

generations. . . . Our ancestors were not so much concerned with the past from realization of its reality as we are; they tend to think *sub specie aeternitatis*.

Intelligence is not the same as wisdom. It is more liable to mistakes than wisdom. On the other hand it is committed to notions, and is ashamed of revokes as its disconcerting. It is of transformations. It is responsive. It follows after.

The faculty called intelligence was born in Greece, but no people before or since have seemed to possess it in proportions so relatively dominant. Other minds might be ninties, or ninety nine one hundredths, composed of habit and emotion, but the Greek looked and reasoned. Relatively he was clear eyed and supple minded.

Professor Erskine, some time ago, wrote an article on "The Moral Obligation to Be Intelligent," a title that perhaps contained in itself the gist of the argument. It implied, as Miss Paget also seems to imply, that people can, if they try, be more intelligent than they are: that the effort to discard prejudice and be rid of muddled thinking and blundering bromidism, the persistent asking of ourselves, "But is it so? Is it so reality?" is not without reward. Intelligence, as the faculty however inadequate that most distinguishes human from other beings, is the faculty that biologically speaking is most likely to enlarge its domain. Historically speaking, Miss Paget thinks it has been doing so. Individually speaking, it is a comfort to know that one can be sensible, at least more sensible, if one tries.

Life and the Village

AT THE SIGN OF THE GOAT AND COMPASSES. By MARTIN ARMSTRONG. New York: Harper & Bros. 1925. \$2.

Reviewed by LOUIS KRONENBERGER

TO his new novel Martin Armstrong has given the piquant title "At the Sign of the Goat and Compasses". It is an accurate title also, for the true subject of the book is Crome village, and "The Goat and Compasses", as Crome's only inn, was the center of village life. Furthermore the inn had been owned for generations by the Jordens, and Rose and Bella Jorden are two important characters in the story.

But none of the villagers is so important as the village itself. Mr. Armstrong merely weaves all their fortunes around his major pattern, which is the declining fortune of Crome. His method differs from that in most stories of village life. It differs from, let us say, the method in Jane Austen's "Emma" because its characters are singled or paired off separately instead of reacting interdependently in one organic plot. Again it differs from that in "Winesburg, Ohio" where each person has a chapter—or short-story—of his own, because Mr. Armstrong skips back and forth among his people, here taking them up and there putting them down. And superficially "At the Sign of the Goat and Compasses" is not realistic like "Emma" or "Winesburg, Ohio"; but that is precisely Mr. Armstrong's purpose—to reveal, beneath a tranquil idyllic surface, an intensity of groping human life.

Once a prosperous seaport Crome, now threatened with eventual destruction by the sea, has shrunk to the smallest of villages. But it is not too small to have its types of humanity; and as one might expect of Mr. Armstrong, its highly singular types. It has possibly no one so memorable as the Miss Millett or so touching as the Mrs. Barber of "The Bazaar," but one is not likely to forget Mrs. Dunk or Miss Furly. Miss Furly, a repressed old maid who imagines she is the widow of an unknown sailor washed ashore at Crome, and who becomes deranged to the point of saying so on the tombstone she buys for him, might almost serve, in addition to being a humorous and slightly pathetic woman, as a cruel burlesque on the old maids with imaginary love affairs that have been recorded by psychoanalysts.

New Worlds and Old

NO MORE PARADES. By FORD MADOX FORD. New York: Albert & Charles Boni. 1925. \$2.50. THE GREAT WORLD. By a Gentleman with a Gun. New York: Doran. 1925.

Reviewed by MARY M. COLUM

THESE two novels because of the sort of life they reveal are the outstanding English novels of the year that is just past: "The Great World" deals with a life that is completely over; "No More Parades," on the other hand, deals with a life so new that only those readers abreast with modern ideas can read it with pleasure. Unlike "The Great World" Mr. Ford's novel is not a thoroughly English book—it is not permeated with English ideals and traditions; it has, in fact, a sort of unconscious anti-English feeling in it as if it were the work of one of those aliens in the British Empire, Celt or Semite, who in their souls resent what England stands for.

