

admitted under fire that this concentration was probably dangerous, after some of the eminent had pooh-poohed the fact that it existed at all.

Important to us here in New York was the opening, on the second of February, of the new one hundred and eighty million Grand Central Terminal, with its seventy acres and its thirty-two miles of track. Twenty-five million people were to pass its gates annually. And, on the first of May, the Woolworth Building first received those myriad bees of business long to throng its multicellular hive. These, as I say, were matters of local interest. So was the fact that Mayor Gaynor frowned upon the one-step, tango, and grizzly bear. But our newspapers widened our horizon. We absorbed accounts of the general strike in Belgium, of the illness of Pope Pius X, of the assassination of the King of Greece, of Liebknecht's expose of the Krupps in the Reichstag, of the Dayton flood, —and on Sunday perhaps we read Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's article on England's next war, answering General von Bernhardi's "Germany and the Next War," in which Sir Arthur pointed out among other things that he himself was a member of the Anglo-German society, which was designed to promote amity between the two countries, and that he had never really believed in the German menace at all.

And perhaps we yawned a bit over that, as it all seemed very far away and unimportant,—and languidly took up the rotogravure section, to appraise the portrayal by Paul Helleu, the French etcher, of those he considered the most beautiful women in this our America. Or perhaps—

*(To be continued in a fortnight)*

## Lincoln in Fiction Guise

FOREVER FREE. A Novel of Abraham Lincoln. By HONORE WILLIS MORROW. New York: William Morrow & Co. 1927. \$2.50.

Reviewed by ALLAN NEVINS

TO make Lincoln the central figure and hero of a novel was a daring venture. It could not possibly be a complete success: fiction cannot challenge history so directly and escape the logical penalty. It ceases in large part to be fiction at all, and yet it annoys the informed reader by the gross liberties it takes with historical fact. When we find the third chapter of this book introducing a beautiful spy named Miss Ford into the White House, a highly melodramatic invention, and at the same time treating Lincoln, Seward, Welles, McClellan, and all the rest with careful precision, putting into their mouths speeches that they actually said, we fear the worst. We foresee a queer mélange of the literally true and the preposterously untrue. We fear to find Lincoln escaping from some vile plot of the lovely spy to the Cabinet meeting at which he reads first Petroleum V. Nasby and then the Emancipation Proclamation, or Lincoln winning Miss Ford over to the Union side by the grace with which he recites the letter to Mrs. Bixby.

As a matter of fact, the novel proves to be much better than such forebodings would suggest. It is written with care and literary skill; it is carefully documented; it is interesting from beginning to end. Take away the absurd sub-plot about the spy Miss Ford, her work as social secretary in the White House, and her intrigues with Confederate emissaries, and we have left a great deal of adroit and plausible historical portraiture. Lincoln becomes a human figure, and if not quite the man we had supposed, Mrs. Morrow is as much entitled to her own interpretation as Mr. Nathaniel Stephenson. The peppery Mrs. Lincoln, first indulging in some "tantrum" and then all contrition before her "Abra'm," is ably realized. The impudent McClellan, the boyish, debonair John Hay, the forthright Stanton, the benevolent Father Welles, all speak and act like consistent human beings, not mere historical puppets. There is a good deal in the background and episodes with which the historical expert would quarrel, but the author achieves her aim of investing the period, the place, and the famous people with a very considerable degree of reality.

Mrs. Morrow has been happy in her choice and limitation of the central theme. Refusing to be drawn into an attempt to deal with all Lincoln's four years in the White House, she centers her attention upon the struggle of 1861-62 over the emancipation issue. In one aspect, it was a tense and dramatic political struggle, the abolitionists and radicals insisting that Lincoln make the freeing of the slaves as well as the restoration of the Union

an object of the war. In another aspect it was a painful psychological struggle, Lincoln hesitating, doubting, but finally deciding that however it embittered the struggle, emancipation would help the North to victory. Mrs. Morrow's final scene, the absurd Miss Ford having been bloodily removed from the action, shows Lincoln dipping his pen in a bottle of ink held for him by Taddie, and, with Cabinet members standing in the background, signing his name to the Emancipation Proclamation.

## A Romance of Avignon

THE POPE OF THE SEA. By VICENTE BLASCO IBAÑEZ. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1927. \$2.50.

