

The BOWLING GREEN

John Mistletoe

II.

CHIEF necessity for the artist is "imaginative dominion over experience," wrote Pearsall Smith in one of his porcelain essays—that same Pearsall Smith whom Mistletoe always proudly alludes to as a fellow-Haverfordian. Truly only the greatest intuitions, at the full flex of their power, can dominate the spin of private experience as the lumberman foots the twirling log; can steer and drive it home to some perfect niche of art. But perhaps to be brought up from first beginnings in ligature with a settled institution may at least tend toward some drowsy awareness of stability. In that childish kosmos there were many subconscious intimations of a mood one can only describe as piety, by which one means a sense of respect. There was Old Caleb, for instance, the superannuated college factotum. He still performed easy tasks about the grounds, carried up the mail bag from the post-office or drove the baggage wagon. To see that venerable figure moving about the lawn on a cane or sitting as still as Buddha under a tree, respected by all and even addressing the president of the college as "Isaac," was to receive some inkling of the dignity of age and the continuity of human effort. So also the extraordinary beauty of old Quaker ladies seen in "First Day Meeting," lovely as pigeons in their grey bonnets, was a thrill to every nerve of admiration. There were never lovelier faces or kinder hearts. Something in that guileless way of life kept the soft color of youth on those radiant features, and surely no costume was ever so perfect to set off woman's tender charm. Must Mistletoe confess that not until many years later, in the Tarara Boomdeay chorus of the Black Crook (irreverently garbed in Quaker grey) did he find quite the same aesthetic thrill? To watch those countenances in meeting was irresistible. Perhaps they were sometimes devoid of anything legitimately describable as thought, but they were rapt in a demure harmony of innocent benediction.

What a purely delicious selfishness there is in trying to recapture the lucid impressionism of childhood, which was untainted by any of the sophistications of morality or judgment. And how strange it would be to walk, now, through the little wood of chestnut trees, over the bridge, and up the Meeting House lane. It would best be done quite alone, for there is no game more celestially solitary than the hide and seek we play with the child we remember. At least three ingredients of reminiscence would be the alarming white bull dog at the gate just over the bridge, an almost equally disturbing small schoolmate with very liquid brown eyes, and a rambling tramp smitten by a soft apple thrown with good aim—and then wildly fled from. Perhaps it was that path through the woods, strewn in those days with chestnut burrs, that suggested young Mistletoe's first venture in fiction. It was called *The Story of a Woodcutter*. Whether written by native ambition or at the insistence of teachers no one can now say; but he was called upon to read it aloud, chapter by chapter, in the classroom; a task faced with a mingling of pride and shame such as still occasionally recurs.

It is curious, Mistletoe here bids me interpolate, with what instinctive wariness one treads the rustling path of memory, not to scare up any irreparable secrets—either one's own or those of others. The task I set myself in deciphering the Mistletoe palimpsest requires a difficult double fidelity: fidelity to his own imagination, and equal fidelity to what reason recognizes as fact. Maturity, alas, is so often a parliamentary affair: there are parties and cabals in the mind, majorities and committees and rarely any chairman astute enough to manage the session conclusively. Childhood is more easily unanimous.

When I say that that place, that green and healthy world, gave one a sense of peace, I mean of course that I now perceive it was so. Peace is a condition not often apprehended while it exists. And a sense of peace is not by any means the whole of life. There are some who cannot carry too much peace at a time without growing morbid. One who has

been, now for quite a few years, deeply infected with the wild beauty and lunacy of New York and her terrific creative spell, is perhaps an imperfect judge of quietness. I think however that that is said largely for manners: Mistletoe believes himself a connoisseur of silence, for which he has, on occasion, an exceptional capacity. The notion I pursue is that it is not easy to work out a differential calculus of what is really important. There are instants when some casual line from Matthew Arnold or Keats will outweigh battleships or look taller than 42nd Street. We carry, as at present, both new and old money in pocket simultaneously; who is to say which is the more legal tender? Anyone who has watched children knows how in a flash of gesture or expression they often unconsciously suggest whole vistas of feeling; through the low archway of the moment you see deep landscapes of life. I saw it twice by chance this morning: a child's maternal tenderness as she removed from her small pet dog a muzzle that was irking him; and again another child carrying to safety a terrified infant rabbit the dogs had chivied up in the woods. Or a remark when one of the dogs was at the vet's for inoculation during a neighborhood rabies alarm—"Will Frisky be back for his birthday? He never spent a night away from home before, except the two nights he ran away."

