

"THE SATURDAY REVIEWERS"

SO many questions have been asked as to the function of The Saturday Reviewers that we reprint here part of last week's "Announcement." The Saturday Reviewers will review exclusively for *The Saturday Review*, they will help by their advice and critical activity in the task of discrimination, they will themselves contribute largely, but they will be an addition to, not a substitution for, *The Saturday Review's* long list of specialists and special writers. They will help regulate where the traffic is heaviest.

"It would be easy to draw from the files of *The Saturday Review* a list of names well-loved for their contributions, and say, these are our reviewers. They are our special staff of celebrities, but since their profession is to be distinguished in story-telling, verse, or history they can usually be critics only on occasion. The sweat and labor of the day, the task of routine sorting, appraising, discriminating is not for them; they cannot review often, as a professional critic should.

"*The Saturday Review* hopes always to boast of its celebrities, but it still more strongly desires to avoid that morass of mediocrity into which general reviewing has so often fallen, a dismal swamp of stale, perfunctory opinion from inexperienced writers or weary hacks. The Editors have long striven to avert the dreadful penalty which waits upon a situation which provides too many books and too few professional reviewers—they hope with some success. For many months they have been considering a new manoeuvre in the never ending war against the powers of dulness, and now have the honor to announce 'The Saturday Reviewers.'

"'The Saturday Reviewers,' whose reviews will appear exclusively in this journal, are professional critics, long tested in their various fields, and many of them eminent in their own creative work. They share a common ideal of critical excellence, no matter how various may be their personal opinions and how divergent, on occasions, their points of view. They will be not a clique, but a council, an auxiliary council to the editorial staff. By advice, by argument *viva voce*, by discriminating selection, by their own pens, they will help in the delicate task of sorting and estimating the current books. With their aid the Editors hope to make notice in *The Saturday Review* of itself an indication that a book is important enough to be praised or damned, and with their assistance they hope that standards of criticism, which in the confusion of the Age of Advertisement have been too often lost to sight, will be more discernible over the melée."

The list of the Saturday Reviewers has been enriched by four more names:

LEONARD BACON—Satirist, poet, critic.

C. K. OGDEN—Scientist, editor of "The History of Civilization," author of "The Meaning of Psychology."

CHAUNCEY BREWSTER TINKER—Professor of English in Yale, editor of the "Letters of James Boswell," author of "The Young Boswell."

LOUIS UNTERMEYER—Critic of American poetry, anthologist, poet.

Those announced last week were:

HERVEY ALLEN—Critic, biographer, poet.

ERNEST SUTHERLAND BATES—Philosopher, critic of English literature.

ARTHUR COLTON—Novelist, story-writer, librarian, essayist.

MALCOLM DAVIS—Associate Editor of Foreign Affairs. Student of international and industrial relations.

EDWARD DAVISON—Historian of English poetry and *belles lettres*.

LEE WILSON DODD—Dramatist, novelist, essayist.

FRANK JEWETT MATHER—Historian and critic of the Fine Arts.

LLOYD MORRIS—Biographer and critic of fiction.

ALLAN NEVINS—Historian, journalist, critic of fiction.

REXFORD GUY TUGWELL—Economist, author.

Points of View

Spengler Again

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*.

SIR:

You will be interested in learning what happened at the Club the other day, when somebody mentioned Spengler. First of all, you should know that ever since a certain famous domestic event in his family, Babbitt has been much interested in Dr. Freud. The profound discussions of psycho-analysis between him and myself have been the wonder and admiration of club members who happened to listen in. What was my amazement when I discovered, a few days ago, that instead of Freud none other than Spengler had become the subject of Babbitt's most concentrated and trenchant thought!

He and I had not discussed the "Down-fall of the Occident" for more than ten minutes when not less than four members left the group that was talking about golf and began to listen to Babbitt. Their eyes literally started to pop out from their heads when he said:

"This fellow has found out that it makes all the difference in the world what you think about the way space is built. You've got to arrange all the rest of your ideas accordingly. You know this man Einstein—he tries to make us think space is curved, and according to Spengler the Lord only knows how that might affect our glorious civilization—it might make us all Bolsheviks, so we had better look out. Well, the old Greeks first used to think that space came to an end just a little ways above their biggest mountain, Olympus, and also just the other side of the Mediterranean. As long as they believed that, they were really fine fellows—great athletes and all that. And they went in for Art, you know, and Culture and all that sort of thing. After a while some fellows from the Near East made the Greek professors and philosophers say that space was really round—the world was a sort of hollow ball with us inside it. That didn't suit the Greek genius, so most of the people lost interest in culture and began devoting themselves to earning an honest living in a small way, and left Culture to the fellows from the East, Syrians and Jews and Arabs and that kind of people. That's the time when nobody cared about Art and Science, but they invented Arabian Nights' Tales, and King Arthur legends; but they were good church people. That lasted a long time. First, just as before, those Eastern fellows were great on Culture and all that—but by and by they lost interest. Just then, the Nordics—that's us—had a notion that everybody was wrong about space; that it wasn't round, or flat, or anything else but just went on in every direction without ever stopping. So some of our folks began to say that religion and fairy tales is all very well, but the real thing to do is to invent mathematics and science and subdue Nature. First they thought that was just another kind of Culture, just like Art, and Religion, and Fairy Tales; but soon somebody discovered that subduing Nature could be made to pay. That gave us a chance at machinery and railways, and for the first time there is real prosperity in the world. Now that man Spengler is one of those loons who think that Culture is worth more than machines, and because most of us would rather live in a modern house than a Gothic castle, he says we're going to be as bad as the old Greeks and the Syrians when they no longer cared for Culture."

"Guess he's a Bolshevik," one of the members interrupted.

"I don't know," said Babbitt. "But I hope that fellow Einstein with his curvature of space isn't going to bring on a new kind of Culture that's bad for business."

ERNEST BRUNCKEN.

Misprints

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:

SIR:

In your issue of October 23, by a substitution of the word *pace* for *peace* somebody made unintelligible my praise of Mr. Leonard Bacon's "Animula Vagula." The correction (which I should like your readers to see) should read:

"Mr. Bacon's book is important because its symbols depict that quarrel known to every intelligent and sensitive man who is endeavoring to keep *pace* with the world, that destructive quarrel between the intellectual obverse and emotional reverse of the human mind which, today, is perhaps more complex than ever before."

EDWARD DAVISON.

Vassar College.

On Being Educated

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:

SIR:

The High Brow Editorial of October 9 puts very forcibly the disheartening situation with regard to the educated American public. The high hopes held by our grandparents of an educated people emerging from free schools have come indeed to a lame issue. Nevertheless the matter is still an unsettled one and has two distinct factors only one of which you have discussed. There are the people themselves and then there is the type of education. You have fastened on the people as demonstrably unworthy of education.

If you will spend, sir, a few mornings in any New York state public school, from the first to the eighth grade, you will see the process of paralyzing ideas, deadening originality, and producing the "echo" type of mind going on in full force.

Listen to the threats, sneers, and scoldings necessary to compel wriggling children to sit still and have pumped into them academic information in which they have no least interest—and indeed are not expected by their teachers to have. Consider the wholly ready-made character of the curriculum, the premium put on docile memorizing, the utter disregard of the body in its crying need for activity on its own account and as a means for testing out academic ideas which the child is acquiring. Hear the quietus put immediately on any digression toward an interesting topic which some still unsubdued child may dare to make. Have a teacher tell you (as I did) that when a child has learned to be thoroughly obedient he is educated. If you have the heart to make such morning visits over a period of years, you will see this method break down the resistance of one child after another until only one or two in fifty who may fortunately possess minds of unusual vigor and versatility escape with a remnant of personality left.

In our locality is a German repair tailor whose wife does his collecting and delivering. Mrs. Miller makes us a brief call occasionally, and in those few minutes leaves me enough of her fresh and emphatic personality to lighten my atmosphere for the week. Mrs. Miller was born and brought up in eastern Germany. Her voice ranges up and down several scales with a proper note for each emotion and with the added charm of her broken English she recounts her own and the public's affairs with opinions whose terseness and independence give one a jolt. Her husband rises with simple dignity at neighborhood meetings in the school auditorium and expresses his reasoned views on questions under discussion, and frequently as not with unhesitating disagreement with the trend the subject is taking. Their daughter of twenty, American born and schooled is stereotyped, commonplace, and dull. What she says is slung forth in a thick unmodulated voice, and appears to be mere words or phrases with no apparent meaning in any of them. The American public schools have handed Eva a gold brick.

I still have hopes for the plain people and believe that a fundamental change in school curriculums and methods would produce people capable of independent reasoning and a measure of discriminating taste.

REBA S. DIRLAM.

Concerning Dogs

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:

SIR:

I am writing a book "Concerning Dogs; Larrie and Some Others" and would be glad of remarkable stories of anybody's dog, showing unusual intelligence. Since I wrote "Concerning Cats" (published in 1900) I have been told something like a thousand times "O, I could have told you some wonderful stories about my cats if you had only come to me!" All right. Here's your chance to tell your dog-story, provided it proves something of his intelligence, devotion, loyalty, and what not; and above all has not been printed already, in some other book.

HELEN M. WINSLOW,
Shirley, Massachusetts.

