

Points of View

"The Road to Xanadu"

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

One of your readers at least felt that your editorial of May 21 in praise of Professor Lowes's book on Coleridge supplied a needed supplement to Professor Tinker's review of the book in the preceding issue. We can, indeed, infer from this review that a book has been written about the sources of "The Ancient Mariner" and "Kubla Khan," and by means of three columns which Professor Tinker devotes to a story of Kipling's we can gather something about a theory of the imagination developed in the book. But of the gigantic production which is "The Road to Xanadu" Professor Tinker gives us scarcely an inkling. From all that he tells us we would think that merely another academic study had appeared.

In reading "The Road to Xanadu" itself, however, most of us can only marvel at the ability which enabled one of the busiest of mortals, in the intervals of a put-upon life as professor and chairman of a department, to accumulate such quantities of facts; to order every fact into its exact place in the total argument; to detect (with "falcon eye" surely not so different in kind from Coleridge's), the innumerable, subtle, and diverse sources of the poet's inspiration; to present the whole cheerfully, unpedantically, readably, at times with elevation; and most marvelous of all, never once to lose sight of the fact that he is not accumulating "sources" for their own sake, but is seeking through sources to throw light on the workings of the poetic imagination.

And not the least of the virtues which Professor Lowes reflects in his book is that he never wastes time to be "literary" or otherwise display himself. Indeed, he has no need, when his business, strictly attended to, is so eloquent for him. But all substitutes for thoroughness are naturally abhorrent to him. I well remember the occasion at a meeting of graduate students at Harvard, when after the author had read us a chapter from this work, one of my fellow students exclaimed despairingly and admiringly to him, "Really, Professor Lowes, after hearing what you have done there, one feels as if we ordinary graduate students might as well quit trying; we never can do anything like that!"

Professor Lowes only shook his head in sad deprecation. "I am only scratching the surface!" he sighed. "I am only scratching the surface!" And from his tone and expression we felt that what seemed to him his superficiality was one of the great sorrows of his life.

ALAN R. THOMPSON.

A Correction

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

In reading a review of G. B. Stern's "The Dark Gentleman" by Leonard Bacon, I was struck with the fact that the reviewer pointed out that for the first time animals were used in literature to point and illustrate human emotions and complications. I believe Heywood Brown also stated something to the same effect in a review. I should like to point out that this particular method and the use of animal characters has been used over and over again, and it seems to me extraordinarily successfully, by Robert Nathan, an author who is much too little appreciated by the general public, although I understand highly thought of by the writing fraternity. Anyone who has read "Fiddler in Barley" will understand what I mean.

In this book, the little dancing dog, Musket, is a perfect example of what the reviewers are praising G. B. Stern for. First honor where honor is due.

CHARLES F. FULLER.

New York.

[Is not the medieval "Reynard the Fox" a fair example also?—THE EDITOR.]

What Is Academic?

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

I hope I shall not appear over-fastidious if I ask in what sense the word *academic* was meant when your editorial of April 23 inquired, "Why is there . . . no literary magazine not academic in all the South?" Did your writer properly consider the case of *The Virginia Quarterly Review*? I cannot imagine his describing this journal with an adjective that is either patently useless or

gravely deceptive. Published by the University of Virginia, the *Quarterly* is admittedly academic in origin. To style it so were idle. And where is the reader who has followed the magazine during its two years of life who will charge it with being theoretically aloof, learnedly dull—*academic* in its usual literary sense? The *Virginia Quarterly* is closely grounded in the soil and soul of the South (its university origin is a help not a hindrance in this), and from this steady footing throws lively light upon matters regional, national, and international. I suggest that your writer find the past few issues of *The Virginia Quarterly Review* and read—or reread—certain articles by Broadus Mitchell, Edwin Björkman, and Sara Haardt.

BERNARD M. PEEBLES.

St. Joseph, Michigan.

