

one would as soon quarrel with a silkworm spinning its cocoon—is that her flashing fancy, her ability to catch resemblances, and her feeling for the surfaces of things are not matched by a corresponding interest in the more significant aspects of the varied life she observes so acutely. The crests shimmer and sparkle, but there is never more than the faintest hint of the troughs and the shadows in them. It is not only that the blitheness and sprightliness of her style contrast with the aridity of her matter, but that they seem actually to reflect its essential superficiality.

In the end, Kate and Joe and even Evelyn—not to mention Charlotte, Hoagland, Carrie, and the rest—arouse no sentiment in the reader except one of vague pity for their unimportance. The underlying theme—Kate's eternal inability to recommence her career—never becomes vital to us because Kate herself is so colorless and negligible. And the secondary theme—Evelyn's longing, in the midst of Westlake's futility, for luxury and the great world—lacks all poignancy because Evelyn and her great world seem, on the whole, to be quite tame, tawdry, and commonplace. One feels that, despite their photographic reality, these people and their concerns simply do not matter.

Critics will probably continue to cavil at Anne Parrish for not being other than she is. Some will want her more bitingly ironic or more deeply penetrative, analytical, and interpretative; others will want her to leave Westlake and wrestle with larger problems. All of them, however, must rejoice in her clear, wide-eyed sight of things and people, and in her deliciously humorous peeps around their corners. And for the writer herself it must be ever so much pleasanter to skim happily and merrily over the surface, with an occasional graceful, swan-like dive below, than to wallow and churn and spatter mud all over the place.

Heine As He Was Not

THE SARDONIC SMILE. By LUDWIG DIEHL.
Translated by Louise Collier Willcox. Boston:
Houghton Mifflin Company. 1926. \$2.50.

Reviewed by LOUIS UNTERMEYER
Author of "The Poems of Heinrich Heine"

MISS WILLCOX prefaces her translation of Ludwig Diehl's "novelized life" of the German lyricist with a note that, masking as an apologia, is really a challenge. There is enough in the body of the book to provoke any student of Heine without her gratuitous chip on the shoulder. Thus Miss Willcox:

The Translator wishes to say that she has always known that it was impossible to translate Heine's lyrics. . . . As she foresees, however, the irritation which will be felt by reviewers who have the original lines in mind and heart, she suggests that their best mode of shaming the translator is to produce at once a better version—thereby serving her, the reader, and the great poet himself.

This—though it is particularly difficult for the present reviewer who confesses to having translated some three hundred and fifty of Heine's *lieder*—can be done by citing chapter and verse. And for this there is scarcely room. But when Miss Willcox defies the reviewers to "produce at once a better version" she more than suggests that no one has ever produced a better rendering of "Leise zieht durch mein Gemüt" than:

Lightly through my spirits steals
Such a lovely ringing;
Speed forth, little Song of Spring,
Speed along a-singing

or that the following has never been improved upon:

A dream as strange as dream could be,
It terrorized and frightened me,—
I see it waking, feel it still,
My heart beats so it's like to kill.

Has Miss Willcox never read the translations of Charles Godfrey Leland, or Theodore Martin, or Kate Freiligrath, or James Thomson, or Howard Mumford Jones, or a dozen others now out of print? Discarding the interrogatory, I cannot remember—except in a schoolboy examination paper or some burlesque of the awkward—translations more inept, less gracious, and so altogether lacking in the combination of wit, music, and natural speech that is the salient characteristic of Heine.

Aside from the excerpts of poetry quoted in the text, Miss Willcox is satisfactory; she does much better by Diehl than by Heine. But to what purpose? How nearly does the original approximate

the mocking executioner of the German Romanticists? The German title of the novel is significant: "Ahasuerus." By which Diehl attempted to make Heine the projection of the Wandering Jew, a scourged pariah seeking to recapture a home he never had, a tragic symbol of the Jewish race *in petto*. To do this Diehl has done violence not only to the facts of Heine's existence, but to the very quality of his life. The author has a theme which is also a thesis, and this *leitmotif* is dragged in whenever the "action" lags (which is often), whenever the rhetoric mounts (which is still more frequent), and whenever Herr Diehl desires to sound a strain that is not so much Zionist as chauvinistic. Only a Jew suffering from the most aggravated inferiority complex could enjoy an outburst like:

Sometimes his uncle pointed out a stone showing the hands of Aaron or the dove of Israel, and said softly, half chanting: "You do not know them all and I do not know them all! and yet I do know them all, and you shall know them all. For they are I and thou, and thou and I, and we are all of them. The very earth here upon which we step is flesh of our flesh, and dust of the bodies that moulder here, dust of all the thousands that moulder here so many centuries! Strange to each other and yet the same! Scattered all over the world and yet together! Homeless and unsettled, eternally wandering! The 'Wandering Jew!' Yet never vanishing—still the chosen people, one now and forever. The Wandering Jew! Note it, my son! Be proud of the chosen people! We have no fatherland, say the Teutons. Laugh in their faces. No! Don't laugh; tell them very politely and modestly and think about it, 'He who would rule must seem to serve.' Tell them very modestly, 'The Jew's fatherland is his race!' But be proud of that race in your heart and remain true to it as I have."

The style itself never rises above such fustian. Diehl is either prosy to the pitch of protracted dullness or he rants. I have already quoted an example of his rhodomontade; here is a segment in the quieter, "realistic" vein with which the volume opens:

One July day in the year 1807, a little broad-shouldered man with a pale face stood at the high bay window of a castle in the extreme east of Germany. He sought with glance and thought to penetrate the strange, hidden world that lay before him, alluring, enticing, but inaccessible. Napoleon, lord of Europe, was looking across into the only land that was still closed to him, Russia. Proudly he raised his powerful head and drew in his tight lips tighter. His eyes shone for a moment and an inner voice spoke: I WILL!

But, irrespective of Diehl's manner, the adapter had material which, as a pure recital of biographical fact, is far richer than that used in "Ariel" (the life of Shelley), or "Astarte" (the life of Byron), or "Israfel" (the life of Poe). Maurois and Hervey Allen, however, found a way of recreating their poets or, at least, letting them live. Diehl does not even know how to let Heine die. The last episode where La Mouche (absurdly metamorphosed into "Lorelei") takes the center of the stage, begins by being mawkish and ends by becoming maudlin. Instead of the concluding "*Dieu me pardonnera; c'est son métier*," we have Heine beatifically quoting Goethe between platitudes after his Lorelei has (apocryphally) soothed him with a set of recitations from Hölderlin. The final Heinesque mockery is softened to a pretty fadeout.

And so throughout the work. The chronology is twisted to fit a romantic preconception. The cocotte Matilda is first white-washed so that Heine can marry her; later she is derided so that Heine can be glorified in his last minute literary liaison with Camille Selden. The poems, stuck in like raisins in a rice-pudding, are not illuminated by the prose nor do they reflect the turmoil from which Heine, never, no matter how much he traveled, could escape. Sentimentalized throughout, reduced to almost unrelieved bathos, Heine's agonizing *Whemut* becomes little more than a nostalgia for *Apfelstrudel*. Of the literary milieu of his times we are vouchsafed little but some tedious and untidy paragraphs. Of the way in which his cousin's (Amalie's) rejection affected the greater part of his poetry—an influence so enormous that it became the continually recurrent complex of his lyrics, from the anguished "Buch der Lieder" to the twisted "Romancero"—of the very core of his agony we get nothing. Compared to this pretentious and misrepresentative portrait, Zangwill's short story, "A Mattress Grave," is a model of accurate biography. And, apart from the use of Heine's own epigrams Zangwill's pretended to be nothing more faithful than fantasy.

High Comedy

A DEPUTY WAS KING. By G. B. STERN.
New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1926. \$2.50.

Reviewed by LEONARD BACON

A NEW society is born. Also Queen Victoria is deader than Queen Anne. And in Miss G. B. Stern a prophetess has arisen in Israel to tell the world about it.

Though her new book perhaps has not the grandeur of conception of "The Matriarch," it makes up for the lack by deeper and more brilliant coloring, and by a subtlety in the analysis and synthesis of character which is beyond praise. Nasty words like genius have to be used at times. Miss Stern has moments when she compels you to use them.

