

academic Professor Cooley's seems to me more like a free mind than the cosmopolitan Mr. Boyd's.

Chapter I of the "Literary Blasphemies" is addressed "To the Indignant Reader," one of whom does not feel indignant, nor indeed very much impressed, except with the fury of Mr. Boyd's indignation over the placid waters of an uncritical world's conventional opinions. Chapter II is on Shakespeare, in which, if one can escape from the vituperation, he may discover a residuum of good sense, only it seems to say: "This is the gist of the whole matter;" and it is not. Chapter III is on Milton by which one is led, or misled, to think that Mr. Boyd does not know much about poetry. Whether Milton's Puritanism was bad for his poetry or not, or helped his fame or injured it, is a matter of guesswork. Mr. Boyd thinks it ruined his poetry and is the chief support of his reputation, that his only real salvation was the Elizabethan element in him. There may be something in that, although "Paradise Lost" is no duller as narrative than the very Elizabethan "Faerie Queene." But to most modern critics the enduring value of Milton, as of Spenser, is the esthetic, and I do not see how his Puritanism—or call it his austerity—can be separated, like the goats from the sheep, and set off by itself for an inclusive and exclusive damnation. "Paradise Lost" and "Samson Agonistes" have this esthetic power as much as, and with a longer reach, than, "L'Allegro" or "Comus." I suspect Mr. Boyd of limitations. If he had ever felt the big waves of Milton's blank verse go through his nervous system, especially in youth, as some of us have, he would have realized that without that experience there is not much point in talking about Milton at all. Neither do I think Milton was a humbug with his "Tractate on Divorce," though it was patently enough pretty "wishful thinking." Byron posed as a dark mysterious somewhat, but in Mr. Boyd's eyes he had the virtue of being a rebel and a rake and therefore sincere, and Milton had the vice of being theologically and Hebraically moral and therefore a humbug. But none of these vices or virtues seem to me to imply, or render probable, or even suggest, either sincerity or humbug.

Personally, both men are more repellant than attractive to me, as biographical persons, but personally I prefer not to care very much about any of these things. When Byron goes suddenly up on his sinewy wings in "Childe Harold," or rattles along easy and strong page after page of "Don Juan," I don't care what is "put on" or what is not. It is superb. And if I find that to read the "Adonais" and the "Morte D'Arthur" after "Lycidas" and "Paradise Lost" is to find the Shelleyan music thin and the Tennysonian blank verse precious and "dressed up to kill," it may be an unfair experiment, but it points to the real Miltonic values. At any rate it has nothing to do with curates at tea parties reading the Idyls to mid-Victorian ladies and assuring them that atheism was not a necessity. Byron, says Mr. Boyd, "was a personality, though not a poet, of our own 'age of dissonance,' and it is that dissonance in him which has its echo in the modern reader." Except that the "modern reader" possibly means Mr. Boyd, the statement means very little to me. Byron's personality, like the personality of nearly all poets of importance, is of very little importance without his poetry. "His turbulent and fascinating life" in itself was neither as turbulent or as fascinating as that of thousands of obscure men, who being unable to write like Byron are forgotten as he would have been.

In these and the remaining essays (on Swift, Dickens, Poe, Whitman, James, and Hardy) Mr. Boyd's enthusiasm seems to be only, or mainly, aroused where somebody has shocked somebody. Is not that a bit of an obsession? Whether the eternal English propriety was better or worse than the eternal French triangle is no great matter. Any tendency that becomes an obsession soon becomes tiresome. "The difference between this prurient drivel" of some obscure contributor to a church paper in respect to "The Scarlet Letter" "and the violence of Lockhart (on Keats) is the difference between criticism by critics and criticism by moralizing amateurs." "Drivel" may pass if one must be violent, but "prurient" is mistaken as well as violent. That Lockhart, Jeffrey, and Wilson were competent critics is true, but they were of the eighteenth century tradition, and incompetent to Keats. Does "moralizing amateurs" imply that whoever moralizes is amateur? If a critic can only see morals when the value is something else, he has not a free