A Pirandello Play

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

It is in your April 2nd issue that Mr. Ernest Boyd states Pirandello's "Right You Are If You Think You Are" is the only play since "Six Characters in Search of an Author" to survive the test of production in this country.

It won't cheer him any to know that our Potboiler Theatre has just produced "The Pleasure of Honesty" with a cast recruited from the movies—think of that!—with great success. The cast, headed by Henry Kolker, received ovations from an audience part intelligent and part just Hollywood, and neither cast nor audience seemed at all irritated by Pirandello's metaphysical derivations, which seem to bother Mr. Boyd unduly.

The play is, of course, blightingly talky in the first and last acts. But in spite of Mr. Boyd's fulminations against the "hollowness" and "banality" of Pirandello's philosophy the production contrived a mellowness and sparkle; for "bad" philosophy it seemed awfully good drama. But then, this is, of course, Los Angeles. Will Mr. Mencken please note? And, incidentally, none of the movie stars receive a cent for services to the Little Theatre.

ISABEL L. MAYERS.

Los Angeles.

The New Books Poetry

(Continued from preceding page)

devoutly in Sussex of today, yet with the glamour of the old Miracle play. She has done this beautifully and tenderly, with interspersed songs; some adapted chants, some original ones, and some of old ballad stock. The poems that precede the plays are of the same locality, the most moving being "St. Mary Magdalene." These are all simple and pure and adorned with local references to places, to flowers, and trees. Here is a garland of poetic devotion by a novelist of great strength and range.

GOD'S TROMBONES. By JAMES WELDON JOHNSON. Viking Press. 1927. \$2.50.

This is a beautifully made book. The remarkable drawings are by Aaron Douglas, like the author a Negro, the lettering by C. B. Falls, the well-known illustrator. The cover is a gorgeous gold and black design, the illustrations of black and blue-gray in fine special reproduction. Mr. Johnson, notable artist of his race, has here turned certain Negro sermons into free verse. His triumph lies in the fact that he has not descended to dialect, yet has managed to convey the very intoning of the originals in his striking versions. His preface sets forth ably the significance and gifts of the old Negro preacher. He has culled the material for his text from innumerable sermons heard and witnessed. No one who wishes to familiarize himself with the most artistic and native work that is coming from the literate Negroes of today can afford to neglect this slim, beautiful volume of Mr. Johnson's. It is a work of research turned into a work of re-creation. It fixes in distinguished form upon the printed page the essence of the best Negro preaching of all time. "Go Down Death," a funeral sermon, is, both in text and illustration, one of the most striking of the seven unusual utterances here rendered.

THE BOOKMAN ANTHOLOGY OF VERSE. (Second Series) Edited by JOHN FARRAR. Doran. 1927. \$2.

Mr. Farrar may be right in his chief contention in his preface to this book, that

the American poetic scene "has lost fire." But the Literary Guild's acceptance of E. A. Robinson's "Tristram" as their third choice to send to their subscribers was destined to refute his conjecture that no "Book of the Month" society would dare choose a book of poetry. If, in his figure of speech, the feast of Euterpe has not lost its meat but has, perhaps, lost its savor, there continues to be, nevertheless, a great deal of interesting poetry written today. Mr. Farrar's present selection from the poems that have appeared in *The Bookman* is, indeed, one witness to that fact. To one of the extreme Left in Modern Poetry most of these poems might seem negligible. Few of them, to be sure, are more than interesting. Some are trivial. That there are more men than women included is not indicative of the present tendency in American poetry. With the exception of a few outstanding figures, the women of America are today writing better poetry than the men. Among the names included, Amy Lowell and George Sterling have left us, Franklin P. Adams (a versifier rather than a poet), Benét, Dell, Frost, Guiterman (again a versifier), "H. D.," Le Gallienne, McFee (chiefly a novelist), Jeannette Marks, David Morton, Lizette Reese, Robinson, Scollard, Leonora Speyer, Genevieve Taggard, John V. A. Weaver, Carolyn Wells, Margaret Widemer, and Marguerite Wilkinson, although belonging to different terms of years, may be loosely grouped as veterans. Mrs. Speyer has recently won the Pulitzer prize for her poetry, Genevieve Taggard is one of the best of the younger women writing. Marion Strobel, Bernice Kenyon, Roberta Swartz, Nathalia Crane, (the child prodigy), are all making places for themselves. Outside of these are Countée Cullen, the negro poet, Hervey Allen, and Joseph Auslander, two of the best of the younger men, Du Bose Heyward, Thomas Moulton, the Englishman, and a few others. As we have indicated, the contributions to the volume are uneven in quality, but Mr. Farrar's introductory notes are intimately interesting.