"A Deputy Was King" continues the history of Toni Rakonitz and of the Rakonitz tribe. Readers of "The Matriarch" will remember how Toni had the diadem of the matriarchate set upon her unwilling head in spite of her vehement plea of *nolo episcopari*. This book relates how for a time she abdicated the throne, and how, once a priestess always a priestess, she returned from a freedom that was not everything it was cracked up to be, and again assumed the purple—a matriarch ruling not for any subliminal lust of power, but because some one has got to do it. It tells how Toni married Giles Goddard an Englishman with a more than British capacity for frustration; how Anastasia, the old matriarch, died semi-conscious of defeat; how Toni's wild cousin Loreine eloped with Giles; how the ever delightful Val Power won the War of the Chinese Coat against Loreine (that episode is as fine as anything in these times); how Giles grew not unnaturally weary of Loreine, and conquered Toni by threatening to have another hemorrhage. All this and a great deal more. In short there never was a book of which a summary was likely to give a more unfortunate impression.

For all the weaknesses of the book lie in the complication of its episodes many of which are not in themselves exciting, while at least two have something of unreality, which only Miss Stern's superb capacity succeeds in concealing. I do not mean that Miss Stern has not told a good story. But I do think that she takes a certain perverse pleasure in getting away with murder, in forcing her characters into occasional situations which illustrate her abilities rather than theirs. And this is strange too, because the power of the book lies in the exquisitely skilful unveiling of personality, till naked loveliness or the deformity which Velasquez liked to paint are alive before you, unconcealed by the conventional.

This unveiling, this development, this evocation of the living thing from the close wrapped chrysalis of the spirit is what constitutes Miss Stern's strength. To the reviewer she appears to have this capacity in a degree as great as any living writer. And this makes her books to him things which, in spite of her lust for paradoxical and bizarre situations, have beauty and force and thrilling motion.

The three principal women are the magnificent results of this power. Loreine is an extraordinary creature. She is the mere image of the feminine element in a man, a troll-woman, an illusion, a Lamia, yet with a strange, agonizingly eager life of her own. Somehow she lives the illusion that she is. And you end by believing in the most unbelievable of created things because she is just as incredible as half the women you know. Val Power, endowed with a pathos that she had not yet acquired in "The Matriarch," is an even more exciting person, with a grip on the reader's sympathies that the unfashionable Victorian novelists knew how to achieve, but whose secret has been lost by the new gang. Finally there is Toni herself with her superb generosity, her endearing imperfections, and her capacity for change that at once astonishes and convinces. All three of these figures have a tremendous existential power that many an actual person lacks.

And beside all this "the brooding humor of Comedy" hovers over every encounter in the book. Mirth and grief and all their allotropes mingle in a gorgeous alloy. Who that has read it will ever forget Toni's encounter with the "sumptuous bits" in Jimmy Goddard's apartment, or the great clash between hostile branches of the Rakonitz family, when each knew that the other was in a position to levy blackmail, and the floods of natural racial ebullience were damned by conventions which it

was feared one careless word might shatter. And there are literally dozens of passages equally brilliant, all instinct with genius, all food for that sympathetic laughter which somebody has called the greatest of human pleasures.

Much more could be said. "A Deputy Was King" is an admirable and engaging book, full of living people and the divine breath of high comedy. Why should one say more, when there has been consonance in a sequel?

Wages of Sin; to Date

THE ELDER BROTHER. By ANTHONY GIBBS. New York: The Dial Press. 1926. \$2.

KINDLING AND ASHES. By GEORGE BARR McCUTCHEON. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co. \$2.

Reviewed by H. W. BOYNTON

IN "Peter Vacuum" the youngest novelist in the Gibbs family produced a story that seemed more than a "first novel of promise." It had life and spontaneity, and it hung together. "The Elder Brother," somehow, is "not so good." "Peter Vacuum" was a story of undergraduate experience by one who had quite recently ceased to be an undergraduate. "The Elder Brother," with one foot still in the academic world, feels doubtfully with the other for some kind of foothold in the world which lies outside and beyond.

The brothers Ronald and Hugo Bellairs represent a carefully arranged contrast between the pre-war and after-war generations, or points of view. Ronald has been just old enough for war service. He comes out of it with credit, but secretly unstrung and unfitted to make much of his later life. He is the dispirited child of a period which made a good deal of honor and duty and so on. It all seems to him a little hollow, now, and yet something to be clung to—for what else is there? Hugo was too young for the war. "The world was very good to Hugo." He is the kind of lad who, without any particular virtues or achievements, always falls on his feet. At Oxford (where Ronny painfully supports him) he cuts a dash with his genius for jazz. He is the last word in juvenile egotism and irresponsibility. The old fetishes—decency, chivalry, honor—mean less than nothing to him.