mind. To the free mind a heresy and a conformity are equally welcome, if they can both show reason. If I were disposed to be violent too I should say that Mr. Boyd's "poll-parrotting of pedagogues" and his similar phrases (like Lockhart's "back to his gallipots" or the "our literature though humble is undefiled" of the obscure contributor to a church paper) is also drivel. Not being so disposed, I should prefer to say that Mr. Boyd is a vigorous critic, with whose judgment I frequently agree. If he overestimates Balzac and underestimates Dickens, there are competent critics on both sides of the issue and it would be unfair to attribute to Mr. Boyd a wishful thoughtfulness in the matter, wishful to demonstrate his cosmopolitan outlook; but that kind of unfairness is on his almost every page, part of the stock in trade advertised as blasphemy. His analysis of Henry James is shrewdly devastating. But the novelists most interested in the technique of their art are usually those most interested in James; which might have suggested to Mr. Boyd that to be outside of one's taste and outside of one's competence may be different words for the same thing. There is no objection to limitations, but when marked limitations are joined to a kind of quarrelsome dogmatism, one is tempted to object.

At any rate it is pleasant to return from this arena to Professor Cooley's quiet study, where something real is gestating. It is not the radicals but the scientists who have revolutionized us, and not by their quarrels but by their thinking straight.

"Let our struggle be with facts, with life, rather than with other writers," Mr. Cooley says, as if he were thinking straight at Mr. Boyd. "One who writes controversy digs his own grave. It is creditable to have an original idea, but to have one and not bore people with it is distinguished."

Professor Cooley is by profession a sociologist, but "Life and the Student" is a volume of *pensées*. Whether called Thoughts (of Pascal and Joubert), or Table Talk (of John Selden and Coleridge), or Conversations (of Ben Jonson and of Goethe), or Journals (of Amiel, or of Emerson and Thoreau in the volumes recently published as "The Heart of Emerson's Journals" and "The Heart of Thoreau's Journals") it is a species with an "established reputation." Ben Jonson's "Discoveries" is the same kind of a book. I have a weakness for the species. The difference for the reader between it and a book of sustained continuity is like the difference between a conversation and a lecture. One's mind is active in the interims, and the result is conversational. But it is not a book for a commonplace man to attempt. There is a certain amount of protection in continuity, but detached thoughts leave one unsheltered. Without coupling or comparing Professor Cooley with any of the famous and familiar, one may say that his is an unusual mind, whose quality does not appear in any particular charm or vigor of style, but in a combination of freshness and sanity, originality and reasonableness, and in this respect is a little like Joubert's. He is independent but not eccentric.

Great Lovers

JULIE DE LESPINASSE. By MARQUIS DE SÉGUR. New York: E. P. Dutton Co. 1928. \$5. THE SECRET MEMOIRS OF THE DUCHESS D'ABRANTES. Edited by ROBERT CHANTEMESSE. Translated by ERIC SUTTON. New York: Brentano's. 1927. \$5.

Reviewed by WALTER S. HAYWARD
Harvard University

THE publication of two volumes such as these is a curious indication of the taste of our time for the "confessional" type of literature, particularly when the self-revelation is concerned with ardent hearts and passionate dispositions. Julie de Lespinasse, by all accounts, was one of the most talented Frenchwomen who held salons in the mid-eighteenth century. She was also one who, as the author remarks, was "no sooner aware of the ocean of passion than she plunged into it." In addition, she had a great faculty for disinterested friendship in an age when every man of sense had to have a woman friend. D'Alembert lived under her roof for sixteen years and not until her death did he discover that he had been her philosopher far more than friend. He occupied the same position in her house as those who saw the Guitrys in "Mozart" will remember that Baron Grimm held in the home of Mme. d'Épinay.

