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Points of View

Duty and Desire

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

Dr. Henry Seidel Canby writing in *The Saturday Review of Literature* some months ago of Quakers and Puritans, said:

"It is, indeed, not the ethical formula for making everybody good that is the chief legacy of the Puritans, nor, except in weak forms, their dominant fear of the passions. Nor is it their anti-estheticism, for in that, if they were blind to color and deaf to music, their intellectual sense of proportion, their appreciation of decorous beauty, is manifest in their furniture, their houses, and most of all in the exquisite order of such of their villages as we have not yet destroyed. Nor have the ideas, which intellectuals usually leave behind them, in this case survived in any consistency. No, it is a mental habit which New England chiefly gave to the United States, a deep-lying will to achieve and accomplish, essential at first to all Calvinists who could never know whether they were of the elect or the damned unless they strove unendingly, and in the decline of Calvinism became a will to succeed in any fashion, not to lie down and take one's ease, not to be content with what one was or had, never to cease trying to rise in the scale, which in a hundred forms, many degenerate, some admirable, is a part of American strenuousness throughout history. The aim was lost or transmuted, the will, the habit, the custom of energy remained.

"That the influence of a pioneer environment with its obstacles which had to be overcome was great in this, I of course do not deny, and that boundless opportunity in the same environment also called forth the will is obvious. Nor do I forget the later Scotch-Irish whose equivalent doctrine had like effects. Climate too has been a factor. The more carefully one studies American literature, religion, and social history, the more evident and the more continuous does this mental habit appear. And in both its ethical and unethical forms—whether in the reforming clergyman, or the American undergraduate strenuous beyond comparison in the pursuit of his own ideals—it is essentially Puritan (as Keyserling incidentally has recently stated) and specifically in America owes its strongest impulses and immediate origin to the leaders of New England thought who were the strongest moral and intellectual force in our early history."

I take it that the chief aim of God, nature, or evolution is the voluntary development of consciously molded character, constantly salted down into subconscious strata, but with new characteristics always in the making.

If the development of character is the aim of evolution the Puritans were right in refusing to "lie down and take one's ease," or to be content "with what one was or had," and in never ceasing to try to rise in the scale.

The man who at or prior to his prime, when he has developed his full faculties, lies down content, will become stationary and then retrogressive. Instead of gaining more character, he will start losing that which he has already gained.

In the matter of character development, I take it as my starting premise that the Duty-will must be supreme over the Desire-will. In the formation of character the two wills may struggle in the early stages of the contest, but unless the Duty-will shall eventually dominate, the character will not grow. Long continued dominance of the Duty-will finally remolds the Desire-will into an agent of its own. When that stage is reached, there should be an acquisition of new duties, or the Duty-will will tend to atrophy. The Desire-will left to its own devices and unchecked by the Duty-will will cause men to degenerate into beasts. The Desire-will alone will never raise beasts into men. Rome probably began its real decay at the point where the Roman Duty-will had decayed or been definitely conquered by the Desire- or Pleasure-will.

This observation holds true through all evolution. It is the species which is gripped and driven by some will or instinct higher than its desires that is growing or developing. It is the pleasure-led species which is moving toward extinction or decay. There are many forms of incentive operating upon the Duty-will, such as patriotism, love of offspring or mates, compassion, sympathy for others, and so forth.

Perhaps the highest form of duty-incentive is an unselfish patriotism to God known as Faith, although it may be that pure altruism, where it is secret and not seeking popular acclaim or other reward, may run patriotism a close second. Where altruism is coupled with a belief in Materialism it is perhaps even a higher or less selfish thing than Faith. But the point is that the demands of character-growth require that in all man's crucial combats between Duty and Desire, the former shall triumph if the character is to maintain its integrity. This does not mean that Duty shall assume the task of thwarting or stamping out Desire. Such a course of conduct would produce a dour and terrible character, one all out of balance. No; Duty should work with and use Desire, letting the latter grow, merely guiding it now and then, and subduing it only at the Waterloos and Marengos of life.

