

the next, notably his Italian policy, receive only the most casual mention.

If Lord Palmerston devoted most of his time to foreign affairs, he was by no means inactive or without opinions on internal matters. His biographer quite rightly points out that, though not zealous for parliamentary reform, he was a steady and sincere worker for many other reforms of a practical and tangible nature, especially in connection with the abolition of the slave trade. Incidentally Mr. Guedalla absolves him from the charge that he was eager to take a hand in our Civil War. It is noticeable however that, while he ordinarily takes pains to point out the "Palmerstonian" touch with an admiring pen, he sees nothing in the high-handed exploit of Captain Wilkes save an abstract question of international law.

For the benefit of his more professional readers, Mr. Guedalla has included a bibliography and an index, but he evidently feels that any system of exact references would detract unduly from the readable quality of his book. Readable it certainly is, and in addition suggestive and widely informed. In brief Mr. Guedalla has written in accordance with Victor Hugo's observation that "Lord Palmerston appartient un peu à l'histoire et beaucoup au roman."

An Aviator's Diary

WAR BIRDS: The Diary of an Unknown Aviator. New York: George H. Doran. 1926. \$3.50 net.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ALEXANDER PERCY

SO much of the ardor, the live idiocy, and the heartbreak of youth has found its way into the pages of this book that it has captivated the American reading public and sold by the thousands. Its very verve and excess strike us as peculiarly American and our Puritan scruples are anesthetized because the gay and bawdy incidents recounted are danced against a crimson backdrop of terror and tragedy and death. We have always wanted to know what those gallant birdmen of ours thought and felt in the brief, glittering interlude before they crashed, and at last this "Diary of an Unknown Aviator" seems to tell us.

It is just, therefore, to inquire whether the book is what it purports to be, an extraordinary document of real value, or whether it is merely another of those entertaining hoaxes now being served to the gullible public. Is this a real diary? Can the name of its author be given? The answer to these questions can be made only partially but accurately.

The book as it stands is not the verbatim diary of any one aviator but it is based largely on the actual diary of Henry McGavock Grider, of Grider, Arkansas, an American aviator who served with the British under Bishop and who fell fighting in France. These statements are conclusions drawn from the following indisputable facts:

Grider, a kinsman of Jacob McGavock Dickinson, ex-Secretary of War, kept a diary from the time he left Canada until the time he landed in England and this diary is now in the possession of his family. With certain verbal changes and a few additions, this diary comprises the first twenty-four pages of "War Birds." Later portions of the book tally in incident, sometimes even in phrasing, with letters written by Grider to friends and relatives near Memphis, Tennessee. As this first diary was not seen by the publishers of "War Birds," Grider presumably copied it into another book and continued the diary. This assumption is strengthened by the fact that a friend of his from Osceola, Arkansas, sent him a blank diary book, receipt of which he acknowledged on February 2nd, and to the use of which he frequently referred in subsequent letters. So much for the proof that "War Birds" is based on the actual diary of Henry Grider.

Now for the proof that the published volume is not the work of Grider alone. Grider was killed in action on June 18th, near Armentières, and his body was never found. "War Birds" purports to continue as a diary from June 18th to August 27th, and ends with an editor's note, which reads:

Here the diary ends due to the death of its author in aerial combat. He was shot down by a German plane twenty miles behind the German lines. He was given a decent burial by the Germans and his grave was later found by the Red Cross.

Apparently some one close to the dead aviator, probably one of his flying chums, took his original diary, deleted and changed it slightly, added to it considerably, and published it. Such treatment may have made a more readable book; it certainly made a less valuable document.

The BOWLING GREEN

"Pretending to Sleep"

WHAT are you working on now, is a question they frequently ask you. You must not try to tell them. You couldn't even if you would; and if it were possible it would not be wise.

The strange certainty that the conception, though still haphazard, partial, dim, will work itself out, will come to pass, is the craftsman's anchor to windward. If he has that certainty well bedded down in good holding bottom he can ride many a stiff onshore gust of procrastination and doubt. It is well to remember how little offing the artist—any artist has. The beach is very near. I mean psychically as well as financially.

Paul Valéry of the French Academy has written a book of essays called "Variety," now published here in an able translation by Malcolm Cowley. It is a book too profound for me to venture any systematic comment, but as it deals with matters in which we all have a right to speculate—the workings of the mind—I am not ashamed to set down some of my own thoughts. The word *speculate* is well chosen for its double intention. M. Valéry plays hazard among the most delicate and dangerous equilibria we have to consider. Whether writing about La Fontaine or Poe or Proust or Leonardo his theme is really the same: an introspection of the imaginative psyche and how it behaves under the pressure of creative desire. Not often before have I had a happier thrill of verification than in Valéry's pages: here, as previously in Remy de Gourmont, in Santayana, in André Gide, I have exclaimed to myself that this is a man who gives a recognizable picture of the unpicturable: the joys and anxieties of the expectant artist, the fantastic process of the pre-natal care of literature. What actually happens to a work of art before it is born is the gravest problem to the artist; it is a theme mostly disregarded by critics.