"No More Parades" is probably the most highly praised novel of the year; in fact, one discovers from the more intellectual reviewers that it is a very remarkable book. The *Dial* reviewer gives us to understand that it is a great book; he seems to think that all Mr. Ford's novels are great books—they are written, we are told, "with integrity, probity, and a single violence of passion that makes them great." Both the *Tribune* and the *Times* reviewer pronounced the book the finest novel of the year. Anyhow, it is perfectly certain that if it had been written one, or two, or three decades ago, or at any time since novels began to be written, few if any



Illustration, by M. Fischerova-Kvechova, for "Folk-Songs of Bohemia" (Szalatnay)

would have read it. All our intellectuals are reading it now. Indeed I expect that our young intellectual novelists will be heavily influenced by it or will attempt to imitate a whole-cloth imitation of it. At the beginning of a new year it is worth considering why a book like "No More Parades" gets this amount of attention.

It gets attention for exactly the same reason that the work of T. S. Eliot gets attention, and, in a lesser degree, that the work of the new *Dial* prize-winner, E. E. Cummings, who that journal editorially informs us is a great poet. The *Dial* does not explain to us why it considers Mr. Cummings a great poet, nor does its reviewer tell us why he considers Mr. Ford a great novelist. But this is the reason: Mr. Ford, Mr. Cummings, and several other writers of the newer order express, nimbly and accurately, in carefully developed and individual style, certain attitudes of mind, certain sensations, certain emotions, and, above all, certain observations of this generation. Mr. Ford is, of course, a much more important writer than Mr. Cummings. They both, however, give expression to a certain rampant and disillusioned intellectualism which is the fashionable literary attitude of the moment.

That readers should like a writer because he expresses them or something which interests them is understandable enough; this sort of judgment has indeed a certain relation to literary criticism, but it must be considered as relative to other merits. It is the sheerest nonsense to call a writer great because he expresses some facet or some neuroticism of his own generation. For example, I believe that T. S. Eliot expresses a part of me a great deal better than does John Keats or Robert Browning. But I am not for that reason under the delusion that Mr. Eliot is as great as Keats or Browning, or that he is a great poet at all—an excellent poet of sorts he is. An excellent novelist of sorts is Mr. Ford Madox

Ford, but neither of them have the stamina, or the passion, or the hard grip on their material of the great writers; they have not added anything to the experience of the race that is going to make them live in the memory of the race, and, if we are to have any sort of genuine criticism, the indiscriminate calling of such writers great or immortal must be stopped.

An immortal writer is a writer who expresses something immortal; a great writer is a writer who expresses something great—it may be something overwhelmingly great, or it may be simply a strong, fleeting intensity. The expression of fleeting intensities, or even fleeting whimsicalities has often innate in them, if not an immortal flame, at least an immortal spark, and so they, too, live with the greater expressions in the mind of man. Having made my protest against the calling of such books "great"—and such a protest is, perhaps, the most necessary act of criticism at the present time, let me state that "No More Parades" is an excellent book and worth every intelligent man's or woman's reading once. It has the integrity and the probity which the *Dial* reviewer credits it with; it has not, however, "the single violence of passion"—it has not, in fact, passion at all; passion is exactly the quality lacking in such books. It has little emotion; it is life portrayed through thin emotions but distinguished intellect—a life where people observe rather than feel things. What intensity it has is nervous and intellectual intensity. It is an outstanding characteristic of such books that they are written out of the nerves and intellect.

