

Points of View

Here Was a Man

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

All admirers of Frank Moore Colby's work and all who ever knew Mr. Colby must be grateful to you and to Mr. Dodd for the review of "The Colby Essays" in your March 5 issue. I hope it is not presumptuous of me to add a personal word.

Mr. Dodd has skilfully and valiantly defended Mr. Colby against the charge of being an "indifferentist . . . egotistic, frosty, self-centered." That any such picture is a "caricature" is of course true, but it is not so easy to prove that Mr. Colby did "paint his own portrait" (adequately) "in his work." That, certainly, was far from his intention. He was not of the cult of self-expressionists but of the very choice group of idea-expressionists, as Mr. Dodd so ably demonstrates. This being true, is it not because Mr. Colby's ideas are so rich in content, and so perfectly word-embodied,

that the creator's personality retires into relative insignificance—as he would have desired?

Perhaps, at the risk of being impertinent, one may say that Frank Moore Colby did not "write for a living." That is self-evident to anyone who knows what comparatively meager returns such writing as his can look for. The great novelists may have built up modest fortunes once their place in popular favor was established; the great essayists have not required large wallets.

Yet livings have to be earned. Mr. Colby's was earned, over a period of some years, largely through his connection with a well-known New York publishing house. He was in active editorial charge of a certain encyclopædia and year book which rank high among their kind, and his work in this field was very faithful and fruitful. It was not work that he loved. He could not give it the allegiance that most professional men can give their chosen voca-

tion. His heart was in the kind of work into which he could throw his very self—and yet in which so little of his self is manifest.

One could reasonably expect that any tendency to "indifferentism" would appear, if ever, in relation to daily labors that were at best of rather a routine and humdrum sort—and that this "indifferentism" might extend to those who were associated with the editor in such daily labors. Surely they would soon have discovered the fact if Mr. Colby had been "a human iceberg." They never discovered anything of the kind. This being the case, one member of the staff who labored in 1913-16 in an upper-Broadway loft overlooking the Hudson feels impelled to render due if insignificant tribute to the man who was so kindly, so unfailingly patient, so considerate, so trustful that others would perform their assigned tasks as faithfully as he performed his.

I can see him yet, coming in of a morning, rather self-absorbed (or idea-absorbed), with his plodding walk and his inspirational pipe, to settle down to duties that sometimes must have seemed to clasp shackles upon his spirit. . . . A just man, a rare mind, a heart not worn on a sleeve; a man whom one could thoroughly respect and like, yea love, even where close personal fellowship was lacking. What a rich association with him must those have had who by age and interests and calibre were qualified to be his intimates!

ONE WHO REMEMBERS

Kipling's Attitude

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

Too much that has been said on the subject of prohibition invites that biblical thrust in the solar plexus, *who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?* It is hence the more refreshing to find something on the subject, which is pungently pat and convincing, and, to find it, where one might expect such a trove, in the latest volume of the seer-eyed Kipling.

In the tale of Prophet and the Country,

the old chucklesome Kipling once more delights us, with his slyly trenchant wit and wisdom, and the masterly ease with which his arrows find the bull's-eye. Using the rank dialect of a supposedly typical American, he serves up from a uniquely fresh point of view our "She-dominated Civilization" and the Prohibition "wished on to America by her women, while her sons were helping the Allies win the war." Most piquantly "the Revolt of the Red Corpuscles" is verbally screened for Mr. Kipling, by his expositor:

Deprive 'em (the Red Corpuscles) of their job by sterilizin' an' virginising the system, an' the Red Corpuscles turn on the human system an' destroy it bodily. Mentally, too, mebbe. *Ain't that a hell of a thought?*

All that the delightfully tragic story records, is condensed in a few prefatory stanzas of an apocryphal translation of Horace's Ode 20 (Book V) (?):

Whence public strife and naked crime
And—deadlier than the cup you shun—

*A people schooled to mock, in time,
All law—not one.*

*Cease, then, to fashion State-made sin,
Nor give thy children cause to doubt
That Virtue springs from iron within
Not lead without.*

If these lines, countersigned by the appalling statistics of bootleggers, do not hold an unanswerable challenge to prohibition, in its present state, I do not know where we shall find them. Nevertheless, if Mr. Kipling will permit a funbeam to flicker over the serious solidity of the theme, may one ask how much *iron within* was displayed by the narrative of "The Bull That Thought," when he "accompanied" Monsieur Voivon, when he filled their glasses five times, with the champagne "that went better at each descent."