SELECTIONS FROM WHITMAN.
Edited by ZADA THORNSBURGH. Macmillan. 1927.

This small pocket volume, one of the Macmillan Pocket Classics, with an introduction that includes a résumé of Whitman's life and a study of the form, structure, and style of his poetry, and also with appended notes, is an excellent primer of Whitman, and should be useful in the study of Whitman in schools. Democratic Vistas, Whitman's essay on Democracy, is also included.

THE ANSWERING VOICE. 100 Love Lyrics by Women. Selected by Sara Teasdale. Macmillan. 1926. \$1.50.

Miss Teasdale has aimed "to bring together the most beautiful love lyrics written in English by women since the middle of the last century." Before this period, she tells us, she could find nothing worthy of inclusion except Lady Anne Lindsay's "Auld Robin Gray" and Susan Blamire's "An ye shall walk in silk attire." It is a little difficult to understand a taste that excludes Lady Nairne's "Land o' the Leal," surely one of the finest love poems ever written by a woman. Other serious omissions, in a volume that admits such inferior verses as Mrs. Pickthall's "I sat among the green leaves," with its incongruous refrain "The green nuts are falling on my heart," must be named. Isobel Pagan's "Ca' the yowes to the knowes" fully maintains the severe standards of the "Oxford Book of English Verse" and deserved a place in Mrs. Filsinger's collection. And we would have preferred Anne Hunter's "My Mother bids me bind my hair" (distinctly a love poem) to any of a score of more recent poems apparently preferred by the compiler. There can be but little serious disagreement as to the deserts of these particular poems and it is, perhaps, kinder to attribute their absence to Sara Teasdale's carelessness rather than to her taste.

After the 1850 mark she makes some equally serious omissions. Is there nothing in Emily Brontë worthy to stand side by side with such pieces as the late Miss Lowell's "Apology" and "Taxis"? And what of Sara Coleridge, Dora Sigerson Shorter, Caroline Norton, Sylvia Lynd, Margaret L. Woods, Frances Cornford, Frédegond Shove, Michael Field, and many another? Leonora Speyer certainly merited a page even though it were at the expense of Adelaide Crapsey. It is not easy to think, off hand, of an outstanding love poem by Elinor Wylie; but the American reader will rub his eyes when he fails to find her name in the index.

These are not merely arbitrary objections. There must be very grave obstacles in the way of the living poet who, like Sara Teasdale, bravely attempts to satisfy the demands of a high poetic standard in the face of so many living rivals who might take it seriously to heart if she elected not to represent them. This consideration, so far, has been the curse of the modern anthology. We do not for a moment suggest that Mrs. Filsinger allowed herself to be consciously influenced by such ulterior considerations. Far from it. But the grossly disproportionate preponderance here of the American women poets over their English contemporaries cannot be justified in qualitative terms. In some instances, at least, where a poet has been represented by two lyrics, one might have been spared to admit such undoubtedly fine things as have already been suggested. It would have been more to the purpose of the anthology to reject even such a winning poem as Willa Cather's "Grandmither, think not I forget," which is not a love lyric in the accepted sense, rather than omit a second poem by Alice Meynell or Miss Millay.

