

# The Saturday Review

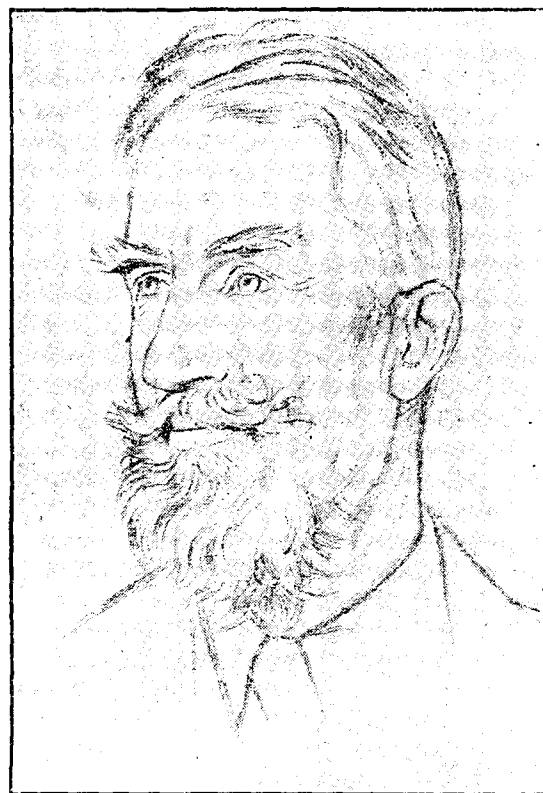
## of LITERATURE

EDITED BY HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

VOLUME IV

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, JUNE 23, 1928

NUMBER 48



G. BERNARD SHAW

From "Twenty-four Portraits," by William Rothenstein (Harcourt, Brace).

### Mr. Shaw as a Socialist

THE INTELLIGENT WOMAN'S GUIDE TO CAPITALISM AND SOCIALISM. New York: Brentano's. 1928. \$3.50.

Reviewed by HAROLD J. LASKI

London School of Economics and Political Science

IT will soon be fifty years since Mr. Shaw, in the now classic first essay of the "Fabian Essays," showed that he could beat the professional economists at their own game of refined analysis. In the period since that time, he has discussed every angle of socialist theory and tactic. But he has never sought to set out coherently his considered view of the whole issue. His new book attempts just this thing, and there is no student of our ways of life but will be grateful for it.

It is, from every angle, an arresting revelation of Mr. Shaw's own mind. Above everything, it is the work of a great humanist. The results of action interest Mr. Shaw not as a revelation of this theory or that, but because they affect the lives of men. The second thing that is outstanding is Mr. Shaw's insistence that socialism is a philosophy of life as a whole and not merely of our economic life. To see it economically is to see it politically; to see it politically, is to see it as a religion. To see it adequately, in a word, means seeing it as a philosophy of education, of art, of science. Its postulates, that is, permeate our lives as we live them totally; it enters into them all and gives them that color and quality by which each aspect becomes different and better. There is essential wisdom in this outlook; for either a socialist philosophy is an art of life as a seamless web, or it is nothing.

One or two things are worth noting as an index to Mr. Shaw's habits of mind. The great playwright, like the great novelist, sees things journalistically; he exploits dramatic situations. It would be vain to look in him for a systematic philosophical exposition. Rather, he takes convincing aspects of his problem and presents them to his public as situations of inescapable interest. He is almost uninterested in the logic of the process; he is concerned

(Continued on page 984)

## The American Scholar—Ninety Years Later

BY HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

THERE is no essay ever written on this continent more often praised, more often quoted, than Emerson's "The American Scholar." There is no utterance of the American mind so ironic in its unfulfilment, so unprophetic of our later history, so completely misread by those who praise it.

In the rhetoric of Commencement speeches, Emerson has become a voice proclaiming the independence of the American mind and the self-sufficiency of native scholarship:—"We will walk on our own feet; we will work with our own hands; we will speak our own minds";—and the patriotism which applauds from the auditorium this quotation will a few minutes later cheer the industrialist who says that we build the most and the best automobiles in the world.

