

Books of Special Interest

Unpublished Letters

BALZAC AND SOUVERAIN. Edited by WALTER SCOTT HASTINGS. New York: Doubleday, Page & Co. 1927. \$15.

Reviewed by E. PRESTON DARGAN
University of Chicago

AMONG the most revealing pages in Balzac's life-history are those concerning his relations with publishers. These figures emerge as definitely as if they belonged to the "Comédie Humaine" itself. We come to know the "odious" Madame Béchet, Edmond Werdet, gossip and "vulture," and the crafty Chlendorowski. We learn afresh how closely Balzac commingled his financial affairs and his literary ambitions.

Such are the interests of the present volume, consisting mainly of fifty-six hitherto unpublished letters from Balzac to Hippolyte Souverain. This *éditeur* stood sponsor for numerous novels during the author's grand climacteric (1833-1844). The original holographs are the property of Mr. Gabriel Wells, who in various ways has appeared as the "twentieth century godfather of Balzac." The volume republishes also certain complementary letters from Souverain to the novelist. The editing has been carefully done by Professor W. S. Hastings, already known for his work on Balzac's plays. The commentary or running text, if not always explicit, is thoroughly reliable and readable. Professor Hastings has had to surmount great difficulties in transcribing, grouping, and dating the letters. The result is a well-knit and complete chapter from Balzac's professional life.

At best, the author maintained an armed truce with his publishers; at worst, it was a guerilla warfare of recriminations. "M. de Balzac est un homme à ne jamais imprimer," declared a printer to Souverain. We need not dwell on the familiar tale of how this "Manslayer" rewrote large portions of his novels on proof-sheets. Such revisions meant infinite delays; and Souverain complains mainly of overdue proof-sheets, unfurnished copy, and carelessness as

to contracts. On the other hand, the letters are constantly referring to money matters; here it is Balzac who accuses *le superbe Hippolyte* of sharp dealing and wants more liberality including frequent advances. In short, an atmosphere of mutual distrust long prevailed. The editor of the volume seems too good-natured in endeavoring to clear this atmosphere. It is hardly true that the "first signs of coldness" date from 1843. All along there are too many signs of irritation, threats of legal proceedings, and clearly expressed suspicion.

As for literary matters, the chief lesson I learn is that one cannot understand the composition of the "Comédie Humaine" without due regard to Balzac's correspondence and his mutable contracts with publishers. A dozen masterpieces were brought out by Souverain in these years. Concerning them we glean much information. It is noteworthy that sometimes a volume is to be filled out by writing, rather hastily, an additional tale or two. To set up part of one volume required of the compositors three hundred hours of proof-corrections. The cost of polishing "Pierrette" exceeded what the author was paid for that story. Sweeping revisions were made for "Le Curé de Village" as for "Un Grand Homme de Province à Paris." Occasionally the publisher is allowed to make the necessary corrections, but Balzac vehemently protests against Souverain's passing a "revise" without the author's consent. Frequently we hear of obligations unfulfilled, because the novelist has undertaken fresh enterprises to the prejudice of a previous contract. We can understand Souverain's constant lament that Balzac is "always promising," but seldom performing.

Yet the Titan's productivity during this period was enormous. The volume shows that he wrote incessantly, as one hag-ridden. It is what killed him ultimately. Even in 1843 his printers nearly drove him to death. The break with Souverain, as publisher came at this time. But later, while Balzac was ill in Russia, the tone of the correspondence reveals that cordial relations were for the first time established. Not only

did Souverain help the suffering author financially (he had done this before), but he came forward with various friendly services, which included the purveying of the latest Parisian gossip and books to the Ukraine!

Professor Hastings is likely to be credited with a notable discovery about this Russian sojourn. It is indicated from a monogram on one of the letters that Balzac was in a State hospital during the autumn of 1849, instead of at his fiancée's home. If this be fully proven, it would count as another instance of Madame Hanska's neglect.

Altogether, this is a volume which for external beauty and intrinsic value should appeal to every Balzac amateur.

Historical Criticism

LINCOLN OR LEE. By WILLIAM E. DODD. New York: The Century Co. 1928. \$2.

Reviewed by L. E. ROBINSON

IN three chapters Mr. Dodd has essayed a very difficult task even for a historian of his attainments. He attempts in brief compass a "comparison and contrast" of Lincoln and Lee through a *résumé* of their conduct and fortune as leaders of their respective sides in what he somewhat naively calls "the war between the states." The swiftly-moving and well-written parallel of the two leaders sketches the opening of the Civil War and the events of the epic duel that followed; it indicates Lincoln's successful management of Palmerston's attitude and English public opinion, and stresses the hostility the President encountered in Congress, in the cabinet, and elsewhere. Up to Gettysburg, Lincoln loses and Lee wins. After Gettysburg, which Lee lost because "his greatness was his ruin," the Confederate leader declined before the superior force of Grant, who, in spite of excessive losses, persisted in fighting Lee's army.

