

Points of View

More on Beecher

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

The Saturday Review has, I feel, done us all a service by printing Mr. Samuel Scoville, Jr.'s, further attack upon my "Henry Ward Beecher: An American Portrait." For in this second installment of obprobrium Mr. Scoville appears to have assembled the chief complaints of the embattled Beecher cohorts—the Beechers, through Mr. Scoville himself; the Abbotts of the *Outlook* (Lyman Abbott was Mr. Beecher's assistant and successor as well as his biographer, and his brother, Austin Abbott, was Mr. Beecher's attorney), and Mr. F. Lauriston Bullard of the *Boston Herald* (Mrs. Henry Ward Beecher was a Bullard). To the animadversions of each of these, I have replied separately; but as the *Boston Herald* and the *Outlook* seem to believe in presenting only one side of a story, I welcome this opportunity to dispose of the lot *en masse*.

The bulk of Mr. Scoville's latest eruption being mere reiteration of assertions previously refuted may be dismissed. There are, however, a few points that I should like to shed a little light upon.

Mr. Scoville objects, for example, to my citing *Woodhull & Claflin's Weekly* as source material. I have no doubt he does. Mr. Beecher himself was not especially partial to that journal, but as he was specifically charged with adultery in its columns he had either to sue Mrs. Woodhull for libel or bear up with what grace he could command under her accusation. As Mr. Beecher chose the latter course, his grandson, it would seem, might well feel himself bound by that choice and leave Mrs. Woodhull's memory in peace. Instead, he appears to think that Mr. Beecher can be somehow purged of the charge of adultery by asserting that "Victoria Woodhull served a term of imprisonment for publishing" her story of Mr. Beecher's deviation from the path of grace.

Unfortunately for Mr. Scoville, however, this is not true. The complaint against Mrs. Woodhull was dismissed, and far from repenting, she republished her article about Mr. Beecher's alleged adulteries a second time, on May 17, 1873. Her paper containing this article was not suppressed, and under the circumstances I hardly see what a conscientious biographer could do but refer to it. Mr. Scoville's father evidently

thought so too, as he devoted considerable space in his biography of Mr. Beecher (written in conjunction with Mr. Beecher's son) to the subject of Mrs. Woodhull's charges.

But there is one cardinal difference between Mr. Scoville's father's treatment of this subject and mine. On April 6, 1888, when Mr. Scoville, Sr.'s, biography of Henry Ward Beecher was about to appear, his publishers were notified that Victoria Woodhull (then Mrs. John Biddulph Martin) would bring suit for libel if Henry Ward Beecher's statement to the Plymouth Church Investigating Committee were printed as Mr. Beecher made it.

Now this is very interesting. For Mr. Beecher's statement to his Plymouth Church Investigating Committee was either true or it was false. If it was true, Mr. Scoville, Sr., had nothing to fear in printing it. But Mr. Scoville, Sr., did not print that statement as Mr. Beecher made it—under threat of suit for libel, he altered Mr. Beecher's statement and printed the altered form in his biography of Henry Ward Beecher, without warning his readers that he had tampered with the evidence.

In this connection, it is interesting to note that in his original attack upon my book, Mr. Scoville, Jr., referred to Messrs. Moulton and Tilton as "self-confessed liars and blackmailers." Being a lawyer, Mr. Scoville knows the meaning of the word "blackmail." He is aware, therefore, that the excerpt from Mr. Beecher's testimony in Tilton vs. Beecher which he quotes is conclusive evidence that there was no blackmail. As for Mr. Moulton's admission, on the witness stand, that he had lied, it is only fair to point out that Mr. Beecher in the same trial admitted doing a little lying himself in the matter of an insurance policy—a somewhat more serious business than lying to shield a friend. By and large, however, I think that Charles A. Dana was right when he wrote of Mr. Moulton: "One great distinction of the late Frank Moulton is that he never told a lie."