Emerson would not be pleased. He was more interested in scholarship than in garlands for America. He wrote his lecture not to celebrate an accomplished fact, but to specify what the American scholar should become—a creative intellect, not a promoter or a manifold of material welfare; a man thinking, not a bookworm however self-sufficient; an original mind escaping from the dominance of past genius and well aware that each generation must write its own books. "Meek young men grow up in libraries, believing it their duty to accept the views which Cicero, which Locke, which Bacon have given; forgetful that Cicero, Locke, and Bacon were only young men in libraries when they wrote these books." When the American scholar should become the man thinking it was this which was to be changed. Not nationalism, but originality and self-dependence was the theme of his famous essay.

Has the American scholar become the "man thinking"? Has he recast his environment and wrought so that "young men of the fairest promise" are no longer "hindered from action by the disgust which the principles on which business is managed inspire"; has he made the air we breathe less "thick and fat" with "private avarice," or taught the mind of this country to aim no longer at "low objects"?

Poor scholars, let us not ask too much of them! They have had the Civil War, its exhaustion of idealism and its shattering of the continuity of American culture; they have had the swarming illiterates of Europe; they have had the wild exploitation of the loot of a continent, when to get rich was a by-product of activity; they have had the problem of wholesale education on their hands. And while they were struggling with their books, science went into the laboratory and conquered the world. Emerson announced his Program too soon; his mine exploded in an empty harbor, but there is dynamite in him still.

To survey American scholarship, even literary scholarship, is a task for a foundation, nor do I take comfort from Emerson's confident benediction that pecuniary foundations can never countervail the least sentence or syllable of wit, for it is impossible to be witty over the vast museum of facts which since his day the literary scholar—a man working like the devil, if not always, or often, a man thinking—has piled up in books and pamphlets. Instead, and for the purpose of this brief note upon Progress, let me review a single number of the most representative journal of American literary scholarship up to date.\*

I shall not review it for the competence of its

\* The Publications of The Modern Language Association of America. Vol. XLIII. No. 1, March 1928.

facts, for these only a specialist can judge (and often only a specialist be interested in), but rather for the cause, the use of these assembled facts, for the philosophy of work and the philosophy of purpose which inspire these American scholars who, like maggots in a cheese, are boring away oblivious while science walks off with the literary bag.

In a request for bibliographies of "productions" by its faculty, a great university recently stated that only articles or books which "contributed to knowledge" should be included, articles for "popular magazines," book reviews, and all creative work which did not give new facts were directly or by implication excluded. This is the usual specification for literary scholarship in America, and the condition for advancement in American universities. There must be a contribution to knowledge. Knowledge of what? Not life, for then poetry, fiction, even the literary essay or criticism of contemporary literature would be legal tender; but not even from those whose business it is to teach the writing of English are such gauds given more than perfunctory credit. Indeed it was said ten years ago by a scholar, himself a stifled poet, that it was better for a student of English never to write at all than to depart from the pursuit of facts. Knowledge of books then, of that wise kind which, half intuition, half deduction from the requisite facts, leads toward criticism, prophecy perhaps, certainly to what Emerson calls creative reading? Alas, there has been too little of this in American scholarship to answer confidently, but the omens for the beginner are inauspicious. "Candidates for the Ph.D. are warned not to undertake criticism." Considering all things that dictum may be wise, but it is not only youth that in American scholarship is warned to crib, cabin, and confine the imagination.

What, then, is this desideratum, knowledge? Let

### This Week

"Condemned to Devil's Island."

Reviewed by Frederick O'Brien.

"But Gentlemen Marry Brunettes."

Reviewed by William Rose Benét.

"Eat, Drink, and Be Healthy."

Reviewed by John E. Lind, M.D.

"The Cyder Feast."

Reviewed by Louis Untermeyer.

Mr. Moon's Notebook.

"The Norns Are Spinning."

Reviewed by Phillips D. Carleton.

"The Torch Flare."

Reviewed by Bray Hammond.

"The Legend Called Meryom."

Reviewed by Louis Golding.

The Bowling Green.

By Christopher Morley.

Edmund Gosse.

