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## Points of View

### Heaving a Brick

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:  
SIR:

I never yet came within range of one of those condescending critics without wanting to heave half a brick at him; and I know that I'm not the only writer who feels that way: when to a grand condescension they add insincerity I feel like making it a full sized brick. Some Anonymous Critic has been having a shot at my "Steel Decks" in a late issue of yours. It's a safe barrier—shooting from cover. Do I rate a shot in the open at him?

This A. C. pretends to outline the plot of the story. Assuming this plot, or any other plot, to be the silliest ever, since when has the plot of a story been the whole works? Is it the plot outline or how we fill it in that counts? Does the bully skipper live and breathe? Is the roughneck mate a real seagoer? Do the deckhands, cook, and oilers act like real human beings on an oilship out to sea? Did the ship act as a ship should act in a storm? Aren't these the things to inform the reader about? If our A. C. honestly thinks he should expend so much of his space in outlining the plot, why does he so carefully avoid mention of the main theme, which is: Should a man, because he has managed to get himself a ship-master's ticket, be allowed to hold unlimited authority over a crew of men at sea? Also, why does it happen that our A. C., reviewing for a magazine which circulates so largely among writing folk, carefully avoids mention—he mentions lesser items—of the hero's arraignment of Immature Book Critics?

Our A. C. writes . . . "This might make

curious reading in the office of a regular tank steamer concern." I'm not sure that I have him right—his style runs to innuendo and insinuation rather than straightforward statement—but he must mean that the office force of a shipping concern would smile with him at the absurdity of the story. I don't know what our friend knows about shipping offices, but in the years when I paid small attention to time clocks I put in many a fine day loafing in such offices. One of them operated a line of oil ships. It may interest our A. C. to know that "Steel Decks" was born in the aforesaid oil ship office; and long before the story saw book form it was read by shore and seagoing employees of that office. I have to report that their reactions to the story have not discouraged me.

Our A. C. may mean by the phrase quoted above that collusion for grafting purposes between a ship captain and a company official ashore is a preposterous notion. Well, I once took a cruise with an oil ship skipper who was later reported for grafting. I reported him. The office investigated and fired him.

Speaking of absurd rascality plots, I wonder what our critical friend would say to the plot of one steamship concern hiring men to set fire at sea to the cargo of a rival passenger steamer. No, this is not out of the movies. It is open talk right now in shipping circles along the Atlantic Coast; and a hint of it has been printed in the daily press. When? Within three months. There's one to smile off.

It irks our A. C. that seventeen pages are given over to a fist fight. What an awful waste! Mr. Shaw writes a full sized play around a prize fighter, and Mr. Doyle a full length novel about a prize ring hero, and nobody in the writing world that I know has condemned their choice of themes or the space given to them, but my allowance of seventeen pages for a battle which is to have a vital bearing on the hero's fortunes is too much—much too much. Our A. C. objects to the hero talking while he is punching his man. Now what are you going to do with that kind of a writing creature? Did this man never sit near a ring side in his life? Did he never know a fighter of the "kidding" type? Or one who uses his brains as well as his fists?

There is also the meticulous notation of the ridiculous idea that the villain weighs seventy pounds more than the hero and yet is beaten up. Has this particularly damn fool person any knowledge at all of fighting men? The old Jack Dempsey—a light middle weight, Joe Walcott, a welter weight, Charlie Mitchell (a light heavy weight), all defeated men who outweighed them by more than seventy pounds. Mitchell once defeated a man who outweighed him by ninety-five pounds; and these defeated men were thought good enough to get backing for professional ring work. The present Jack Dempsey, weighing 190, knocked the livers and lights out of Willard, weighing 245; and Willard at that time was the world's champion. What is there so foolish about my claiming that the hero of a story can out-punch a fat slob who is seventy pounds heavier than himself?

What I chiefly hold against your critic is that he is not sincere . . . "Now for a word of comment in all fairness to the author . . ." Now may I be argued into admitting the vigor and originality of that phrase, but never the sincerity of it. "In all fairness . . . and speaking frankly . . ." If there were any way to prove it, I would bet a quart of Baccardi rum, which is getting to be a scarce article of commerce on this bleak New England Coast, that when those archaeologists now digging in Assyria get acquainted with the idioms they will find these same canting phrases baked deep in on the old cuneiform tablets.