Nevertheless, when all is said, this is an unusually interesting little anthology and these strictures are not to be interpreted as a sign of ingratitude. One omission only, because it is a sign of grace almost unique in an American anthology, we welcome warmly, though not without insisting that the anthology is sadly incomplete because of its absence. We refer to Miss Teasdale herself.

A MARRIAGE WITH SPACE. By Mark Turbyfill. Covici.

SELECTED POEMS. By Walter de la Mare. Holt. \$2.

THE VAGRANT OF TIME. By Charles G. D. Roberts. Toronto: Ryerson Press. \$2.

CAPRICIOUS WINDS. By Helen Birch Bartlett. Houghton Mifflin. \$2.

AN OLD MAN'S STORY. By Helen E. Cornell. Balmer. Dorrance.

FROM A CALIFORNIA GARDEN. By Bessie Pryor. Palmer. Dorrance.

CANADIAN POETS. Edited by John W. Garvin. Dodd, Mead, McClellan & Stewart. \$5.

STREET LAMP. By Morris Abel Beer. Vinal. \$1.50.

ECHOES OF MANY MOODS. By Charles Kelsey. Gaines. Privately printed.

Religion

THE HISTORY OF THE TRANSLATION OF THE BLESSED MARTYRS OF CHRIST MARCELLINUS AND PETER. The English Version by BARRETT WENDELL. Harvard University Press. 1926. \$5.

"To true worshippers of the true God, and to unfeigned lovers of our Lord Jesus Christ and of His Saints, Eginhard a sinner." This little book tells how the pious chronicler of Charlemagne, wearied of the congestion of the court, found a spot named Odenwald, "far removed from the vulgar crowd," how he erected houses and a church there, and how he sent his servants into Italy to procure the bones of certain martyrs, and of all that came of their journey. The supposition that there was at Rome "a great abundance of the neglected tombs of the martyrs" proved untrue; the tombs were all too closely cherished; and the servants were obliged to break into the sepulchre of Peter and Marcellinus by stealth and at night. Having secured the relics of Marcellinus, "they went back to their abode in the city." But their leader, Eginhard's notary, was not satisfied.

For, as he afterwards told me, it seemed to him by no means admissible that he should go home with the body of the blessed Marcellinus alone; it would be a great shame if the body of the blessed martyr Peter, who had been his fellow in suffering, and through five hundred years and more had lain with him in the same sepulchre, should be left there when he was going from thence.

So the next night the bones of the blessed martyr Peter also were secured. On their return journey the party observed the greatest secrecy until they were safely across the Alps; then they openly proclaimed the nature of their burden and were henceforth accompanied on their way by "hymning troops of people" singing God's praise. The saints at first objected to the spot in which their bones were deposited and caused the bier to sweat blood, but Eginhard duly heeded the warning and removed them to a choicer location where they were not only content but testified their satisfaction by appropriate miracles. The quaint ninth century tale was rendered into English by the late Barrett Wendell as a relaxation during the writing of his last book, "The Traditions of English Literature." The style is a delight to the ear, and the printing, with type arranged by Bruce Rogers, is an even greater delight to the eye.

(Continued on next page)

The World of Rare Books

By FREDERICK M. HOPKINS

THE SEASON OF 1926-1927

A REVIEW of its auction season now closing issued by the Anderson Galleries emphasizes the growing interest among collectors in autographic material. Autographs of Button Gwinnett, Signer of the Declaration of Independence for Georgia, are a conspicuous example of this tendency. A Gwinnett signature offered last November brought \$28,500, a record price for an American historical autograph. The second, sold in March, fetched \$51,000, a record for an autograph anywhere at any time. The advance in fifteen years from \$4,600 to \$51,000 reflects the growth of interest in sets of Signers of the Declaration of Independence. Aside from Gwinnett items, the season has been one of outstanding importance. Manuscripts of Lafcadio Hearn, in December, realized from \$450 to \$975 each, according to length; a Roosevelt manuscript review of Capt. Mahan's "Influence of Sea Power on History," sold for \$2,500; a 15th century Book of Hours brought \$3,600; and a Washington letter to Thomas Paine, March 17, 1782, concerning the evacuation of Charlestown, went for \$950. Many new records were made at the sale of American and English autographs in the collection of A. C. Goodyear of Buffalo, in February. A collection of letters from Thackeray to Mrs. Brookfield, Miss Kate Perry, and Mrs. Elliot fetched \$29,500. At the same sale a manuscript fragment of a speech by Lincoln on September 15, 1859, dealing with slavery and equality, sold for \$4,700, and a letter written by Lincoln June 19, 1860, protesting against the unauthorized publication of his alleged biography, went for \$2,900.