The two chief characters, Sylvia and Christopher Tietjens, similarly, are created out of the nerves and intellect, and so have the curious reality and unreality of such creations. The scene of the novel is a base-camp behind the lines in France during the war; naturally we do not get the emotional reactions of people to the war—we get their nervous reactions to minor phases of it. Readers of what are called very modern books will have noticed that in them great stress is laid on such facets of life as have, up to the present, been omitted altogether in literature or relegated to a minor position. This is due to the influence of the discoveries of psychoanalysis which show that more or less hidden, and sometimes superficial desires, play an unsuspected rôle in the nervous make-up of individuals. When such forces are brought out and made play the chief rôles the total effect is of patent unreality. In the older English novels such forces had no part to play. For instance, in "Tess of the d'Urbervilles," Tess is shown acting under powerfully moving influences, in powerfully significant situations, while in a book like "No More Parades" Sylvia Tietjens's character is shown in insignificant circumstances under the sway of neurotic emotions. Her chief desire with regard to her husband is to torture him with infidelities and cruelties. As she sits in a hotel lobby with a man who has been her lover she sees in a mirror her husband enter and hand a card to the hotel servant; she watches his lips moving as he asks for her, sees him see her sitting there. The description of this scene is a triumph of nervous observation. We have all through the book triumphs of nervous observation, but we have no triumphs of emotional revelation; neither Sylvia nor her husband are strongly alive because their creator had not in himself a vital life to give them. He tries to make of Christopher an intellectual, a chivalrous gentleman following public school ethics and the Arnold of Rugby code of honor; what he actually turns out to be is a sort of Sissy without strong emotions, a man who tries to be unfaithful to his wife but cannot succeed. We are told that he won't hit another man before his wife, Sylvia, but he permits his brother to write scurrilous letters about her.

From the reports in the newspapers of recent English society scandals it would appear as if "No More Parades" was a fair account of "one half Rome." But for the other half we turn to "The Great World." In contrast to "No More Parades" this book gives us a life where people feel but do not observe very much. It is not as well worth reading as "No More Parades," but it gives a highly authentic picture of the sort of English gentlemen who did really swallow public school ethics and Arnold of Rugby. They made themselves, perhaps, rather stodgy and insular in the process, but they also made themselves complete aristocrats. "The Great World" is really a sort of history, and nothing could be better than the presentation and contrast of the three Dukes of Stretton—the first two being country gentlemen

who lived for their estates and did the best they could for man and beast thereon; the last a young gentleman of the newer order with an adventurous interest in socialism. It is a highly intelligent and even witty and satirical book, but its great value is in the fact that it is a chronicle of the life of an English aristocrat before the war—a life that, as we know, is over for ever. And it is written about in a narrative style that is also over. None of our young writers is going to imitate it, but I should not be at all surprised if in its own excellent, stodgy, and limited way, it had a considerable lease of life.

The Moscow Theatre

INSIDE THE MOSCOW ART THEATRE.

By OLIVER M. SAYLER. New York: Brentano's. 1925. \$4.

PLAYS OF THE MOSCOW ART THEATRE MUSICAL STUDIO. ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS FROM THE RUSSIAN. By GEORGE S. AND GILBERT SELDES, with Introductions by OLIVER M. SAYLER. The same. \$3.00.

Reviewed by John Mason Brown
Theatre Arts Monthly

WHEN Oliver M. Sayler wrote "The Russian Theatre under the Revolution" seven years ago, he wrote with all the contagious excitement of a discoverer. As dramatic editor of the *Indianapolis News*, he had dreamed of the Russian theatre for years before he visited Moscow. When he at last reached Russia, after the difficulties of entering it through the back door of Siberia (because Europe was war-ridden), he found himself in the midst of the first revolution. He was on the scene to write of what happened to the theatre in those perilous days, but his nearness to the theatre under the revolution was not half as important as his presence in Moscow, where he could study the scheme and happenings of the leading Russian stages. The book that resulted throbbed with the joint exultation of a reporter making an important "scoop," and a critic finding an ideal undimmed even when standing before it. It was an important book in many ways. It gave America the best account of the Moscow Art Theatre's working methods and the most complete summary of the contemporary Russian stage that had been written. It gave to Mr. Sayler the sole rights to the Russian theatre as literary material, and prepared the way for the visit of Stanislavsky. For it must be remembered that no one (not even Morris Gest or Otto Kahn) was more influential than Mr. Sayler in paving the way for the two successful visits of the Moscow Art Theatre.