A sixth century version of the story of the Nativity is said to have been discovered by Dr. M. R. James, Provost of Eton, among the ancient manuscripts of Hereford Cathedral. The new version is believed to be a mediæval translation of a Greek manuscript.

The World of Rare Books

By FREDERICK M. HOPKINS

THE GLEMBY COLLECTION

EARLY English literature, modern first editions, association copies, and important original manuscripts of Robert Louis Stevenson and other modern authors, collected by Harry Glemby of this city, will be sold at the Anderson Galleries, November 15 and 16. For several years Mr. Glemby has been known to booksellers of London and New York as an enthusiastic buyer of rare books and manuscripts. It is a tribute to his instinctive appreciation that in a comparatively short period he has brought together a collection which includes such unusual treasures as six presentation copies of the first editions of Lewis Carroll, with inscriptions to Canon Duckworth, his friend and companion on the memorable boating trip which gave "Alice" to the world; the superb series of first editions of Joseph Conrad, with autograph inscriptions written in reply to very acute and pertinent questions by an admirer; corrected proofs and autograph letters of Rudyard Kipling; original manuscripts of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, William McFee, Joseph Conrad, Mark Twain, Anatole France and others; presentation copies by Samuel Butler, Bliss Carman, Dickens, Hardy, Kipling; four Shakespeare quartos and the Beverly Chew copy of the "Poems" of 1640; first editions of "The Vicar of Wakefield" and "Gulliver's Travels"; illuminated manuscripts and printed Horæ; a splendid collection of original manuscripts, autograph letters and first editions of Robert Louis Stevenson. Mr. Glemby is disposing of this collection in order to concentrate on another field in which he desires to specialize.

ANTIQUARIANS REPORT PROGRESS

AT the recent meeting of the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Mass., general progress along the line was reported and many plans for the future were discussed. The endowment fund of \$500,000 for the general work of the society has made a good beginning. The work of cataloguing, classifying, and calendaring manuscripts, long deferred, has been resumed with energy, and it is hoped will be rushed to completion. Discoveries already made emphasize the necessity of the proper arrangement of this original source

material. During the past calendar year the new additions are as follows: bound volumes, 5,392; pamphlets, 16,593; engravings, broadsides, and maps, 212; unbound newspapers, 3,795; beside much valuable autographic material. The number of volumes now in the library is 161,612 and of pamphlets 257,228, a total of 418,840 titles. The society has had a number of important collections presented to it during the past year, the most important being that of Charles H. Taylor of Boston. He has sent hundreds of titles for the collection relating to printing and journalism, numerous volumes of literary and historical value, scarce periodicals, many ephemeral items relating to railroads, early music, lithography, engraving, and several lots of New England manuscripts. Samuel L. Munson has continued his interest in the almanac collection and has acquired for the library during the year over 200 additional titles. The annual report describes a newly formed collection of first editions of American literature, in which field the new acquisitions secured during the year number over 2,000 titles out of 10,000 estimated to be a fairly comprehensive collection of works of worthwhile American authors.

BULLETIN OF BIBLIOGRAPHY

FREDERICK W. FAXON, editor of the *Bulletin of Bibliography*, has just issued the "A. L. A. Fiftieth Anniversary Number" of this quarterly, the contents of which are naturally on a high and jubilant note. Mr. Faxon has reason to feel pride in the growth of the national association of librarians, for he says in a congratulatory editorial that "only a few years ago the writer, as secretary, carried the records of the association in one pocket and carried on the correspondence at his home. We now have an organization with spacious headquarters in Chicago, employing 63 persons, publishing many books and indexes each year, conducting the monthly *Booklist*, printing a bulletin for members together with an annual handbook, and a volume of proceedings, sponsoring adult education, custodian and distributor of a fund of \$4,000,000 to advance library training, helping foreign universities to buy needed books from another trust fund. The membership

has risen from a small beginning in 1876 to 10,000. The *Bulletin of Bibliography* has played no unimportant part in making this growth. The frontispiece is appropriately a portrait of R. R. Bowker of whom Mr. Faxon writes an appreciative sketch. The current number of the *Bulletin* continues its interesting "Glimpses of the Lives and Works of Certain French Bibliographers," dealing with Lacroix, Nodier, and Querard.

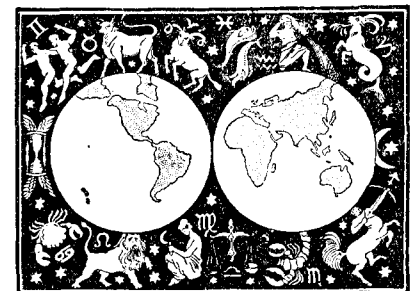
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