

A Dreamer's Journal

THE JOURNALS OF THOMAS JAMES
COBDEN-SANDERSON. New York: The
Macmillan Company. 1926. \$25.

Reviewed by ALFRED DE SAUTY

"**L**A vie contemplative est la vie pour
mois je le crois" seems to epitomize
the writer of these memoirs and one
can almost visualize him seated, dressed in monk's
garb, in some quiet scriptorium in medieval days
rather than as an individual living in the twentieth
century.

Living, as we do, in an age of bustle and noise,
it is difficult at first to attune one's mind to the
pervading atmosphere of these two volumes, an
atmosphere redolent of peace. Cobden-Sanderson,
the dreamer, rather than Cobden-Sanderson, the
craftsman, dominates them from the beginning to
the end. That his dreams were sincere is evident
and the supreme dignity of his journals more than
compensates for the very human frailties he dis-
closes here and there.

Here we have love letters written but never sent,
intimate thoughts on his past, present, and future
life, intermingled with much that is interesting in
the way of glimpses of many of his contemporaries.
On friendly terms, as he was, with many women
and men who were outstanding figures in the liter-
ary and artistic circles of his day, these glimpses are
all too short.

A lawyer by profession in his earlier manhood,
his practice seems to have brought him but little
pleasure or profit, and it is difficult to conceive a
man of his character ever being successfully engaged
in such a profession. Groping always, groping as it
were in the dark towards an outlet for the creative
and idealistic side of his nature, his fortunate de-
cision to adopt a handicraft came as a result of a
chance suggestion made by Mrs. William Morris
when supping at William Richmond's house.

"I was talking to Mrs. Morris after supper, and saying
how anxious I was to use my hands—." "Then why
don't you learn bookbinding?" she said. "That would
add an Art to our little community, and we would work
together. I should like," she continued, "to do some
little embroideries for books, and I would do so for you."
"Shall bookbinding, then, be my trade?"

Two days later finds him arranging for lessons
in bookbinding as a result of this fortunate sug-
gestion, fortunate in that it gave to the world a
master craftsman of high ideals and coming at a
time when the crafts generally, and that of book-
binding in particular, had fallen to a very low
ebb. The concentration necessary in acquiring such
a highly detailed craft as bookbinding the applica-
tion of high ideals, and the raising of it to a very
high level are all reflected in many of the entries
of this period, and he says: "Is not this world new
to me again from this day?"

To the amateur bibliopagist his early efforts in
binding and the difficulties of the beginner cannot
but be of interest, for there are few crafts where
such close attention to small details is so necessary.
Step by step, sometimes falteringly, sometimes too
boldly, he achieved a high skill of hand, and left a
lasting mark on the pages of the history of book-
binding, and he has fittingly been referred to as
"the father of English binding" of the period. In
design he brought not only thought and treat-
ment, but created a stimulus strongly marked in
the revival of interest in the production of fine
bindings.

From the fine binding of books to the printing of
fine books seems but a logical step, and the second
volume (1900-1922) deals considerably with the
Doves Press from its birth in 1900 to its final dis-
solution in 1916 when its type was finally disposed
of. Its disposal was characteristic of the man who
regarded nothing as final, and was achieved by the
simple but regrettable method of throwing it over
the Hammersmith Bridge stealthily at night into the
Thames; this in its twenty-sixth year!

As with binding, so with his printing; simplicity
combined with a sincere regard for the limitations
of both crafts resulted in a series of books now
world famous. His attitude towards simplicity may
be conveyed by the story of his reply to a client who
protested at his prices were high considering the
small amount of decoration: "You are paying for
reticence."

The BOWLING GREEN

Three Old-Fashioned

WHAT I always like about this place
(Said Toulemonde) is the array of
tumbler

Standing on the shelf behind the bar,
All foundationed for Old-Fashioned cocktails;
Each with its orange slices and its cherry,
Pretty as an armada of old Spain.

Well, boys, this should be helpful for what ails
you—

(If anything ails you: how am I to know?)

