

for life to Australia, was worse than death and not an escape from Hell. Yet men who live in torture very often hold to life as Ralph Rashleigh did through many years in criminal camps.

He was not vicious, not bestial in any act of his; he was a weak and strangely naive young man, never too embittered. But he could not win especial favor; his fate in those sadistic times was over relentless, ever as hard and continuous as that of the very lowest brutes in camp. Under it he lost his cynicism and all criminal instinct.

One sees with despair his ingenuous failures to profit by his comparative superiority. Thus, at a time when the reader hopes he will escape the worst, Rashleigh makes a sort of political speech (far more innocent than many now made in Congress) and he is sent to Emu Plains, a colony of horror, a hell of cruelty not to have been imagined by the Marquis de Sade. Rashleigh, when he made this one of many absurd slips, had been luckily assigned as helper to a schoolmaster in Sydney, but he threw away this good fortune unknowingly.

When by rare chance he wins certain relief, even when the camp Court is inclined to deal lightly with him on a trumped up indictment, Ralph topples again into Hades where his fellow prisoners make up the torture he has so nearly missed. There is no question of Rashleigh's winning favor from the prisoners; there is no room for the merest wraith of amenity among them.

It is remarkable how the reader is held on the single note of unchanging hardship, the continuous misery, against which incredible schemes are laid. But in spite of Fate there is always breathless hope. One reads on through another and another amazing adventure and thinks that nothing could be worse;—surely at last Rashleigh must come to the end, must escape. It grows worse, though there are exceptions.

He is assigned to work on the farms now and then, and this gives him comparative peace. But useless cruelty seems to have spread to the soul of the colony beyond the prisons to the free men and women who should have no morbid reason to believe in brutality. They rejoice in cheap prison labor, but they destroy the workman by insane pressure upon him.

At last Rashleigh is freed from serfdom by Bushrangers who attack the last farmhouse to which he has been assigned. But he is to know a new slavery; he is compelled to join the murderous bandits. His experiences under Philip Foxley make a terrifying story, and one realizes how the Bushrangers, who were escaped convicts, were driven to crime and revenge and went beyond revenge to madness.

Then there are the savage black men, the aborigines. The reader feels that the end must come in the forest where capture, always imminent, means death at the hands of the natives. And yet Rashleigh, when the Bushrangers are at last wiped out and he is free, is taken into a tribe and is treated well.

His hardships end when he rescues a family of whites from the natives and is taken to "New England" in Australia to work as a black servant. And now there is adventure of a very different kind, especially when he removes the dye and appears as a white man.

The reader is never put off by consciousness of a tale cooked up,—written for effect. It is true that Rashleigh, or his first editor, skilfully put the tale together and painted some pictures, but in so far as this has been done it is excellent art.

The Comédie Française, "House of Molière," and the world's oldest legitimate theatre, may become the French home of the talking movies if a proposal made at the extraordinary meeting of its members is adopted. Meanwhile literary, art, and dramatic circles are up in arms.

The proposal arose when the members were called together to discuss the action of one of the cast in signing a contract for an American talking picture. The majority of the members felt that none should act for the talkies unless the whole company so engaged.

Dr. Emile Fabre then, as an alternative, suggested the "talkies" be produced at an old theatre branch on the Rue de Richelieu for the benefit of the provinces and the colonies and foreign countries while the regular classic repertoire was continued on the principal stage.

The question will be decided at another meeting shortly.

New Poetry

THE POETRY QUARTOS. Twelve Brochures, each containing a new poem by an American poet. Designed, printed, and made by PAUL JOHNSTON and published by Random House. 1929. \$10.

Reviewed by LOUIS UNTERMAYER

THIS, with the exception of a Cabellian item, is the first excursion of Random House in the field of contemporary *belles lettres*. Their initial publication "Candide," illustrated by Rockwell Kent, and the subsequent edition of "The Scarlet Letter" earned the young publishers the right to be classed with the leading distributors of distinguished books, and their activities in behalf of The Nonesuch Press (in England), The Fountain Press (in America), and The Bremer Press (in Germany) have won the respect of those interested in beautiful books. This latest limited edition is no disappointment.