Regarding the apocryphal tale that William A. Beach, counsel for Mr. Tilton, ever admitted that Mr. Beecher was innocent of the adulteries for which Mr. Beach so unsparingly flayed him, Mr. Scoville writes: "If Mr. Hibben had taken the trouble to read more reliable authorities than the *Police Gazette* he would never have made such a statement. The first story appeared," asserts Mr. Scoville, "on March 19, 1887. . . ."

If Mr. Scoville would take the trouble to read his own father's biography of Mr. Beecher he would find, on page 534 of it, that Mr. Samuel Scoville, Sr. (in conjunction with Mr. William C. Beecher) takes personal responsibility for this story, having, he says, heard "similar views" from Mr. Beach himself. Now Mr. Beach died in 1884. If Mr. Scoville, Sr., or Mr. William C. Beecher heard him express "similar views," it must have been at least three years before "the first story appeared," according to Mr. Scoville, Jr. But Mr. Scoville, Sr., goes on. Five years before that, he says, Mr. Beach "frequently and publicly" made the statement imputed to him—that is, the story was, according to Mr. Scoville, Sr., current and public at least eight years before Mr. Scoville, Jr., asserts that "the first story appeared."

Considering all these circumstances as well as the categorical denial of the tale by Mr. Beach's associates, family, and friends, and the inherent improbability of the tale itself, I decided, I think properly, to reject it.

Mr. Scoville still insists that his grandfather was bribed by Jay Cooke. I cannot, however, accept this. I know, of course, that Henry Ward Beecher was charged in the *New York Times* of May 30, 1875, with some rather curious financial dealings, and that Henry C. Bowen paid his debts in Indianapolis, and that Robert Bonner saved him from bankruptcy by a gift of \$10,000; and that on one occasion when he refused to pay a debt, an arbiter adjudged \$1,000 against him. But Henry Ward Beecher was a preacher, not a financier, and in the matter of the Northern Pacific stock, he was on the same footing with Chief Justice Chase, Horace Greeley, John W. Forney, Gen. Horace Porter, and a host of other honest men, as things were viewed in that day. If Mr. Scoville has any evidence to support his assertion that "Mr. Beecher never received a share of stock of the Northern Pacific Railroad from Jay Cooke," I shall be glad to see it. But Mr. Scoville's assertions thus far have not proved sufficiently dependable for me to accept them as conclusive. Until incontrovertible evidence is forthcoming, I shall have to agree with Professor Oberholtzer that "a man who could shift from one foot to another as he [Mr. Beecher] did, hunting notoriety wherever it was to be found, with the Tilton scandal to cap his career, ought not to be squeamish about a little stock in a railroad company."

There are a few minor points in Mr. Scoville's letter. In his original complaint he accused me of suppressing the alleged fact that a council of Congregational ministers found Mr. Beecher "innocent of any wrong-doing." Confronted by the evidence, he now modifies his statement to "found in Mr. Beecher's favor." But neither is that true. Nor is it true that I suppress the fact that Judge Neilson, who presided at Tilton vs. Beecher, was present at Mr. Beecher's seventieth birthday celebration—it is on page 341 of my book. The Judge, on that occasion, pronounced precisely ninety-two non-committal and perfunctory words of congratulation. The incident was so trivial that Mr. Scoville's father and other contemporary biographers of Mr. Beecher ignored it.

Mr. Scoville refers to "The Great Brooklyn Romance" as an anonymous publication. It is, on the contrary, a compilation of unchallenged documentary evidence and was officially used by counsel on both sides in the trial of Tilton vs. Beecher. (Verbatim Report: Vol. II, p. 624.)

The account of the battle between the Chesapeake and the Shannon did not originate with me, but with Henry Bradshaw Fearon, who wrote it from Boston shortly after the event.