Lee is called "the greatest of American, if not English-speaking, commanders." He was the best representative of his time of the "aristocratic principle." He was great and knew he was great. He represented the section that had abandoned the social philosophy of Jefferson, its greatest thinker, for the "harder doctrine of Hamilton and John Marshall, the doctrine of inequality among men." Lincoln, politically sympathetic with Jefferson's doctrine of equality among men, was gentle and submissive to the will of the majority. It is perplexing to find a good American historian referring to Lincoln as "unreligious"; to his assassination as having hurried him "into an earlier and a greater immortality than life itself could have given." It is an open question whether Lee's last five years "completed" or redeemed his "immortality."

Mr. Dodd's little book is an interesting if journalistic essay in historical criticism. He has selected the two greatest and most interesting Civil War leaders for parallel study. In his estimate he has been influenced obviously by his own observation that "Americans love success" and by the idea of "the narrow and accidental margin of success." The President and the General are regarded too exclusively from the same level of responsibility and action. There is some reason, however, for this point of view, since Lincoln was primarily a statesman with major military problems forced upon his unwarlike temper, and Lee was a trained soldier whose life affords no data for study in the service or ideals of democratic government. Mr. Dodd keeps before his reader Lincoln's hope of "lifting the weights from the shoulders of all men"; little is made of his major objective of the Union as the means of achieving that hope; little is made of his military vision and judgment, so clearly summarized two years ago by the English General Ballard; little or nothing is made of his philosophy of individualism as the ideal of republican government set out in his permanent contribution to American political literature, far and away superior to any contributed by others on either side of the struggle. Lincoln was the thinker and spokesman of his era on its political side. Lee was the finest flower of manhood and of generalship furnished by his side of the controversy, and the last five years of his life were, from all we know, beautiful. In their private lives and character both leaders were irreproachable. As protagonists of their period, Lincoln stood for the humanity and development of all men; Lee stood for an aristocratic ideal of great antiquity, doomed to pass away before the newer world tendencies of popular education and economic opportunity. As a historian, Mr. Dodd declines to interpret his facts; perhaps he is right. Possibly he does not care to have these three chapters looked upon as the estimate of a critical historical essay.

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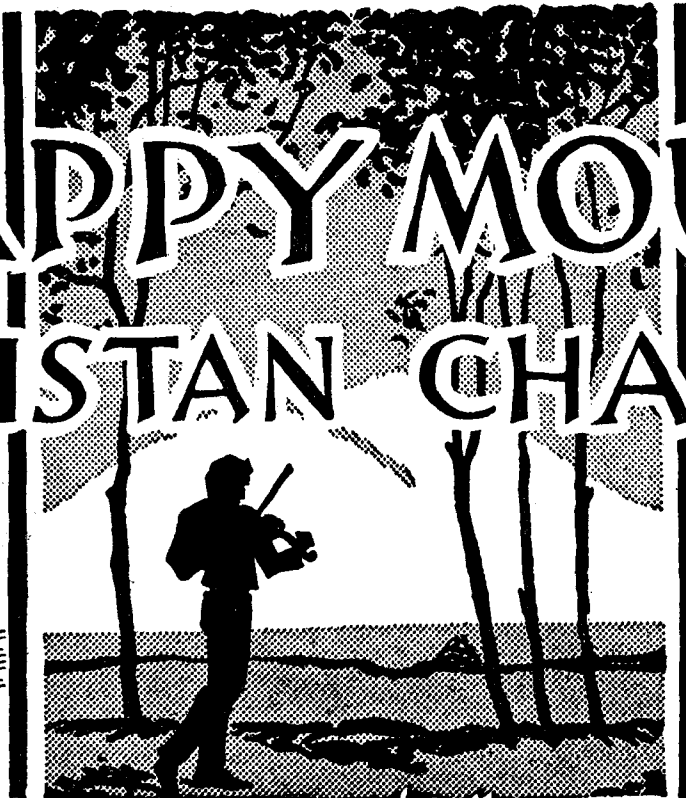
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Books of Special Interest

Behaviorism Again

PSYCHOLOGICAL CARE OF INFANT AND CHILD. By JOHN B. WATSON. New York: W. W. Norton & Company. 1928. \$2.