BLASCO IBAÑEZ calls this, his newest novel—it has only recently appeared in Spain—"an historical medley." Actually it is a guide-book novel of the baldest sort. The fictional element is slight and can be easily thrust to one side. A young Spaniard of historical interests and ample leisure falls in love with an Argentine widow of great wealth and beauty, and volunteers to act as her cicerone in Avignon. Thus begins a courtship which is pursued through sixteen chapters of historical disquisition, which ranges geographically from Avignon and Perpignan to the old Spanish town of Peniscola, and which finally ends in Don Claudio's conquest of his beloved Rosaura. The characters are the merest shadows; it is the descriptions of Avignon and the other old towns, and the evocation of the history connected with them, which interests Blasco Ibañez.

The history is done with dash and color, though with inevitable sketchiness. Blasco Ibañez describes the migration of the Papacy to Avignon, the gay, rich life of the medieval town on the banks of the Rhône, and the construction of the great papal palaces. He pictures the pilgrimages, the triumphal exhibition of captive Moors, the arrival of monarchs, the flirtations, the dances on the bridge, and the street-fighting. Some pages are given to the poet Petrarch, who graced Avignon with his residence. Then Blasco Ibañez, speaking always through Claudio, goes on to the great papal schism, and to the feud between church and empire. Claudio is especially concerned with one of the Spanish antipopes, the Archbishop Pedro de Luna of Toledo, who was elected by the Avignon cardinals in 1394 under the title of Benedict XIII, and who proved an adroit and unscrupulous antagonist of the regular pope, Boniface IX. We hear at great length of the character, exploits, and crimes of Luna, and we follow him to his sea-girt fortress, the little promontory of Peniscola, when he is driven into exile. It was his residence in this ocean stronghold which gave him his title of "the pope of the sea," and it was here that, after various attempts on his life, he met a secluded and peaceful end. Blasco Ibañez narrates the whole story with ease and grace. The result can hardly be called a successful novel, but it is a good book for the tourist to take with him to Spain and southern France.

## A First Novel

MORNING, NOON AND NIGHT. By KENNETH PHILLIPS BRITTON. Hartford, Conn.: Edwin Valentine Mitchell. 1927. \$2.

Reviewed by GRACE FRANK

THIS is one of those excellent first novels that one would like to praise unreservedly. And if the whole book kept pace with its parts one could. For its best parts do more than promise: they fulfil. Paris in its rôle of "the public playground for American children" (Mr. Britton's phrase) has been exploited in more than one recent novel. Mr. Britton's Paris is as gay and meaningless, as drunk and aimless as Nancy Hoyt's and Ernest Hemingway's. But, though it is less buoyant than the one and less brittle and crystalline than the other, it is something more than either of them. It takes its stand not only at the Ritz bar and the cabarets of Montmartre, but memorably at the Gare St.-Lazare; it peeps at the resident colony and the would be resident colony from the rue Balzac; it avoids for the most part—thank Heaven—the Dôme and the Rotonde. The author's observations along the way are both shrewd and witty and if he gives us no taste of the Paris of the French, he at least cuts through the glazed icing of the American Paris and shows it for what it is.

Moreover, before he transfers his heroine from

a Rhode Island village to Paris he manages to excavate below the stony pastures of a small New England community and bring up not mere scraps and potsherds but several vases of notable quality. His heroine throughout the earlier pages, for all her drabness, has vitality. It is after she goes to Paris and as a woman of thirty-five acquires "a twenty-five veneer and a notoriety complex" that she slowly hardens into something not quite human. She and Connie, despite their high spirits and the clever things they say, too often turn into painted mannequins. Especially is this true when the plot quickens not of itself but of its author's hot-house forcing. The stagey Mrs. Judson, the incident of the stolen earrings, the callow melodrama connected with the heroine's frustrated "initiation" are quite unworthy of the book at its soundest and sincerest. But at its soundest and sincerest it sets a high standard, and both author and publisher are to be congratulated on this, their first venture.

## A Chinese Classic

THE RESTITUTION OF THE BRIDE.

Translated from the Chinese by E. BUTTS HOWELL. New York: Brentano's. 1927. \$3.50.