On the whole, as I contemplate these desperate attempts to obscure the issue of Henry Ward Beecher's life and character on the part of his worshippers, I am minded of what old John Bigelow wrote at the time of the famous scandal:

"The thing that astonishes me is the character of the crowd by which he was surrounded, and in the midst of whom he lived, moved, and had his torment. Not one decent man, woman, or dog has turned up in all this ruffianly fray to call him friend."

PAXTON HIBBEN.

New York.

It is related that a visitor to the Fogg Museum at Harvard last week asked the attendant at the post-card desk if he had Mr. Langdon Warner's new book on China. "No," said he, "we have not, but we have a new book by Mr. Blake, called 'Young's Night Thoughts.'"

What It Means

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

Mr. John Hyde Preston, who reviews E. E. Cummings's "Him" in a recent issue of the *Review*, confesses with indescribable modesty that he and Mr. Cummings don't know what "Him" is all about. A lot of it, Mr. Preston declares, is very, very difficult, and though he can understand all the vulgar parts quite well, there are some passages of "crazy stuff" that make his head whirl. Mr. Preston quotes two of these "crazy" passages, and suggests that he and Mr. Cummings would be grateful if some thoughtful soul would explain them. Perhaps I might be of some help.

The first passage Mr. Preston quotes as "crazy stuff" follows. It is a stage direction.

A Plainclothesman, his entire being focussed on something just offstage to the audience's left, stalks this invisible something minutely.

It seems strange to me that the meaning of this obvious sentence should have escaped Mr. Preston and Mr. Cummings. For it is simply an accurate description of a plainclothesman creeping furtively across the stage toward some invisible objective concealed in the wings. I am sorry I have been unable to paraphrase the passage in words of fewer syllables than Mr. Cummings uses, but if Mr. Preston will look all the hard ones up in the dictionary, I am sure the meaning will be cleared up for him nicely.

The second passage Mr. Preston quotes follows:

Horseradish will not produce consequences unless cowslips which is unlikely so be not daunted tho' affairs go badly since all will be well. The cards say and the leaves admit that enough is as good as a feast which will cause you some flatulence. . . . etc. etc.

This second passage, if I remember correctly for I haven't the book here, is uttered by one of the three Fates and is a travesty on the idiom and vocabulary of oracles and fortune telling. If Mr. Preston will read the first act of Macbeth, he will find the witches there talking a similar lyrical nonsense. But of course Shakespeare is very enigmatic too.

And by the way, Mr. Preston and I would like to know what "Symbolism" as Mr. Preston uses the word in his review, means.

SLATER BROWN.

Bernardsville, N. J.

Keats Letters

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

I am engaged in the preparation of a new edition of the letters of John Keats, based on my father's library editions of 1883 and 1889, the two volumes of "Letters" included in the complete Keats he edited for Messrs. Gowers and Gray in 1900-1901, and the additional matter he had gathered up to the time of his death in 1917. Many of the letters brought together under his editorship were derived from printed sources and doubtless some of these as well as many new letters have come to light during the past quarter of a century.

I shall be grateful to any of your readers who are the happy possessors of original Keats letters if they will communicate with me with a view to publication, if unpublished, or collation, if already in print; or should they find it more convenient to correspond with someone resident in England, Mr. Humphrey Milford, of the Oxford University Press, Amen House, Warwick Square, London, E. C. 4, has kindly undertaken to copy or collate any letters entrusted to his care. I need hardly offer the assurance that any manuscripts entrusted to us will be dealt with expeditiously and returned promptly to the owners.

I am anxious to include in the edition a census of letters giving the source whence they are derived and, wherever possible, the present ownership of the originals, and information that will help in furthering this object will be very acceptable.

MAURICE BUXTON FORMAN.

1100 Pretorius Street, Pretoria.

Edgar H. Wells and Company have completed their annotated catalogue which offers a wide assortment of modern authors, and followed this with a miscellaneous catalogue in which searchers for holiday gifts ought to find something for almost any taste. Apparently the lovers of out of doors sports are showing increasing interest in books about their favorite diversions, and such subjects as the drama and cookery books are likewise looking up.