Here, charming in format and arresting in content, are twelve hitherto unpublished poems by as many American poets, each poem printed in a separate folio and the series boxed in a specially designed case. The check list comprises "Prelude," by Conrad Aiken; "Sagacity," by William Rose Benét; "Roots," by Witter Bynner; "The Aspirant," by Theodore Dreiser; "Red Roses for Bronze," by H. D.; "The Lovely Shall Be Choosers," by Robert Frost; "Body and Stone," by Alfred Kreymborg; "Rigamarole, Rigamarole," by Vachel Lindsay; "The Prodigal Son," by Edwin Arlington Robinson; "Monologue for Mothers," by Genevieve Taggard; "Adirondack Cycle," by Louis Untermeyer; "Birthday Sonnet," by Elinor Wylie. With three exceptions, most of the poems are longish (H. D.'s runs to nearly two hundred lines) and with three exceptions, the contributions are all that we might have asked of their authors. The two outstanding poems are Frost's "The Lovely Shall Be Choosers" and Robinson's "The Prodigal Son"; both are unusual and at the same time characteristic examples. Frost's, a particularly intense communication, keyed higher than most of his work, is in irregular blank verse which begins:

The Voice said, "Hurl her down!"

The Voices said, "How far down?"

"Seven levels of the world."

"How much time have we?"

"Take twenty years.

She would refuse love safe with honor.

The Lovely shall be choosers, shall they?

Then let them choose!"

Robinson's treatment of the Biblical legend is not so much in his later as in his "Miniver Cheevy" vein with a force behind the couplets that is both nonchalant and biting. The prodigal, speaking to his righteous and reproachful brother, concludes:

We are so different when we are dead
That you, alive, may weep for what you said;
And I, the ghost of one you could not save,
May find you planting lentils on my grave.

Of texture so fine that it needs something more than the brain to apprehend its significance, Elinor Wylie's posthumous sonnet escapes the limitations of its borders. Typical of the increasing depth of her poetry, the sestet has that profundity of speech, the authority, the finality of tone that marks her last work. William Rose Benét's lines are a rebuke and tribute in one:

We knew so much; when her beautiful eyes would lighten,
Her beautiful laughter follow our phrase;
Or the gaze go hard with pain, the lips tighten,
On the bitterer days.
Oh, ours was all knowing then, all generous displaying.
Such wisdom we had to show!
And now there is merely silence, silence, silence saying
All we did not know.

Genevieve Taggard's breathless "Monologue for Mothers" and Conrad Aiken's viola-timbred "Prelude" have, under the music of the verse, a troubled counterpoint. Each bears a double theme; each succeeds where a single false progression, one wrongly placed modulation, would have sounded instant failure. The same, alas, can not be said for Vachel Lindsay's "Rigamarole, Rigamarole" unless it is meant to be just that, or for Alfred Kreymborg's flat quatrains, or for Theodore Dreiser's staccato prose.

But if every poet is not at his brightest or his best,

and if Paul Johnston's typography is, once in a while, a little tricky, and his drawings now and then reminiscent of Macknight Kauffer's idiomatic designs for Faber and Gwyer's similar series, collectors—and readers—have much to be grateful for. I can think of only one serious complaint: only 475 copies of this varied and extremely vivid collection were printed. This, in both senses, is the limit.

Song and Dance

THE ELIZABETHAN JIG. By CHARLES READ BASKERVILL. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 1929. \$5.

Reviewed by EDWARD BLISS REED

THE songs of the Tudor and Stuart drama are known to all lovers of poetry, thanks to the anthologists; and Canon Fellowes and the English Singers have made us appreciate the beauties of Elizabethan madrigal and motet. Contemporaneous with the lyrics of Shakespeare and the polyphony of Byrd there existed a third type of song of which the general reader has probably never heard. It was always accompanied by dance; it was of a much lower caste than the songs of the playwrights and the lutenists; it was sentimental, satiric, and at times utterly disreputable, and, therefore, it became the delight of the groundlings. It is to this now forgotten *genre*—the jig—that Professor Baskervill's scholarly and interesting volume is devoted.

The jig was "a dance in which wheeling or turning on the toe was a conspicuous feature." Song went with it and "jig" became a generic term for what is now called in the vernacular "a song and dance act." Originating in popular songs and in folk gatherings, the actors saw its great possibilities for entertainment and brought it to the stage. Often when a play ended, to the delight of the pit—and possibly the boxes—the jigs came on. We have always wondered how the base mechanics, who stood, wedged in a crowd before the stage, endured the verbal subtleties, the lyric flights, and the gorgeous rhetoric of their dramatists. After reading this book, we suspect it may be because they were buoyed up by the knowledge that jigs would follow the play.