Some latitude, however, one must allow to a story-teller. Even an imaginary drink helps to mellow and blend consecutive paragraphs.

Hats off, then, to Mr. Kipling, even, if we must gently remind him that he should not mistake the voices of ten political tailors in America as representatives of a population of over one hundred million.

ELLEN BURNS SHERMAN

Ashburnham, Mass.

The Reviewer's Way

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

There is a fine superciliousness exhibited in the last sentence of Mr. Elmer Davis's review of "I'll Have a Fine Funeral": Which, after all, is the business of the novelist. Unfortunately, however, the review fails to exemplify the corollary of this, i.e., that a careful examination of this same business of the novelist is the business of the critic.

Instead, Mr. Davis devotes most of his space to maintaining that this, if not the best of all possible worlds, is at least a very good one, and that Mr. Mazière's attack must therefore necessarily be fallacious. The reviewer does not, of course, pretend actually to know the facts which led to the writing of the book under consideration; he merely feels that they must be misinterpreted, because they fail to fit his ideas.

The accuracy of the reviewer's observation is fairly well indicated by his phrase, "a social-economic order of two or three centuries' standing." Apparently he never heard of the Industrial Revolution, or at least does not know that it began scarcely a hundred years ago, and it is not yet completed.

But most of our present-day reviewers, not content with their privilege of making *ex cathedra* pronouncements on literature, feel also impelled to explain Life to their dumb and benighted readers. Once wholesome comments on the effects of a little knowledge, and of power misplaced, are no longer fashionable.

CHARLES EDMUND NOYES

New York.

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

Praise God and the editor of *The Saturday Review* for choosing a man like Leonard Bacon. He is one of the two or three reviewers who has given Osbert Sitwell's book "Before the Bombardment" a little of the praise that is due it. Sitting quietly here in Europe, one gets tired of seeing mediocre books "boomed" by literary chain gangs while good ones are lost in the clouds of smoke. "Before the Bombardment," it seems to me, is likely to outlast the whole collection of "best novels" with which obliging reviewers have garlanded the American public this year.

LOUIS BROMFIELD

Paris, France.

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27th Division Air Service

MILLER FIELD
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February 14th, 1927

Mr. Alan Rinehart,
George H. Doran Company,
244 Madison Avenue,
New York City.

Dear Sir:

I have just finished reading the copy of "War Birds" which you so kindly sent me. Naturally, I have read a great many articles and publications dealing with Air Service activities during the war, but never have I had the pleasure of reading one so full of human interest and yet so accurate in detail as to this one.

Having been a member of that same group of Cadets with the author, having crossed to England on the "Carmania" with them, trained with them at the various R. A. F. schools mentioned and eventually gone up to the British front with them, I am in a position to vouch for the accuracy of both the events and sensations described. All of the characters are familiar, some of them very close friends, and in comparing the diary with my own covering the same period I find that facts and places correspond almost exactly.

Certainly there could be no more fascinating and more human story of war-time Air service than this.

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Commanding.

GAV/el

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DORAN BOOKS

The New Books

The books listed by title only in the classified list below are noted here as received. Many of them will be reviewed later.

Art

DRAWINGS OF THE EARLY FLEMISH SCHOOL. By A. E. POPHAM. With 72 collotypes. McBride. 1926. \$5.