The present biography of Mlle. de Lespinasse is due to the discovery of certain letters which she had written to her lover, the Count Guibert. These had already been published by Mme. Guibert, but, as a wife would naturally publish the letters of her husband's mistress, in a mutilated form. The original letters are shortly to be given to the public; meanwhile this biography paves the way for their reception. In spite of a violent green and purple binding, which would indicate that the book was intended for the boudoir rather than the library, it is well written, as might be expected from an author bearing the name of "Ségur," and is based on a great deal of research in family papers, town records, and the writings of the familiars of the Lespinasse Salon.

Julie de Lespinasse, an illegitimate daughter of a noble family, was taken by the famous Mme. du Deffand as her companion, and introduced to the intellectual society of Paris under her ægis. A furious quarrel took place ultimately over d'Alembert, and the two women parted, Julie taking d'Alembert with her, and setting up her own Salon. Mme. du Deffand said of her when she died, cleverly if sacrilegiously, "if she is in Paradise, the Holy Virgin will need to keep her eyes open, or she will find herself lost to the love of the Eternal." The Lespinasse Salon included almost all the Encyclopædists, being frequented by such well known celebrities as Turgot, Marmontel, Condorcet, and the Scotch philosopher, Hume. After a more or less serious affair with the Spanish Marquis de Mora, Julie met her fate in the person of Count Guibert, twenty-nine years old, author of a book, and with twelve years experience in the army. She soon became his mistress, but could not hold him, and after attaining the heights of happiness, she plumbed the lowest depths, and died an unhappy and disappointed woman.

The heroine of this second volume, Laura de Permon, Duchesse d'Abrantes, was not less a great lover than Mlle. de Lespinasse. Although perhaps not so talented, yet, as a good musician, an excellent dancer, and an entertainer who could make any party a success, she had a great following during the great days of the Consulate and Empire. Late in life, at the instigation of Balzac, she wrote twenty-eight volumes of reminiscences, in all of which she kept herself discreetly in the background. Chance has brought to light the record of her private life, in the form of letters written to her lover Maurice de Balincourt, and her private diary, all carefully preserved for a hundred years in a faded yellow envelope inscribed "Letters of Laura d'Abrantes, containing various curious matters." As hardly any of the letters were dated, the editor, with the aid of the private diary and allusions in the letters, has pieced together the story and edited it carefully.

The career of the Duchess started at a fairly early age. Due to her half-Corsican parentage, she was thrown into contact with Napoleon in the days of his rise to fame. When she was only sixteen, Napoleon married her to his favorite Junot, whose proudest boast was that he was his own ancestor. Neither of them regarded the marital bond as any obstacle to adventure. After many affairs, including a *liaison* with Metternich when he was Austrian representative in France, she encountered the grand passion in all its force when, in 1812, she met Maurice de Balincourt, scion of the old régime. He was twenty-three and she twenty-eight. Their friendship lasted for six years. Laura finally became so serious that she wrote one letter to her lover entirely in her own blood.

After the death of her husband, she became involved in financial difficulties and Maurice came to the rescue. So reckless was she in her expenditures that he finally had to sell one of his estates, and decided then that it was time to make an end. She, on her part, knew enough to "break off at the first refusal rather than run the risk of asking twice." Among many interesting touches of a non-amorous nature, there is an excellent account of the death-sentence and execution of Marshal Ney.

It is unfortunate that the life of Mlle. de Lespinasse has no index. So many famous personages promenade through its pages, and the author has spent so much effort on his work, that this extra labor would have meant little added time and would have been appreciated by many readers. While both books are worth at least a hasty perusal, the biography of Mlle. de Lespinasse is particularly good.

The BOWLING GREEN

Translations from the Chinese

AU COURANT

REMARKABLY prompt is the Old Mandarin
To adopt the patter of the day
For when you ask him
Well, O. M., how are you?
He replies with pleasing amphibology
"Not so how."

