

Further Indictment

SLAVES OF THE GODS. By KATHERINE MAYO. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1929.

Reviewed by HENRY KITTREDGE NORTON

SINCE the publication of "Mother India" the name of Katherine Mayo has entered that somewhat select group known as "household words." This is not necessarily an honor, for these words, few as they are, cover a wide range of ethical implication. Christ and the Devil are but two of them. And there would be vehement dissent whatever rung on the ethical ladder was assigned as Miss Mayo's seat. There are those who look upon her as the prophet of a new day for India. There are others—possibly more numerous—who look upon her as a muckraker, as a panderer, or worse.

When the carefully documented indictment of "Mother India" fell among the fascinating, but exotically frail, structure which Hindu lecturers and writers had constructed for us out of the vaunted beauties of Indian philosophy, Indian religion, and Indian spirituality, a veritable riot broke out. Father, sons, sisters, and adopted aunts of Mother India rose in her defence with a vehemence which betrayed more than a relative interest in her good name. Miss Mayo was denounced as a liar, a propagandist, a sensational journalist, and even as a tourist. Her statistics, of course, were awkward things to get around and so it was asserted that these were antiquated and referred, insofar as they were admissible at all, to a period varying from a couple of decades to a couple of centuries ago according to the enthusiasm of the critic.

Miss Mayo continued her way—evil or not as the case may be—unabashed. She had set herself a task just as she had in the case of the rural police and of the Filipinos and she refused to be driven off her course. "Mother India," despite its outward resemblance to a lawyer's brief, had reached hundreds of thousands of readers. But there were many who should have the truth and could not be reached in this way. For these Miss Mayo has put her indictments of the Hindu social system in story form. The warp of beauty and the woof of horror in child marriage, child suicide, wife murder, infanticide, have been painstakingly woven together into a series of tales which are as fascinating as they are terrifying. Abstractly there is no more truth—and no less—in these tales than there was in the chapters of "Mother India," but somehow or other there is more poignancy in the death of little Kamla Devi, the murder of the child wife, the torture of the child widow, and the sacrifice of the charming Alamehu, than in columns of disgrace-laden figures that tell us how many hundreds of thousands of little Hindu girls share their fate every year.

The stories themselves are most artistically done. As a mere collection of tales they have a charm and an Oriental flavor that suggests now Burton and now Kipling. But Miss Mayo has not stopped at the stories. Her purpose is not to add to the world's stock of fiction, but to press home her arraignment of the Hindu social system. For this it is essential that the reader should understand that the stories are not fiction but truth in fictional form. At the end of each story, therefore, she has collected a few excerpts from statements of Indian leaders, which not only testify to the essential truth of the tale, but proclaim the prevalence of the evil which it depicts. There is nothing wearisome in these excerpts. They are short and to the point and they effectively answer the question which, in view of the attacks on "Mother India," will inevitably arise in the reader's mind—"But is this really true?"

Nor has Miss Mayo missed the opportunity to confound the critics of "Mother India," although she nowhere mentions them. With a few exceptions all of the statements quoted have been made since 1920 and the great majority of them since "Mother India" was written. Thus does she negative the assertion that "Mother India" dealt with the old bad days and that the evils therein laid bare have long since ceased to exist.

Taken as a whole, "The Slaves of the Gods" utterly destroys the criticism leveled at "Mother India." If it adds nothing to the original indictment, it leaves nothing to the apologist for Hindu culture. Miss Mayo has no quarrel with the literary and philosophical theories which underlie that culture, but she condemns with all the vigor of an outraged soul the social oppression which exemplifies those theories as they are practised in India.

In one respect she carries her argument somewhat further than she did in "Mother India." A basic tenet of British rule in India is that there is to be no interference with the religious customs of the Indian peoples. This has not prevented the suppression of suttee and thuggee, the burning of widows and assassination under the guise of religion. Miss Mayo raises the pertinent question whether the time has not come for a more vigorous effort to modify the inexcusable social practices of Hinduism, practices which account for a vastly greater total of human misery than the more dramatic crimes of suttee and thuggee. To be sure, the present social practices hide behind the mask of religious injunction, but this very circumstance forces the question whether religious toleration, desirable as it is, should be stretched to cover a mass of oppressions which the oppressors choose to cloak with religious sanctity. The most earnest advocate of religious toleration would hardly defend human sacrifice today no matter how earnestly the perpetrators believed in its religious efficacy. Miss Mayo in her latest volume has not only nailed down and double-riveted the charges made in "Mother India," but she has posed a further question to the leaders of civilization: "How long must any portion of humanity be bound to mortal wretchedness for the benefit of a priestly and privileged class, before the unctuous plea of the oppressors for religious tolerance becomes a blaring absurdity?"