Like its fellows in the English-made series "Drawings of the Old Masters," this quarto admirably serves both the amateur and the professional student of the history of art. In it one may trace the story of linear design from the miniature painters of Flanders at the end of the fourteenth century to Old Bruegel, beyond the middle of the sixteenth. The indispensable sheets are reproduced and there are also novelties, as the two charming drawings ascribed to Scorel. The editor has used commendable caution in attributions and has not hesitated to offer a fine drawing though its authorship be doubtful. The catalogue indications are satisfyingly full for a popular book, and the bibliographical leads are entirely adequate. Amid the slovenliness now prevailing in art historical books, this series is a shining example of editorial probity.

FANTIN-LATOUR. By *Gustave Kahn*. Dodd, Mead. \$2.

CONSTABLE. By *André Fontainas*. Dodd, Mead. \$2.

MEXICAN ARCHITECTURE OF THE VICE-REGAL PERIOD. By *Walter L. Kilham*. Longmans, Green.

Belles Lettres

THE DEVELOPMENT OF VIRGIL'S ART. By *HENRY W. PRESCOTT*. University of Chicago Press. 1927. \$4.

After two thousand years it is difficult to offer novelties in Virgilian interpretations. Heinze, however, in "Vergils Epische Technik," succeeded in making a significant contribution. His volume, despite its burden of argument, should have been translated long ago, since its penetrating methods—as Garrod has proved—may be employed to advantage in studying more recent authors. Professor Prescott has here reproduced the best part of Heinze's volume. He has, however, by no means translated or paraphrased. He has rather assimilated and rewritten, now judiciously condensing, now expanding with profit, always presenting the matter in an effective arrangement and with complete mastery of Virgil's epic and its sources. He has also rescued many profitable suggestions from Norden's bulky volume of erudite and extravagant guesses, and for a helpful discussion of Virgil's earlier years he has judiciously sifted out the more generally accepted results of recent studies—chiefly American—conducted in the mazes of the Appendix Vergiliana. It is encouraging to see that a conservative scholar could find so much of permanent value in these recent investigations. The book will be read with profit by teachers of Virgil, and can claim a legitimate place on the shelves of intelligent readers of literature who occasionally range into the ancient field.

BUMPS. By *Albert Payson Terhune*. Harper's. **PROSE PREFERENCES.** Selected and edited by *Sidney Cox* and *Edmund Freeman*. Harper's. \$2.50.

THE SOURCES OF HAMLET: With Essay on the Legend of Sir Israel Gollancz. Oxford University Press. \$2.75.

MR. PICKWICK'S PILGRIMAGES. By *Walter Dexter*. Lippincott. \$5.

THE FIRST ENGLISH TRANSLATORS OF THE CLASSICS. By *C. H. Conley*. Yale University Press.

THE OUTLINE OF SANITY. By *G. K. Chesterton*. Dodd, Mead. \$2.50.

PAGES IN WAITING. By *James Milne*. Putnam. \$2.50.

Biography

LADY MILLER AND THE BATHEASTON LITERARY CIRCLE. By *RUTH AVALINE HESSELGRAVE*. Yale University Press. 1926. \$2.

Eighteenth century enthusiasts never weary of hearing about Lady Miller and her Vase. Beginning with Horace Walpole, the *cognoscenti* have laughed at both and displayed an insatiable desire to know more. Now Miss Hesselgrave has written it all up with the apparatus of modern scholarship and put the period to the whole absurd performance. Those who remember Miss Repplier's handling of kindred subjects in "A Happy Half Century" may wish that Miss Hesselgrave had used her material more gaily, but we must not cavil, for we have it—and in a format which is in the highest traditions of the Yale University Press. Peace to Egeria and her *bouts rimés*!

THE EMPRESS-MIGHT-HAVE-BEEN. By *Octave Aubry*. Harper's. \$2.50.

THE HEALING OF RODOLPHE GRIVEL. By *Fabre d'Olivet*. Translated by *Nayán Louise Redfield*. Putnam. \$4.