So it comes about that Hugo has all the fun, and Ronny pays the piper. The tale would have been less like a tract if things had been evened up a little. There is too much villain and hero about the business as it stands. Hugo might better have been allowed a qualm or two—and one does hope till the last that Ronny will prove himself something more than a sentimental weakling. When, in the end, Hugo has robbed his brother of everything he values, including his good name and his girl, and Ronny seeks him out, automatic in hand, we do look for something to be doing. But Hugo wins as usual; all he has to do is to look Ronny in the eye, and that nerveless dreamer asks for the loan of a tenner and slinks from the room "out into the fog," says the chronicle, which differs only by a word from the classic phrase of melodrama.

This, we may say, is the sardonic moral of the tract: that in the modern scene, the world of the youngest generation, Self properly wins; and all the old patter about goodness and honor becomes a vague tinkling echo out of the foolish past. Hugo may be admired as a player who cheats and "gets away with it;" Ronny, with his silly self-sacrifice, is merely contemptible. He is both sheep and goat in this parable!

However, virtue did not always bring home the bacon, even in Victorian days. Nor, according to Mr. McCutcheon's testimony, did vice always get what was coming to it. "Kindling and Ashes" testifies that phrases like "murder will out" did not always fit the fact. This is a long and not so exciting yarn about a young man of high repute who shot the husband, married the wife, and lived happy, or at least undetected, ever afterward. He had the pleasure not only of committing the crime, but of reaping its full reward. Remorse did not devastate his days, nor was he moved by any sentimental weakness to a deathbed confession. The only thing that modified the satisfaction of Rufus Playdon the murderer was the suspicion that his wife still romantically preferred the memory of the murdered Bennie Jaggard.

The BOWLING GREEN

Twilight of the Gods

[Written for a special supplement of the *Manchester Guardian*, October, 1926, and reprinted here by request.]

THERE is a young man called Harold Underhill who lives in a sea-chest; he has lived there for many years and will never live anywhere else. He was born in Manchester. He was the hero of my Oxford novel, which was begun long ago. (They were all writing them then: Mr. Compton Mackenzie started it, I think; or was it Mr. Galsworthy, who wrote a novel about a New College undergraduate who fell in love with his tutor's wife?—not nearly so improbable a fall as you might imagine). It was not finished. That is good news for you; but I well remember when Harold was born; it was in a third-class smoking carriage in a big railway station in Manchester, waiting for the London express to pull out. The carriage, fortunately, was empty save for the agitated parent. It was autumn, 1911, and how it was raining. It had been raining for several days. I remember the first sentence without going to the sea-chest where Harold lies full fathom five—though not converted into anything rich or strange. "The wet week-end in Manchester was over."

Manchester ought to be glad to know how narrowly it escaped being in the first chapter of one of the worst Young Oxford novels that never were published. That was the first thing I ever did for Manchester. I should like to be able to do something less negative. But Manchester was then in my mind, for I had just spent a happy week-end in some region of the city mysteriously abbreviated as C.-on-M., a contraction still enigmatic to me. And of that first visit I now remember very little except a large bookshop where I bought some book (but what?); a Christian Science church which struck me as beautiful and dignified; and a performance of Miss Horniman's company in "John Gabriel Borkman." But I think that even then, young and green as I was, I caught some obscure sensibility of the vigorous, honest, unpretentious culture that is characteristic of big manufacturing towns. I don't enjoy the word "culture," but what other can we use? Intellectualism? Whatever you call it, that fine curiosity of the mind, it often seems so much more vital, less palaverish, in the provinces than in the capital. The centre of things—London, New York, Paris—too rapidly becomes eccentric. So it is that on our side, too, you are more likely, often, to find a real going in the mulberry trees a little away from the brilliant glamour of the Via Alba Maxima.