Reviewed by HOWARD BROWN

IN this volume Mr. Howell adds to his earlier translations from the Chinese classic "Chin Ku Chi Kuan," a collection of stories written by two unidentified scholars during the middle of the seventeenth century. Being the fruit of a civilization which knew itself and possessed a common background of ideas, they are stories with a theme. One tells of the rewards of virtue, another of the lack of dependence which worth has upon social class; and two, at least, out of the six deal with the problem of luck, or fate. There is nothing here, certainly, to confuse a western reader. Up until the present time, when our system of values is subject to question on every hand, these and other general conceptions served as the framework upon which many an author erected his literary house. And with such a central core universally conceded, it was infinitely simpler to make one's writing intelligible and effective. This is what the stories at hand are to a surprising degree.

But not only are they emotionally convincing because of sound philosophical basis; they give evidence in addition of an art which was just as definitely conceived. Theme, and especially character are present, but subordinated to the story's value as entertainment. The authors were aware that the art of the *chef* and the story-teller are equally designed to cause delight, the one concocting his dishes for the palate, the other for the brain, an organ doubtfully subtler in its reactions. Both organs, however, are more exacting in some people than in others. There are certain palates which prove jaded to ordinary food, as there are certain minds too fine for other than the subtlest and most delicate patterns of art. These will find refreshment in "The Restitution of the Bride."

We have to thank Mr. Howell for presenting this fragile world unmarred. His translation is clear and unaffected, while his notes illuminate and do not intrude. The illustrations by a native artist add to the flavor of the whole.

## Roman Days

DAWN. By IRVING BACHELLER. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1927. \$2.50.

MR. BACHELLER could hardly have chosen a more appealing or colorful period in which to lay the scenes of his new historical novel. Purporting to record the adventures of a Greek girl converted to Christianity during the lifetime of Christ (she is assumed indeed to be the woman taken in adultery), the tale moves from the sands of the desert to the bazaars and temples of great cities, from the luxurious homes of the Romans to the dens of Ishmaelite bandits, from the hovels of the faithful to the prisons and palaces of their oppressors.

Merging with the tale of Doris and of her long wanderings in search of her lover are episodes from the public life and the last days of Christ and from the teaching and martyrdom of His disciples. Doris comes into intimate contact not only with the humbler members of her faith, the halt and blind who were healed, but also with the great teachers of the day, St. Paul, Barnabas, and Apollos. She herself acquires a potent eloquence in spreading the gospel. And in her journeys from one end of the Holy Land



to the other she encounters every conceivable adventure and every conceivable type of person. Escaping from the snares of outlaws and bandits, she faces imprisonment or death in the arena at the hands of the Romans; rejecting the advances of Caligula and Vespasian, she is threatened by the cruelty of the Pharisees and the High Priest. Yet she remains ever young and beautiful, loving and beloved, a typical heroine with a saving vanity that makes her almost human.

Here then is a pageant of Oriental richness, a romance crowded with incidents, a somewhat pedestrian and episodic narration of great and stirring events. Historically the picture seems accurate enough. (The reviewer has noted only that the connections of Caligula and Vespasian with Judea at the time assumed by the story cannot be verified and that Rome's persecution of the Christians is probably dated too early. The misspelling of Tiberias is a little confusing.) The language is of course the pseudo-Biblical language necessitated by the subject. Sometimes it is quite effective, sometimes a little dry and hard. (The incident of the lions' cave, for example, has recently been more tersely and delicately related by Martin Armstrong in his "Desert"). Sentimentality for the most part is commendably absent. What one misses in the tale is the creative touch, the imaginative insight into characters and events, that might have made of such a theme a thing of significant beauty.

## A Post-War World

THE LONGEST SHADOW. By JEFFERY E. JEFFERY. Boston: Little, Brown Company. 1927. \$2.

NOWADAYS when a serious novelist writes of the post-war world without bitterness, irony, or satire, we are apt to find his flavor slightly old-fashioned. We are so accustomed to the wormwood, masquerading as absinthe, which is offered us by the perverse school of fiction that, when we come upon a piece of good white bread, we may mistake it for a marshmallow. Yet Mr. Jeffery himself graduated from the war with wounds and medals to his credit. In an era of strident disillusionment he might well be forgiven for beating his breast and blowing his brasses with the rest.

Instead, he chooses to chronicle the spiritual problems of a civilized young man, a young man who persists in retaining his crusader's zeal and in remaining a visionary despite the ghastly realities of the war and despite his disheartening affair with a complex, sophisticated, and ruthless modern woman. Philip Queste is a romanticist and an idealist; the girl he loves is a rather unprincipled hedonist; his friends and family are in varying degrees practical persons adjusted to their environment. Mr. Jeffery pictures the clashing standards and temperaments of all these people against the background of an England still struggling with the changes wrought by the war. His tale is stirringly simple and essentially convincing.