By Dr. Joseph Collins.

### Next Week, or Later

Coral Jungles of Sea-Cow Reef.

By William Beebe.



us search for it in the publications of The Modern Language Association which contains by general consent what "gowns and pecuniary foundations" regard as the proper output of the producing scholar in America and his natural function. Here, well edited, occasionally well written, are the contributions from California to Maine of the grandsons and granddaughters of Emerson's scholar. It is these papers that are legal tender in bibliographies, exchangeable for salary checks and promotions. Here is the corpus from which one can argue the presence or absence of a soul. If the sum total is naturally less in excellence than selected books of selected writers, it differs only in degree not in kind, and clearly represents the effort of an able editor to secure the best available in oncoming scholarship. The test is a fair one, for we are seeking, not the best that can be done in a certain way, but the way itself and where it leads.

The first article in this March number of the Publications is a study of the legend of Joseph of Egypt as it appears in Old and Middle English. Twenty-five pages assemble the evidence for all the variants of the story, and prove that Joseph's reputation was protected with loving care. It is, in spite of the forbidding texts through which it ranges, a more amiable investigation than that type specimen of academic futility, the pursuit of an *Æsopian* fable and its variants through the centuries, along the trail of an error in spelling or the substitution of a lion for a bear.

The next article endeavors to establish the identity of the Pearl in the early English poem of that name, and the authorship thereof. It is modest and, if inconclusive, advances knowledge in a field which, if tiny, is worth cultivating—an excellent example of what our American scholars are doing, well done. The third article proves that Gilbert Pilkington can not be proved to have written the Second Shepherd's play. The fourth minutely describes the manuscript of the Towneley plays of the same period. The fifth is a treatise on a treatise on how to date more of these early plays. Results are negative. The sixth accounts the unimportant activities of Waller the n the Royal Society. The seventh carefully ers the contemporary satire in a dead master—Otway's "Venice Preserved." With the eighth, interest mounts, for its thoughtful study of neo-classicism explains the Augustan interregnum between individualism and romance when one had to be classic or nothing. Number IX is an account of Brooke, who wrote "The Fool of Quality"—most sentimental of novels, and tried to turn eighteenth century science into poetry. "Brooke blindly fumbled at the concepts which the problem of reconciling evolution with a spiritual creed has endowed with modern significance." In X, Melchior Grimm is shown to have gone to France because he liked it, not as an apostle of German literature. In XI, by close reasoning it is proved that Diderot probably didn't write a review of Lessing's "Miss Sara Sampson" (a paper on a book review is legal tender). In XII, Sheridan is accused of poaching from two contemporaries. XIII is a minute and immense analysis of Ritson's "Life of King Arthur." The book is unimportant, but shows "the continuity of interest in Arthur." XIV is a study of some sources of "René"; XV, a detailed account of American writings between 1783-1833 republished in England; XVI a study as to why *des jeunes gens* came to mean young men instead of young people. The last paper, a highly technical analysis of the choriambus in English verse, is a contribution to the complexity of English rhythms, which no matter how readily a poet writes them, have proved under analysis to be problems for the psychologist and the mathematician.

It is easy to loose sarcasm upon some of these endeavors to beat dust from a recalcitrant past, but that is a layman's attitude. The ideal of scientific scholarship is truth. If Diderot did not write that review, there is one fact nailed on the wall of print. Some false deduction as to eighteenth century philosophy may stop there and go no further. If the Towneley plays can be redated, or can't be redated, why there is one tiny beam of light (misty to be sure) on a hidden corner of an obscure period. If the eighteenth century was static in criticism, there is one basis for contrast with our own.

No, to say that literary scholarship as it is practised in our universities is trivial, to say that it is pursued without sense of proportion, to say that the

professor at work upon the remote and not too important sources of a difficult and mediocre work resembles the morning commuter exercising his brains upon a cross-word puzzle, has a sting of truth, but is not entirely just. Nothing comes out of the puzzle but mental absorption and a group of words. From the most trivial discovery in the history of literature some light, some truth, some useful application to the only life we live, our own, may spring—if the man thinking chances to come upon it, and is able to change a dead fact into a thought!