If Mr. Sayler did this quite indirectly and quite unconsciously in "The Russian Theatre under the Revolution," he paves the way for the present visit of the Musical Studio quite directly and quite consciously in "Inside the Moscow Art Theatre." As the Musical Studio is an outgrowth of the last five years, Mr. Sayler presents the instructive administrative changes in the Art Theatre which have occurred since his first visit to Russia, and which have made the many recent activities of the parent theatre possible. For one thing, a highly centralized dictatorship has supplanted the former cooperative management. Though Stanislavsky's company is still intact, playing its old repertory, the Art Theatre has not come to a stand-still. The First Studio has "grown up," and Mihail Chekov has presented Moscow with a "Hamlet" "modern" in other respects than in its clothes. But above all the Art Theatre has kept pace with the current tendencies of the Russian stage by the development of the Musical Studio under the spirited direction of Vladimir Nemirovitch-Dantchenko. Nemirovitch-Dantchenko has aimed at the "synthetic theatre," where "the singing actor" and the director combine to rid "musical-dramatic expression of its rubber stamp, stencils, and bad taste," and introduce "into the field of lyric drama an atmosphere of genuine art and, first of all, the art of the actor." As Mr. Sayler points out this "lyric expression of the Moscow Art Theatre is a tacit admission that realism in Russia, too, has about reached the end of its tether."

When he is bringing his record up-to-date, or giving the history of music drama as a form, Mr. Sayler is at his best. But when he comes to the detailed chapter on the Musical Studio's repertory he slips into a bewildering enthusiasm which knows no

shadings and expresses itself largely in superlatives. The facts behind the adjectives are certainly worthy of attention, however, for Mr. Sayler traces the growth of the idea through the actual repertory. He shows how "timid and cautious" was the first experiment with "The Daughter of Madame Angot," and carries the development in boldness and technique through "La Perichole" to "Lystrata," "Love and Death," and finally the truly significant production of "Carmencita and the Soldier." So long as he interests, and he does through almost all of his two hundred and thirty odd pages, it doubtless matters little in a temporary and topical book of this kind whether or not his style is loose and journalistic and whether the critic gives place to the reporter. Mr. Sayler has prepared the way again, and explained many things which it is necessary to know if the work of the Musical Studio is to be rightly understood. One cannot but wonder, however, if "Inside the Moscow Art Theatre" would not have been more effective if Mr. Sayler had stood by his original intention and made of it "a modest monograph" instead of "a full length book."

The art of writing librettos is not yet, unfortunately, among the seven lively arts, and even the the names of George S. and Gilbert Seldes cannot make of their collection of the plays of the Moscow Art Theatre Musical Studio more than a necessary evil. The translations of "Lysistrata," "The Daughter of Madame Angot," "La Perichola," and "Love and Death" though clear have little interest aside from the operas they explain. Lipskerov's bold rearrangement of "Carmencita and the Soldier," however, has a distinct interest of its own, in spite of the impotency of the English translation of its verse.

Naturalist and Essayist

THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF JOHN BURROUGHS. BY CLARA BARRUS. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 2 vols. 1925. \$12.50.

Reviewed by Norman Foerster
University of North Carolina.

DR. BARRUS . . . A very keen, appreciative mind, of more ready service to me than any woman I ever met. Would like to write my life. I should like her to do it, if it is ever done—have named her my literary executor—the most companionable woman I have yet met in this world—reads and delights in the same books I do—a sort of feminine counterpart of myself." Thus reads an entry in the journal of John Burroughs about the time of their first meeting, in his sixty-fifth year. For the twenty years that followed they were closely associated. Dr. Barrus "typed" virtually all his magazine articles and the last fourteen of his books; making herself his Boswell, she noted his talk,—often, when others were present, *verbatim*; and she collected letters, memoranda, and other biographical material until they "proved an embarrassment of riches, heavily taxing one's powers of selection." The result is a biography of 900 well-filled pages. "Knowing him well, revering him, and believing him worthy of immortal regard," she has prepared a meticulous record of her hero's thoughts and actions, including details as to his earnings as an author and the minutiae of his housekeeping. The first volume, which carries the leisurely story to his sixty-fifth year, reads well enough; but it is to be feared that only those who believe Burroughs "worthy of immortal regard" will survive the second volume, which begins with his sixty-fifth year and tends to oscillate monotonously between small events and large honors.