And naturally. It is one of those topics (of which there are more than you might suppose) on which whatever you say is more than likely to be nonsense; indeed, ought to be nonsense. The instinct of the writer who cannot and will not tell his friends what he is working on is based in a fear and shyness unspeakably wise. The innumerable amazements and symbolisms of every day are metabolizing his secret congestion; he is purged and poisoned thirty times a week, he shifts the burden of his reverie from one side to another to see how it carries easiest, there grows in him a mixed ferment and indolence, hope and horror, which only some fellow-initiate can properly envy or deplore. His black immersion in self, mingled with his naturally affectionate curiosity about other human beings, make his conduct grotesque. Playing choice and chance among a continual flicker of significances, constantly thinking of things that can never be mentioned, arrogant and apprehensive by turns, all he can rely on is that sense of certainty: the assurance that it will come. But you must not wonder at his idiotic bearing when someone says "what are you working on now?" Some of the inconspicuous and queer lopsides of this human race, if there are any, as some surmise, are due to Satan's casual visit to Eden on the sixth day, our birthday. He had heard that something was going on. "Well," he asked the Creator, "and what are you working on now?"

Of the great number of things in M. Valéry's book that I should like to quote, of the hundred or so passages of superb shrewdness and subtle understanding, I choose one particularly:

It is seldom that the lessons which literary history claims to teach have any bearing on the secret of how poems are made. Everything takes place within the artist, as if the observable events of his life had only a superficial influence on his works. The one important fact—the very act of the Muses—is independent of adventures, of the author's mode of life, of incidents, and of anything that could figure in a biography. Everything which history can observe is unimportant.

The essentials of his work are indefinable circumstances, occult encounters, facts visible to one man only, and others which are so easy or familiar to this one man that he disregards them. By examining ourselves, we can easily

discover that these incessant and impalpable events are the solid matter of our true personality.

Every creative being is half certain, half uncertain, of his own powers; he feels a known and an unknown, whose incessant relations and unexpected exchanges finally give birth to some production. I do not know what I shall do; yet my mind thinks that it knows itself, and I build and count on this knowledge, which I call *myself*. But I shall surprise myself; if I doubted this, I should be nothing. I know that I shall be astonished by this or that thought which will soon occur to me—and yet I demand this surprise! I build and count on it, as I count on my certainty. I hope for something unexpected which I shall create; I have need of my known and my unknown. . . .

Let us despair of having clear vision in these matters, and soothe ourselves with an image. I can imagine this poet, his mind full of ruses and resources, pretending to sleep in the imaginary centre of his still uncreated work, better to capture that moment of his own greatest power which is his prey. In the vague depth of his eyes, all the forces of his desire and all the springs of his instinct are stretched taut. And there, intent on the chances from which she selects her nourishment; there, very obscure in the midst of the nets which she has woven out of words, a mysterious Arachne, muse of the hunt, watches in silence.

Yes; "pretending to sleep." And he does not talk in his sleep; rather he sleeps in his talk. The only thing I a little demur to is limiting this dreaming life specifically to the artist, for in degree it is true of every human being. Symbolisms and fables are his preoccupation, and if he happens to be intent upon some still unaccomplished fancy he weaves them all into the fabric to see how and where they join his weave. Everything, from Orion's dancing figure sprawled across the sky, to the motor truck marked COAL AND ICE (surely there is some huge significance that these two cancelling opposites are always sold by the same merchant)—everything is calory to his huge appetite for pattern. The enormous uneasiness he feels rises from the large incongruity between his necessary deportment and the cruel insatiate demands of his embryo. So he keeps to the twilight of the mind, takes his dumb pleasure apart from scrutiny. He yearns, as all men must, for the long days and sun-warmed ground of spring; yet he dreads it too; dreads those long dusks that turn good byes into farewells, that shorten the winter nights so fit for silence, for poetries unwritten. Yet spring will come, and the generous daylight that compels too close a study of the dangerous earth.

"A good style in literature," said Ford Madox Ford in his book on Conrad, "if closely examined, will be seen to consist in a constant succession of tiny surprises." A very shrewd remark, and perhaps it is so because the artist's own life is a constant succession of magical amazements. And this faculty of surprising himself, which M. Valéry points out, is the happiest apoplexy in the whole disease. For that bliss, long despaired of, hoped for, counted on, he must sacrifice so much; you will forgive him some truanies.