We may admit that scholars, like many children, love puzzles, and still find their task defensible. Source seeking, text building, error quashing is the adolescence of scholarship, but it is also the preface to wisdom. It is not childish unless the adult mind sticks there and can move no further.

If "in silence, in steadiness, in severe abstraction . . . the scholar adds observation to observation . . . happy enough if he can satisfy himself alone that this day he has seen something truly," if this vast labor of accumulated fact were in the hands of the dedicate, willing sacrifices to the possibilities of experiment, following knowledge down its faintest trail over dustiest ground, regardless of utility, we might still question the orientation of the endeavor, yet praise the devotees. It was such a dedication that led the monks to the desert.

But this "productivity," this assembling of literary fact for the sake of accuracy in inessentials as well as essentials, is not the work of dedicated hands, it is the total expectation in scholarship from tens of thousands of men and women actively engaged in teaching literature and language to youth. This is their testing ground; here, unlike the monks, is their way of earthly, not heavenly, promotion. They may write profitable text books, they may teach with the lips of angels, they may be conduits of literary emotion, but as scholars, here they must engage, here be judged. In these papers is the erudite mystery which makes doctors' theses; in doctors' degrees and more such treatises lie advancement and justification of the pleasant academic life.



The tide of literary facts mounts ever higher. In the documents of the Middle Ages were found the tightest puzzles for youthful investigation, but these are nearly exhausted. The wave of research sweeps through the darker corners of the Renaissance, breaks over the eighteenth century, eddies over the nineteenth, curls round contemporary literature but draws back. There is lack of dignity in immediate problems, and danger too. A neat demonstration of the gullibility of mere literary critics who believed in the South America of Afra Behn held good until new documents were found to upset it, but a geographical analysis of a living author's poems lasted only long enough to reach his indignant denials. And so, with a hungry roar, the tide bursts through the virgin fields of American literature; seeking not the great problems—Melville, Poe, Thoreau, the nature, if any, of the American mind,—but mediocrities whose works out of happy neglect had been left untidy, third-rate poets without biographies, defunct and uncatalogued magazines, texts corrupt because they were not worth correcting.

I do not wish to seem perverse in wholesale re-creation, for I am well aware of the utility of spade work, and the honorable necessity of insignificant facts. And indeed I condemn no single work or single man, not even the errors of my own past. There is an argument for every investigation, however narrow, even for the minutest editing of the style of the first Montgomery Ward catalogue.

It is not perversity. The wrong is in the whole not in the part. The fallacy is in the philosophy which underlies this scholarship so laborious and so partial. It is the aim not the work which is at fault. It is not the motives (though we may often suspect them) but the definition of a literary scholar upon which the entire edifice of research, reward, and justification rests.



For it should be clear to us, and it would certainly be clear to a resurrected Emerson, that the American scholar has embraced one cold ideal in the past half century and let the rest go glimmering. He has made himself scientist. He has gone to the chemist's laboratory and learned of him. He has thrown aside intuition for experiment, given over interpretation for discovery, let go his conception of

a Whole in order to concentrate upon minutest Parts. If the impression of a tooth and a wing upon a piece of slate could redraw the evolutionary line, why then the rummage of an ancient manuscript, the negative proof of an authorship, the reconstruction of a text, may remake literary history, and explain literature. The physicists in a bit of mud have discovered a new earth and perhaps a new heaven. When they ceased being philosophers they began to be great. Let us go and do likewise.

No student of the past decades can doubt the justice of this parallel. The question is not of the value of scientific method in scholarship, for that, even in the few papers discussed above, is obvious; the question is whether literary scholarship and science are synonymous terms as "gowns and pecuniary foundations" have agreed in these years to believe. For if they are not, then, in spite of the benefits accruing to literary history from our half century of accumulated fact, we are indeed deluded.



