality," that bugbear of the stage, but real native style, the most delightful thing on the stage or anywhere else. This in spite of the fact that the stage directions are meager, careless, and in some cases downright misleading. For instance, in "What Price Glory," our old friend Captain Flagg is introduced as "a fine, magnificently-endowed man." I rubbed my eyes here. That was hardly as I remembered him on the stage, or as I found him in the printed page. Possibly the authors intended this note to be taken ironically. Charmaine is described simply as "a drab," which seems a little inadequate. Again, the Apothecary's Mate who is introduced as "a pink-faced kid . . . horribly callous, is the one who, a page or two later, gets off those arresting remarks about the human soul. The second play, "First Flight" ends with this cynical direction: "Jackson: (Who hasn't the nerve to take the girl, and who therefor mouths a moral sentiment as an excuse for running away). Youngsters do act thus, of course, but one's sympathies have been so actively engaged on behalf of the gallant sprig, Captain Andy Jackson, that this comes like a cold douche as the final curtain falls. If a taste for reading plays is to be inculcated, more thought must be spent on the stage directions.

✱ ✱ ✱

However there is nothing careless about the dialogue. Dialogue is the hardest thing in the world to write; and this is nervous, brilliant, and beautiful dialogue. I use beautiful advisedly; and in that connection I am thinking chiefly of the rough soldier talk in "What Price Glory?" which created such a to-do when the play was produced. There is all the difference in the world between common slang and stylish slang, though exactly the same phrases and words may be used. It all depends on how they are used. This soldier talk exactly conveys the illusion of life, but it is by no means phonographic; a cunning selection and arrangement has been exercised. That's where the element of beauty enters.

The same in "First Flight." Here it is the speech of Carolinians about 1790 that is conveyed. I do not know if that is the way they talked then; but the illusion is perfectly satisfactory. Here, in quite another milieu are exhibited the same qualities of naturalness and style.

The third play, "The Buccaneer" is a slighter affair, a sort of *jeu d'esprit*, highly picturesque and amusing. The first act is reminiscent of "Captain Brashwood's Conversion." There is little attempt to reproduce the speech and character of the seventeenth century. When Charles II comes on, it descends into positive extravaganza—but why not? It is extravaganza in a good style. As I remember it, this play did not enjoy much success on the stage; nevertheless it is more amusing than many comedies which are packing the theatres nightly.

✱ ✱ ✱

It is amusing to perceive that the themes of "What Price Glory?" and "First Flight" are identical, though the plays are so different. To quote the title of another play the theme is: "Love 'em and Leave 'em." In other words the delightfulness, and the essential unimportance of woman in a man's life. It is a jolly old doctrine, and vastly comforting to the male; but a little old-fashioned nowadays, and difficult to put in practice. The third play, "The Buccaneer," just escapes the same theme, due to the fact that the Lady Elizabeth Neville declines to be left at the final curtain.

In the case of a collaboration it is always tempting to speculate upon which contributed what part to the whole. Taking the other activities of Messrs. Stallings and Anderson into consideration, one may guess that generally speaking, the former contributed the raw material, which the latter shaped for the stage. Both must have helped to create the style. If this guess is correct, Mr. Anderson has exercised admirable restraint. The technique of the stage is never allowed to obtrude. All three of the plays are free of theatrical hokum.

In the past far too much importance has been attached to stage technique. "What Price Glory?" according to the rules, is a bad play. There is little dramatic progression; the situation remains about the same throughout. A bad play; but who cares, when it was absorbing to witness, and is scarcely less interesting to read? No new or profound depths in human nature are revealed; but it is fresh, living,