Still it remains unpredictable, unamenable to paradigm. The analogy is grotesque, but I think of the mind as a kind of Chinese restaurant where little tables, dimly lit, are set about a polished dancing floor. Soft-footed Oriental boys, dressed in black, pass among the patrons; their demeanor has the vague inscrutability their race suggests to Westerners. The guests at the little tables are Thoughts. The foreign and gently misunderstandable servitors are the things that happen to us—the things that biographers can see. They, and the chop suey, are the visible explanation of the patrons' presence. Every now and then, with one accord, you will see all the Thoughts leave their tables and dance. To an unprejudiced other-planetary observer, looking (as we all do) from another star, it might be thought that the flitting and enigmatic visitation of those dark attendants was the explanation of the dance. To his observation the music, concealed in some balcony, would not be sensible.

Why and when those Thoughts will leave their chop suey and begin to dance, that is the problem.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

There is shortly to be put out in England, says *John O'London's Weekly*, what promises to be a literary discovery of considerable importance—the attempt made as a young man by Algernon Charles Swinburne to complete Keats's unfinished masterpiece, "Hyperion." The poem, which runs to two books and 527 lines, has been edited by Professor Georges Lafourcade, of the Institut Français in London, who also contributes an essay on the influence of Keats on Swinburne's poetry.

JOHN DAY

Because we believe that readers of THE SATURDAY REVIEW will be particularly responsive to the beauty of this story of two lives spent in the borderland between phantasy and reality, we quote selections from Miss Elinor Wylie's review of



Shadows Waiting

*By Eleanor
Carroll Chilton*

"Melodrama it is; melodrama of the intellect and of the emotions. . . . Even if we are to accept the word in its strictest meaning, as a drama with a running accompaniment of music, the music is here in the hushed slow poetry of certain scenes and the grave passion of others. . . . This is no 'delicate fantasy,' thank Heaven; it is executed with delicacy, and it is sufficiently fantastic to be true, but over and above these suaver virtues it is full of serious power and intelligence . . .

a little anatomy of melancholy that is all at once intense, poetic, and adorably well-bred. It is never hysterical, never trivial, and in spite of its extreme earnestness, it is never for an instant dull."

—Elinor Wylie

The Saturday Review of Literature

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Books of Special Interest

Words and Their Use

NEW METHODS FOR THE STUDY OF LITERATURE. By EDITH RICKERT. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1926. \$3.

Reviewed by Francis P. Donnelly, S. J.

PROFESSOR John M. Manly says in the Introductory Note, "Unless my judgment is badly at fault, Professor Rickert's book will be the sign and the cause of a new era in the study of literature." It is not a little presumptuous to differ from so fine an English scholar as Professor Manly, but in this case let us pray that his judgment is at fault.

With the exception of one chapter on Imagery, the entire book is taken up in the study of words, singly and combined, and chiefly of their sounds. The single letters, vowels and consonants, the syllables stressed and unstressed, the words mostly in their material aspect as found in the dictionary and grammar, their accent and their length, phrases and clauses in their length and rhythm, and also sentences, lines, and stanzas, are discussed, not however in this order but largely in the reverse order.

Although other purposes are avowed, the analysis of Professor Rickert is in fact one of sound chiefly. Her book is new in extending statistical methods and in applying them more largely than others and especially in devising elaborate methods of graphically depicting the different features analysed. For the most part a new terminology and many and very minute divisions accompany the analysis.

The serious limitation of Professor Rickert's methods is that her analysis supposes literature to be oral or sounded whereas it is mostly written. She rightly objects to other methods while admitting their utility. "There can be no question," she says, "that scientific study of literary sources and influences, bibliography and biography, geography, history—all phases of the conditions under which literature is produced—is of the highest importance for the understanding of literature. But it is not the study of literature itself." Professor Rickert's methods are unhappily not the study of literature either, because she omits for the most part the minds of author and reader and centers upon the medium. A chemical analysis or a spectroscopic analysis of the pigments on a canvas is not a study of painting but of paints.

Again, although Professor Rickert admits "a complete ignorance of the relationship between sound and æsthetic effect," and "the continual temptation to read into the sound phenomena associations of the word meanings," she herself forgets the obvious fact that language is purely conventional. The ripple of water and the crash of thunder every human being recognizes, but no one unaware of the meaning of ripple and of thunder can hear those sounds of nature in the sounds of the letters. The sounds of the lips are not the sounds of water or of electric storms. Yet Professor Rickert finds letters suggesting "very special and momentary effects" even through a translation.