The main explanation of this glaring disproportion is doubtless the biographer's association with Burroughs during his old age alone. But the explanation is not an excuse, partly because Dr. Barrus had ample materials for his early life (if one may use the phrase for a span of sixty-four years), and partly because the best of Burroughs does not appear in his old age. In the years of the great war, for example, this inveterate rationalist quite fails to honor himself or mankind; responding in 100 per cent fashion to the wave of feeling that swept the country, he displayed a reaction to the war, its causes and issues, that cannot be termed rational, perhaps not even intelligent. His rationalism proved to be far weaker than his emotionalism, a

fact which throws, I think, a significant light on his career as a whole.

Burroughs's career may be roughly divided at 1900, the year, as it happens, with which the second volume of this biography opens. That is the year of "The Light of Day" (of which a Methodist clergyman said that "it begins in twilight, and ends in darkness"). The book is a belated contribution to the evolution controversy that raged in the '70s and '80s; the light of the day is reason, the scientific reason, which dominated Burroughs persistently, if not steadily, for the rest of his life. In most of the fifteen volumes that follow this book, he appears in the rôle of an unimportant scientist and scientific sage, widely read, to be sure, but essentially commonplace. His special capacity did not lie in this field, any more than it lay in literary criticism, which he attempted occasionally throughout his career. His distinction was not intellectual, æsthetic, or religious: it was poetic. It was poetic sensibility to nature, harmonized with close observation of nature. It is this Burroughs who flourished in the three decades preceding the year 1900. It is "John o' Birds" who is the noteworthy John, and neither "St. John the Divine" nor "St. John the Human."

More important than anything Burroughs published after 1900 is his first nature book, "Wake Robin," so named by his friend Walt Whitman despite the fact that it is a book of essays on birds.

Here is the really memorable Burroughs, who could carry his readers—even scientific readers like Coues—into the breathing life of the woods and fields and render the various language which Nature speaks so faithfully that (as Arnold said of Wordsworth) she herself seems to take the pen.

What influence was it that deflected Burroughs from the poetic vein that dominated this first nature book and gradually waned? The main influence was, I think, curiously enough, that of Walt Whitman, with whom he was associated, often intimately, from the autumn of 1863 to the death of Whitman in 1892. Writing to a friend in 1866, he said: "I think I have had my say about the birds, for the present, at least. Sometime I may make a book of these, and other articles, but am in no hurry." He was indeed in no hurry; it was five years before "Wake-Robin" appeared. And he was in no hurry, as Dr. Barrus rightly infers, "because of the great Whitman planet that had swum into his ken," though Dr. Barrus does not indicate the full influence of that planet. At the time when he said he had had his say about the birds, he was engaged on a book about Walt Whitman (half of which was Whitman's own work), which appeared in 1867; and his last book in the nineteenth century was to be another book on Whitman, published in 1896. Through all these years (before Darwin and Bergson mastered him) he was an eager disciple of Whitman, who transformed him gradually into a sage and prophet. Whitman, giving him the "cosmos," made birds seem very small game. Instead of the unconscious poetry that suffused his early work, Burroughs offered, in increasing quantities, meditations on the perfection of the universe. Although these meditations in his later years were filled with the scientific and rationalistic mood of the age, they continued to be filled also with the special kind of optimism that permeates the work of Whitman. He sought to reconcile Whitman and Darwin; but time will adjudge him a better writer, I suspect, in the days of his enthusiasm for Audubon.

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