While Miss Mayo poses the question she is no less careful to point out the enormous difficulties involved. The two stories "Why They Do Not Tell" and "Loneliness," as well as incidents in several of the others, show most forcibly how seemingly impossible it is even to find a place to begin. The oppressed classes are so thoroughly imbued with the righteousness of their own lowly condition and the oppressing classes so thoroughly imbued with the righteousness of their own oppression that beneficent action seems utterly precluded. Where it has been attempted it has, with discouraging regularity, reacted to the detriment of those it tried to help. The problem is thus not one for the British government alone, but for civilization at large.

An Army of Artists

THE PRINCE OR SOMEBODY. By LOUIS GOLDING. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1929. \$2.50.

Reviewed by ROBERT NATHAN
Author of "The Bishop's Wife"

MR. LOUIS GOLDING has the extraordinary good fortune to employ under the banner of his name, and in his single person, a whole army of artists. There are at least two novelists whom I know very well: Louis the mystic, the cabalist, the hagiographer; and Golding the romantic, the poet, the lad-in-love-with-the-lady-in-the-fairy-tale. There are, besides, the traveler, and the scholar; and finally, Golding of Oxford, the Generalissimo, one might say, of this successful army.

Of some of these Goldings I have written before: of the mystic, the author of the beautiful "Miracle Boy"; of the traveler, whose delightful "Those Ancient Lands" appears this spring. Now I have before me "The Prince or Somebody," by the romantic Golding; and it seems to me the happiest of his books. On page sixteen, between hoots of laughter, I asked myself: Can he possibly keep it up? He does; his wit stitches the book together with a bright thread.

It is the story of Merryl Kielsen, Princess Rurikoff, and her strange, dark husband Fyodor, who made so much trouble, and felt so unhappy; of Ben Wain, the little Englishman with that one astonishing left hook to the chin; of the dog Boris; of the Tyrolean Alps; of the lascivious Mariandl with her little, red nose; of Frau Schabs, to whom the whole dreadful proceedings were "not a joke, not a little thing, Oh no, no, no"; and of many others, drawn together in a story which not only marches along the borders of terror, but moves with the best of good humor, wit, and gusto, and even with beauty.

For it is to the further good fortune of Golding of Oxford that the mystic who writes under his banner is a cracking good story-teller; and that the romantic is a wise and able psychologist. Here, as in "Store of Ladies," the romantic holds the front: such a romantic, even—will he ever forgive me?

—as Arlen of the "Green Hat"—; but the other regiments of his art are never far behind. It is the mystic who emerges at the end of the book, among the saints of the Florianthal; it is the traveler who paints for us, in chapter after chapter, the snows and gardens of the Tyrol. How happy he is at description, one learns almost at once:

He was awakened upon the third morning by a blast of sunlight so strong that he almost heard it. The air that struck in through the open window was keen and bright, as if a mountain pasture rose beyond it towards hanging woods and high waters. The tinkle of the tram car at the end of the street had a sharp sweetness about it. . . .

The taste of Switzerland is in my mouth as I copy it.

It is the wit who gives us the gorgeously comic Frau Schabs:

"No," she cried. "No! Es ist kein Spass, es ist keine Kleinigkeit!"

"I thought it mightn't be," murmured Ben.

"Oh no! Oh no! It is no joke! It is no small detail. No joke at all! As for being a small detail, it is no small detail at all!"

And for sheer virtuosity, the departure of Merryl from Unterwald, among the trunks and boxes, is a thing to gape at, and to remember.

"The Prince or Somebody" is the story of Merryl. Fyodor loved her—alas, so tragically; Ben Wain loved her—alas, so hopelessly—and Mr. Golding loves her, as an author should love his heroine. Does he understand her? I do not know. He states his own perplexity; perhaps, too, he states his heart's own hope, his heart's true longing—for the arms of the maternal, for the endlessness of motherhood. He calls Merryl a "myth creator." What else is the mother?