Reviewed by F. L. WELLS
Boston Psychopathic Hospital

THE explicit goal is to do what can be done towards duplicating Emmett Holt's classic, for the mental life of the child. Watson could have written five years ago everything of importance here. Then the comparison with Holt might in some sort have held; now this place belongs to Thom's "Everyday Problems of the Everyday Child," and the present book takes rank as a special plea for a principle.

In whatever Watson writes one can be sure of distinctive and vigorous rhetoric. On vital themes he speaks out of the abundance of the heart and does not sidestep or pussyfoot. Nor is he an "unfermented" man. Together these things have given him a hold on the intelligent lay public such as no one in the psychological field has had for a generation. His thesis is that nurture is practically all and nature practically nothing. An energetic and healthy view whatever the facts may be, for in this faith we shall certainly get more done than if we think original nature throws the dice as well as loads them. The words most to be applauded in this book are those in which Watson strikes hard at the illusion of breeding as a method of morality, and for fewer children given the most our culture affords. A constructive suggestion is the opportunity of maternity hospitals for training mothers-to-be in the technique of infant care. There are excellent hints on the play-life of the young child, with special reference to over-

plus of toys. The remarks on sex life at this age are generally sound, and the rule in many enlightened households, though there are difficulties in starting these policies after the child reaches school age that might be made clearer.

Not the best-disposed of critics, however, can grant that the volume gives a proportioned account of its topic. The outlook is from experience quite specialized for infant years, in the presence of a high level of equipment and service. The result is a general over-simplification. On the practical side, witness the treatment of destructiveness. For Watson it is essentially a matter of poor mental hygiene with toys. Thom gives a wider and different view. Or again the temper tantrum. This chapter has interesting prophylactic suggestions, but as the tantrum does not lend itself to a simple unconditioning technique, Watson's system has relatively little help to offer.

Paraphrasing "Bacon," either Francis or Roger, lived no part of his life in the so-called fifteenth century. If the passage on p. 41 about "raw material to make a man" means anything, it means that birth is a sort of critical point, after which all is given from the environment, no conduct patterns develop from within, and constitutional factors do not effect the way the environment is accepted. There should be a Tex Rickard of the intelligentsia to arrange a set-to on this question between the learned author and Dr. Walter Timme. Faithful adherence to Watson's basic principle implies a control of the child's environment that is of doubtful wisdom, as well as closer than practical in our culture. If Watson's views are correct, it is easy from a laboratory standpoint to bring up a child without conditioned fears, but how much else will he have? The game is not to glass-case the child away from stimuli that condition fear, but to educate him to deal with emotion-producing stimuli as they arise. That is the way to create the "problem-solving child" of Watson's ideal; not giving him the fewest problems to solve, but giving him the best technique for solving those of normal experience.

Having the charm of a personalized record by an interesting personality, the volume must accept its limitations. How "the" behaviorist studies infants and children is hardly so exclusive a process as the general reader might be led to suppose. "Almost frantic interest" may be an orthodox behaviorist formulation of the common attitude toward the topic, but would sound strange in the mouth of Gesell, or Thom, or the lamented Bird Baldwin. As an approach to philosophy, behaviorism vies with psychoanalysis in popular concern, though the pundits of psychology all but forgot it in scrambling for the bandwagon of Gestalt.

The Cash Value of Life

HEALTH AND WEALTH. By LOUIS I. DUBLIN. New York: Harper & Bros. 1928. \$3.

Reviewed by GILBERT M. TUCKER, JR.

TO measure the value of health and life in dollars and to reduce these assets to their proper place in the nation's balance sheet is a difficult problem, but an appraisal in terms of human life in cash values is the outstanding feature of this volume. As far as we know, Dr. Dublin's book marks the first broad attempt to reach an evaluation of public health activities, not in terms of efficiency in accomplishing its aim, but in dollars and cents.

Dr. Dublin, who is the statistician for the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, is peculiarly fitted to discuss the problems of public health from this angle, for one is inclined to have more faith in studies and in the conclusions reached, at least so far as they are presented in economic terms, by one who is not a medically trained scientist employed in public health, but rather a business man representing interests concerned not only in saving lives, but in saving them economically, efficiently, and profitably from the viewpoint of the balance sheet of a business office. The life insurance companies are, of course, primarily interested in making money and what lends special value to such a study as this, is not so much what is said regarding the advances of medical science, the extension of public health activities, and the education of the public to better methods of living, but that what is spent in such operations shows a real financial profit. One life insurance company alone has spent over twenty million dollars in health education, nursing, and other activities aimed at promoting the health of their policy-holders, and they compute that

as a result they have saved in the payment of death claims well over twice that sum. It strengthens one's faith enormously in a public health program when a hard-headed corporation can show such money profits by saving lives.