Having expended four-fifths of his space in depreciating the story in every way he can, our A. C. proceeds to expend the last fifth in advising the poor boob of an author what he should do in the future. I should . . . stick to my "fishermen, sloping decks and humming gear . . ." whatever humming gear is on a fisherman! Fishermen speak of fishing gear, meaning with the hooks and lines they lay along the bottom of the ocean: and sometimes they speak of reefing tackle as reefing gear; but hooks and lines and reefing tackle do not hum. Back stays hum, fore stays hum, ratlines hum—there is a humming throughout the whole rigging sometimes in a hard breeze; but lines laid along the bottom of the ocean and reefing gear howsed down to a fore or main boom do not hum in the wind. The

wind can't get at 'em, if my A. C. gets what I mean.

Stick to my fishermen! Why stick to any one thing if a man knows something about something else? Having spent at least a month aboard steamers to every week I have put in on sailing craft, why not allow me to pen a few pages about the steamer folk? As the best two (or perhaps three) stories I ever wrote had nothing to do with fishermen, why stick exclusively to my fishermen?

Our A. C. is eager to give advice. I wonder will he take a little? Why not, in reviewing a book stick to a review of the book, and allow the writer of a book to say a word about a life that he may know as much about as any A. C.?

JAMES B. CONNOLLY.

### Hardy and the Nobel Prize

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:  
SIR:

If I read the news correctly, the Nobel prize for literature was not awarded this year. I propose with your cooperation to enlist the interest of authors and of all other people who care for literature in a movement to urge upon the Board of Directors of the Nobel Foundation the fitness of awarding the prize for literature to the greatest living man of letters, Thomas Hardy. I tried two years ago to get the international P. E. N. Club to take some action to this end, but nothing came of my suggestion, and Mr. Galsworthy, the head of the English center, did not receive the idea with much enthusiasm. I wonder if writers in England and America, and in other countries too, would not find it a pleasant and dignified expression of respect, certainly not an impertinence, to recommend to the Swedish Committee that they increase the distinction of the honorable list of names of men of letters by adding that of Thomas Hardy. Nobody will object to the award of the prize to any worthy writer. But it seems a pity to omit the award altogether when such a genius as Hardy is still upon the earth. I felt this even more strongly in 1914 when there was no award (probably on account of the war), for then Joseph Conrad was alive, a supreme artist and one, moreover, with a unique claim to international recognition. Mr. Hardy is eighty-five years old and in the course of things is not long for this sad world, and he probably is far beyond any interest in the bauble prizes of life. The prize would add no honor to him, but his name would add lustre to the already brilliant list of twenty-four names. Will you open your correspondence columns to communications on this subject and see what response we get?

JOHN MACY.

Hastings-on-Hudson.

### "Mary Wollstonecraft"

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:  
SIR:

For going on four years I have been engaged in collecting and putting together the material for a book now nearing a London press. It is provisionally entitled: "Memoirs of Mary Wollstonecraft." Written by William Godwin and edited with a supplement chronologically arranged and containing hitherto unpublished or uncollected material and a bibliography of Mary's books by W. Clark Durant.

The first source to which I turned was of course *Notes and Queries*. In the seventies a gentleman residing in Hull informed its readers that in an unlikely book may be found, as examples of improvement in English composition, eleven letters written by my heroine from Beverley, Hull, and Bath, at an early and entirely undocumented period in her life.

The book is entitled: "English Exercises." By Jane Gardiner. Adapted to the "Young Ladies' Grammar" lately published by the same author. York. 1801.

I have searched by correspondence with libraries of any importance all over the United States and Great Britain. The closest I reached was at the British Museum where one may consult Jane's "Young Ladies' Grammar" (1799).

It only occurred to me recently that the field would be greatly extended were this appeal made to a multitude of individuals, any of whom might be a possible owner. So I shall state in closing that should any reader have a copy or cognizance of one's whereabouts he will earn my undying gratitude by communicating that priceless fact to the undersigned.