The American Art Association announces that its thirty-five sales for the season, comprising autographs, manuscripts, books, and prints, realized \$910,882.50. A few of the outstanding sales were the notable library of Major W. Van R. Whitall of Pelham, N. Y., which brought over \$120,000. The sporting library of Walter C. Noyes of this city, sold in a single session, totaled over \$40,000. The famous Conrad collection made by Richard Curle, another single session sale, brought nearly \$39,000. The highest price for a single item was \$15,400 paid by the Rosenbach Company for the original manuscript of Richard Wagner's "Das Rheingold," one of the most important operatic manuscripts ever sold at auc-

tion. The second highest price was \$8,400 paid for the first edition of Shelley's "Adonais," a superb copy in the original wrappers. It was unusual that two copies of Edward Fitzgerald's translation of the "Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam," both in the original wrappers, should appear in two different collections, one selling for \$3,200, the other for \$3,250. The greatest number of records were established during the Whitall sale, \$5,000 being paid for one of twelve known copies of William Blake's "The Book of Thel," \$3,800 for Browne's "Pseudodoxia Epidemica" with manuscript notes by S. T. Coleridge; \$2,200 for Thomas Hardy's "The Dynasts," while "The Temple" of George Herbert realized the same price. A first edition of the "Poems" by John Keats sold for \$3,300, and Shelley's "The Cenci," presented by Leigh Hunt to Charles Lloyd, fetched \$2,500. Another Shelley item, "Epipsychidion," brought \$5,100, and \$3,400 was realized for Spenser's "Faerie Queene." It was practically a rule without exception that when material of the first importance, whether autographic or rare books, was offered it found enthusiastic bidders and high prices were the result.

AMERICANA AT HEARTMAN'S

THE auction business of Charles F. Heartman, of Metuchen, N. J., differs from others in one respect, it takes no vacation. Book sales are held, we believe, in every month in the year, those in midsummer being quite as successful as any. A notable collection of Americana, comprising books, pamphlets, broadsides, autograph letters, documents, and manuscripts, selections from various consignments, was sold on May 19, good prices generally being realized. A few representative lots and the prices which they brought were the following:

Adams (John). A. L. S., 2 pp., 4to. Philadelphia, March 2, 1798. To Eliphalet Fitch. \$116.

Adams (John Quincy). A. L. S., 4 pp., 4to. Washington, March 17, 1841. To Simon S. Jocelyn, Joshua Leavitt, and Lewis Tappan. Protesting against slavery and the right of search on the high seas. \$77.

Bartlett (Josiah). A. L. S., 2 pp., folio. Exeter, June 29, 1791. To Col. Joseph Whipple. \$77.50.

Burgoyne (Gen. John). L. S. with a few lines in his autograph, 3 pp., 4to.

Cambridge, February 12, 1778. To Gen. Heath. \$75.

Gaine (Hugh). "Universal Register," for the year 1775, 16mo, sheep. New York, 1774. \$88.

Hamilton (Alexander). A. L. S., 1 p., 4to. March 28, 1792. To John Keen. On financial matters. \$77.50.

Hancock (John). Printed D. S. In Congress, Philadelphia, December 6, 1776. \$85.