LARGE CAKE, \$10

The Old Sinologue, though not distrustful,
Is always wary,
And at his favorite speakeasy
Carefully examines the check before paying.
"What's this?" he asked, laboriously deciphering
Bruno's cursive script;
"I do not remember having partaken
Of a Large Cake?"

Be your age, O. M., replied his companion
(Poo Pitty Sing, that exquisite creature)
That's what they always call
A bottle of wine.
Something in this episode
Amused the old gentleman's eastern fancy,
And thereafter, lunching at Bruno's,
He was always careful to order
"A Large Cake."

PRECAUTION

It was then,
Daintily cracking sunflower seeds between his
teeth,
That the Elderly Statesman
Was reminded of that famous coterie of poets
The Seven Loafers of the Bamboo Grove.
Greatest of these, he told us,
Was Liu Ling
Who ordered his two serving-men
To follow him constantly.
One carried wine,
And the other a spade
So the poet might be buried
Where he fell.

ANALOGIES IN THE PANTRY

A good wine
Should stand uncorked a while before being
drunk
To exhale its ethers.
So should an author
Having inwardly fermented his work
Remain for a season gently idle and passive
Before writing it.

THE GRAPES OF WRATH

Speaking of wine
There is a little-known story of Marshal Foch.
When the German envoys arrived
To ask for armistice
They were given their lunch
Apart, by themselves.
And by the Marshal's express command
They were served a very rare vintage.
And you might take care, said Foch,
That they observe the label.

It was of the year 1870.

SCENE SHIFTING

Sometimes, in reading a tale,
You find that the scene, as you have pictured it in
your mind,
Is wrongly orientated.
You have got all the bearings wrong,
And with a sudden difficult heave of imagination
You have to black out the vision you had constructed.
You must transpose the whole setting,
Shifting landscapes, rooms, characters,
To face another way.

This process has its workings too
For theologians and sociologists.

VISIBILITY CURVES

When daylight is passed through 40 meters of water, the resulting spectral intensity curve is very similar to the visibility curve of the eye. Early life on the earth developed in a watery environment with a vaporous atmosphere. This permits the suggestion that the visibility curve of the eye owes its general characteristics to the spectral intensity curve of Palaeozoic daylight.—Dr. E. O. HULBURT, in *The Journal of the Optical Society of America*.

The observant Old Mandarin
Careful student of scientific proceedings
Was delighted by an article by Dr. Edward Hulburt,
Of the Naval Research Laboratory, Washington,
D. C.

This essay suggested
That our eyes are still conditioned in their seeing
By the unambitious life
Of the palaeozoic fish.

So, remarks our Mandarin,
Perhaps the Ancient Amœba
Still plays carom with our eyeballs,
And even when I pay homage, my dear,
To your visibility curves
(Which are far from spectral)
I peer myopic through the nebulae
Of palaeozoic fog.

FATHER HEALY

Many an odd thing indeed
Does the undismayed Mandarin paste into his
scrapbook
And only what he calls his oriental Sang Freud
Emboldened him to reprint a cutting
Which appeared (I have seen it)
In the *London Times*.

I reproduce it verbatim
Before the Editor spots it:

"Father Healy had a wonderful racing donkey
Which he entered for some race in Ireland.
His bishop wrote to him,
Pointing out that it was undignified
For a priest
To be entering his donkey for races.
Father Healy went to the telegraph office
And wired his Lordship:
*In deference to your Lordship's wishes,
I have scratched my ass.*"

FOR AUTOGRAPH COLLECTORS

When they ask him for his autograph
The Old Mandarin always writes:
The only autograph worth having
Is one
That was never intended as such.

NOCTURNE FOR A SETTLED BUDDHIST

Once I am safely couched, Oh Lily of Truth,
Do not visit me with profane imaginations,
For I belong to the S. G. S. S. G. B.,
The Society for Going To Sleep
As Soon As You Go To Bed.