*If anything ails us, they replied in duo,
And we're not saying if it does or no,
But if it should, this will be good for it.*

I woke, he said, that morning, very tranquil.
With my first conscious breath there was a lightness,
A feeling that whatever weights had tilted
The tender scales of balance in my soul
Were counterpoised with little grams of laughter.
Sure and easy on that hinge of Time
I teetered in an equilibrium
And felt that some day I might still be merry—
Mind you, this needs careful explanation—

*Sure, sure, this needs most careful explanation,
They chimed in chorus; and each one's bright eyes
Showed that he too was eager to explain.
He looked at them, a bit suspiciously,
Deciding to abbreviate the tale.*

I mean to say (so he abridged his matter)
The beauty and the essence were still there,
But untormented. I was not afraid.
I well remember how I lay abed
Moveless in every muscle, full aware
Of every peace and sweetness man can know.
There's no great harm in getting used to silence:
We'll all have plenty of it in the end.
There was a golden taste that country morning;
A smell of cedars; crocuses were out.

*He's got a table for three, one of them said.
Bring your glasses with you.—Yes, I know
Exactly how you felt. One day in London
In the fall of Nineteen Twenty-One—
But never mind. Go ahead, Toulemonde.*

Oh tender, tender was the air that morning!
Quietly my pulse and nerves were different,
Life wasn't something always waited for,
This was Life; life itself, right here, right now,
And all incredible and natural things
I've ever known, were active in my mind
And I could see this comedy of earth
(Which sometimes seems adapted from the French
By a shrewd but not too skilled translator)
Premeditated to some *Tout s'arrange*.
And at that very moment, heaven help us,
A friend of mine chooses that day to send me
A beautiful and very special copy
Of Ronsard's poems—*La Muse de Ronsard*.
Ronsard, whom I thought I had forgotten
Since I was a boy at Fontainebleau—
Ronsard of the Odes and Odelettes,
Ronsard with his "longues nuits d'hiver,"
His April seasons and his matchless sonnets
(Into the woods then with his girls and salads.)
Unhappy lovers always should be Frenchmen,
So sweet a tongue for any kind of pain!
That douce old French, so simple, sad, and honest,
Four hundred years adrift on April air,
Light as those cherry petals by the Loing
Along the woody skirts of Fontainebleau.
And all those little laughter, lusts and lyrics—
Waiter! another round of the Old-Fashioned.

Maybe you don't get the flavor of old French;
Or worse, much worse, maybe you've never known
Someone you wanted to address like this:—

*Le soir qu'Amour vous fist en la salle descendre
Pour danser d'artifice un beau ballet d'Amour,
Vos yeux, bien qu'il fust nuit, ramenèrent le jour,
Tant ils sceurent d'esclairs par la place resplandre.*

Or this, which so many have imitated:—

Quand vous serez bien vieille, au soir, a la chan-
delle,
Assise aupres du feu, devidant et filant,
Direz, chantant mes vers, en vous esmerveillant:
"Ronsard me celebrait, du temps que j'estois
belle!"

Or this, my boys (with a lively guttural
And plenty of rich cadence, he declaimed:—)

Ostez vostre beauté, ostez vostre jeunesse,
Ostez ces rares dons que vous tenez des cieux,
Ostez ce docte esprit, ostez moy ces beaux yeux,
Cet aller, ce parler digne d'une Deesse.

What's that "ostez" mean? I don't quite get that.

Ostez? Same as ôter. Take away.
But what d'you think of a man who sends you
Ronsard

Just when you thought you'd found a little ease?
So I fell back into my pearly grievance,
My lovely horror and my dumb distress.
Tonight I'll hear the whistle of the frogs,
The nightingales of our Long Island swamps.
I'll hear them flute their truisms, and have nothing,
Nothing at all, to contradict them with.
I'm done for. Yes, I'm low, boys, very low.

*Say, when I was in Paris in Nineteen . . .
You talk of being low: look, here's a graph,
I'll draw it on the tablecloth, like this:
That's where I was in Nineteen; at the bottom;
Shot up like this, toward the spring of Twenty;
Then another gulf, I went down, down,
Clean off the table; but I've got it figured,
I'm coming back; not counting little zigzags,
The general trend is up; I look to be
Back close to normal, spring of Twenty Eight.
Waiter! This round's on me, then I must go.*

Forgive me, Ronsard, if I had forgotten
Your power on the heart. Come with me now,
I know a place where sunshine warms the ced
A ring of white oaks, twisted by the wind,
Leans above stony beach. In juniper air
Clean with all northern savors, we'll confide
Some tender things that you well understand.