They are not. That statement can be made with complete dogmatism. The business of science is to measure fact, to uncover the nature of things, to provide a technique for the control of nature itself. In this it has been brilliantly successful on a scale and a scope so wide that the rewriting of literary history—which has been the sole business of the American scholar—is only the least part of its total endeavor. And science in pursuit of its legitimate business has come to the frontiers of knowledge. It has proved the non-existence of matter, destroyed materialism, and demonstrated its inability to explain the relation of nature to mind (since neither in scientific terms exists). It has vast triumphs still before it in the discovery of processes, but in relativities and causations it has already called upon the metaphysicians for aid. "Physic of Metaphysic begs defence" as Pope prophetically wrote in the classic attack upon unilluminated scholarship.\*

Thinkers about science are already arising, who propose to function beyond the possibility of experiment.

But literature, except in the restricted area where it deals with and is based upon facts, has always been beyond proof, though not beyond reason. Its stuff and substance has never been dates, circumstances, sources, and reference, although the scientific scholar has been able to show how necessary is a right understanding of such matters to just appreciation. It is made of imagination, intuition, emotion, and prophecy; it is instinct with beauty, and the power of idea—indeed with precisely those intangibles which can be approached, but not controlled, by fact. It has a living relation to all life, and can no more be fully explained by its facts than life itself, which is a collocation of force exhibiting especial "pushiness," atoms swarming under laws which do not explain them, nor always hold, non-matter synthesizing into an entity—a thing beyond experiment except as to its processes.



I say then that literary scholarship in America is precisely like those mercantilists of the eighteenth century who based their world policy upon a theory of limited application and brought the economic and political structure crashing on their heads. It has given its all to science when its part was less than science and its all more. It has wisely gone into the laboratory for aid, but most unwisely never come out. It has pinned all of literature to a fact, when a fact is not all of literature.

That is why we Americans have done more than our share in the rewriting of the history of English literature, and left that literature as art, as ideas, as emotion, pretty much where we found it. That is why if one wants to study literature *per se*, and not history, it is to essays long ago written (and usually for "popular" magazines) to which one turns, not to the transactions of learned societies, or if to them, to articles strangely out of place in a collection of factual evidence.

And the effect upon the profession of literary scholarship has been deadening; not so deadening as

\* "The Dunciad" lends itself to apt quotation, with a substitution of names; but I will try to be more just than Pope and leave blanks where his malice pilloried scholars who were useful even if they were dull—

"The critic eye, that microscope of wit,  
Sees hairs and pores, examines bit by bit:  
How parts relate to parts, or they to whole,  
The body's harmony, the beaming soul,  
Are things which —, —, — shall see,  
When man's whole frame is obvious to a flea."



might be however, for if the American scholar has conformed in his production, his mind has been free. It is a commonplace that professors of literature go to their annual meetings, not to hear papers, but to talk. Talk, the mere talk of trained minds, who have profited by science, but know they must transcend it, has been more valuable, perhaps, in recent America than all our scholarly print. And much of it, fortunately, has passed on into teaching.

It is high time to see more clearly, to give the scientific scholar his due, for we do not wish to go back to the easy days of rhetoric and insufficient generalization, when Matthew Arnold could write upon Celtic literature without knowing a word of Celtic;—time to turn some portion of our great energy away from the accurate recording of literary history to the study of literature itself. Or shall we wait until our masters, the scientists, have preceded us?—until they return from beyond the atom to seek in the only perfect expression of mind, which is literature, some explanation of phenomena irreducible by law and experiment? When the metaphysicians follow we may bestir ourselves. Already philosophers like Croce and Whitehead, mathematicians, psychologists, are becoming our critics of literature.

The old oracle said, "All things have two handles: beware of the wrong one" . . . The scholar should be the delegated intellect whose business it is to correlate thinking. In the degenerate state . . . he tends to become . . . the parrot of other men's thinking.

The history of these ninety years should teach the scholar that science is a good handle, but not the only one. He grasped it, and proposed to move mountains. He has set some history in order, found the missing toe bones and arranged the skeleton. But now a brood of parrots searches the bushes for splinters. He must grasp the other handle or accept sterility—and he is none too virile now.