Although the author lacks the protestant note characteristic of the earlier Galsworthy, his sensitiveness to fine-grained living and thinking is reminiscent of the greater novelist's. His characters, too, emerge in something the same way that Galsworthy's do, rounding themselves out alone, unaided apparently by auctorial modeling. The scenes between Philip and Judy—their quarrels and reconciliations, his difficulty in believing her other than the goddess of his dreams—are managed with beautiful impartiality. The influence of Philip's mother upon her son is suggested with exactly the right degree of emphasis—the influence of an impulsive woman who ran away from her respectable husband with a lover and bequeathed to Philip a curious letter urging him to cultivate and exult in his emotions. There are other fine things in the book, notably the portrait of a woman widowed by the war, bitter, starving for love, unable to endure the happiness of others. Indeed Mr. Jeffery has accomplished his task with such thoughtfulness and artistry that one has no desire to call attention to the shallower places in his story.

"The Longest Shadow" is not to be classed as a great novel—in this sense few novels are great—but it is a pleasant book to read, a gracious, restrained, urbane book, soundly and delicately fashioned. After the tales of hectic inertia so fashionable at present, it seems almost too true to be good. But it is good—and a welcome antidote to the others.

## The BOWLING GREEN

### The Folder

IT seems to be time for another dip into The Folder. When I had the good fortune to encounter Jim Whitall at lunch the other day he asserted candidly that the best Bowling Greens are those that come straight from The Folder. I have much respect for Jim's judgment: he was my editor-in-chief, eighteen years ago, on that admirable magazine *The Haverfordian*.

Even in so small a matter as anthologizing from The Folder it is necessary to use discretion. As A. L. remarked the other day, after examining one of the \$20,000 copies of Colonel Lawrence's book, people immediately conclude that when documents are expurgated ("boulderized," a publisher friend of mine innocently calls it; and by the way, has anyone ever written a Life of Bowdler?) it is because portions were obscene. Not at all. Expurgations are usually for perfectly sound reasons of political and social expedience. The most interesting characteristic of man is that he is an animal keenly aware of alternatives.

I find first of all a memorandum that, tastes in reading being what they are nowadays, it should be explained that Michael Sadleir's "Trollope" is not a book about a woman of the streets.

59th Street writes:—

Why have you never stated that the sprightliest of all journals about books is that monthly *Books of Today and Tomorrow* issued by the famous bookshop Hatchard's in London, 187 Piccadilly? It is full of gorgeous chaff. Brentano's *Book Chat* is perhaps the nearest approach to it over here. The trouble with most American booksellers is that they feel they have a Mission to Uplift the public. The public wants to be amused. Hatchard's always advertise themselves as "Booksellers to Their Majesties the King and Queen." I wonder if Their Majesties ever read *Books of Today and Tomorrow*.

Philadelphia writes:—

There's a cigarette ad that always catches my eye in theatre programs. I forget what cigarette, but the slogan is *For the man who feels entitled to life's better things*. I've always wanted to see a bookseller list some titles *For the man who feels entitled to read really unusual books*. My own list, this season, would begin like this:

As It Was, by H. T.  
Mr. Gilhooly, by Liam O'Flaherty  
Two Gentlemen in Bonds, by John Crowe Ransom  
Trumpets of Jubilee, by Constance Rourke  
Mr. Fortune's Maggot, by Sylvia Townsend Warner  
The King's Henchman, by Edna St. Vincent Millay  
The Ghost Book, edited by Cynthia Asquith  
Marching On, by James Boyd

I am quite aware that this list would not do for anyone else.

R. O. B., Chicago, writes:—

My mind is like one of those folding metal cups we used always to take to the Sunday School picnic, you know, with little rings fitting into each other, each smaller than the one above it. But it has many more rings and I spend most of my life peering down into them as they stretch away growing smaller and smaller. When I must be actively at something the thing simply folds itself up with a bit of clanking, ready to stretch out the moment activity ceases.