*Well, so long Toulemonde. I'll see you later.
But just remember what a signal folly
It is to think of every work of art
As a thing done whole and integral,
Forgetting all the scraps and shreds of doing
By which we brought it to the finished round.*

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

Art in a City

(Continued from page 709)

neck and deposit him in a grove of tulip poplars on
a hillside of cedar, or by the curve of a surf-beaten
beach. But that is no cure, though if all follow the
incoherent into Babel our case is sad indeed. For
either life is incoherent, and science and the artists
are just finding it out; or it is not, and we are on
our way to discover what underlies the clash of elec-
trons. In any case the city artists must go through
with their pain (and ours). If they are merely con-
fused by the clatter about them—and that is the
criticism to be made upon a good deal of modern
literature—why, so much the worse for their art. If
they retire to cowslips and trout pools because they
will not face the city—why, so much the worse for
their service to humanity. We cannot have New
York, Chicago, Paris, and London and not write
about, or paint them. The real artists will struggle
with this new urbanization as they struggled with
the Greek idea and the Christian philosophy. They
are not responsible for their world, but only for
what they make of it—for the strength, the skill,
the subtlety, the beauty, most of all the integrity of
their reactions.

The library of the University of Chicago has pur-
chased from Gabriel Wells, of this city, a volume
containing fifty-two manuscript pages intermingled
with proof sheets of one of Balzac's earliest stories,
"Le Secret des Ruggieri." The proofs, of which
there are seven sets, are covered with corrections,
additions and changes in Balzac's handwriting,
showing that his hard work had only just begun
when his original manuscript had been completed.
The chief donor of the manuscript is Miss Shirley
Farr, a graduate of the University of Chicago.

Books of Special Interest

Ten Thousand Books

A. L. A. CATALOG, 1926. Annotated Basic List of 10,000 Books. Edited by ISABELLA M. COOPER. Chicago: American Library Association. 1926. \$6.

Reviewed by HELEN E. HAINES

HERE is a tool of professional book selection that sets a new standard and ideal for the small American public library. It represents a quarter-century leap in the half-century of growth that American libraries commemorate this year. In 1904 the "A. L. A. Catalog" made its first appearance, recording 7,500 volumes selected as the best for small public libraries. Selection was cooperative, made by specialists and by librarians; though somewhat experimental in method, it nevertheless established the principles of selection of books by consensus of specialized opinion and of their "evaluation" in a compact note of characterization. In the twenty-two years since then two supplements have appeared and the monthly *Booklist* of the association has carried on the process of current selection and evaluation; but the "A. L. A. Catalog, 1904" has remained the basic list upon which nearly all smaller American libraries have built and renewed their collections. Now comes the "A. L. A. Catalog, 1926," designed to supersede the original volume, the most thoroughly organized recent undertaking in general popular bibliography. It is published as part of the American Library Association's celebration of its semi-centennial anniversary, and its preparation and publication within the short period of two years was made possible by a special grant from the Carnegie Corporation.

In general, the catalogue commands high commendation. It accomplishes a difficult task with excellent practical efficiency. It has, of course, eliminated all elaboration and detail from its bibliographic record; it represents the simplest possible technique that will convey necessary information as to author, title, date, edition, publisher, and price of all the books that it records. Indeed, no publication dates at all are given for fiction, an omission that must have saved

much time and labor, but that bibliographically is hardly defensible. In arrangement, it follows the Decimal classification, which furnishes the vertebral structure of the small American public library collection, offsetting its vagaries and limitations (from the book-user's point of view) by an admirable index, ample and expert. A note of "evaluation" is given for virtually every one of the 10,295 books recorded, and although these annotations are uneven in quality they condense an immense amount of valuable bibliographical, descriptive, and critical information. Selectively, the catalogue represents the cooperative work of over 400 collaborators, including specialists of every kind, and its ten thousand entries are the ultimate reduction of fifty thousand collected, recommended, or suggested titles that have passed through the editorial crucible.

Comparison of the 1926 volume with that of 1904 reveals far-reaching changes in subject-matter and in selection standards. Classes that show the greatest increase are bibliography, philosophy, sociology, applied science, and fine arts. Natural science has undergone a considerable reduction. History is cut from 973 volumes in 1904 to 806 in 1926, and fiction with 1,226 volumes in 1904 is given only 1,129 today. Some of these reductions are explained by the fact that books for children which in 1904 were scattered through all the classes are now grouped by themselves in an independent list which represents 9.2 per cent of the total collection; but in general they are the result of the too rigorous limitation of the catalogue as a whole. A limit of 15,000 titles instead of 10,000, would undoubtedly have given a basic list of greater value and better proportions.

