

with all the barbaric splendor of that incredible court, pitched in tents like a gigantic circus on the outskirts of the city in the midst of the camp of gathering hordes of Tartars, until the rumors of the old Earthshaker's death, at the very moment that he was planning to add all Cathay to his dominions, sent them hurrying westward again, killing their horses in their haste, to Persia, where they were involved in the turmoil of a crumbling empire, and at last, escaping from the clash of rebel armies by a perilous detour through the fastnesses of Georgia, to Trebizond and Christendom once more. To San Lucar in Spain the survivors of that embassy won back on the seventh of March, 1406, having been gone for two years and about nine months.

This was the story that the ambassador Clavijo, once he was back in the court of Castile, set himself to tell, putting down, exactly, everything he saw and did that seemed to him worthy of mention. He records the stages of his journey, the state of the roads and the surrounding country, how he was received, how he was lodged, what he had to eat. He describes the architecture and the appearance of the cities through which he passed. He gives incomparable pictures of the anarchy of Asia Minor, of the administration of the Tartar Empire, of Tamerlane's great system of post roads, and of the fantastic court of that great conqueror, the gargantuan eating and drinking, the Oriental magnificence, the prodigality of means, the ruthless speed and efficiency of achievement.

Tamerlane shouting encouragement to the workmen on a palace he was in a hurry to build (he was always in a hurry), and bringing them food with his own hands, appears less like the Arabian Nights figure of legend and more like some railroading empire builder of our own Middle West; one perceives the reason for the strength of the man and the weakness of what he built. And whatever Clavijo recounts, he does so with a clearness and vivacity of detail that are their own guarantee of truth. For instance, on the way to Samarkand the Spaniards were joined by the ambassadors of the Sultan of Cairo, bearing gifts to Tamerlane, and among these gifts a curious animal, a "beast called the Jorufa . . . strangely made and after a fashion unknown to us. This animal has a body as big as a horse but with an extremely long neck. . . ." But he saw stranger things than giraffes. He saw merchants from farther India at Samarkand and the ambassadors of the Emperor of Cathay, and wrote down what he heard of those far lands, their wealth, and the skill of their artisans, in his book. Whatever might be thought of Marco Polo, here was evidence that the Castilian court was obliged to take seriously. Perhaps it is not fantastic to believe that his record may have influenced the grand-daughter of the king he served to gamble on another adventurer, and one may trace a connection between Clavijo and Columbus. At any rate, in Professor Merriman's words, "the embassy of Clavijo will always be remembered as an early proof of the Spaniard's passion for adventure in distant lands"; and the story of it makes fascinating reading.

Clavijo's book has not enjoyed the popularity it deserves. The only English translation up to now has been that of Clements Markham, brought out by the Hakluyt Society in 1859, and that has long been scarce. It is entirely superseded by the present edition. No one who has not at least a nodding acquaintance with the difficulties of the medieval geography of Asia can begin to appreciate the patient, accurate scholarship, the long hard toil, the constant critical alertness implied by the present edition. The translator has made use of Sreznevski's edition of Clavijo (St. Petersburg, 1881), of the wealth of monographic and periodical literature now available on Central Asia, and of researches in the Madrid National Library which have brought to light manuscripts of Clavijo's narrative hitherto unknown; his own extensive knowledge of most of the territory covered from first hand observation as well as from long study has doubtless been invaluable to him. His notes are concise, illuminating, and authoritative; without cumbersome display—they occupy only twenty-five pages—and designed merely to be useful to the general reader, they contrive to be models of scholarship and good sense. The volume is attractively printed and adequately provided with simple, clear maps. Its publication is a boon alike to the special student of Central Asian geography and history and to the unscholarly reader to whom the romance of other times and strange places makes appeal. The present edition should find many such readers. For Clavijo's is an immortal book.

When Men Betray

THEY STOOPED TO FOLLY. By ELLEN GLASGOW. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1929. \$2.50 net.

Reviewed by AMY LOVEMAN

MISS GLASGOW in this "comedy of morals" has again proved her right to be regarded as perhaps the leading woman novelist of America. No one of our female writers has her wit, her ironical insight into the foibles of human nature, her ability to reduce to an epigram the findings of her penetrating insight. Few of the men writing our novels are her peers, and no one of them surpasses her in the beautiful precision of a style which conceals its artistry under its art. She has discernment and wisdom, a detachment which permits her to watch the human comedy with amusement, and a sympathy which while it takes nothing of incisiveness from her comment leaves it always without trace of bitterness. She is, in short a delectable novelist, one whose intelligence is always tempered by her humor, and whose humor is always in fee to her understanding.

This is not to say that "They Stooped to Folly" is a completely successful book. Curiously enough



Caricature of D. H. Lawrence, by Scheel

its faults lie chiefly in its failure adequately to realize its female characters. While Miss Glasgow has made her Mr. Littlepage walk the pages of her novel a Southern gentleman to the life, with both the defects and the merits of his virtues, with a faith in the standards of the past and a pathetic puzzlement as to the freedom of the present alike convincing and persuasive, she has drawn her Victoria and Mary Victoria, the mother good as involuntarily as the rose is fragrant, and the daughter wearing the patent of nobleness with conscious determination, too much to an ideal pattern. Where Mr. Littlepage speaks and moves with the accent and the gait of reality, his wife and daughter are born of the novelist's pen. Aunt Agatha, too, who stooped to folly in a day when to decline from the upright was to retire to unresenting self-effacement, Mrs. Dalrymple who sinned lightly and continued to bank heavily on her womanly charms, have something of lay figures about them. Milly alone, poor Milly, so imprudent in her love, so passionate in her despair, so exuberant in her liberation from the fetters of her infatuation, Milly alone of the women of the book is a vividly veracious figure. Completely of her day and her generation, she is at once the exemplar and the justification of youth in revolt against the despotism of facts and militant in its assertion of the right to happiness.

"The world," in the much quoted words of Horace Walpole, "is a comedy to those that think, a tragedy to those who feel." To the critical intelligence of an Ellen Glasgow there cannot be other than comedy in a situation such as that which involves her characters, in an order of existence which allows a Mary Victoria to claim justification on the highest moral grounds for her marriage to the lover she has been asked to retrieve for Milly, which makes the father who has attempted to enlist his daughter's services in behalf of his secretary the unwitting instrument of fresh misery for the girl he would have befriended, which shows the object of

two women's devotion driven to desperation by surfeit of affection and cherishing. To the quick humanity of an Ellen Glasgow, however, there cannot but also be tragedy in the quagmire of human relationships, and it is the saving compassion of her reaction to the embroilments of circumstance which lends significance to her interpretation. Miss Glasgow's art is a circumscribed one, but within its limits it is admirable. It has charm, it has brilliance, and that indefinable distinction which to possess is to be of those who grace, not follow, literature. The savor of her writing lingers.

A Modern McTeague

HUNKY. By THAMES WILLIAMSON. New York: Coward-McCann. 1929. \$2.50.

Reviewed by W. R. BURNETT

Author of "Little Caesar"

THERE hasn't been a figure like Jencic, the hunky, in American letters since Frank Norris's McTeague. Jencic, like McTeague, is big, simple, credulous, slow-witted; he is essentially a child, slow to anger, taking all manner of rebuffs in spite of his physical superiority, but terrible when finally aroused. He works in a bakery, first as a roustabout and later, due to the efforts of his friend, Krusack, the master baker, he climbs to helper, then second baker. He is clumsy and dull, but once he learns something he retains it. He is loyal and kind. He is easily imposed upon and forgives swiftly. He is a pathetic and vivid figure. Asked by his friend Krusack to describe a certain man he says: "As for that . . . well, he was just a man, and not so big as me, that's all." The essence of character is in that commonplace remark. Mr. Williamson knows what he is doing with Jencic.

But the rest of the book is mediocre. Having conceived Jencic, a wholly original and living figure, it seems that Mr. Williamson exhausted his powers as a novelist and was forced to fall back on the well-known dodges of the trade. For the plot of "Hunky" is of the obvious movie type, with Jencic in the rôle of the naïve, good, imposed-on hero; Louie Bedin, an iron moulder, a small, dapper, tached, perfumed sheik in the rôle of villain; Teena, who works in the bakery and has a bad reputation, as the vamp-heroine, who, so the concluding portion of the book would lead you to believe, is saved by the immense love and loyalty of Jencic. Further, the book has no inevitability about it. You do not feel that you are watching the unfolding of a few lives as they naturally would unfold, given character and situation; you feel that the author is pulling his characters about, making them do things they wouldn't do, in order either to prove something (just what, I don't know), or to make an interesting and dramatic story.

Mr. Williamson is peculiarly unfortunate with his woman, Teena. It is quite clear to the reader what he is trying to do with her, but he doesn't succeed in doing it. She rings false from cover to cover. The things she says do not arise from what she is, but from what the author wants her to say. This is true in a lesser degree of all the other characters with the exception of Jencic.

And there are minor discrepancies. The setting of the book is of the present and in a big city of some kind. Yet Jencic works as a laborer for the sum of \$6 a week and is overjoyed when he is raised to \$9 and at last, when he becomes second baker, a position of some responsibility, is stupefied by a salary of \$15. Not only that. He lives quite comfortably on what he makes and manages not only to drink whiskey at \$3 a quart, but to save \$500. I made some investigations into wage scales after reading "Hunky" and the lowest salary figure I could find for laborers was 35 cents an hour or \$3.50 per day. Some laborers are drawing as high as 60 cents. This may seem like petty cavilling, but Mr. Williamson is dealing avowedly with contemporary life in a realistic way and should have his facts right. More than that, Mr. Williamson shows a surprising unfamiliarity with American slang. In "Hunky" the slang term "wop" is used to denote successively an Irishman, a hunky, and a fool. "Wop" has a restricted meaning; it means "Italian," and nothing else. There are other discrepancies in the language used.

Viewed from the standpoint of literature, "Hunky" is just another book, made more interesting than most by a single, authentic figure, but spoiled, as many books are spoiled, by a lack of

craftsmanship and an imperfect knowledge of the life written about. Frank Norris's "McTeague," a somewhat similar book, which should be considered an American classic but is generally relegated to cheap editions with Wild West stories and detective fiction, rings true from beginning to end; "Hunky" does not.

The Two George Sands

THE INTIMATE JOURNAL OF GEORGE SAND. Edited and Translated by MARIE JENNEY HOWE. New York: The John Day Company. 1929. \$3.50.

Reviewed by ALBERT FEULLERAT

THOSE who expect to find in the "Intimate Journal" of George Sand some sensational revelation about the love affair of that famous lady with Alfred de Musset will be disappointed. The diary that goes by that title, and which comes from the collection of Viscount Spoelberch de Lovenjoul, was published in France in 1926. But most of its twenty-seven pages had already been used by several critics, notably, to quote only a few, by Mariéton, Arvède, Barine, Rochelave, Wladimir Karenine. Paul de Musset, for his own part, including several pages in "Lui et Elle." Nothing important apparently remained for future gleaners. And I, for one, cannot regret this lack of novelty. For it is evident that the "Journal" was written for the mystification of Musset. It represents what George Sand wanted her lover to believe—or, maybe, what she herself wanted to believe—rather than that which actually happened. It is certainly one of the documents that contribute to thicken the obscurity of the story. There is only one good point about this final publication: it precludes further speculation as to the contents of that much discussed "Journal."

Much more interesting to the biographer of George Sand are the other two sections of the book: a scrap book in which George Sand entered miscellaneous matter, poems, letters, notes etc., and the "Daily Conversations with the Very Learned and Highly Skilled Doctor Pifföel," another journal being supposed to relate the secret talks of the author with herself—Pifföel being the nickname adopted by George among her friends. Here, probably because she did not intend these pages for publication, the author was her simple self and did not resort to that manipulation of the facts which we cannot help suspecting in the "Intimate Journal." And as we listen to those soliloquies we distinguish, emphasized as it never had been before, a side of George Sand's personality which we are too often apt to lose sight of.

For there were two women in George Sand: the one, a passionate woman, impatient of restraint, ever striving after some impossible ideal, a lover who could never fulfil her love, a reformer who built a new society upon mere illusions of her benevolent heart, always disappointed but always aspiring, living a life of constant exaltation; the other, a sensible woman, clear-sighted and practical, courageously struggling with the hardships of life, a perfect housewife, motherly with her lovers as well as with her children, a *bourgeoise* to the fingertips—the George Sand who exasperated Musset when she would break away from his most exalted moods, quietly sit at her desk and write with the regularity of an office clerk, because she wanted to make the pot of the *ménage* boil, the George Sand also whose advice was often sought for by her friends in matters practical as well as literary.

It is this remarkably well-poised woman that the major part of the present volume brings out. One is surprised to see how rational the author of "Lelia" could be, as revealed in these pages covering a long period from 1837 (just a few years after the stormy Musset affair) to 1868, when old, but a confirmed optimist, George Sand could cast a serene look upon her past and attempt a definition of happiness. When talking to herself she could philosophize in the coolest manner concerning that very passion of love which so strangely distracted her in the publicity of daily life, and she then unflinchingly saw the unromantic undersides in the duel of the sexes. She who was a rebel against all social conventions had a singularly sane conception of the relation of parents and children and of what efficient education should be. The passages in which she criticizes certain writers, the pages for instance on Hoffmann, those on "Obermann" (omitted, I do not know why, in the present translation) reveal an extraordinary mental acumen; and she evinced the same depth of insight when she

spoke of her own works, as witness the detachment with which she balanced the qualities and defects of "Lelia." Had she devoted herself to literary criticism George Sand might have been another Sainte-Beuve.

The whole life and career of George Sand can be explained by this dualism in her nature. In her youth, the passionate, rebellious woman, still exasperated by the pose of the time, predominated, and then we have the familiar George Sand of the early novels and of the social novels, which are like so many convulsions of her fiery soul. Then, when age and experience told upon her, the sensible, quiet woman little by little came uppermost. The capricious lover was turned into a lovable granny, a gentle extoller of that serener form of love: pity. The communist in politics settled down into a conventional, most respectable woman of society. In literature the reconciliation between the two contending sides found its perfect expression in the rustic novels. There the early George Sand is still felt through the idealistic atmosphere with which she surrounds her creations; but what probably was the real George Sand now triumphs in the peaceful, optimistic conception of life and in the surety with which she dissects man's soul. We knew that George Sand was a genius; we did not, perhaps, realize so clearly how rich and truly sane was the artistic nature of that writer whose misfortune it was to fall under the spell of the Romantic intoxication.

Soviet Days

THE DIARY OF A COMMUNIST UNDERGRADUATE. By N. OGNYOV. Translated by ALEXANDER WERTH. New York: Payson & Clarke. 1929. \$2.50.

Reviewed by ARTHUR RUHL

THE sequel to the "Diary of a Communist Schoolboy" is interesting, but like many such second efforts, not quite so good as the first fresh story. The author, N. Ogniov, has to meet the difficulty of all such attempts to carry on a hero's earlier adventures, and the special difficulty, in this case, that the age and *milieu* represented—that of a soviet university and of a young man, psychologically fumbling—are much harder to handle in brief diary jottings than were the comparatively simple experiences of a Communist schoolboy.

Certain peculiarities of Soviet psychology still further sharpen these difficulties. The undergraduate cannot permit himself to be sentimental about girls, or the "beauties of nature," or keen about sport, or yield to all sorts of enthusiasms normal to ordinary young men in "capitalist" societies, without betraying an "ideological taint" and revealing a "petit bourgeois mentality." His life, therefore, is likely to seem, to the western reader, unless the latter knows enough of contemporary Russia to create his scene and atmosphere for himself as he goes along, to be flopping about in a sort of vacuum, with little warmth or reality.

Notwithstanding these drawbacks, the diary is peppered with quick thrusts; in a sentence of two, years of revolutionary storm and whole chapters of sociological analysis are summed up in a flash.

"Very well!" cries one of the "bourgeois" young flappers who try to teach the young Communist to dance to a gramophone, and whom he accuses of being engaged in a "stupid and anti-revolutionary pastime," "Very well! But remember that I believe in God and the fox-trot! And no one—do you hear, young Communist?—no one can stop me!"

Kostya, who has been sleeping on a bench in the park and having a hard time to get enough to eat, is invited to dinner by one of his classmates, Koruntsev, and the latter's uncle.

Although I have been suspicious of Koruntsev for the past weeks (he writes), I don't think he has really done anything anti-proletarian for which he ought to be tried. So when he asked me to dinner yesterday, I saw nothing wrong in it, and went. Of course, Koruntsev is ideologically somewhat inconsistent, and, strictly speaking, his views are tainted with a petty bourgeois spirit; but after all, one has to study this spirit before starting a fight against it. I realize quite well that this path is a dangerous one, and, if one is not careful enough, it can lead one to opportunism, passivity, and even Menshivism. To resist this, one has to watch one's self very carefully all the time, and then it's all right. . . .

Here, the author is able to tell, in diary form, a long story of a seventeen-year-old's struggle and wavering between his natural instincts and the "principles," which, as he says in another place, "are the main question so far as I am concerned." But it

is a hard trick, and as already suggested, it often doesn't come off.

This is brought out in rather striking fashion by the letter from the boy's teacher which ends the book. Nikpetozh was one of those members of the old intelligentsia who have adapted themselves more or less successfully to the new order. He loved Russia, genuinely believed that there was good and beauty in the Revolution, despite its crimes, faults, and failures, and desperately tried to give to it his intellectually trained mind. It was a hard job and Moscow got the better of him. He couldn't seem to fit, developed "nerves," began to see a giant spider sitting in the middle of his room, always waiting and watching for him. Kastya, with the help of a friend, who tended sheep in the summer in order to save a little for his winter at the university, got the harried teacher a job as a mail-driver on one of the rural postal routes that make a circuit of the remoter villages.

"A vast expanse of snow" the latter wrote several months afterward, from somewhere in the far north,

and here I am on my sledge, gliding along from village to village. But don't think that all this snow and spaciousness around me has put me into a lyrical mood! I haven't time for it. I've got to ponder over all the questions the village folks put to me . . . the Revolution and the radio, which the Revolution has brought to the villages, have turned rural Russia upside down . . . the village folks argue—some of them for, others against the Government—but in any case, they argue! And arguing means thinking! And thinking means—growth! . . . It's late. My temporary landlords are asleep, and a solitary little electric lamp is twinkling on a table before me. Surely that's a miracle! To think that in a savage, out-of-the-way corner like this there can be an electric lamp instead of the usual taper! But they've already become used to their electric light, and that isn't really the important point. . . . I told you I wasn't in a lyrical mood. But that isn't really true. When I see the blue outline of a wood against the snowy horizon, and somewhere in the distance the lights of a factory, and when the little horse pulls the sledge through the deep snow, with the driver and myself, and mail-bags full of complaints and applications and facts and orders and information and money, I suddenly have a dim vision of my home country, and I sometimes whisper to myself:

"Onward, dear Russia, onward!"

"Strange, isn't it? On the whole, I'm happy. Good-bye."

Why does this seem so warm and real as contrasted with much of the rest of the book? For several reasons. For one, because here the individual is living and breathing in an understandable scene, real to the American reader as a Montana ranch. For another, because here the author himself is simply letting himself go, in a mood which, plainly, might be his own. It is an "American" mood—Nikpetozh might be any A.R.A. relief worker driving his sledge from one village kitchen to another, a day or two out from Samara or Orenburg. Maybe the author of these diaries, himself, is "tainted with a petty bourgeois spirit" which comes through here, in spite of him!

The Convocation of Canterbury and York, have both given sanction to the proposal of the bishops to permit the use of parts of the revised Prayer-book of 1928, twice rejected by Parliament. It may be remembered that the bishops recommended as a temporary measure to meet a situation of great difficulty that, with certain specified safeguards and exceptions, it should be permissible to use "such deviations from and additions to the book of 1662 as fall within the limits of the book of 1928." At the same time the bishops gave a pledge to suppress practices which are consistent with neither book.

For the third year in succession the Newdigate Prize has been awarded to a girl undergraduate. This year's winner is Miss Phyllis M. Hartnoll, of St. Hugh's College.

The Saturday Review of LITERATURE

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