Of all jig makers and performers, Richard Tarlton bore the bell. He it was who made Elizabeth "laugh so excessively, as he fought against her little dog with his sword and long staffe, and bade the Queen take off her mastic" (mastiff) that the Queen "bade them take away the knave." Tarlton was succeeded by Kemp and a score of others who carried the jig to Germany where it enjoyed great popularity and the sincere flattery of imitation. Of the thirty-six jigs printed in Part II of this volume—and they include every text that Professor Baskervill could find—twelve are in German.

Professor Baskervill not only writes the history of the jig, its rise and fall, but he gives a very careful analysis of its relation to the ballad and discusses the plots of these dramatic songs. One may doubt if a stone has been left unturned or any contemporary reference to the jig omitted. And if the few jigs that remain, and which Professor Baskervill prints, do not impress us by their language or plot, it must be remembered that they were made to be heard and seen, not read, and that the acting and singing made them.

This book is a valuable contribution to the records of the English stage. The student of drama and of cultural history will find here much material that he can not afford to overlook. Professor Baskervill is judicious in his opinions and theories; he is clear and interesting in presenting his material, and indefatigable in his researches. This volume will remain the authority on the subject.

The Saturday Review of Literature

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Published weekly, by The Saturday Review Co., Inc., Henry S. Canby, President; Roy E. Larsen, Vice President; Noble A. Cathcart, Secretary-Treasurer, 25 West 45th Street, New York. Subscription rates, per year, postpaid: in the U. S. and Mexico, \$3.50; in Canada, \$4; in Great Britain, 18 shillings; elsewhere, \$4.50. All business communications should be addressed to 25 West 45th Street, New York. Entered as second class matter at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 1, 1879. Vol. 5. No. 51.
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A Gallant Skipper's Yarns

THE PEDRO GORINO. The Adventures of a Negro Sea-Captain in Africa and on the Seven Seas in his attempts to Found an Ethiopian Empire. An Autobiographical Narrative, by CAPTAIN HARRY DEAN. Written with the assistance of STERLING NORTH. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1929. \$3.50.

Reviewed by CAPTAIN DAVID W. BONE

ONE hesitates whether to dismiss Captain Dean's autobiography as the vague outpourings of a single-minded mariner or take Mr. Sterling North to task for having "finkled" the gallant skipper's yarns almost beyond hope of unravelment. Two souls with but a single thought, and that, to put quote marks around the word "negro." It seems heartless to begin thus with an apparent racial bias, but Mr. North is as insistent upon provoking such comment as Captain Dean is stoutly desirous of prolonging it. For an understanding of the book, the Preface is enlightening. Captain Dean meets his collaborator on the campus of the University of Chicago.

... he talked of Africa, inland mountains where multi-colored birds sang in unbelievable foliage. He told of days when there still were pirates on the seas, of battles he had seen, of storm and shipwreck. "I look like a poor old man," he said, "but I am a prince in my own right back in Africa. I know things that would make the King of England tremble on his throne. I know facts that would make the imperialists of every nation blush with shame. And yet I can't get money enough to keep body and soul together. Listen," he said, "I know the history of Africa sixteen thousand years. Why, I am blood brother to more than one king. There is not a drop of slave blood in my body." He had trailed off into another subject, and it was growing dark.

I seem to have heard the "blood brother" phrase before, but Mr. North is no Ethelreda Lewis, and his advocacy of the Captain is distinguished only by pity for the straits to which a somewhat picturesque old sea rover is reduced.

Born in 1864, young Dean went first to the sea at the age of twelve years in his uncle's ship, the *Traveler*. Throughout the book few dates are mentioned, but it must have been about 1900 when he purchased a vessel of his own, the *Pedro Gorino* of Stavanger. She was a small topsail schooner of about seventy feet in length and in her he sailed for South Africa, arriving in Table Bay during the early stages of the Boer war. Although content to employ his schooner in the ways of trade (and sea trade and shipping were profitable at the time), Captain Dean had other ends in view. He sought an opportune moment to—

instigate a movement to rehabilitate Africa and found such an Ethiopian Empire as the world has never seen. It would be greater than the empire in Haiti, for while that Island kingdom with its Toussaint l'Ouvertures and Christophes produced great palaces, and forts, and armies—battalions strong enough to whip the best soldiery of France—yet the island itself is a mere pin-point on the earth's surface compared to the great continent of Africa where I planned to build my empire.

In a further two hundred pages the narrative is thin and obscure, obviously padded by the enthusiastic but naïve collaborator. Captain Dean makes many coasting voyages, journeys overland to the country of the Pondos, sees some little of the war in progress, and comes to believe in himself as a clever plotter. Granted that, at the time of the Boer war, the disposition and attitude of the "native" tribes (I also may be allowed to use quotes) was keenly scrutinized by both Boer and Briton, it is inconceivable that a wandering seaman from a coasting schooner should be made an object of hate and persecution by the high authorities of the Colony. Captain Dean avows himself a dreamer; one can accept his avowal when reading of the great offer that was made to him. He met the secretary to the Governor-General of Portuguese East Africa. There was talk of high politics in the best romantic manner of intrigue.

I asked him to explain himself, and he, thinking that I too was playing the game, complied.

"Of course you understand that we have been watching your movements up and down the coast, your stops at Pondo Land, East London, and Port Elizabeth. Your search is ended. I offer you the opportunity for which you have been seeking, and I offer it in a way that will make your act seem wholly lawful."

I tried to cover my amazement. "Just what is my reputed position in Africa?" I asked. "And what have I been attempting outside of my lawful business in the coast trade?"

"Everyone knows," he told me, "that you are an intelligence officer in the employ of the American Government and one of the most dangerous sort, since your power over the native is tremendously increased because of your color. As for the immediate object for which you are

striving, that too is well known. You have been seeking an opening for your government, any tiny port or town.

"I deny every word of it," I said hotly.

"Perhaps you represent another power, another country another faction, or let us say an organization of your own people"; he shrugged his shoulders, "the situation remains primarily the same."

I saw clearly now, and my reply was evasive as I knew it must be.

His voice dropped to a whisper. "I am offering you the vast territory of Portuguese East Africa including the city of Lorenzo Marques for the ridiculously low figure of fifty thousand pounds sterling."

Meyersonism

(Continued from page 1172)

for the illusion of an independent activity, that permanent representation which is the faculty of the simplest creatures and organisms. . . . Then the novel can cease to be narrative analysis and sentiment; it will become instead a simple string of perceptions, impressions, and notations, innocent of all preparation, all connection, and all obvious or perceptible cohesion. . . .

This prediction has since been more than fulfilled in some quarters. Not only literature, but painting and music have continued on the path of disintegration and incongruity.

It is not against the wrongness (for nothing is wrong that is sincere) but against the infantile incompleteness of that sort of art that Meyersonism is a reaction. It tends to reassert the dignity of a cohesive element which knows its limits, but also its power, and vice versa. It reclaims the sequence and consequence of thought and language. This, as I am going to emphasize, is only one side of its influence. It must be insisted upon because it is so frequently overlooked by the younger disciples of Meyerson.

In that part of creative intelligence and activity which is arbitrarily attributed to science or art, but belongs undivided to their partnership and commonwealth, Time, the much-abused, Time, miserable because measurable, and odious to the Bergsonian generation, finds itself regenerated by Meyersonism, and granted a fresh lease of life. It is a fashionable and easy trick to pose as the enemy of time, to affect to despise history, and to enclose past and present within one's individual omniscience. But Meyerson has proved that there is a real unity of process in the highest workings of the human mind. All discovery, all invention, postulate a cloud, a veil to be raised, something that passes or vanishes, under which we find a recognizable residue. Even if time could be completely dissociated into space as measurable, and duration as irreducible to quantity, the notion of time would still remain indispensable to mental activity, be it artistic or scientific. Meyerson does not at all minimize one of its aspects in favor of the other. He was one of the first scientists and philosophers of our time to reaffirm that the sense of ultimate reality cannot be deductive, quantitative, and, in consequence, to proclaim in poetry, fiction, and art, the power of conveying a quality of real knowledge, otherwise uncommunicable. Some trends of thought in Whitehead and Eddington are unmistakably Meyersonian. The author of "Identity and Reality" has marked more clearly and earlier than perhaps any philosopher of this century, the specifically scientific limits of science. He constantly refers to the opposition between thought and reality from which springs the function of art, as witness the following quotations from "Deduction Relativiste":