One of the most striking changes—evidence of the new book-currents of recent years—is the trend toward information literature: bibliographies, conspectuses, outlines, year-books, the consolidation, condensation, and popularization of knowledge. There are ten bibliographies of useful arts, where none was recorded in 1904. Journalism, with two titles in 1904, has sixteen in 1926. Sociology especially reveals the

changes of the quarter-century. The Negro was represented in 1904 by three works on slavery; in 1926 we have fifteen titles, covering social, historical, and economic relations of the race. There is a great increase in the literature of labor, prison reform, population problems, and child welfare, and a flooding in of new subjects in education. Mental tests, psychoanalysis, publicity, sexual ethics, industrial management, concrete construction, were all unknown in 1904. Very interesting are the changes in philosophy and religion. Philosophy has been much strengthened and better organized, with 284 titles as against 143 in 1904. Religion has been vigorously pruned and modernized; Lyman Abbott, Hamilton Mabie, Theodore Parker, Henry Ward Beecher, Canon Farrar, and Washington Gladden are gone, and in their places stand Edward Carpenter, L. P. Jacks, J. C. Powys, and Harry Emerson Fosdick. Even Papini's "Life of Christ" is absent. The Jewish encyclopedia, the Catholic encyclopedia, the encyclopedia of Islam, the Upanishads, and the Vedas are admitted to the fold, and the implication inherent in the Decimal classification that Religion is synonymous with Protestantism has been almost eliminated. Drama and poetry are greatly enlarged. American drama in 1904 was represented only by two of Howells's farces; for 1926 we have forty-two individual entries, with many more titles listed in the notes. Fiction, despite its too rigorous limitation, is an inspiring selection, chosen with catholicity and discrimination. The rich field of foreign fiction in English translation has been intelligently gleaned; a cold shoulder has been turned to the inanely "harmless," and the distinctive work of modern writers is adequately represented.

Only those who know the timidity and moralism that dominate the ordinary small public library can appreciate how radical a departure has been made in the new "A. L. A. Catalog." It sets up a standard of book selection that is entirely revolutionary as regards libraries where heretofore "Esther Waters" has been an "immoral" book, where Willa Cather and Hergesheimer and May Sinclair are dubiously admitted to "restricted use," and where Dreiser, Cabell, and D. H. Lawrence are anathema. Here is a basic list of high professional authority, intended specifically for libraries, which includes not only all these writers, but where the D. Cameron and "Madame Bovary" are accepted as works of literary value, where the great literature of other races and other countries finds generous recognition, and where in every field of thought the work of the most modern theorists and experimenters takes its place beside the literature of an earlier day. If the "A. L. A. Catalog, 1926" diffuses its influence of intelligence, reason, and tolerance through our small public libraries during the coming quarter-century, the I. Q. of the next generation ought to be considerably higher than that of the present one.

Chinese Life

A GRIFFIN IN CHINA. By GENEVIEVE WIMSATT. New York: Funk & Wagnalls. 1926. \$3 net.

IT may perhaps be necessary to explain that the "griffin" of Miss Wimsatt, is own brother to the tenderfoot. There are other varieties of griffin in China, but they are not mentioned in this volume, there is no room for them. Lightly and cheerfully the author sets down the things she heard and saw while the old China hands looked on and "smiled upon the griffin." Although readers will look in vain for any explanation of China's present travail, they will certainly not lack amusement; some parts of the book will indeed provoke hearty laughter. The chapter on "Eating in China" is concluded in a manner to stir the Union of Cafeteria Owners to united action.

"I fear I shall never see New York again," lamented a gentleman of Peking. "The food in America is not so very bad but it has no taste, and I cannot again go hungry."

The book is obviously intended to instruct the uninitiated in the general principles of Chinese daily life, and it can certainly have no wider appeal. Books have been better written and much in this volume is not new, even to the general reader. But the author is throughout conversationally enthusiastic and whatever faults she has committed, dullness is not one of them. The sub-title, "Fact and Legend in the everyday life of the Great Republic," epitomizes very well the finished work. There is just enough in the book (together with a generous supply of very excellent photographs) to stimulate the curiosity of those who would be students of China, but have not yet begun, and to satisfy the casual reader who occasionally needs the answer to a question on things Chinese.

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