But if I have to still my anxieties with print,
For prenescent reading
I commend the Panchatantra.

TRIBUTE TO AN ARTIST

I found the Old Mandarin in bed
Reading Saki
With his high-born graciousness
He bade me to a chair by his couch
And offered a goblet
Of the wine of Esopus.

It delights my heart, he said,
To see the Viking boys
Making a drive for Saki.
There is something specially Chinese
In Saki's Tory humor,
He has the claw of the demon-cat
Beneath his brilliant robe.
Suavest comedian, silkiest satirist,
Smooth as a shave.
With a new razor blade.

SHIRT TAILS

Asked for a comment on American civilization,
The Old Mandarin replied:

Your shirt-tails are not long enough.
A certain breeziness about the reins
May be all right for wenches,
But well girded and roomed about
With the kilts of his shirt-tail
The philosopher feels more secure.

CRITERION

In your great country
I can always tell
Whether a man is really important
By the number of keys
He carries in his pocket.
But I reckon success
By a different measure.
He who is burdened
With more than seven keys on his key-ring,
How he has failed in life!
To tell you what those seven keys should be
Would be another poem
And a profound one.

SKIDDING

When a car skids, the experienced driver
Steers by instinct
Toward the side to which she slithers.
Is it not so in the realm of ethics?
If you feel yourself slipping
Don't turn away from the skid
But toward it.

PATET AD ORIENTEM VIA

Aye, said the retired shipmaster,
Who had left the sea and was devoting his time
To the Oriental mystics and sages,
I am Running my Easting Down.

A great light shone around about them
And they were tickled to death.

LITERARY NOTE

A bookseller told me
That after some years of neglect
George Meredith was "coming back."
As far as I'm concerned
He never went away.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

The Houghton Mifflin Company and the *American Legion Monthly* announce that for the most interesting, best written, and most memorable story with the World War as a background, adapted to both serial and book publication, a prize of \$25,000 cash will be awarded. This payment will cover the right of first serial publication in *The American Legion Monthly*, but Houghton Mifflin Company's share of the award will be in addition to royalties on the sales of the book. On all sales of the winning novel in book form made through the regular channels of the book trade, there will be paid, entirely apart from the prize, a royalty of twenty-five cents per copy, with the customary royalties on copies sold at a reduced price for export, or for reprint editions. All returns from motion picture and dramatic rights will accrue to the author, but Houghton Mifflin Company will undertake the sale for the usual agent's commission. Any author, regardless of nationality, may compete in this contest, but manuscripts must be submitted in the English language.

Manuscripts which must be not less than 70,000 words in length and must be addressed to War Novel Competition, Houghton Mifflin Company, 2 Park Street, Boston, Mass., will be acknowledged and read as promptly as possible by the editorial staffs of Houghton Mifflin Company and *The American Legion Monthly*. All possible care will be taken for their protection, but liability will not be assumed for their loss or damage. Authors are advised to retain carbon copies.

The Competition will close at 5 P. M., May 1st, 1929. Manuscripts may be submitted at any time prior to that date. Early submission is encouraged. The judges of the Competition will be: Alice Duer Miller, novelist, Major General James G. Harbord, U. S. A., Retired, Richard Henry Little, Columnist in *The Chicago Tribune*, John T. Winterich, Editor of *The American Legion Monthly*, Ferris Greenslet, Literary Director of Houghton Mifflin Company.

Their decisions on questions of eligibility and interpretations of the rules and their award shall be final. The decision will be reached by the board of judges as soon as possible after May 1st, 1929, and public announcement made. The sum of \$25,000 will then be paid outright upon the signing of the contracts, as outlined in Rule One above. All manuscripts offered in the Competition other than that winning the prize are to be considered as submitted to *The American Legion Monthly* for first serial publication, and to Houghton Mifflin Company for publication in book form.