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The Reader's Guide

Conducted by MAY LAMBERTON BECKER

Inquiries in regard to the selection of books and questions of like nature should be addressed to MRS. BECKER, c/o *The Saturday Review*.

THE readers of this department are requested to advise Mr. Alexander W. Weddell, American Consul General at Mexico City, in as amusing and unusual a task as is likely to fall to a book-lover.

"Several years ago," he writes, "my wife and I saved from destruction the old Priory near Warwick—buying the material from the house-wrecker. We brought this material to the United States and have used the old stones to construct a Tudor Mansion near Richmond, Virginia. The structure is fireproof and a portion of it is now available for the Virginia Historical Society. On our death the entire building, known as 'Virginia House,' becomes the property of the Society.

"In the library, in which I am trying to amass Virginiana, there is a secret doorway leading to another part of the house. I am desirous of giving to this doorway the effect of the continuation of the bookshelves, and since the false book-backs must be made independently I had rather thought of using fake titles, etc., such as the missing books of Livy, a bit of the missing works of Plato, in Disraeli's 'Curiosities of Literature' are several suggestions. I am wondering if it is a fair question to ask you if you could not help me along these lines of titles?"

Fair? It's blissful. I have always wanted sometime to compile a list of books confidently quoted in other books, non-existent save in the consciousness of book-characters, like the novel written by the hero of Hugh Walpole's "Fortitude," the play by George Esmond Warrington performed with such éclat in "The Virginians," or "Passion Flowers," the poems of Miss Bunion so prominent in "Pendennis"—or for that matter, the even more familiar "Walter Lorraine" in the same book. I remember that some time ago someone asked me where he could get a copy of a certain book quoted in a novel by Mr. James Branch Cabell. Having my own ideas on the matter, I asked Mr. Cabell where it might be found, and received the information that it was unfortunately in the collection of Mr. John Charteris, a library whose distinguishing characteristic is that it is composed exclusively of unique copies. Mr. Cabell surely should have some titles for this book-shelf. So, I doubt not, have other readers of this review.

D. D., Rochester, Minn., asks for a short list of books on conditions in Sicily, and a history of Sicily. She says "I have 'Little Cities of Sicily,' but the author handles his subject in rather a 'high hat' manner, very upsetting to the average reader."

WHEN Marion Crawford wrote of Italy, whether of Rome, of Venice, or of "Southern Italy and Sicily and the Rulers of the South," he brought to the work an endless patience in documentation, unusual in the novelists of his period, and helped by the resources placed at his disposal by the Italian government. "Southern Italy" (Macmillan) has been for some little time out of print, but most of the public libraries have it, and no doubt it is not beyond reach of booksellers. It is a popular history going through the thirteenth century, with an added chapter on the Mafia. E. A. Freeman's "Story of Sicily, Phœnician, Greek, and Roman" is one of the "Story of the Nations" series (Putnam); it goes from earliest times to the ninth century A. D. W. C. Perry's "Sicily in Fable, History, Art, and Song" (Macmillan) goes to the capture of Syracuse by Marcellus. For present conditions there is Arthur Stanley Riggs's "Vistas in Sicily," a traveler's pleasant experiences and reports on scenery and historic associations. The third volume of Baedeker's "Italy" is given to Sicily (Scribner). Henry James Forman's "Grecian Italy" (Boni & Liveright), is an unusually good travel-book including Sicily with Calabria and Malta. There is a beautifully illustrated article on "Sicily, island of vivid beauty and crumbling glory" in the October *National Geographic*.