The book is almost wholly a reprint of papers and addresses by Dr. Dublin and covers a broad range of subjects dealing with public health problems, the cash value of life, the cost of sickness and of untimely death, the problems of such specific diseases as tuberculosis, heart disease, and cancer, and the broad questions involved in the population problem, its rate of increase, the expectation of life, the effects of birth control, immigration and education, and the much mooted question of prohibition. It concludes with the discussion of the future and possibilities of the whole public health movement.

Without being tiresomely statistical, Dr. Dublin's book should do much to clarify the interpretation of statistics and should prove valuable to the many whose lack of training leads to muddled thinking in drawing conclusions from statistical generalities; for instance, he brings out clearly the often misunderstood situation that extending the average span of life does not mean prolonging longevity. More of us to-day escape early death and live to old age than formerly, but, having attained a certain degree of longevity—he sets sixty-five as "the threshold of old age"—our expectation of life, our chance of joining the centenarians, is little if any greater than in past years. We save and prolong the lives of our children, but we do not prolong the lives of our grandparents.

One of the most original and interesting, but at the same time the most doubtful, sections of the book is the first chapter, in which the author attempts to reduce to money and cents the cash values of human lives. He says that raising a child to the age of eighteen costs about ten thousand dollars, and if we capitalize his probable future net earnings, beyond his expenditure, his present worth, if he is of the wage-earner class in the \$2,500 a year income group, is about \$29,000 dollars. By the same reasoning, he concludes that a child of this class is worth about \$10,000 at birth. Whether we base our argument on the cost of raising a child or on the potential earnings of future years, life has a very real cash value, and he computes the value of the population of the United States as an asset of some one trillion, five billion dollars, or about five times the value of our material wealth. Frankly, a good bit of this reasoning appears a bit fanciful, for one is by no means sure that earning capacity in dollars is any adequate measure of one's real value and usefulness to the race. It would be pitiful to think of the picayune cash value, computed on this basis, of "baby" college professors, clergymen, or, for that matter, public health workers, and one wonders if prize-fighters and movie sheiks are worth quite as much as such a value would indicate. The value of a baby is a pretty uncertain thing to estimate, and one is reminded of the mother of a large family who wouldn't take a million dollars for one of her children, but wouldn't give five cents for a dozen more. One wonders if we would really be better off if our population density of about ninety a square mile were increased to that of India with something over two hundred, and if a large population is the *summum bonum* of a nation's life. But, whatever we may think of these figures, the fact remains that there is an immense and totally unnecessary wastage of human life involving tremendous economic loss, and Dr. Dublin's argument that a far more liberal expenditure for the prevention of sickness and unnecessary death would be the wisest investment we could make is undoubtedly sound, whether we view the question from sentimental and humanitarian viewpoints or simply as a cold-blooded business.

Dr. Dublin's studies on the cost of sickness and medical services are illuminating and full of suggestion, particularly what is said regarding physicians' fees and pay clinics. We wish that he had touched on the ticklish question of "state medicine." In the discussion of population questions, the effects of birth control and immigration and kindred questions, there will be found much stimulus, although one may often disagree with his conclusions. We might wish that in his consideration of the influence of immigration, a little more attention had been given to the relation of immigration to the native birth-rate. But however one may disagree with his conclusions, the book is of real value and should do much to stimulate a broader interest and a more generous support, for these measures aim at preventing sickness and postponing death.

Once in a blue moon, COMES A BOOK LIKE THIS!

from a review by BRUCE GOULD
in N. Y. Eve. Post

Once in a blue moon comes a story which recaptures that almost forgotten period when we were very young. Indeed, such a blue moon is now hovering over the publishing field with the appearance of Norman Matson's new novel, "Day of Fortune" (Century, \$2.50).

Doubtless we could do nothing better to stimulate an interest in this book than to quote the entire two pages devoted to the expedition of Peter, Heinie and little Martin to the river. For that incident alone the book is worth reading. We don't quote it, for we are confident that you will obtain the book if the inspired intimacy of Matson's vision of childhood awakens any response in your heart and memory.

Here is childhood which reawakens memories left untouched by "Tom Sawyer" and "Huckleberry Finn." The nearest approach to Matson's accomplishment can be credited to the author of "Seventeen," Booth Tarkington. But there has always been an adult smirk, a cruel sense of poking fun, in Tarkington's depiction of the gaucheries of childhood which has detracted, for us, from his otherwise moving account of children.

You will search long, indeed, before you find a novel which as well brings a family from babyhood to young manhood before your eyes. Matson's is a glowing realism, letting no detail escape, investing it with that un-escapable reality of childish dreams which proves such a stumbling block for most writers.

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