

Ramsay told her not to be a fool. She sat beside him, smiling.

Sitting opposite him, could she not see as in an X-ray photograph, the ribs and thigh bones of the young man's desires to impress himself, lying dark in the mist of his flesh—that thin mist which convention had laid over his burning desire to break into the conversation?

Phrases came. Visions came. Beautiful pictures. Beautiful phrases. But what she wished to get hold of was that very jar on the nerves, the thing itself before it has been made anything. Get that and start afresh; get that and start afresh; she said desperately, pitching herself firmly again before her easel.

No quotation avails. The distinction lies here: A spoonful of brine gives the flavor of the barrel, but, a spoonful of the sea at sunset, what of that?

The method now is of sufficient importance to enspell one for the space of a volume. Can such a method be integrated, permitting both action and "inaction" to take their places in a novel, as in life—events too being played upon by pulsation as, in this book, Mrs. Woolf plays upon that which we have been accustomed to call monotony? Why not? For this method, like the methods of all literature, is a quest. Meanwhile "To the Light-house" moves toward the core of life in letters.

## Out of Carolina

CONGAREE SKETCHES. By E. C. L. ADAMS. Chapel Hill, N. C.: University of North Carolina Press. 1927. \$2.

THESE sketches stand in direct line of the tales that made Joel Chandler Harris famous and like them should find readers not only among students of folklore but also among that part of the public, young and old, which rejoices in the fertility and ingenuity of the untutored negro mind. They are exceedingly brief narratives, some of them mere snippets of dialogue, others stories of hardly more than two or three pages in length, and still others metrical versions of darkey legend and saying—all of them, howsoever slight, revelatory of the negro mind, and all of them delightful in their unsophistication.

Here again, as in the Uncle Remus tales, is observable that commingling of humor, wistfulness, and poetry that in the speech of even the least educated negro reflects the imaginative instinct of the race. Mr. Adams has deftly introduced his volume with a page of description that places his Congaree negroes against the background of Carolina swamp, and that at the same time conveys the picturesque quality of their thought.

I been down to de Congaree in de big swamps (says one of his darkeys) where de trees is tall an' de moss long an' gray, where de Bullace grow, an' where I hear de tune of de bird in de mornin'; down wey de wild turkey gobbles, way down on de Congaree; wey God's mornin' leads to de devil's night; down on de river, where night makes her sign, where owls on a dead limb talks of de dead, talks wid de dead and laughs like de dead, way down in de big swamps of de Congaree; down where de blunt-tailed moccasin crawls in de grass, where de air is stink wid de smell; where de water is green, where de worms is spewed out of de groun'; where de groun' is mud, where de trees sweat like a man; down in de home of de varmint an' bugs, down in de slick yellow mud, de black mud an' de brown, way down in de big swamps of de Congaree; down in de land of pizen, where de yellow-fly sting, in de home of de fever an' wey death is de king. Dat wey I been, down in de big swamps. Down in de land of mosquito, way down in de big swamps, down on de Congaree.

That same poetic fancy that distills the very lushness and dankness of the swamp in this passage is infused through all the tales of the Congaree negro, whether they are of darkeys in association with their fellows or at their adventures with the angels. Both as folklore and story these sketches which Mr. Adams has collected and put into form are well worth the reading. They are prefaced by a heartening introduction by Paul Green.

The Macmillan Company offer a prize of \$100 to the librarian suggesting the best title for a group of books which it has in prospect. The nucleus of the new library is to be the series projected by the Workers' Education Bureau, under the title, "The Workers' Bookshelf," of which the Macmillan Company are now to become the publishers. The series is to be edited by a distinguished board headed by Dr. Charles A. Beard. It is to include short volumes representative of the important aspects of American culture, including economics, politics, natural science, law, and much else.

## The BOWLING GREEN

### The Folder

SPEAKING of possible inscriptions for the monument on the Long Island flying field where transatlantic flyers take off, how about this from *Rasselas*—

*Remark'd many ingenious contrivances to facilitate motion, and unite levity with strength.*

"To unite levity with strength"—surely not a bad motto for the conduct of life in general.

Mr. Morgan Barnes, of Ojai, California, gets the prize for translation into Latin of Captain David Bone's Virgilian halloo (See *Bowling Green* of May 21). Mr. Barnes piles Pelion on Ossa as follows:—

CARMEN OSSEUM

(From the English of Captain David W. Bone)

Quare, Christophore, comes mihi magnos Atlantici fluctus Aquilone Africoque terga manis monstrorum volventia e profundis excitantibus non es permensus? Eheu quid memorabile non vidi ex tempore quo, tempestati irridens, Columnas superavi Herculeas et, oris Africae barbarorum aridae nutricis post tergum relictis, litore quo olim fuit Carthago navem statui!

Ad portum Phalericum inde delatus in patriam Atheniensium celeriter vehiculo comparato ad castae Minervae templum fulgente sub luna luceque stellarum candentium sum vectus.

Amoenum oculisque gratum erat Byzantium quamquam ventis inhorrescebat Bosphorus et procella nigrans nive commixta saevibat quae modo Hyadum lacrimantium stridens nos intrantes perterrebat.

Nam ea in urbe valde delectabant puellae tenerae tonsis capillis quae tenuiter vestitae miris in modis saltabant ad lyram agrestem et nobiscum ingenue versabantur. Praeterea poculis Cypri vinetis Aegaeis paullulum morati gavisi sumus.

Auspiciis prosperis Phoeboque orto Punicam oram legimus. Radiis Aurorae lucebant Tyrus et Sidon et Carmeli juga florea cum ventis secundis qui nos Pelusium ferrent vela dedimus.

Summo ex mari clarus surgebat Pharos et nobis in portum Alexandrinum cursum monstrabat. Simul ac ortus est Titan ancoram de puppi dejecimus loco quo olim regebant orientali luxu Antonius et Cleopatra. Omnibus ex partibus visendi salutandi studio barbari Graeci Nubii decurrebant.

Ornamenta Persica stragulaeque fabulosa e Cathaia nobis insolitum inter musicam offerebantur. Calor ossa reliquit, mi Christophore, cum mihi subiit recordatio te heu longe abesse nec una saltaturum. Illis enim in locis colitur studiose Baal a plebe sordida vulgo Jazz nominatus quem deum precibus pie invocant puellae.

Nunc vero O Christophore desiderium tui me omnem habet. Dies et alter praeterlabitur, per tremulum aequor navi currimus, lenibus vela implentibus Zephyris, dum delphini lascivi Veneris deliciae spuma ludunt mareque coruscans turbant.

Veniet tamen dies cum tecum fuero Atlanticum diris Idibus non jam vexantibus, cum certa nectemus Caecubumque ad solennia reservatum cum pueri formosi profundunt.

MORGAN BARNES.

A Harvard instructor sends us the following congenial inquiry. If any clients care to offer suggestions we will gladly forward them.

Some years ago when you were conducting the "Bowling Green" on the old *Evening Post*, you were good enough to notice some contributions of mine on John Donne (during his all too short burst of popularity) and other subjects. At that time you dubbed me "a friendly merchant of Water Street"; since then I have gone back to Harvard as a tutor in History and Literature.

Each summer we assign to students concentrating in this field a certain amount of reading, either fiction, history and biography of the Strachey type, or verse. It is quite useless to assign heavy reading such as Stubbs's "Constitutional Government of England" as it just doesn't get done. On the other hand, if we select easily readable books, we have found that students get interested and will do a surprising amount of reading.

To a Junior, naturally, one can assign more advanced books for this summer reading than to a Freshman. In the Middle Ages I have been starting the men off with things like John Addington Symonds's "Wine, Women and Song," Conan Doyle's "White Company," some of Scott's novels (which I don't like), Kingsley's "Hereward the Wake," Hardy's "Passe Rose," and others of that sort; in the Renaissance, the "Decameron," Marguerite of Navarre's "Heptameron," the Memoirs of Benvenuto Cellini, François Villon, etc.

And then, just because I think they are grand books, though quite outside the fields I tutor in, such titles as Hardy's "Jude the Obscure," Butler's "Way of All Flesh," Anatole France's "Penguin Island," and so forth.

The reason I am writing you, is to ask for suggestions; my only excuse for so doing is that I think the work we are doing is worth while and may appeal to you. I know you will recommend the "Leviathan"; but only an exceptional boy will read that during the dog days. If you have any favorites in lighter vein, preferably books illustrative of the life and manners of some period, I should be deeply grateful for a list.

E. W. P.

For my own part, I have grown more cautious about making suggestions. I should hardly dare propose *Leviathan* to a Harvard boy, he'd only think I was urging a trip abroad. It would be fun to suggest Sir Thomas Browne, or Thomas Fuller, or Aubrey's *Brief Lives*, if there were any real chance of their getting read. (Though I know a college girl in Brooklyn whose two special hobbies are Thomas Fuller and French slang. But then she is as unusual as the delightful Elizabeth Danvers, of whom Aubrey says, "She had prodigious parts for a woman. I have heard my father's mother say that she had Chaucer at her fingers' ends. Knew how to manage her estate as well as any man; understood jewels as well as any jeweller. Very beautiful, but only short-sighted. She married Sir Edmund Carey, but kept him to hard meate." I have often wanted to hear Sir Edmund's side of the story.)

The books that come into my mind have nothing to do with the Middle Ages. O. Henry, in young summers on a ranch in Texas, got his best fun out of Webster's Unabridged. I get very weary, by the way, of hearing that O. Henry "corrupted" or "debauched" the American short story. The deuce: just because his imitators could echo only the flash, the trickery, is that O. Henry's fault? In their hands the thing became a strumpet.

Perhaps the best thing an instructor could do would be to put in the student's hands a list of the titles in the World's Classics Series, or the Everyman Library, and duly swear him to read any ten ad lib. Almost all are Consommations du Premier Choix. (This is the time of year when small erring tags of French come to mind.) Surely the summer vacation would be a grand chance to loiter about in the pages of Boswell, or Pepys' Diary. This being the summer of William Blake's centennial, I have a hope that a few will trouble themselves with his own special brand of fright. If our Young Harvard is of a scientific or calculating turn, what could give him more excellent rationality than Leck's *Wrinkles in Practical Navigation* or W. W. R. Ball's *Mathematical Recreations and Problems*—a book that makes all the Ask Me Anothers and Guggenheims seem mere kindergarten palaver. Summer is the time to die with Ivan Ilyitch and be born again with Moby Dick. To be educated with Henry Adams and eat grass with Walt Whitman.

Apropos erring tags of French, a little book that would make ideal steamer reading for anyone going across, anyone really interested in lingo, is *A Glossary of French Slang*, by Olivier Leroy and published by the World Book Company, of Yonkers, N. Y. This is not one of those detestable little manuals of tourist gabble but a gorgeous compendium of Gallic vulgate, edited by a French professor. You mustn't mind a certain number of rather strenuously candid metaphors, and you'll be wary, I hope, how you use some of them. If you can translate, right off the bat, such argot as *il a l'oeil americain*, *ella une araignee dans le plafond*, *il y a du monde au balcon*, *j'ai le bec sale*, *on lui a monte le bobechon*, *un verre de chien*, *etre a la comedie*, *pas de cresson sur la fontaine*, *faire monter a l'echelle*, *mettre du beurre dans les epinards*, *ta gueule, bebe!* then you don't need this little book. I only wish I myself had known of it before. If and when I next get to France I shall have vast hilarity in trying out some of its brisk neologies. That fellow at the cafe-bar on the Boule Miche, I can just see him grin.

Gissing Pond, out in the green Salamis Estates, is no more. Some lusty men appeared one day, dug trenches, and drained it. Now it is only a mud-hole, and evidently some building operation is toward. The high-minded H. H. remarks that whatever house is built on that site will hear the ghost-voices of April evenings that first lured Mr. Gissing on his quest.

I had always dreamed that somehow that particular corner of woodland might remain in fief to solitude. I had even vaguely schemed, somehow or other, getting it made into a permanent boudoir for frogs, a little sort of Endymion alcove of the world such as will be needed when New York spreads herself over the whole western end of Long Island. Gissing Park, I imagined it! I hope it will teach me a lesson, that a dream is ineffective unless backed by a title-deed.

But indeed I shall be surprised if whoever lives there does not sometimes hear, in the anxious dusks of spring, the barking of a mongrel phantom.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.



## Books of Special Interest

### Character Sketches

BYZANTINE PORTRAITS. By CHARLES DIEHL. Translated by HAROLD BELL. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1927.

Reviewed by CONRAD CHAPMAN

THIS is the second book by Professor Diehl to appear in English here within the last twelve months. The translator has left nothing to be desired in the way of a smooth, idiomatic rendering of a French book whose chief claim is its style; and for those who do not read French with ease, he has rendered a further service. Except for forgotten passages in Gibbon and Finlay and for a few chapters in Bury's "Later Roman Empire," none of the material here presented has been published before in English.

Diehl's book consists of nine biographical sketches, of which seven are of Emperors and two of Emperresses; to these are added four supplementary chapters. Except for Endocia, wife of Theodosius, in the fifth, and for Theodora, wife of Justinian, in the sixth century, the personages chosen lived between 750 and 1100 A. D. The object of the author is to show that even in that age and place woman played the more important rôle. He has therefore picked the seven Emperresses for their superiority and the two Emperors for their foolish or base character. With great refinement of detail and no small literary skill, he proceeds to develop this *cherchez-la-femme* theory of history, so dear to the French.

As we should expect, these famous ladies are painted in all the attributes associated with their romantic lives and the pomp and intrigue of the Byzantine Court. They are good-looking, of course. Endocia is described as "very beautiful, being rather tall, with a wonderful figure, and curly blond hair that framed her features in a golden aureole and enhanced the brilliancy of her fair complexion. Her lovely eyes were intelligent and full of life, and she kept them modestly lowered. She had a pure Greek nose, and she carried herself with grace and dignity." Theodora "was pretty and rather small, but extraordinarily graceful; and her

charming face, with its pale, creamy coloring, was lighted up by large, vivacious, sparkling eyes." Of Theophano we are told, "her beauty was radiant, superhuman, divine." Zoë Porphyrogenita "had large eyes under heavy eyebrows, a slightly aquiline nose, and beautiful fair hair. Her complexion and her whole body were of dazzling whiteness; she was of incomparable grace and most harmoniously proportioned. She had not a single wrinkle . . . and had a very elegant figure." [Zoë was then fifty.]

After their beauty comes their talent for intrigue: this is the more easily shown, as most of them rise to the imperial dignity from obscure origin, and all of them marry husbands who—Nicephorus Phocas excepted—figure as unworthy of governing a household, let alone an Empire. Theodosius, Endocia's husband, "was a nice, young fellow, of medium height, fair with black eyes, very polite, quiet, gentle, and amiable; somewhat of a bore and a pedant; of a sedentary disposition, a feeble character and easily influenced." Justinian would twice have lost the empire but for Theodora. Theophilus, wife of the Blessed Theodora, was a weakling, and so on. Of course the sketches of the two Byzantine Emperors are anything but flattering. Basil, founder of the Macedonian Dynasty, is "just a splendid human animal," an illiterate peasant, enriched by the gifts of an elderly Greek widow, he finally wins the notice of the Emperor, Michael III the Drunkard, by his success in a prize-fight. He subsequently advances himself rapidly in the imperial favor by sharing with and even outdoing the Emperor in all forms of vice, until one day he murders his benefactor and usurps the throne. His successor, Leo the Wise, turns out to be weak and foolish: he promulgated a decree against third marriages and then scandalized both Church and people by marrying four times, himself.

These characters seem to belong in a "fairytale, a country virgin and unknown," to quote M. de Vogüé. In spite of the author's belief in the "scientific spirit" of his approach, somehow the book has a

warmer atmosphere—almost reminding one of the "Arabian Nights." Picturesque details are not suppressed on the score of improbability. Basil's death was due to a hunting accident: the stag "caught his antlers in the sovereign's belt, lifted him bodily from the saddle . . . and carried him along for about sixteen miles." Again, "She (the Blessed Theodora) was very proud of having restored Orthodoxy. By her order, the Paulicians were given their choice between conversion and death; as they refused to yield, blood flowed freely in Asia Minor. The imperial inquisitors . . . did wonders: they succeeded in putting more than one hundred thousand of them to death by torture."

The Byzantine chronicler imitated the best Classical Greek style, but his imagination was his own and oriental. That is why it is so difficult to construct Byzantine history from contemporary chronicles.

But it is not history with which we should be here concerned. All the subjects had previously been treated in historical works by French writers, chief of whom were Rambaud, Schlumberger, and M. Diehl himself: e. g., Chapter III, on Theodora, is taken from Diehl's "Théodora"; Chapters VII to XI, on Basil, Leo, Theophano, and Zoë, parallel the fuller account of these personages in Schlumberger's "Épopée Byzantine," etc. It was neither for historic value nor for original research that the "Figures Byzantines" was awarded the Marcelin Guérin Prize by the French Academy, but for vividness of portrayal and elegance of style.

As character drawing, two types of ambitious women—the frankly worldly and the Puritanical—are strikingly done. All the sketches are drawn from the point of view of a man of the world: pleasure, wealth, power are the center of interest. The superficial requires no such effort to understand as the metaphysical; the book is, consequently, easy reading and its appeal broad.

### A Mirror to His Age

RELIQUIAE. By A. D. GODLEY. Edited by C. R. L. Fletcher. New York: Oxford University Press. 1927. \$6.

Reviewed by TUCKER BROOKE  
Yale University

WHEN Alfred Denis Godley, Public Orator in the University of Oxford, was himself awarded the degree of Doctor of Letters in 1919, the eminent person who for the occasion usurped Godley's office and presented him, confessed in gracious Latin the embarrassment he felt at his paradoxical position. So any reviewer of Godley's books must feel. How can language be found with which to reflect again, not too mudily, the sparkling wit and wisdom by which he held up the mirror to his age? These two posthumous volumes are as delightful reading as can well be come by, and as true an image of what was going on in the best academic minds during the last thirty-five or forty years. The only thing to do with them is to read, and having read to read again, for there is little in them that will not endure the stern test of being left upon one's bedside table.

A North Irishman by birth, classical don by vocation, conservative by politics and instinct, and a wit by the grace of Mercury, this melancholy and courtly Hellenist, who looked like Don Quixote, stands well in the tradition of Cowper, Hood, Calverley, Praed, and Procter. While he wrote the *Oxford Magazine* reached a height of brilliance that it will not easily attain again, and even *Punch* derived a special and superlative charm from the verses which bore his watched-for initials.

The volumes now edited by his Magdalen friend and colleague, Mr. C. R. L. Fletcher, give an ample and favorable impression of Godley's prolific mind. They are in prose and in verse, in English, Latin, Greek, and French: Godley could be equally witty and equally erudite in all these languages. They deal with many subjects, but especially with student life and university government, mountaineering, politics, and travel. It is their wit that will keep them alive, but they include much more than *jeux d'esprit*. There is an essay on walking trips (among others) which can hold its own with Hazlitt; and there are studies of special subjects—such as the papers on Greek topics and the incisive essays on Victorian literature—which, savory though the style is to the mere taster, really demand to be chewed and digested.

The University of Washington (Seattle) Chapbooks have now come into existence with the publication of "A Short View of Menckanism" (in Menckenes) by Joseph B. Harrison. Glenn Hughes is the editor of the series.



### The Natural History of Revolution.

By LYFORD P. EDWARDS.

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