But the horizon is not too dark. Universities, fumbling toward the light, ask poets, essayists, playwrights to live and talk with them, and no questions asked except that they should be what they are. The poets should be inside the universities, for scholars in literature should be poets even if they never write a line of verse. We have the men and the minds to make use of this heavy load of investigation, even though a generation of creative youth has been driven from scholarship by disillusionment more bitter than economic necessity. We have the scientific training, although one suspects it is a second-hand and somewhat stale science. Yet it, or a better training in scientific methods, is indispensable, for if the area of literature in which facts count is small, it is the very clearing with which the garden of wisdom begins. Let us shake off this obsessive superstition that he who finds a date is saved, and may rest in salvation. Yes, we have settled Hoti's business (and a side-street affair it has proved): it is time to take up Pindar and Æschylus and the life and art for which Hoti was made.

## Any Prison Is Hell

CONDEMNED TO DEVIL'S ISLAND. By BLAIR NILES. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company. 1928. \$3.

Reviewed by FREDERICK O'BRIEN

THIS fictional life of a young convict, deported from France to the penal colony in French Guiana made notorious by Dreyfus's imprisonment there, is a real and terrifying story told with art and sympathy. The miasma of prisons, the strange, persistent spirit of their inmates, the brutality of the law and its enforcers, and the common callousness of the outside world towards the condemned, are pictured with skill, so that the people and scenes of the novel are as vivid as facts and yet as bizarre and tragic as the stage and actors in a nightmare.

Blair Niles has succeeded in a most difficult form of literary effort—the presentation in ordinary, unstrained language of characters, scenes, motives, depravities, pangs, and passions far distant from the souls of her readers, as opposite from their strivings and arenas as war and peace, and yet made understandable and sympathetic by her own sincere emotions and rare ability.

The book is a poignant study of the cruelty of justice in a dreadful tropic, and is also an exciting novel of accumulating movement, queer types, and

exotic background. It is a painting of the stark man-animal in heartrending circumstances, by the gentle brush of an artist-woman; unZolaesque—realism, horrors, obscenities in a soft medium.

Escape is the watchword of the prisoners of Devil's Island; the light by which they live; the nourishment that sustains them in the struggle against utter decay, against the death that would seem the end sought for them by their jailers. One remembers that some of the condemned do escape. Dieudonné, the gangster of Paris, did fifteen years in Guiana, and got away; to be arrested in Brazil, and finally pardoned on account of public clamor. Michel, the young leading man of Blair Niles's drama, a burglar in former free days, escapes. After tortures, starvation, despair, hope, he is caught when in sight of liberty, the Venezuelan coast, and dragged back to solitary confinement, severe punishment for his rebellion. Michel runs the gamut of prison experiences. Through his alert, boyish, always hopeful eyes, one views the abominations of the French experiment in punishment and isolation of the enemies of society.

The system is very bad. It reeks with sodomy, graft, sadism. Only the incredible, inextinguishable faith of the exiles in eventual evasion of their bars



"So Finally the Geniuses Were All Present"  
(at the Algonquin Round Table)

From "But Gentlemen Marry Brunettes," by Anita Loos  
(Boni & Liveright)

illuminates the stinking cells of the sombre, brilliant story.

Prisons are depressing places everywhere. I have visited a number in China, Africa, South America, as well as in our country. The French, though not equalling in sheer stupid cruelty the Orientals, the Portuguese, or the Africans, yet are leaders in inhumanity towards convicts. Their prisons are failures of civilization, and the existence of the Guiana penal colony, Devil's Island, is a severe charge against the Republic. One has but to contrast Bilibid or Iwahig in the Philippines to see the immeasurable advance the United States has made away from France's murderous settlements. Jailers except in a few cases are sadists; their realm is a curious kingdom of moronic, sardonic egotism.

"Condemned," Mrs. Niles's book, is unique in her possession of the actualities and singular color of her scenes, in her compass of the minds of the characters, her non-use of melodrama or mere horror, and her constant support of the tension inherent in her plot. One reads the book with eagerness, with a mixture of hope and despair; one ends it with fear that man is not equal to his assumed task of chastising his erring brother into reform.