H. H., Massachusetts, asks for a rhyming dictionary and a book to help an amateur run a rather nice restaurant.

QUANTITY COOKING: Menu Planning and Cooking for Large Numbers," by Lenore Richards and Nola Treat (Little, Brown), and the same authors' "Tea Room Recipes" (Little, Brown), are just what is needed, but I warn H. H. that neither of them should be used in conjunction with a rhyming dictionary. But if it must be, it is well to let not the right hand know what the left doeth; one may

be employed in blending waffle mixture while the other keeps the place in "The Rhymer's Lexicon," by Andrew Loring (Dutton), the easiest one of these to handle. As that peerless work "A Reader's Guide Book," says: "Its system is perfectly simple: you are, let us say, in process of composing a valentine to Susan: you turn to (a) 'Words accented on the penult' and in this to (b) 'U' as in tuber and mover, fully and woolly," and upon running down the lines you find that Susan is not there, but are consoled by the possibilities of archducal—nuchal—Pentateuchal, and quite taken off the subject by the glamour of diazeutic-entheteutic-hermeneutic—maieutic-scorbutic-therapeutic-toreutic. So you do not write to Susan at all, which is probably all the better for you."

H. D. R., Connecticut, asks if any textbook contains matter required to teach music in public schools.

I HAVE been hoping someone would ask me some such question, ever since "Principles of Musical Education," by James L. Mursell of Lawrence College (Macmillan), reached me a few weeks since. It is an analysis of the psychological factors underlying musical education in general, but besides this, questions of administration are discussed and ideals presented for public school and private teacher, in vocal and instrumental music. It considers the musical mind, its constituents and training, rhythmic and auditory experience, musical intelligence and feeling; training for musicianly listening, performance, and composition; music in schools and studios, mechanical music, concerts, clubs, and community music; there are questions and exercises and a bibliography. This is a subject that has as yet a desultory and contradictory documentation. This book takes it seriously but not dogmatically; its wide scope has been indicated by this description.

M. W. N., Elmhurst, L. I., asks if lists of science books for boys and girls from fourteen to sixteen have been compiled.

FORTY-EIGHT recent books from which a selection may safely be made are listed in my "Adventures in Reading" (Stokes), in the chapter "New Eyes, New Ears." I know these books are safe, not because I am a specialist on any of the subjects of which they treat, but because this selection was made from a longer list compiled by Dr. E. E. Slosson, of Science Service, Washington, D. C., and author of "Creative Chemistry." In this connection it should be noted that Dr. Slosson's paper on "Adult Education in Science," given at the second annual meeting of the American Association for Adult Education, in Cleveland last May, has just been reprinted in pamphlet form, and I suppose must be obtainable from the association, 41 East 42d Street, N. Y. This will answer the needs of an inquirer who lately asked me if anything had been written about the literary side of scientific writing.

H. G. C., New York, asks for a complete set of the works of Father Tabb.

"FATHER TABB: His Life and Work," by Jennie M. Tabb of the State Normal School of Virginia (Stratford), contains besides a biographical study, all his best-known poems. I do not know of a complete collection of all he has written; I think none has been made.

SEVERAL inquiries have come in about prize-awards abroad: G. B. F., *Grape-land, Miss.*, asks who won the Nobel prize for literature; H. H., *Boston, Mass.*, had heard rumors of its award to Pirandello and asks where they came from: G. H., *New York*, asks if the Goncourt Prize has yet been awarded for the year. These may be resolved together: the Nobel Prize for the year has been awarded to Grazia Deledda, don't ask me why, nobody knows and I believe the author herself, a sober, ever a sombre writer of folk-tragedies, must have been somewhat surprised, for her vogue—never great—was past its prime years ago even in Italy. All we have of her in English is "The Mother," an excellent novel published by Macmillan, but most of her novels are accessible in French, which is indeed the language in which I read all I know of her work—which I respect and admire. Where the Pirandello rumor started I do not know, but I too saw it stated somewhere—I think in a foreign newspaper. The excellent French newspaper *Les Nouvelles Littéraires* says that the crowning of Grazia Deledda has been received in Italy with a smile, sympathetic indeed, but a smile