ANTHONY COMSTOCK. By *Heywood Brown* and *Margaret Leech*. A. & C. Boni. \$3.

SONS OF THE EAGLE. By *George Creel*. Bobbs-Merrill. \$3.50.

I THE JEW. By *Maurice Samuel*. Harcourt, Brace. \$2.50.

THE ACTOR IN DICKENS. By *J. B. Van Amerongen*. Appleton.

EARLY DAYS IN UPPER CANADA. By *John Langton*. Edited by *W. A. Langton*. Macmillan.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A FISHERMAN. By *Frank Parker Day*. Doubleday, Page. \$2.50 net.

ENCOUNTERS. By *Ife Evans*. Houghton Mifflin. \$3.

A METHODIST SAINT. By *Herbert Asbury*. Knopf. \$5 net.

Fiction

THE FRUIT OF EDEN. By *LOUISE GERARD*. Macaulay. 1927. \$2.

Our heroine here is Hilary Fane, a sportive English girl of noble lineage who, unescorted and in male attire, meets with love and adventure while driving her motorcar about the rustic roads of southern France. An impoverished young native, Paul, the Marquis de Rochefallain, on first meeting mistakes her for an effeminate boy, but later, discovering his error, is inflamed to the extent of abducting and concealing her in the deserted castle of his forefathers, where for several days she undergoes a really painful experience. An accident, inflicting concussion of the brain, necessitates her restoration to liberty and return to England, whence, on being given sad tidings of the stork's approach, she goes back to the too impulsive and warm-blooded Paul. Need we add that the grieving youth, torn by love and contrition makes amends by marrying her and dedicating his life to atonement for his sin? And that the stork's message proved a false alarm?

THE EYE OF LUCIFER. By *FREDERIC F. VAN DE WATER*. Appleton. 1927. \$2.

Two members of the New York State Mounted Police, Sergeant Delaney and Trooper Cameron, while patrolling roads in the vicinity of a nearby town, are summoned thither by the murder of a local millionaire. Mystery, of course, envelops the crime, suspicion of guilt falling upon two unidentified evil characters and two Russians, a sister and brother. The murder of the latter, burglary of a farmhouse and torture of an old man quickly follow, depredations which our two bewildered, but courageous, lads are powerless to prevent. "The Eye," it transpires, a huge emerald which had belonged to the late Czar, is the cause of all the sanguinary wrongdoing. Further details of the story we may not impart, though the devotee of adventure fiction should not be disappointed in learning them from the book itself.

THE HOUSE OF SECRETS. By *SYDNEY HORLER*. Doran. 1926. \$2.

The jacket of this nonsensical mystery novel is adorned with the dubious pun: "Horler for Excitement!", a jest whose quality is appropriate to that of the tale which follows. On being summoned home to England, after a long absence abroad, young Barry Wilding is surprised to find that he is the heir to 800 pounds a year and to his family's isolated ancestral home, The Durdles. There is a condition attached to the legacy, but Barry, on attempting to fulfil the course required of him is at once beset by incomprehensible and violent attacks upon his person. A young girl seeks to warn and befriend him; he is roughly used and repeatedly outwitted by sundry strange villains; all of which extraordinary doings serve but to intensify the befuddled youth's determination to discover what is going on. In his processes of revelation, at the close, our author (in the reader's estimation) severely stubs his toe.

ARIANE. By *Claude Anet*. Knopf. \$2.50.

LUD IN THE MIST. By *Hope Mirreles*. Knopf. \$2.50.

LOVE IS ENOUGH. By *Francis Brett Young*. Knopf. 2 vols. \$5.

A METHODIST SAINT. By *Herbert Asbury*. Knopf. \$5 net.

JEREMY TAKES A HAND. By *Cornelia Kane Rathbone*.

THE BLUE BODICE. By *Antoine Sorrel*. Writer's Guild.

THE LADY OF GESTURES. By *Charlton Andrews*. Macaulay. \$2.

(Continued on next page)

BLACK BUTTERFLIES

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