Holmes (Oliver Wendell). Twenty-one A. L. S., two original manuscripts, and a note. About 35 pp., 1859 to 1890. \$70.

Jackson (Andrew). A. L. in third person, 2 pp., 4to. July 12, 1833. To William J. Duane. \$86.

Jefferson (Thomas). A. L. in third person, 1 p., 4to. Monticello, August 8, 1814. To Thomas C. Flourney. \$71.

Lee (Gen. Charles). A. L. S., 4 pp., 4to. New York, February 9, 1776. To Robert Morris. \$80.

Morris (Robert). Original draft of an A. L. S., 5 pp., folio. Philadelphia, June 26, 1779. To David Rittenhouse. \$85.

Morton (John). D. S., 1 p., small folio. Philadelphia, April 6, 1776. \$75.

Washington (George). L. S., 1 p., folio. Headquarters Gross Prackness, October 29, 1780. War letter in reference to the court martial of Joshua Smith in connection with Arnold's treason.

NOTE AND COMMENT

AS the eighth number of its series of the Centaur Bibliographies the Centaur Book Shop of Philadelphia announces "Theodore Dreiser" by Edward D. McDonald, with an introduction by Mr. Dreiser. The edition will consist of 300 numbered copies for sale and a large paper edition of 100 copies autographed by Mr. Dreiser and the author.

Peter Davies of London announces the early publication of Charles Knight's "Shadows of Old Booksellers," originally published in 1865, recalling the great figures of the booktrade in the eighteenth century. Stanley Unwin, who recently wrote the book "The Truth about Publishing," recently published, has contributed an introduction comparing eighteenth-century methods with those of the present day.

A long-lost poem of the ancient Toltec Empire, 661 A. D., composed more than 1000 years ago and telling the tale of the glories and downfall of the mythical city of Tula, capital of the Toltec Empire, has been found and translated into English by John H. Cornyn, American journalist, master of the Aztec language, and for many years professor of literature in the Mexican

National University. The poem is entitled "Song to Quetzalcoatl."

The New Books

(Continued from preceding page)

Travel

SAVAGE LIFE IN THE BLACK SUDAN. By C. W. DOMVILLE-FIFE. Lippincott. 1927. \$6.

No book for the squeamish is this latest work of the prolific Mr. Domville-Fife, whose wanderings hitherto have been chiefly confined to South America. His hazardous observations among the giant Shilluks, the blood-drinking Dinkas, and the little-known Nuba tribes of Southern Kordofan yielded him a mass of unpalatable data which he sets forth generally with the impartiality of the ethnologist, although he is quite as often entirely frank in recording his own natural disgust. Some of the more lurid chapters, like the fifteenth on black secret societies, are founded on hearsay, but his own account as an eye-witness of an orgy among the Shilluk induces credence in his other authorities. His speculations on the relation between the religious beliefs and customs of the Nubas and the Priest-Kings of ancient Egypt are interesting and apparently have more than a slight basis in fact. There are many photographs of natives, most of them magnificent physical specimens, and the index is full beyond cavil.

ONCE IN THE SADDLE AND PASO POR AQUÍ. By EUGENE MANLOVE RHODES. Houghton Mifflin. 1927. \$2.

Composed of two novelettes, whose scene is the southwest of an earlier day, this book treats of a life and characters such as, in fiction, are usually given the distorted dimensions of the fabulous. The first of the tales (both are concerned with outlaws fleeing from justice) presents the familiar situation of the small rancher being hounded for his coveted property by more powerful neighbors. But this beginning soon leads into other channels, which, without break in the unity, contribute steadily to development of the main theme. The conclusion, though rather too abruptly effected, is the essence of good melodrama. In the second story, our own preference of the two, is pictured the gruelling flight across semi-desert country of a bank bandit, who finally takes refuge with a diphtheria stricken family of Mexicans. Though broken in strength, the hunted man remains heroically beside the sick, his better nature uppermost, and cares for them till belated help arrives.

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