But that is mere conjecture; and it concerns, besides, another Mr. Golding, of whom it is neither my purpose nor my privilege to speak.

The book delighted me. It should delight many thousands more.

In the Manner of Memories

THE GRAND MANNER. By LOUIS KRONENBERGER. New York: Horace Liveright. 1929.

Reviewed by BASIL DAVENPORT

TRUTH is stranger than fiction, and hence less satisfactory. The sole disability under which memoirs labor (more or less according to the writer's conscience) is an obligation to keep somewhere within measurable distance of the truth. And truth is not only notoriously lacking in verisimilitude, but also wants, as a rule, poetic justice, dramatic situations, ironic contrasts, all the equipment of artistic narrative. Now and then a bold author, perceiving this, writes fiction in the manner of a book of memoirs, and enjoys the best of both worlds. Stevenson's "Prince Otto" was such a book; so was Anthony Hope's "The King's Mirror," which sadly disappointed a schoolboy looking for another "Prisoner of Zenda," but which remains in his later memory as a masterpiece in its kind: such a book is "The Grand Manner."

It is laid in the court of a mythical German "regulus or kinglet" at a period between the unidentified but evident eighteenth century of "Prince Otto" and the contemporaneity of "The King's Mirror"—the early and middle nineteenth century. Those were the days when the term "continental" was beginning to acquire significance, so that "Second Empire" seems mysteriously more polished and urbane than "Victorian," and how much more than our own fabulous 'forties and 'fifties! The continental polish and urbanity appear in all their luster in "The Grand Manner." Most of the characters are stupid as only inbred aristocrats can be; some of them are brutal; scarcely one is witty; and yet by some strange skill and style, the general impression made by the book is that of a brilliant and courtly circle, in the garish colors and under the glaring gaslights of the period. The style of the book is indeed itself a *tour de force* of the sophisticated manner.

Upon that side, then, Mr. Kronenberger has attained the fascination of the memoir, its air of glitter and indiscretion. Upon the other he has written a good novel, a thing the unaided Muse of history does not often do. His book has none of the conventional cloak-and-sword plot to which the experienced reader resigns himself on finding himself in a kingdom outside his geography; it is an ironic study of the tragedy that may befall a king who is not sufficiently kinglike. In the history books, of course, there are plenty of weak kings who succeed

in dying in state bedchambers, respected by all and admired by themselves; but the advantage of the novelist—or the tragic poet—is that he can surround his protagonist with precisely the circumstances required to bring out his character, or to break it. With a relentlessness fortunately never found outside books and plays, everything in King Rudolph's parentage, upbringing, and associations, every incident of his life, remorselessly conspires against his peculiar unimportant weaknesses. It is true that Mr. Kronenberger, as Jove, allows a season of prosperity to the prince he was determined to destroy. There is the early episode of the royal marriage (paralleled by that in *The King's Mirror*), in which for a miracle the course of true love runs completely, and then comes to an end that would be tragic if the treatment were not so determinedly ironic.

The characters are as vivid and well-executed—not indeed as those of nature, but, let us say as those of any memoir-writer; the arrangement, movement, and narrative far better. What "The Grand Man" misses in historical significance it makes up in dramatic value. To compare it with the actual history of any German principality or petty kingdom is to come perilously near falling into the Wildean heresy of the superiority of art to nature.

The Mind of the Savage

THE "SOUL" OF THE PRIMITIVE. By LUCIEN LÉVY-BRUHL. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1928. \$5.

Reviewed by ROLAND B. DIXON
Harvard University

NOWADAYS scientists and investigators will not let the poor savage alone. Not content with studying sympathetically his arts and industries, attempting to lay bare the inner secrets and bases of his social life, and probing into the ultimate recesses of his religious beliefs, they also seek to uncover the very processes of his mind in an endeavor to explain why he is so unlike ourselves. Professor Lévy-Bruhl, as is well known, has put forward the thesis that the "primitive" as he prefers to call him, thinks illogically or, as he phrases it, "pre-logically" and mystically. In the present volume he studies from this point of view the savage's conception of his own individuality, both as a living person and also after death. With customary force and clearness he seeks to show by widely selected examples that the savage's idea of his self is far less sharply limited than ours, that the margin of his individuality is, as it were, blurred, since he regards many of his "appurtenances"—his clothing, his house, his weapons, etc.—as belonging in a very real sense to it. He conceives of himself further, Professor Lévy-Bruhl believes, not as an individual but as a member of his social group. Because of his "pre-logical" mind, he finds no difficulty in believing that he can be present in two places or two forms at once, as witness the belief in lycanthropy. The savage has no conception of a "soul" as a discreet entity inhabiting his body and leaving it at death. He believes in a continued existence after death, to be sure, and his body, his skull, his property are still his "appurtenances." In death as in life he has the quality of bi-presence, only after death the emphasis is placed on that presence which is not usually visible, except as a ghost or in some animal form.

These are but a few of the many aspects of the problem which the author ably discusses and, if one is not critically inclined, one lays down the book with a feeling that at last the mystery of the savage mind and of his customs and beliefs, so strangely different from our own, are made clear. It is all quite simple after all, the one word "pre-logical" explains everything. But does it? Have we not here another of those attempts to explain a tremendously complex group of phenomena by a single master key, in which success is possible only if contradictory facts or equally plausible alternative explanations are ignored, the evidence carefully selected and interpretations strained or forced? A rereading shows, I believe, that this is the case. Furthermore, the whole argument rests upon a fallacy, in that it assumes that the savage is fundamentally different from ourselves, that there are no gradations, that we are purely logical in our thought, whereas the "primitive" is wholly "pre-logical." That the average civilized man always thinks logically is obviously not true, and anyone

who has had personal contact with so-called savages knows that while they are often illogical, they often reason just as logically as we do. The savage is indeed more group-conscious than we are, but that does not mean that he is not for certain purposes and under certain circumstances just as individualistic as we.

Malinowski and others who have had close contact with savage folk have shown, and shown very clearly, that the idea that savages are fundamentally unlike ourselves, is quite erroneous. We and they share a common humanity to a far greater degree than the closest student appreciates. Indeed, many of the concepts which Professor Lévy-Bruhl treats as characteristic of "primitives" are really not to be distinguished from those held by the average civilized man. If the savage is "pre-logical" so also in many respects is the European peasant or the dweller on Main Street, and so also are the best of us at times.

A Gallant Personality

LAST CHANGES, LAST CHANCES. By H. W. NEVINSON. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1929.

Reviewed by F. V. MORLEY.

THIS is the third volume of Mr. Nevinson's reminiscences. The first two volumes told of his early services as a war-correspondent in the Graeco-Turkish War of 1897, and during the South African War, in Ladysmith and Pretoria; of his part in exposing the Turkish misrule in Macedonia, and of the system of slavery in Portuguese Angola and the islands of the Guinea Gulf; of his trips in Russia and the Caucasus and Georgia in the revolutionary years of 1905-1907; of the "Unrest" in India in 1907-1908, of the Balkan Wars, and Ireland; and finally, of his visit to Berlin, and his escape just as the Great War began. The present volume starts with August, 1914. The scene is in succession. Belgium, France, the Dardanelles, Salonika, France again, and Germany immediately after the Armistice; then Ireland during the times that led up to the Treaty of 1921; the Washington Conference of the same year; Germany during the Ruhr occupation; and, in conclusion, Palestine. The volume is thus of even greater interest than the preceding ones. Most of the issues dealt with are alive today, and doubtless will remain alive. One cannot dodge their importance, and one of Mr. Nevinson's great virtues is that one cannot dodge his remarks. He is not afraid of decisive statements, because quick give-and-take is the readiest way to encourage thinking.

Two victories are recorded, in which Mr. Nevinson had a personal share—the suffragette movement, and the Irish Treaty. There are also failures, such as the break-up of the old (London) *Nation* group; and there is the voyage of discovery to America in 1921. His observation is as quick and energetic at the age of seventy, as it was forty years earlier; though his remarks emphasize some points at the expense, sometimes, of others. Of the States shortly after the war he says:

I was struck by a peculiar absence of indignation. The country is too vast for the concentration of widespread rage. There is no gathering point for indignant protest like our Hyde Park or Trafalgar Square. General prosperity was partly the cause, for no prosperous being wishes to make a disturbance. But the Americans seemed to me leisurely, acquiescent, patient, obedient—not a "fierce people," as Burke called the English. They submit quietly to the injustice of authority—to what their own Walt Whitman called "the never-ending audacity of elected persons."

These remarks referred to some of the convictions, such as that of Mollie Steimer, under the Espionage Act; to remove them from the context is to give an unfair impression that Mr. Nevinson leaps to generalizations. But even apart from the context they are stimulating. It would seem easier not to attempt to lump a hundred million people into one character; but the distinction between fierce and acquiescent individuals can be established, and among journalists there is perhaps a greater proportion of the acquiescent type here than in England. The nineteenth century liberals in England were fierce men, and the tradition extended to journalism. Such an astonishing display of enterprise and activity, over so many years as Mr. Nevinson's, is only to be explained by a predominant passion. H. M. Tomlinson once wrote: "There is no other living journalist who has an experience as extensive as Nevinson's of the silly and cruel lapses of men—the wars and revolutions of half a cen-

tury; he was there every time; there never was such a fellow for divining the hours and the locality of the next uproar. . . ." This in itself does not excite the critically-minded. The prescience might not be valued higher than the prescience of a stormy petrel, if something more remarkable were not exhibited. The vigorousness and energy, the rage as well as the daring, all that goes to make the quoted "fierceness," are intelligible as the result of a faith, which in turn is humanitarian, of an active Victorian kind.

As a gallant fighter for that faith, and as a gallant figure, Mr. Nevinson's reputation was established many years ago. It is, of course, possible to take too romantic a view of the job of a war-correspondent. Arthur Moore, in a novel about the Young Turk revolution, once described a character who "gallantly waving a cane, and shouting the line *Cras amat qui nunquam amavit, quique, amavit cras amet*, dashed to death in the thick of the foe." It was announced that this character was drawn from Mr. Nevinson. But though Mr. Nevinson is liberal in his attitude toward romantics, he mentions the comparison in order to avoid it, "deeming such a reputation hard to die up to." There are many examples of such terse, good-tempered comment mingled with the hard-hitting in the volume.

A Regal Something

THE LIFE OF H. R. H. THE DUKE OF FLAMBOROUGH. By BENJAMIN BUNNY. A Footnote to History: Arranged, Expurgated and Edited by LAURENCE HOUSMAN. New York: Payson & Clarke. 1929. \$2.50.

Reviewed by ELMER DAVIS

FOR American readers this amusing skit does not possess either the news value, the scandal value, or the solid and thought-fomenting interest which it must have had in England. For here, under the most tenuous of disguises, is the life of the late Duke of Cambridge, cousin of Queen Victoria and Commander-in-Chief of the British Army which he left, in 1895, still fit to win a battle like Waterloo. A nation where royalty still evokes a corporate reverence, not always unmixed with individual contempt, might well shiver at this bringing to light of some of the more absurd legends about the ruling house, as it might well take to heart Mr. Housman's conclusion. For his purpose is to display "the real ridiculousness into which Royalty betrayed a worthy, but inefficient character," and to set forth some means by which Royalty, if it is still to be maintained, might better earn its wages.

All that has only a local interest. But readers of any nation must be amused at this absurd biography which Mr. Housman has told with a sly humor that will be a delight to the reflective. The intrigues of the royal dukes to the end that a king, not a queen, might succeed William IV, and their defeat by Victoria's instinctive Victorianism; the Duke of Cambridge's exploit in leading the charge of the wrong army in the Crimea; the uncertainty of his morganatic children as to the occupation of a father whose appearances were irregular and furtive, so that they first decided that he was a burglar, and then (on proof of royal interest) that he must be the Queen's butler—all this is humor of very near the first degree.

But the humor, after all, is only subsidiary in the finished product, whatever Mr. Housman's intention may have been. The Duke was described by one who knew him as "an old fool, but a great gentleman." Mr. Housman gives loving care to the depiction of the old fool, but somehow it is mostly the great gentleman who emerges. Fool he certainly was, and so long as he commanded the army a standing peril to his country; but many a clever man might well wish to be such a fool as this one. Just so Queen Victoria, whom Mr. Lytton Strachey appears to regard as ludicrous and pathetic, emerges from his biography with a regal something which is neither pitiable or laughable. Whether you like these Guelphs or not, there seems to have been something about them.

The James Tait Black Memorial Prize for the best biographical work of 1928 has been awarded to Mr. John Buchan for his book "Montrose." Mr. Siegfried Sassoon has won the prize for the best novel with his "Memoirs of a Fox-hunting Man."