The Puritan made the mistake of not letting the Duty-will work only eight hours per day and then giving the Desire-will rein for a few hours of recreation before sleep. The apotheosis of an unbalanced or overgrown Duty-will is usually a John Calvin or a Jonathan Edwards, while the apotheosis of the Desire-will is a Falstaff—a sheer bundle of uncontrolled passions and appetites. A man who is dominated by his desires descends towards animality. As he learns to regulate or control his desires (not to starve, but sanely to exercise and even normally to satisfy them) he rises in the scale of mankind.

CRICHTON CLARKE.

New York City.

A Neglected Work

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

Somewhere you have said—it was quoted in the Oxford Press *Periodical*—something to the effect that *The Saturday Review* feels a special and personal responsibility for such books of real genius as may get lost in the shuffle.

This declaration ought to make you the very magazine for me to write to regarding a work which can stand alongside the classics of any literature and yet which is unread by all the *literati* of my acquaintance and generally, I believe. I am sure it would make a special appeal to you.

I refer to the "Labyrinth of the World," by Komensky (1592-1671) more commonly known as Comenius. And my special reason for referring to it at this time is that while Count Lützow's translation will give you a good idea of the work it is not an adequate translation.

The need for a better has been supplied by my friend Dr. Spinka of Chicago. But publishers have not rushed for his manuscript. It is a juncture at which I feel you might have something to say.

A. J. R. SCHUMAKER.

Pittsburgh, Pa.

A Derivation

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

The review of Ewers's "Der Zauberlehrling" (in the *Saturday Review of Literature* for July 16, 1927) omits what seems to me an important though small matter, the derivation of the title. Most well read Germans would at once think of Goethe's short poem by that name, and could infer from it, in general terms, what would happen in the story.

CLIFFORD H. BISSELL.

The Copeland Reader

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

Mr. Gavit, reviewing the Copeland Reader, wonders why it includes translations only from Hebrew and Greek, not also from French and German. I suggest two possibilities: (1) Mr. Copeland's purpose required that the translations be well done; exceptions to the rule that all translations are ill done are rare; the greater lapse of time has given opportunity for a larger number of tolerable translations to come into existence, and to be sifted out by the survival of the fittest, in the case of the ancient languages; or (2) Mr. Copeland thought the students might read their French and German in the original, and get merits which would only be damaged by knowing the passages first in translation, but he despaired of their reading the Hebrew and Greek in the original.

STEVEN T. BYINGTON.

Ballard Vale, Mass.

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

STUDIES IN FLORENTINE PAINTING. The Fourteenth Century. By RICHARD OFFNER. New York: Frederic Fairchild Sherman. 1927. \$25 net.

Most of these essays have appeared in briefer form in various Italian and American magazines. All show a cautious and perceptive scholarship, and the results are likely to be accepted. The method of presentation is excellent. Each reconstruction is accompanied by a plate on which are grouped many probative details. The broader importance of these studies is to show the considerable diversity of a school that has generally been too summarily divided as Giottoesque and Lorenzettian. For example, in the essay devoted to Pacino di Bonaguida, hitherto a sadly over-attributed master, we find a sprightly narrative tendency, deriving probably from the Cecelia Master, and nearly independent of Siena. In Jacopo del Casentino, first fully reconstructed by Dr. Offner, we have the same tendency continued with superficial Giottoesque and Sienese admixtures.

Dr. Offner rarely touches major artists, but his study of Nardo di Cione is important for the whole Orcagnese problem, especially in relieving Orcagna himself of the attributions which Sirén and Suida have too generously bestowed upon the great sculptor painter. From the evolutionary point of view the solid reconstruction of Antonio Veneziano's work is the most valuable contribution of the book. Incidentally it lends credence to the Vasarian view of a progress through Starnina to Masolino. One welcomes also the rediscovery of a charming little romantic narrator in Nardo's follower, Niccolò di Tommaso, who anticipates by a generation Masolino's gentle sentimentality.