My second visit to Manchester—alas! for one night only—was two years ago. Since then I always associate the city with a place which is as unlike it as possible—Gilbert White's Selborne. Because in an underground bookshop somewhere in Manchester I bought an old copy of that book, which I have never really read; but I was moved to buy it partly because two members of the *Manchester Guardian* staff were with me, and they seemed to be discovering desiderated treasures on every shelf, and I was ashamed of not finding anything that spoke to my condition. And partly because of the odd surprise of the first passage in Selborne which my eye fell upon—"Some young men went down lately to a pond on the verge of Wolmer Forest to hunt flappers." It appeared on further study that flappers were "young wild ducks"—again the Ibsen touch.

I have a sort of feeling, I don't know why, that Manchester is the kind of place where Ibsen is played more often than anywhere else. Though when I was there two years ago the most conspicuous announcements were of "Ruggles of Red Gap" at some cinema. Ruggles, in his way, is just as considerable as Ibsen; have you read the book? It broods lightly over the abyss that sometimes separates the English and American senses of what is amusing.

My later visit to Manchester, the only one of which I retain clear vision, was brief and entirely

personal. It is implicated in my private admiration and affection for certain members of the "Manchester Guardian" staff, and I cannot write about it without appearing unseemly. So I cannot tell you about my impressions of Manchester, for they were of people rather than of buildings, institutions, or economic consequences. I have no theory of Manchester's greatness. I have felt very strongly there, even in only a few hours, an undertow of what might be called a Quakerish sort of feeling. It is a feeling I am susceptible to; I know it well round Philadelphia, another great manufacturing city.

You see for a great many of us beyond the horizon Manchester is the *Manchester Guardian*, and it might surprise you to know how many of the *Manchester Guardian* people, whom I suppose you take for granted, are household words in New York or Baltimore or Boston. Better than household words, perhaps, because those are often argumentative. You will not mind my telling you that I now remember that platform of your Midland Station not as the place where Harold Underhill was born, but as the place where I first saw C. E. M. And when Mr. Montague writes a novel or Mr. Monkhouse a play, or your London Letter gives us the bad news that the Cheshire Cheese parrot can only be superannuated with minims of Scotch whiskey, we know about these things almost as soon as you do. And it is in your own columns, for instance, that we have seen the most brilliant and humorous commentary yet written on New York architecture.

I would not be quite honest if I did not add that my brief impression of Manchester, two years ago, was further dimmed in my cortex by extreme weariness. Nothing is so fatiguing as strong admiration, and an overindulgence in this exciting emotion can only be required by sleep. But to my companion, a man of most rugged northern fibre, this visit to Manchester was all in the line of duty. The clean-cut little ponies that deliver your evening papers, the velvety chiaroscuro of soot on your Art Gallery, the six-inch waxed mustachios of a janitor at a big draper's shop, the underground bookstore, the thrilling, smoky dusk, and the amber light seen through glassware in pubs—all these were not physically exhausting to him as they were to me. And so, when we visited the Press Club toward midnight, he was just ready to unleash his mind for exercise. It shames me to recall how for the ensuing two or three hours, while he and others were eager to dissect the universe of thought, I could only anticipate bed and a secret unpacking of my too-crowded grey matters. And when, in that delightful commercial hotel to which we eventually resorted, full of Landseer engravings, my host settled down again for more gay conversation, I felt like the stag at bay. He wondered why I slept most of the way back to London in the train the next morning. But I have not forgotten the quaint face and Midland accent of the elderly chambermaid, nor the long search, down mahogany stairways, for a bath.

I think it was knowing at Oxford several men from the Manchester Grammar School that first gave me the notion that wits are very much alert in that twilight of the gods. The little that I have seen of cities of that sort—Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Chicago, Belfast, Glasgow—always somehow makes me think of a man who would have queerly understood their extraordinary subtle magic. I hope you read him sometimes—I mean Walt Whitman.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

Teaching Our Literature

(Continued from page 493)

own fashion. Cooper as a romanticist of adventure yields little of his quality, Emerson as a romantic philosopher is inexpressive beside the prophet who phrased the idealism of a young nation, Thoreau must not be divorced from wild nature, Mark Twain from the frontier, Poe from the revolt against colonialism, Melville from the focal point of the Protestant conscience in America. If we are to have sound instruction in our own literature, it must be taught as art conditioned by the American environment. Read the great Americans as they wrote, not to illustrate America (except for Cooper in his decadence), but because they had something to say, and could say it finely, and not without reference to the America that bred them.