There are a great many random notes and clippings in The Folder that would take some time to expound in detail. Some, too, whose explanation is uncertain. I don't know just why I preserved the newspaper cutting about LIFE POSSIBLE ON MARS. And here's a bulletin from a little agricultural college in Arkansas that rather pleased me by its honest simplicity. It is Commonwealth College, Mena, Ark., and the report, listing the resources of the institution, includes "Sweet potato dryer with vegetable cellar." There was something about that that gave me a thrill of admiration, more than I often get in reading about the big universities. The treasurer of Commonwealth College says "It takes approximately \$25 a month during the school year to supply the gasoline and kerosene for the fifty-three lamps that make up the lighting system of the whole village. The entire cost of maintenance of each person at Commonwealth, member or student, averages annually about \$125."

Commonwealth College appears to be founded on the ideas of Ruskin College in Florida, which was suggested by Ruskin College at Oxford, the first workingmen's college. It sounds good to me. Its little bulletin is well written and printed: it contains a description of sunset in the Ozarks that Ruskin himself would have relished. I've thought a good deal about that Sweet Potato Dryer.

A clipping from a catalogue of Charles W. Clark Company, 235 West 23 Street, listing a job lot of sets of the novels of Mark Rutherford, six volumes, published at \$9, now offered at \$3.98 the set. This was to remind me that I've never read any "Mark Rutherford," but he has been consistently praised by shrewd critics for many, many years. People who are always complaining about having their reading chosen for them by guilds and committees might have a go at Rutherford and see what it's all about.

Every censure, every sarcasm respecting a publication which the critic, with the criticized work before him, can make good, is the critic's right. The writer is authorized to reply, but not to complain. . . . The critic must know what effect it is his object to produce; and with a view to this effect must he weigh his words. But as soon as the critic betrays that he knows more of his author than the author's publications could have told him; as soon as from this more intimate knowledge, elsewhere obtained, he avails himself of the slightest trait against the author; his censure instantly becomes personal injury. . . . This determination of unlicensed personality, and of permitted and legitimate censure (which I owe in part to the illustrious Lessing) is beyond controversy the true one.

—Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*.

A client who is studying music in Florence and remembers our enthusiasm for Benozzo Gozzoli (whose work we know only in photographs) writes:—

The Gozzoli fresco is my Florentine secret and I'll confess it to you. I've never seen it except in reproductions. I pass it by four times a day and I salute the Palazzo Riccardi and say "Ha! you're holding the heart's desire, you're holding romance, you're holding something very precious. Hold it. Some day when I'm properly in the mood I'll come in, but then my romance will be finished." You understand. There's lots to see in Florence—I can afford to save the most James Stephensian as ultimate reward.

Among numerous specimens of Publishers' Chat, we find these filed away in The Folder for comment.

From the jacket of "The King's Henchman."

Thomas Hardy said, not so long ago, that there were two and only two great things in the United States: the poetry of Edna St. Vincent Millay and our "recessional buildings."

We admire both these achievements as much as anyone, but they are not the only two.

From the spring catalogue of Harcourt, Brace and Co.:

M. Siegfried's last visit was in 1925, when he toured nearly every state, met nearly everyone of importance.

This seems to us highly unlikely. It is not always easy to know who the important people are.

A letter from a Publisher's Young Man:

Don't miss reading ———. It has barbaric color. It has a fine sense of spirituality combined with a very earthy and even heathenish kind of animality. Most of all, it has an atmosphere of tragic fatality which is pure Hellene.

It has flaws of writing, to be sure. All books have. But to me there came in reading it a sense of the supernal tragedy which is in Othello.

It's published March 18th.

An advertisement in the *New York Times* which struck me as a pleasant suggestion for the beginning of a story:

Would you like to go abroad with a few congenial people, in a large, luxurious limousine, with a skilled chauffeur, and a delightful hostess?

Of course this is the perfect way to see Europe, but few people know anyone with whom to do it and many don't want to have the trouble of their own car and chauffeur.

Mrs. Eleanor Daggett Karsten (herself) is again taking nine people this way in her two seven-passenger Fiat limousines, sailing in late April.

The party is now being formed. If interested, wire or write at once. Single individuals and couples equally acceptable. References exchanged. Names of all former guests given on request.

Address Mrs. Eleanor Daggett Karsten, 1,066 Whitney Avenue, New Haven, Conn.

"Are you a Collector?" writes a correspondent. I was about to say No, not in any specific sense, but then I paused. For I pay several hundred dollars a year to rent a room where I go to Collect my thoughts.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY