

BOOKS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

Not Sterne but Combe

LAURENCE STERNE: SECOND JOURNAL TO ELIZA. Hitherto known as "Letters Supposed to Have Been Written by Yorick and Eliza," but now shown to be a later version of the "Journal to Eliza." Transcribed from the copy in the British Museum and presented with an Introduction by MARGARET R. P. SHAW, together with a Foreword by CHARLES WHIBLEY. London: G. Bell & Sons, Ltd. 1929.

Reviewed by WILBUR CROSS

Author of "Life and Times of Laurence Sterne"

IN order to understand the startling claims made for the letters in this volume, it is necessary to bear in mind a few facts in the story of Yorick and Eliza as it has hitherto been told from letters and other documents of unquestionable authenticity.

Soon after coming up to London in January, 1767, Laurence Sterne met, in the Anglo-Indian society he had been cultivating, Mrs. Elizabeth Draper, whose husband held a post in the East India Company and was then stationed at Bombay. Yorick and Eliza, says Sterne, "caught fire, at each other at the same time." Sterne was then in his fifty-fourth year, while Mrs. Draper had not yet quite reached the age of twenty-three. The fires between youth and age were still fast burning when Mrs. Draper was unexpectedly called back to India by her husband. Obedient to the call, she went down to Deal towards the end of March to await the sailing of the *Earl of Chatham*, which was to take her home. During this interval of some ten days, many letters passed between Sterne and Mrs. Draper, under the fanciful names of the Bramin and the Bramine as well as of Yorick and Eliza. Subsequently Mrs. Draper fled from her husband, and returned to England late in 1774, where she died in 1778. Her return was heralded in 1773 by the publication of "Letters from Yorick to Eliza," which were followed in 1775 by three other editions. There are ten of these letters, which, though undated, belong to the first three months of 1767. They were evidently printed from copies which Mrs. Draper permitted one or more friends to make. They created a sensation. In 1775 Sterne's daughter also edited a large miscellaneous group of her father's letters. Neither collection, however, contained any letter from Mrs. Draper to Sterne, of which there had been many. Then the literary hack and forger entered upon the scene to supply the deficiency, first with the spurious "Letters from Eliza to Yorick" (1775).

In "The Letters from Yorick to Eliza," about which no question can arise, there are allusions to journals which each is keeping for the sole eyes of the other. A part, probably the larger part, of Sterne's journal, in Sterne's own hand, came to the British Museum late in the nineteenth century, and was published in 1904 under the title of "The Journal to Eliza," though Sterne called it "Continuation of the Bramine's Journal." The entries begin with April 13, 1767, and end with August 4 of the same year, save for a postscript dated November 1. "The Journal to Eliza" is an extraordinary emotional document, keyed to the tune of "A Sentimental Journey."

Now, we are ready for the claims of Miss Shaw, which are reinforced in a "Foreword" by Mr. Charles Whibley. In 1779 appeared two volumes entitled "Letters Supposed to Have Been Written by Yorick and Eliza," which are loosely arranged as a journal. These letters, which have always been regarded as imitations, Miss Shaw would prove to be genuine. External evidence against her thesis she lightly casts aside, and bases her argument mainly on their style. She conjectures that Sterne was dissatisfied with his journal as first written and took the occasion while in London in January and February 1768 to rewrite it. This "Second Journal to Eliza," as she names it, written just before death, is declared to be "the supreme *apologia* of Sterne's genius." In certain passages Miss Shaw feels, too, that she is the presence of "the ultimate possibilities of language," far from the reach of an imitator.

Miss Shaw's thesis falls on the merest

touch. When Sterne came up to London at the beginning of 1768, he was in wretched health. In the previous spring, summer, and autumn, he had suffered from a succession of hemorrhages of the lungs which had reduced him to "a ghost." With difficulty he had trailed his pen through "A Sentimental Journey." There were to be four volumes, but he was able to write only two. For a time in January he tried to keep engagements to dine out, but he soon had to send in apologies to his friends and request that they visit him in his lodgings. In February he came down with the influenza, which was followed by pleurisy, and then death on the eighteenth of March. During his last illness he began and laid aside a "Comic Romance." It is preposterous to assume that Sterne had the time or the strength to write two volumes of letters either then or during the previous months at Coxwold.

Despite Miss Shaw to the contrary, there is nothing in the letters of 1779 to show that the author of these two volumes had ever seen "The Journal to Eliza." They show an intimate acquaintance with Sterne's works, with "Tristram Shandy," "A Sentimental Journey," his sermons, and his letters, which are freely drawn upon for paraphrase and dilution. With the exception of the last letter, which purports to have been written while death was impending, all the rest, except for some anachronisms, keep close to the period covered by the ten published letters from Yorick to Eliza. A few slips, which Miss Shaw attempts to explain away, damn the whole collection. In the first letter, for instance, Yorick writes that he is going immediately into the country. He was in London at that time and had no intention of leaving town for two months. Twice Eliza writes as if "A Sentimental Journey" were published and she had read it. She particularly admires the portraits of the Monk, poor Maria, and the Peasant, and wonders why history does not extend into Italy. There is, however, no evidence that Sterne had then written a sentence of the book. Nor does the style come very close to Sterne's or Mrs. Draper's. At times there is an approach to Sterne's sentiment and rhythm, but as a whole the collection, running down into moral essays, is very dull, quite out of harmony with the temperaments of Sterne and Mrs. Draper.

Miss Shaw relegates to an appendix the preface and the address to the reader of the original edition, in which it is said that the letters, as the reader will soon discover, are only "imitations" written for the author's "private amusement." Who was the author? In making out the list of his writings late in life, William Combe included "Letters Supposed to Have Been Written by Yorick and Eliza." Combe, still known for his Dr. Syntax, was a voluminous writer, who had a knack of imitating the style of his contemporaries. The "Letters of the late Thomas, Lord Lyttleton," which Combe forged, were twice reprinted as genuine. Miss Shaw admits that Combe may have written the preface and the address to "The Letters Supposed to Have Been Written by Yorick and Eliza," but sets him down as a liar when he claims to have written the letters themselves. One of the letters, it may be observed in passing, retells a story contained in Combe's "Philosopher in Bristol," which was published in 1778. How, one may ask, did Sterne have that story back in 1768 when, according to Miss Shaw's chronology, he wrote the "Second Journal to Eliza"? A footnote by the original editor says that the story was purloined from the manuscript of the letter in which it occurs for the "Philosopher in Bristol." Believe that who will. The footnote and the general character of the so-called "Second Journal to Eliza" point directly to William Combe as the man behind the scene.

Mrs. Frances Brown, the great-grand-niece of Jane Austen, has carried out what ought to be an interesting literary experiment. She is shortly to have published a novel entitled "Margaret Dashwood, or Interference." This is to be nothing less than the story of the love and marriage of one of the characters (Margaret Dashwood) in "Sense and Sensibility" and of the later life of its other personalities.

The Wolf Pack

THE LAST STAND OF THE PACK. By ARTHUR H. CARHART and STANLEY P. YOUNG. New York: J. H. Sears & Co. 1929.

Reviewed by MARY AUSTIN

THE last stand of anything has always a dispiriting sound. However triumphant the occasion for the bringers about of final judgments, of extirpations, the sympathy of the audience is always instinctively with the extirpated. Nothing, for the bystander, should ever be utterly wiped out; there is probably always something to be said for under-dogs, and the right reaction to all drama demands a moment of relenting, of second chances, of the generosity of victory. "The Last Stand of the Pack" carries with it a corrective suggestion for misplaced victories. The pack means depredation, ruthlessness for its victims, cunning and courage of a sort which raises the price of success and creates in advance the anticipation of a good fight, with reasonableness at least on the side of the victor. If you should happen, in addition, to be a producer, on a considerable scale, of live stock, news of the extermination of the pack—for the live stock man, perhaps for any American, there is but one sort of pack—affords the satisfaction of another hazard removed. It is to these that the authors address the book which records the final passing of the wild wolf of the western plains and mountains.

Stanley P. Young is the principal biologist of the U. S. Biological Survey, and Arthur Carhart is a novelist who in association with the U. S. Forest Service, uncovered and shaped into a book the story of what is probably the last known wolf pack within our borders. The material is utterly authentic. The study of the background, of the men involved in the business of pitting their own hunting skill against the wolf packs that until a few years ago haunted the mid-region of the Rockies, is explicit and unprejudiced. There is even that respect which the good hunter allows for a worthy foe. For readers to whom hunting is a preferred sport, and wolves merely the incidental objects of the hunt, the book is excellent, dependable entertainment. It is an unimpeachable gift book for boys. It is also the sort of factual material which becomes in the course of time the background of immortal fiction. The wolf-trappers, the Forest Rangers, the cow-boys involved in the chase and capture of Lefty of Burns Hole, of Whitey and Rags, of Bigfoot and Three-toes and the Phantom Wolf, are, as the authors say in their dedication, the last metamorphoses of the Mountain Men who beat out the wind-swept, snow-blanketed, hail-pelted trails of the Rockies. Altogether, "The Last Stand of the Pack" is an important, an indispensable addition to our Americana.

The reviewer admits a sympathy almost wholly engaged on behalf of the Pack, feeling that the country could well have spared a last pack, and reimbursed the losers among cattle men, for the sake of a pack to study, a pack to provide the last fillip of wildness in a country already too much the sufferer from our American rage for extirpation.

Without, as one suspects, being aware of it, the authors of the book have said the last word on certain aspects of pack history in which there is likely to be no rebuttal. In the story of Unawep and her training of the young wolves, there is confirmation of what students of social origins are more and more certain, the rise of one of our characteristic human types of group organization, the economic pack. At the risk of affording on the one hand comfort, and on the other fresh affront to the followers of Mr. Bryan, the sincere researcher among animal prototypes of human institutions, has to skip the simian group, and fix on the hunting kind as the true founders of our "business" complex. And of all the hunting beasts, the wolf pack, as this book goes to show, most resembled the human economic pack in pattern, in the quality both of leadership and of submission to it, in foresight, in wariness, in evasion and attack, and in ruthlessness. In the struggle between the two, wolf pack and man pack, which Mr. Carhart's book describes, one realizes

that the balance was tipped not in cunning or courage, but in favor of the man who could mobilize to his aid the machine, the trap, the gun, the chemical laboratory. Altogether the book is a fable for economists, a document for psychologists, both of whom will probably agree with the reviewer that it is a pity that its conclusion should remain incontrovertible through the complete destruction of experimental material.

Byzantine Civilization

THE BYZANTINE ACHIEVEMENT. By ROBERT BYRON. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1929. \$5.

MANY books have been written in recent years with the purpose, avowed or not, of destroying a reputation. Here is one intended to restore one. The fame of the Byzantine Empire has suffered in English particularly by the biased and partial treatments of Finlay and Gibbon. It has been obscured by the obsession of western Europe with its own past, and by the rediscovery in the last half century of the European Middle Ages. It has suffered moreover by the elimination of Constantinople from the Western scene and the supplanting of its civilization by an alien culture. The idea of Byzantine history, culture, ethics, art, and achievement in the mind of the educated American or Englishman differs as sharply from the fact as eighteenth century knowledge of China from the actual Chinese empire. In French the situation is better for much valuable historical work has been done and many sound books published, but in English we are still at the mercy of special monographs or most unreliable histories.

Mr. Byron is apparently not a scholar but he knows how to use his sources; his sources are good. He is writing, for a defense and a panegyric, but a defense and a panegyric is precisely what, at the moment, is needed. The extraordinary civilization which we call Byzantine had a thousand years of stable history, with its peak at the very moment when Western Europe was barbarously immersed in the so-called Dark Ages. If King Alfred could have voyaged eastward with one of his mariners he would have found a city in wealth and stability comparable to the greatest of modern times, in beauty far exceeding our best. He would have found manners, trade, organization all in a plane to which nothing in Europe was comparable before the Renaissance. In architecture we have recognized the Byzantine achievement because St. Sophia still stands, but in art, it has only been since the modernists have begun to break away from representationism that the triumphs of plastic and pictorial art beginning when Rome had just fallen and ending only with the errant El Greco, have been properly appreciated. The great sack of Constantinople by barbarian Crusaders, one of the greatest and most shameless lootings in history, followed by the Moslem wave which engulfed, changed, or destroyed what was left, has left us with a pitiful remnant of a vast treasure, but in the original and in European imitation (as in St. Mark's at Venice) there is enough for a working reconstruction.

Mr. Byron's book is not history so much as description. Its chapters deal with culture, politics, trade, manners, and art. They are well documented, and if not to be regarded as first-hand history, are a most excellent introduction to what was civilization to the surrounding nations for until at least the thirteenth century. Most striking is the comparison of the Byzantine budget with that of modern Great Britain, and the extent of its trade, conducted entirely on a hard cash basis, with modern systems of credit. But most interesting and probably most important is the subtle analysis of the Greek sense of a pervasive religion which was the state.

As a contribution to the attempt which another popularizer, H. G. Wells, began with his World History, to restore a correct historical perspective to Westerners who have viewed the world only as Western Europe saw it, this book can be highly commended. It is an introduction to the true center of civilized life in what we call the Dark and the early Middle Ages.

Books of Special Interest

Science and Religion

RELIGION IN AN AGE OF SCIENCE.
By EDWIN ARTHUR BURTT. New York:
Frederick A. Stokes. 1929. \$1.50.

Reviewed by GILBERT LOVELAND

ON this science-and-religion problem, who shall speak as one having authority? The religionist is suspect of wishful thinking or of lack of scientific knowledge. The scientist's attitude toward religion is likely to be related to his piety or want of it. Only the philosopher seems to be sufficiently aloof to see the implications of the methods and programs of both science and religion.

When Professor Burtt, himself a philosopher, says that the philosopher "is a specialist in cutting corners," and that "he wants if possible to catch the gist of what it is to be a scientist without being one," he is doubtless giving a bit of his philosophical autobiography. At any rate, he knows his religion from the inside, and has mastered the concepts of science.

His book has one exceeding great value, above all its other values: it makes unmistakably clear that the reconciliation of science and religion is no easy matter. Quite too much cavalier synthesizing, he thinks, has been done. It is a disservice to both science and religion. It will not do to dismiss all apparent conflict by saying that the two enterprises have two quite unlike fields in human experience; that the field of science is inquiry, and the field of religion, worship; and that each is valid in its proper realm. The plain truth is that science is all the time winning new knowledge in the light of which religion has to retreat from some dogmatic position. As science encroaches little by little upon the Great Unknown, the realm of the mysteries is by that little decreased, with ominous implications for religion. Then religious intellectuals and pious scientists have to play, on religion's behalf, "the pathetic game of give what must, hold what can."

No amiable dichotomy that insulates science from religion will satisfy us longer. There is something significant in the complaisance with which we accept as the tag for our time the phrase, "the age of sci-

ence." The scientific method is gaining more ground in human affairs than we think. Even the fundamentalist goes scientific when something is wrong with his Ford; he wants to know cause and effect then.

Specifically, what is there in the scientific method, as apart from the practical results of scientific research, that influences so pervasively other realms of human experience, particularly philosophy and religion? The purpose of science, says Professor Burtt, is to establish dependable relations between things. Science believes in a system of universal law. Science is empirical—it has real respect for facts. Science is social, for it demands verification of facts; one scientist's experiment must, under right conditions, be repeatable by other scientists. And science is tentative; given new facts, it is quick to alter conclusions. Finally, science admires exactness; its present trend toward mathematical formulation is an expression of the desire for quantitative exactitude.

The effect of all this on philosophy has been notable. Up to the present generation, idealism has been the favorite philosophy of the western world. To-day, "among the younger philosophers who begin to engage attention in America, there is hardly an idealist to be found." The day belongs to pragmatism and realism, philosophies which have respect for facts, are tentative, and try to be exact.