no less, for many Latin literary men believed that the prize should have gone either to Pirandello or to d'Annunzio. From the same source I learn that "Jerome, 60 deg. de Latitude Nord," the novel by Maurice Bedel that won the Goncourt, was also chosen unanimously by the jury of the Theophraste Renaudot Prize, but believing that the more famous award would suffice for Bedel's glory, this committee transferred their choice to Bernard Nabonne's "Maitena." The Femina Prize goes to Canada, whence Marie Le Franc, a teacher "poor in money, rich in the spirit" sent to her native France "Grand Louis l'Innocent," a neoromantic novel that, though it has a Breton setting, reminds the critics of another masterpiece from this part of the world, "Maria Chapdelaine."

The New Books Science

(Continued from page 539)

struction of the earth in the year 39,000,000 of human history is described as though to a child on the planet Venus. Man has succeeded in reaching Venus, where he lives peacefully, and from which he observes the grand catastrophe when the moon hits the earth and the two merge to form a new celestial body. Some 33,000 years later, Venus returns the compliment by sending Man back to the Earth once more. Thus, Mr. Haldane provides for the safety and immortality of Man though the Heavens fall.

It is diverting reading, if not quite what one would expect from a cover and title page which carry large claim in the impressive statement that this book belongs to the "Things-to-Know Series," and is "a scientist's vision of the future of man." Many scientists would surely disagree if the program is to be taken literally, and would see too little advantage in giving the facts such a speculative form. Nevertheless, one may enjoy the fanciful tale which knows no human or earthly boundaries.

THE SPRINGS OF HUMAN ACTION.

A Psychological Study of the Sources, Mechanism, and Principles of Motivation in Human Behavior. By MEHRAN K. THOMSON. Appleton. 1927. \$3.

This is just the volume that we have all been waiting for—a summing up of the findings of modern psychology in its various schools, with charity toward all, with malice toward none. Behavioristic in the broad sense in which recent psychology of every type is behavioristic—in that it is oriented toward conduct instead of "pure thought"—Professor Thomson's work nevertheless holds the balance even between Watsonians and Freudians, "structuralists" and "functionalists," etc., etc. He makes use of the results of all of them without sharing the exclusive views of any. If his book is less stimulating reading than those of the extremists, this is perhaps inevitable. The casual reader is little likely to be cheered by his final conclusion:

There are as many motives [the word is of course not used in its popular sense of conscious intention but in the sense of psycho-physical cause or condition] as there are elementary drives plus all possible combinations of these elements into compounds, plus all possible complex compounds of these compounds, plus higher and higher syntheses. In other words, motives are limitless—theoretically.

The next sentence seems, it is true, to make amends: "But in actual life there is a relatively fixed number of motives, approximately those treated in these pages." Yet when the reader is confronted with chapters on Reflexive Responses, Habits as Motives, Instincts as Motives, Emotions as Motives, Feeling as Motive, Ideas as Motives, Interest as Motive, followed by fourteen other kinds of motives, he is likely, despite Professor Thomson's clear and logical arrangement, to find even the "relatively fixed number" sufficiently bewildering. All this, however, is the fault of the facts, not of Professor Thomson in particular. Psychology is as yet far from being in a position to reduce its complex material to a few simple principles. Where some of Professor Thomson's chapters are rather inconclusive, as in the case of the emotions, this merely reveals the still undeveloped state of his science in those special fields. His work is an admirable summary of attained results and as such is highly valuable.

LIVING MACHINERY. By A. V. HILL. Harcourt, Brace. 1927. \$3.

Doctor A. V. Hill of London is one of the foremost authorities on the physiology of muscle contraction. His technical papers upon this subject are models of compact and well-ordered exposition, impersonal and

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DUTTON'S New Books

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A collection of witty and risqué stories told by the cleverest humorists of the Renaissance period. \$3.00

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By "HIS PUPIL"

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