W. CLARK STEWART

State Hospital,  
Middletown, Conn.



## The New Books

The books listed by title only in the classified list below are noted here as received. Many of them will be reviewed later.

### Art

#### AT THE BOTTOM OF THE LADDER.

Cartoons by CAMILLUS KESSLER. Lippincott. 1926. \$10.

Future presidents, senators, congressmen, police commissioners, hotel men, circus men, newspaper men, authors, bank presidents, governors, heads of big corporations, and so on have all filed before the mind's eye of an accomplished newspaper cartoonist as they might have lived, moved, and had their being in "the good old boyhood days."

Mr. Kessler's series of snapshots at the youth of these men in the public eye, each snap founded upon an actual incident at the start of a career, achieved popularity both with the subjects portrayed and with the general reader, upon its appearance in the daily press. While Mr. Kessler's draughtsmanship cannot be said to possess high distinction, it is adequate to his conception. The book is both entertaining and informative.

THE LURE OF THE LONDON GALLERIES. By Arthur Milton. McBride. \$2 net.

THE ART OF WATER COLOUR PAINTING. By E. Barnard Lintott. Scribners.

OLD MASTERS AND MODERN ART. By Sir Charles Holmes. Harcourt, Brace. \$7.50.

### Belles Lettres

OTHELLO IN FRENCH. By MARGARET GILMAN. Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion. 1925.

This is an exhaustive study of French translations and adaptations of "Othello," from the first version in 1745 by La Place down to the present day. The author discovers an interesting double cycle of prose translations followed by verse, first for the reading public, then for the stage, which is contrary to the usual English habit in translating foreign classics, where verse almost always precedes. It is not surprising that in the case of "Othello" the prose versions are superior. Nor is it surprising to those who know the French that, although they have long learned to accept Shakespeare's works as literature, they still balk at seeing his plays, "Othello" especially, on the actual stage.

THE ADVENTURE OF OLD AGE. By FRANCIS BARDWELL. Houghton Mifflin. 1926. \$2.

One does not have to be upwards of three score and ten to appreciate the sketches drawn together under this paradoxical title. So universal are the author's sympathies and so true his perspective that youth and age both seem to be a part of the same adventure. Young readers should be sure to dip into these pages before they give the book to Grandfather or Great Aunt Sarah.

Mr. Bardwell is an official in the Public Welfare Department of the State of Massachusetts, and in an extended introduction discusses old age as a sociological problem. The body of the book, however, is composed of a series of very human essays and character sketches which have grown out of many years' acquaintance with the aged persons in the almshouses of the State, from Cape Cod to the Berkshires. Dr. Richard Cabot describes Mr. Bardwell as a "cheery, alert gentleman-of-the-old-school with a genius for sympathy and good-humor," and these qualities have found their way in generous measure into his writing. The author's New England background strongly characterizes his work, and the book could have emanated from no other environment than that of the Bay State. It is significant in that it is the outgrowth of emotional interest as well as scientific field-work.

LETTERS TO KATIE. By SIR EDWARD BURNE-JONES. Macmillan. 1925.

"If a marriage could have been arranged between Brother Francis of Assisi and Monna Lisa, or if Puck had eloped with St. Elizabeth of Hungary, their offspring might conceivably have been very like Burne-Jones." So says Mr. Robinson in his introduction to this altogether charming little volume. The letters and sketches accompanying them to Katie Lewis, the little daughter of one of his best friends, justify Mr. Robinson's suggestion. To review the letterpress in cold detail would be to break a butterfly of fancy on a wheel of cold reason. They are wholly delightful and the casual but masterly sketches reproduced throughout deserves more serious attention than they are likely to get. The book gives us a brief and intimate glimpse of those

nurseries of the 'eighties wherein Swinburne found some of his warmest inspirations. No review, only the book itself, can do justice to the artist's pen. Sketches and letters alike reveal an aspect of his genius and character which, in Francis Thomson's phrase, have surely won him a place in "the nurseries of heaven."

THINGS SEEN AND HEARD. By EDGAR J. GOODSPEED. University of Chicago Press. 1925. \$2.

Here are fourteen little essays of an informal sort, keenly personal and charming. Part of their charm lies in their irrepressible light-heartedness, which is too consistently sustained to be a pose, and is certainly not due to ignorance of How Dreadful Modern Life Is. Moralists who sit on their haunches and bay at iniquity which they have treed but cannot reach will be annoyed by Mr. Goodspeed's chuckles. He chuckles at the swindler who fleeced him, and at himself for having been fleeced. Good humor is a bit rare in American writing—not because good humored people are rare, but because they are either lazy or excessively busy, and so cannot write.

Good informal prose, colorful and picturesque, is also rare, and in this lies the second element of charm in Mr. Goodspeed's little book. Liquid, mellifluous prose, dignified, sonorous prose, these we might expect of him; for his publishers describe him—and we have verified the fact—as a "distinguished Greek scholar and translator of the New Testament." Many people will be frightened by this, for the study of Greek is popularly thought to make a man balanced, immobile, austere, like an Athenian frieze. But it doesn't, any more than Egyptology makes a man front you in profile, with pointed elbows crooked and fingers stiffly extended.

THE MIRVILLUX IN THE EPIC. By Ralph Coplestone Williams. Paris: Champion.

THE GREEK POINT OF VIEW. By Maurice Hutten. London: Hodder & Stoughton.

PRIMITIVE CULTURE IN GREECE. By H. J. Rose. Doran. \$2.50 net.

CHILDHOOD IN ENGLISH NON-DRAMATIC LITERATURE. By F. Lamar Janney. Greifswald, Abel.

THE CRITICAL OPINIONS OF SAMUEL JOHNSON. Edited by Joseph Epes Brown. Princeton University Press. \$7.50 net.

THE GENIUS OF BERNARD SHAW. By Patrick Braybrooke. Lippincott.

### Biography

A PORTRAIT GALLERY OF AMERICAN EDITORS. By DORIS ULMANN. New York: William Edwin Rudge. 1926. \$35.

This superbly printed book is in effect a "Who's Who" of the contemporary editors of American magazines, illustrated by portrait photographs in which the skillful art of Mrs. Ulmann has made the camera do what used to be accomplished only by brush or pencil. Each editor has written a comment upon the profession of editing, and upon his own ideals and practices, and these brief essays accompany the pictures. As a contemporary record of portraits and purposes this book has a definite historical value not always to be found in editions de luxe. Forty-three editors are included.

THE LETTERS OF SIR WALTER RALEIGH. Edited by Lady Raleigh. Macmillan. 2 vols. \$7 per set.

JEFFERSON AND HAMILTON. By Claude G. Bowers. Houghton Mifflin. \$5.

THE MIND OF JESUS. By Louis Howland. Bobbs-Merrill. \$2.50.

MY CHINESE MARRIAGE. By M. I. F. Duffield. \$1.75.

DISRAELI AND GLADSTONE. By D. C. Somervell. Doran. \$3.50 net.

RECOLLECTIONS OF A HAPPY LIFE. By Maurice Francis Egan. Doran. \$2.50 net.

THE LOG OF A TIMBER CRUISER. By William Pinkney Lawson. Duffield. \$2.50.

THE LETTERS OF BRET HARTE. Edited by Geoffrey Bret Harte. Houghton Mifflin. \$5.

THE CORRESPONDENCE OF JOHN CLEVES SYMMES. Macmillan. \$2.50.

A NATURALIST OF SOULS. By Gamaliel Bradford. Houghton Mifflin. \$3.50.

SIR THOMAS MORE. By G. R. Potter. Small, Maynard. \$1.75 net.

SIR THOMAS GRESHAM. By F. R. Salter. Small, Maynard. \$1.75 net.

### Business

MARKETING OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS. By James E. Boyle. McGraw-Hill. \$3 net.

BUSINESS AND INVESTMENT FORECASTING. By Ray Vance. Harpers. \$2.50.

(Continued on next page)

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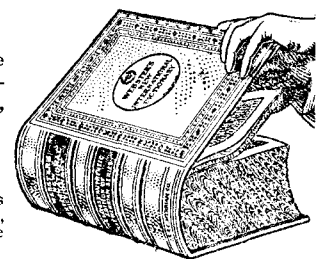
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