Take, for instance, the line from an unknown mediæval carol writer who wished to suggest the Virgin's lullaby, "And still she lulled him asleep." It is all a melody of s and l. Or again, the Latin line of another carol writer who tried by the use of sounds to suggest the Virgin playing pat-a-cake with the Child, "Michi plausus oscula da-da," which fairly represents the patting sound.

It seems to the reviewer that these and several other such passages fairly represent the excellent imagination of Professor Rickert. In the Latin line we have the triumph of the hyphen converting the Latin da, da, into an early instance of dadaism and revealing the hitherto unsuspecting infant origin of that freakish language, to which Professor Rickert in her generous sympathy offers hospitality in her book.

The graphs devised to express the statistics are very elaborate and would demand more work than they are worth. Twenty-five years of teaching make the reviewer envious of Professor Rickert's students. She expects from them labor which he could not even hint at without peril to his existence. The purpose of science and its joy is discovery; the purpose and joy of literature is creation. Any method of studying literature which leaves out composition as its final goal is not literary and artistic. Assuredly the ancient rhetoric, which is still alive despite the premature announcement by Professor Manly that it was "slain and buried by the Romantics," never forgets that right thinking is the fountain head of composition and that the

value of the medium is in its message. No one gets to a telegram by analyzing a copper wire.

We are promised theses "too numerous to be listed," which are applying the new methods. Will they succeed in stilling the outcries, which are noted by Professor Rickert, against the Ph.D. degree as murdering the love of literature? We fear not. What is wanted in education is a Ph.D. for creative work as well as for scientific discovery, literature needs a small amount of analysis and a great deal of composition, the workshops of Professor Baker, not averages and percentages. Literature needs more books and methods such as Professor Mearns has given us in "Creative Youth." Suppose all these Chicago theses are completely successful in plotting and picturing every strand of sound in every writer of literature, you will then produce a "new era in literature" most assuredly, because any artist who has any originality or art will break through all those conventions and invent new combinations, as Joyce and the dadaists have done.

A Mortal God

THE LIFE OF GOTAMA THE BUDDHA. (Compiled exclusively from the Pali Canon.) By E. H. BREWSTER. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1926. \$4.

Reviewed by T. V. SMITH

University of Chicago

HISTORICALLY strange but psychologically obvious, great religious leaders have been for their followers more nearly myths than men. Had an adequate and true biography of them been available from the first, is it not certain that they would have grown less adorably great? No man is god to his Boswell. It is only when men know not what to trust that they trust they know not what. Persons become possible objects for devotion only as they become personages; and this metamorphosis takes place at its worst in the darkness, at its best in the gloaming, but with insuperable difficulty in the full glare of noonday.

It is, however, highly fitting that poetry should be poetically arrived at. So this is a beautiful life of one who has for centuries challenged the love and admiration of millions of men—the Buddha. Romantically and religiously regarded, it is satisfying; scientifically regarded, it is Buddha's resurrection shroud—the man himself is yet to seek. This biography is constructed by putting in presumable chronological order, under fitting headlines, the oldest legends, sayings, and reports concerning him. How old they are nobody knows. They are, however, taken exclusively from the Pali Canon, which in its present form was arranged at the Council of Patna, about 250 B. C. This story differs from other similar lives of the Buddha in that they mix up much later legends with these earliest ones regarding him. It has, therefore, the same advantage over them as would a life of Jesus based upon the gospels have over a life that mixed Dante and Milton indiscriminately with the earliest accounts of Jesus. Though this life of Gotama is, therefore, from a sourcebook compiled several centuries after his death, it is the best that present scholarship can achieve.

It is clear, however, that to get the kind of biography a contemporary literary conscience could be satisfied with one must read not only between the lines of such a compilation as this but also back of the lines. That is, he must use not only all knowledge available regarding the time and place but he must also use his imagination. This is the glory and the utility of the spiritual heroes of mankind—they become ideal only by doffing their reality, immortal only by losing their mortality. It is a beautiful Buddha that Mrs. C. A. F. Rhys Davids puts strategically at the threshold of this literary temple. Certainly no common mortal would ever see the beauties of the inner temple did she not color his glasses as he enters. Once on holy ground and in quest of human worth, the pilgrim can see the saint arise. From his reported talk, from his reported silence; from his reported action, from his reported inaction,—from these there emerges for her not a monk, nor a weak man, nor a wonder-man, nor a vain man, but a "Brother-man," "a willer of the welfare of men, the worker of the things that are worthy, the warden of his brethren's will . . . a helper as few have been, one who worded for men the 'better' within them . . . a helper of the many folk of his own world, a helper toward the worlds of man's wayfaring."



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