Professor Burtt thinks that the pervasive scientific method will have a similar effect upon religion. The conflict between science and religion, as he envisages it, is a conflict of fundamental ideals as to what is of greatest value. Intellectual honesty and social verifiability in an atmosphere of tentativeness and coöperation, are the ideals of science. For religion, the ideal has been "personal salvation, attained by inflexible loyalty to some revered leader, institution, or doctrine." The two sets of ideals are hostile. Religion must be reformed from the ground up, "to the extent of becoming . . . harmonious with the spirit of science." The reformation will be hard; but it must and can come. Reverence for an idealized Christ may be kept, but beliefs about Jesus of Nazareth must not be dogmatic; the tentativeness of scientific thinking requires the

admission that research may yet destroy the historicity of Jesus. And one should not dogmatize even about God, but should hold that concept, too, as socially verifiable, making one's faith contingent on common experience. "I should be willing to cast a temporary doubt, at least, on my own faith, to surrender God for myself, unless and until through the resolution of my friend's difficulties He could be rediscovered by us both." "In short, God's universality can be verified only by His universal discovery."

Here is, then, a clear account of one philosopher's prescription for an ailing religion to make it alive and well in a scientific age. The criticisms due from certain quarters are obvious: idealists will not like it, nor fundamentalists, nor the religious liberals who are yet "hanging on to the hind legs of antiquity." Professor Burtt thinks of religion as social and ethical. He sees as one of its important functions that of worship, and is quick to note that the very attenuation of the objects of worship which his program of reform demands is an obstacle to worship for very many people. One feels sure that he does not consider the "reformed" religion competent to give "the consolations of religion" to the mass of men or to satisfy those who must lean on authority. He is addressing what is to-day a minority, though it may be to-morrow's majority. His is a hard gospel, spoken only to those who find contemporary religion unsatisfactory.

A Study in the Morbid

ELVA. By DURWARD GRINSTEAD. New York: Covici-Friede. 1929.

Reviewed by MARGARET P. MONTAGUE

IN "Elva" Durward Grinstead makes his initial appearance in the field of fiction with a tale of witchcraft and morbid psychology as it exhibited itself—or as he has chosen to imagine that it did—in the historic New England witch hunts of the seventeenth century, with Cotton Mather the prime mover in the hunts. On this dark theme, setting before the reader a group of people in the grip of hysteria and terror—terror of everything, of the French, of the Indians, and the engulfing forests, of witches, of the devil, and even of God—the author has woven the story of his heroine, "Elva," carrying it through all the revolting exhibitions of her strained and malicious nature, up to the terrible climax in the final chapters.

The book is a savage and crudely written study in morbid feminine psychology. All three of the leading woman characters, "Elva," "Ann," and "Grazie Burroughs," are more or less unbalanced. If "Elva" herself is not actually so, the tendencies of her nature are strongly in that direction, while the other two are frankly so. 'Tis a mad world, my masters! But hardly as mad a one as Mr. Grinstead would have us believe in his book, and had he seen fit to depict at least one normal woman, the perversions of his neurotics would in the light of her sanity have showed up more clearly. Also, at least one of these characters, that of "Ann Putnam," goes back upon what the author has given us to understand about her. In the opening chapters she is depicted as insanely terrified of witches and witchcraft, while in the later part of the book, with nothing to indicate a change on her part, she is shown willingly attending meetings for the study of the black arts.

The book is crude and amateurish in style and construction, and Mr. Grinstead has been so negligent of his historic atmosphere as to permit himself the use of such modern slang as "stunt," "phaze," and "Kind—nothing!" while wishing the reader to believe that he is writing of the seventeenth century.

The unpleasantness of this dark tale, which in parts is almost intolerable, is faintly relieved by the sanity of the Christian religion as portrayed in the character of "George Burroughs," the unfortunate pastor of Salem Village, and in spite of its many literary defects one must concede to the story a certain repellent power to seize upon—indeed almost to terrify—the imagination. Whether or not this power lies with the author, or is merely inherent in the dreadful theme he has chosen, in view of his literary shortcomings it is difficult to say. In a second book, when he has more nearly mastered his craftsmanship, it may be possible to appraise Mr. Grinstead's talent.

Close upon the appointment of André Thérive as chief literary critic of the Paris *Temps* comes the publication of his novel, "Le Charbon Ardent" (Grasset). The sombre story is the chronicle of Jean Soreau, a bank clerk employed in an outer suburb of Paris.

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