We want the Real to be rational; at the same time we feel that it cannot be, that our desire is vain. We feel it to such a degree that while straining to demonstrate that the real is also rational, or inversely that our reason can achieve reality, as soon as we think that object more or less attained, whatever has been demonstrated as rational in the real becomes as unreal to us. . . . There is a principle of paradox in our minds. What we conceive as the intimate essence of the real coincides (for instance, in fiction and drama) with the individual, it lies in the non-deductive and non-rational. . . . Art, in its highest form, aims at embracing and expressing all perceptible reality, while science tends to eliminate the share of the subject in observed phenomena. . . . We aspire to a complete synthesis, which alone is able to express the plenitude of reality. . . . This synthesis (if ever established) will not affect the methods of science, for it has definitely mapped its course, and, without possible reversion, given up quality, value, for the sake of quantity. . . . but (in so doing) it drops that part of the real which, to the artist, is the essence of reality.

Nothing can be more definite than the Meyersonian attitude towards Art. Art is the knowledge which science cannot reach. There is an art of mathematics, no mathematics of art. Science does not depend on the scientist, but art is in the artist. Reason, always in quest of truth, unable to attain

substance, confined to structure, yearns nevertheless for something more which art provides. Scientific knowledge is spatial, temporal, quantitative. But the knowledge of all knowledge pierces through space, time, quantity, and discerns another sort of perception, which reaches quality, compasses value, and conveys the ineffable. That is art. It does not teach. But it communicates to the mind an attitude and a movement that lead to the nearest contact of reality that we can achieve. It is disinterested, individual, irreducible to any utilitarian object or ethical necessity. On these issues, Meyerson is quite clear.

But art, to be apprehended, must be expressed, and it cannot be expressed except through a mind shaped by reason. It must use the instruments of science. Perhaps we can conceive a world without literature, but not a literature without words. Any language is a compound of action, sensation, and logic.

There, the paradox of epistemology reappears. Science, founded on irrationals, tries to evade irrationality though it feels it impossible. Art, supported in its expression by rationality, is ever trying to do without that support and cannot succeed. In its attempts it becomes inexpressive, or inaccessible.

Perhaps the knowledge of all knowledge is that which includes both the deductive and inductive. Perception is of things, not abstractions. Science and art are not incompatible, but complementary. They must live—or die—together. The one explains more than it suggests, the other suggests more than it explains. Balanced but not racked between quantity and quality, number and value, space and time, time and duration, unity and diversity, speculation and representation, prose and poetry, poetry and mere aspiration, unable to find an absolute criterion either of truth or beauty, we feel that each of those couples is integrated in the knowledge of knowledge which Meyersonism tends to approximate.

Such a doctrine is evidently disturbing. The scientist tries to ignore the irrational postulate at the basis of science. The artist dissimulates to himself the part of mechanism which supports all expression of his art. If art and science are a game like everything else, Meyerson spoils the scientists' game as well as the artist's. He spoils them in the measure of their mutual incomprehension. In a world full but impatient, of mental customs-houses, Chinese walls, frontiers, and prohibitions, Meyersonism anticipates a philosophy of criticism where that sense of integrity in diversity shall predominate, without which there is no truth nor poetry, that is, no literature.

These are, if I am not mistaken, the directions in which Meyerson's ideas may influence not merely the whole, but every, department of intellectual production. They are already felt. The time is not far when many of our so-called literary discussions will be considered as Byzantine.

It is not suggested that a new doctrine has issued ready-made from Meyerson as Minerva sprang fully armed from Jove's brain. Nothing could be further from the intention of his teaching. Even if such a doctrine were shaping, it would only be another hypothesis, another starting point. What I suggest is that Meyersonism is leading towards the attitude outlined above. For the inadequateness of that outline I, alone, am responsible.

The new English opera "Judith," by Arnold Bennett and Eugene Goossens, was recently produced at Covent Garden.

The origin of the joint authorship, according to a representative of the London *Observer*, came about one day at lunch four years or so ago, when Mr. Goossens, picking up the story of Judith, said what a good opera it would make. Mr. Bennett agreed, and in due course wrote a version in one act. Mr. Goossens began the music, left off, and then, returning to the subject once again, suddenly finished it. The action takes place entirely in the camp of Holofernes.

Jean Giono, an obscure young bank clerk in the small provincial French town of Manosque, has won the twenty-five thousand franc *Prix Brentano* with his first novel, "Hill of Destiny."

The book was published in Paris under the title of "Colline." It deals with the peasants of France and the life they wring out of the bowels of the earth.