Roussenq, who had passed more than ten years alone in a nauseous cell in silence, a perpetual rebel against the life about him on Devil's Island, wrote:

The opaque veil I am going to lift,  
And no consideration shall fetter me.  
Here bodies wish above everything  
To alleviate their torments.  
And here death hovers over an immense  
Distress.  
Cast into our sad cells,  
Condemned to silence, we desire to speak.  
Oh, far from raising man, prison  
Lowers him to the abyss.

Blair Niles has spoken adequately for Roussenq and the thousands who have perished on Devil's Island.

## Funny, Obviously

BUT GENTLEMEN MARRY BRUNETTES.

By ANITA LOOS. New York: Boni & Liveright. 1928. \$2.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

MISS LOOS'S second venture is before me, and, "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes" having been heard round the world, I suppose one is expected to say, "She might have known she couldn't repeat." Is one? It is true that to me this second book is rather terrible, but not terrible in the colloquial sense. It actually has filled me with a feeling of terror, or at least of such depression as sometimes clings to me for days after reading a relentless "realistic" novel.

Of course that's ridiculous, because the book must obviously be a funny book. People roared and shrieked and rolled on the floor about "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes," didn't they? I'll admit I was amused by it myself. Well, in starting in on the brunette book, I was amused. I was mildly amused by Lorelei and Dorothy at the Algonquin. And then Lorelei began to tell Dorothy's story. That ought to have been a perfect scream. The trouble is I began to get rather the same feelings about it that have assailed me in reading the best of Sherwood Anderson. Which is, again, ridiculous, because obviously no two methods of attack could possibly be more dissimilar than those of Mr. Anderson and Miss Loos.

\*\*\*

Of course Dorothy's father and Dorothy's step-mother and Dorothy's waffle-machine and the "Deputy Sheriff" are all funny, up to about page 69, which is concerned with sacred and profane love,—and, incidentally just about the shrewdest page I have read for a long time on that fascinating general subject. There follow three chapters concerning how "the subject of 'Life'" was brought, as Lorelei puts it, to Dorothy's notice. Those are devastating chapters to a sensitive soul. They are, incidentally, devilishly well-written chapters. They contain any number of Dreiserian novels in capsule. In fact, they will save you shelf-room. You can take nine tenths, or ninety-nine one-hundredths, of all the realistic novels old or new in your library, and sell them for \$2.50 to those who buy second-hand books; and then you can cut out those three chapters and have them bound appropriately, and set them up on the top shelf of your now yawningly empty book-case, and you will have all that matters in those nine hundred and ninety-nine novels (or however many there were) classically compressed into about forty small pages of hard, brisk comment. And if you are at all like me, you rather forget that in those forty pages, the amiable nit-wit, Lorelei, is supposed to be amusing you by her illiteracy. No. This is "ackshally" life. As I say, it filled me with a certain terror. I must be soft-boiled.

\*\*\*

Dorothy, back in New York and at the Algonquin, and getting into the Follies is some more, less poignant, "life." Dorothy falling in love with, and lending money to, and finally marrying Lester, the saxophone player, begins to go Ernest Hemingway.

Well, Dorothy thought it would be quite a good idea to buy a revolver on Sixth Avenue and shoot him.

Yes, I suppose Dorothy in Paris is funny. But along in the next chapter, after Mr. Abels has sent for a "silent business partner,"

And about five o'clock in the morning when everybody was in the heights of good spirits, Jerry went into a little alcove to look out the window. And then he called to Lester and said, "Come on in here, Pal, and look at the swell sunrise!" Well, Lester went into the alcove to look, but his foot must have slipped because he fell out the window. And the verdict was suicide.

And don't tell me the funeral is funny,—in spite of "A wench's curse on such as he!" The funniest chapter I read was Chapter Nine. For in it "Mrs. Breene is very aristocratic, her ideas are quite broad-minded, for being so wealthy." Dorothy at Mrs. Breene's soirée, and how she punished the champagne and then went into her dance, thereby achieving an enormous success, may rouse more than a smile. After all, I don't wish to seem entirely sombre about this book.

I like hard-bitten books. This is one of them. Miss Loos, I know, is pigeonholed as a humorist.