A final essay on method is irritating for its crabbed style, but critically important. Divested of psychological subtleties, it amounts to saying that the connoisseur is merely one capable of experiencing very keen and precise feelings before a picture, and of retaining them in intellectualized form. When he meets an identical feeling before another picture, he has to do with a work of the same artist. Upon such mystical experience and a fine memory we believe the act of connoisseurship always has rested and always must rest. Thus the morphological method of Morelli and the new archaeological method of Berenson are to be regarded not as procedures of discovery, but simply as expedients of demonstration. In a better world than ours neither the connoisseur nor the theologian would need to give rational proofs for his self-sufficient intuitions.

At all points Dr. Offner's book displays a fine and cautious connoisseurship and a rich critical intelligence which deserve a more simple and lucid presentation than that which they have received. The book is made with that costly fastidiousness which marks all of Mr. Sherman's publications. One pages it over with mingled delight and regret, realizing that it is inaccessible to many of those students, especially in Europe, who need it most.

AN OUTLINE HISTORY OF ARCHITECTURE OF THE BRITISH ISLES. By P. L. Dickinson. Houghton Mifflin. \$5.

ENGLISH GOTHIC CHURCHES. By Charles W. Dudden. Scribners. \$2.75.

THE APPROACH TO PAINTING. By Thomas Bodkin. Harcourt, Brace. \$2.50.

LANDMARKS IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY PAINTING. By Clive Bell. Harcourt, Brace. \$3.50.

PICTURES AND HOW TO CLEAN THEM. By Thomas Richard Beaufort. Stokes. \$2.50.

NOTES ON GREEK SCULPTURE. By Sir Charles W. C. Smith. Cambridge University Press. (Macmillan).

Belles Lettres

OPEN HOUSE. By J. B. Priestley. Harpers. \$2.50.

ESSAYS ON LITERATURE, HISTORY, POLITICS, ETC. By Leonard Woolf. Harcourt, Brace. \$2.50.

PEEPS AT THE MIGHTY. By Patrick Braybrooke. Lippincott. \$2.50.

OPINIONS. By Claude Washburn. Dutton. \$3.

THE SEARCH FOR ATLANTIS. By Edwin Björkman. Knopf. \$2.

STUFF AND NONSENSE. By Don Rose. Bryn Athyn, Pa.: Donald F. Rose.

THE LITERATURE OF THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS. By Adolf Erman. Translated by Aylward M. Blackman. Dutton. \$6.

THE LIGHT READING OF OUR ANCESTORS. By Lord Ernle. Brentanos. \$3.50.

Biography

THE LOST SWORD OF SHAMYL. By LEWIS STANTON PALEN. Houghton Mifflin. 1927. \$2.50.

The adult reader will perhaps find this record of coincidence and experience of mild interest, and its principal appeal, despite the fact that the book is not put forth as a juvenile, will be to the youthful reader. It is a record of certain episodes in the boyhood of the "White Devil of Russia," and of the remarkable fashion in which he recovered, some years after it had been taken from him by the Bolsheviks, the sword of the famous Caucasian chief, Shamyl, which he had carried through his fighting in the Russian army. The book contains some interesting portrayal of life on a Russian estate on the steppes where the riding and breaking of horses closely parallels that on our own western ranges, a sympathetic sketch of a sturdy and kindly old Cossack, and some encounters and escapes that are told simply but with animation. The book is embellished by spirited illustrations by Prince Serge Cantacuzene-Speransky.

JESUS. By Shirley Jackson Case. University of Chicago Press. \$3.

MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF ENGLAND IN 1675. By Marie Catherine, Baronne d'Aulroy. Translated by Mrs. William Henry Arthur. Edited by George David Gilbert. Dutton. \$5.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AN EX-COLORED MAN. By James Weldon Johnson. Knopf. \$3 net.

BENEDETTO CROCE. By R. G. Collingwood. Oxford University Press. \$2.

CAVOUR. By Maurice Paléologue. Harpers.

CARLYLE AT HIS ZENITH. By David Alec Wilson. Dutton. \$5.

SELECTED LETTERS OF BARON FRIEDRICH VON HÜGEL. Dutton. \$2.

THE MAIN STEM. By William Edge. Vanguard Press. 50 cents.

THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK. By J. B. Priestley. Macmillan. \$1.25.

SHAKESPEARE, ACTOR-PORT. By Clara Longworth de Chambrun.

Drama

MARINERS. By Clemence Dane. Macmillan.

BEN JONSON. Edited by C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson. Vol. III. Oxford University Press. \$7.

HEAVENLY DISCOURSE. By Charles Erskine Scott Wood. Vanguard. 50 cents.

THE SONG OF SOLOMON. By Hubert Osborne. Appleton. \$1.25.

STATION YYYYY. By Booth Tarkington. Appleton.

THE TRAVELLERS. By Booth Tarkington. Appleton.

Education

A GRAMMAR OF MISHNAIC HEBREW. By M. H. Segal. Oxford University Press. \$5.

AN INTRODUCTION TO OLD NORSE. By E. V. Gordon. Oxford University Press. \$3.50.

DE QUINCEY. Edited by M. R. Ridley. Oxford University Press. \$1.25.

NORTH AMERICA. By C. Matheson. Oxford University Press. \$1.25.

GENS QUI PASSENT. By Paul Margueritte. Edited by F. C. Green. Oxford University Press. 50 cents.

CONTES DE MINNIE. By André Lichtenberger. Edited by J. G. Anderson. Oxford University Press. 45 cents.

PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION. By Ilse Forest. Macmillan.

HUMANIZING EDUCATION. By Samuel D. Schmalhausen. Macaulay.

Fiction

MISS BROWN OF X. Y. O. By E. PHILIPS OPPENHEIM. Little, Brown. 1927. \$2.

Mr. Oppenheim turns out his stories to so set a pattern that reviews of a new one seem scarcely a necessity. Here again he builds his tale about an international conspiracy of fearful portent, supplies a British official of high importance to render it abortive, and involves in the toils of the intelligence service a young girl who is suddenly translated from the humdrum existence of a typist to a life of sudden alarms and perils. Needless to say his story moves with rapidity, carried in large part on its swift, staccato dialogue and that it never lacks for exciting incident.

THE INN OF THE HAWK AND RAVEN.

By GEORGE BARR MCCUTCHEON. Dodd, Mead. \$2.

Those many readers who delighted in Mr. McCutcheon's earlier tales of Graustark will rejoice to find him turning again to that imaginary kingdom for his scene. Here once more is a pleasing novel, running, to be sure, true to form, but ringing the changes on familiar romantic material with sufficient adroitness and grace to give charm to its story. Mr. McCutcheon knows how to invest his background with glamour, and his personalities with robustness, and he has created a sufficiently original situation in his capture of a Graustarkian dragoon and his presentation of him by an outlaw chief as a birthday gift to his daughter to supply a mild flutter of uncertainty to his tale. Lovers of romantic fiction will find agreeable reading in this book.

DEATH OF A YOUNG MAN. By W. L. Rivers. Simon & Schuster. \$2.

SILENT GUESTS. By A. E. Forrest. Covici. \$2.

THE DEVIL OF PEI-LING. By Herbert Asbury. Macy-Masius. \$2.

JOSELIN TAKES A HAND. By Andrew Cassels Brown. Dodd, Mead. \$2.

THE CAT'S EYE. By R. Austin Freeman. Dodd, Mead. \$2.

THE HAND OF HORROR. By Owen Fox Jerome. Clode. \$2 net.

THE STORY OF AN AFRICAN FARM. By Olive Schreiner. Modern Library. 95 cents net.

BARBERRY BUSH. By Kathleen Norris. Doubleday, Page. \$2 net.

THE DARK CHAMBER. By Leonard Cline. Viking Press. \$2.

THE REIGN OF GREED. By José Rival. Translated by Charles E. Derbyshire. Manila: Philippine Education Company.

THE END OF A WORLD. By Claude Anet. Knopf.

COASTER CAPTAIN. By James B. Connolly. Macy-Masius. \$2.

FO' MEALS A DAY. By Hugh Wiley. Knopf. \$2.50.

MANCHU BLOOD. By Hugh Wiley. Knopf. \$2.50.

(Continued on next page)



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