In these millennial moments the hour is dazzled round with prism light. It is such moments we pursue, and which the greater part of the time we must be too polite to mention. Happiness is always embarrassing; sometimes gravely annoying to other people.

Peace is not by any means the whole. The joy and justification of the modern spectacle is its furious high voltage. Is there no comedian divine enough to exhibit the bewildering agility of man? Let red-tapesters contrive it as they may and festoon the earth with rigmarole, the dreamer is too subtle for them. The tremulous instancy of his own bliss drives him, his bliss that can shake him like sickness. He lives on stony soil and thrives there; a lacklustre citizen, perhaps, but he has glorious conniptions of his own. Will none admit such irradiance of fire? Perhaps life has outrun print, for the larger part of our writing seems so pale or so sultry. It impends but does not break. In that wisest phrase of Coventry Patmore, it squanders the capital of passion instead of living on the interest. "If I believe in immortality," said Mistletoe once (he always found much antiseptic in *If*) "it's because there must somewhere be time to sit down and laugh." But he knew well enough that there are many things too beautiful for laughter.

The life of any fugitive worth pursuing must be partly a pathological memoir, a dissertation in lunacy. When a mind escapes from prison the big siren yells, and the hunt is on.

In the old wing of the Haverford Library there was a little gallery, reached by an iron ladder. It was rarely visited, used for the storage of an antique collection of classical and theological texts annotated in German, and some thousands of legal volumes in scaling and exhalatory calf. Behind the book-cases, on the outer side of the building, high up by the tops of the tall windows, ran a dusty little passage, somewhat tremulous underfoot and carpeted with rough cocoanut matting. In the days when the undergraduate literary societies turned over their private collections to the college library, certain volumes of juvenile fiction, esteemed too frivolous for general circulation, were sequestered in a remote corner of that gallery. Very likely some of them are still there, as they have been for fifty or sixty years. They contain the neat bookplates of those vanished sodalities the Haverford Athenæum and the Logonian Society—this latter with its excellent motto *Lectio sine stilo sonnum*. Across these bookplates you will sometimes find written the ominous legend *Rejected, A. C. T.*, those being the initials of Professor Allen Thomas, a man of delightfully definite opinions, loving curator of the library through many years and never known otherwise than as "Uncle Allen." There, safe from visit except by some occasional bearded scholar of Assyrian or Coptic, these innocent scandals lurked on the bottom shelf, obedient to the doctrine that a Quaker library had no truck with fiction.

But perhaps, in his mellowing years, Uncle Allen softened toward these books, mostly by Captain Mayne Reid; in fact I imagine he must have enjoyed them himself in tender youth. He was a man quite gnomelike in aspect and his quick flitting

among the alcoves was awe-inspiring to urchins. At any rate when Mistletoe was perhaps eight years old Uncle Allen, with an air of much mystery, piloted him up the iron ladder, introduced him to the enchanting concealed pathway round the gallery, and then under pledge of secrecy, where the bottom shelf looked out on the old greenhouse arch, disclosed the cache of tattered volumes.

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That, I think, was Mistletoe's fullest introduction to the joys of secret reading. Its nearest competition was hearing the *Jungle Book* read aloud when it first appeared in 1894, and being given a paper-bound piracy of *Treasure Island* to read when in bed with an ear-ache, a hot baked onion crackling and stewing under his cheek. (*Treasure Island* still smells faintly of onions in his mind.)

The delights of Mayne Reid's *Plant Hunters*, *Cliff Climbers*, *Bush Boy*, etc., read sprawled out on the floor of that illicit gallery, will not be forgotten. Long long afterward, meeting someone from the Transvaal, Mistletoe was able to please himself by creditable allusions to outspanning and voortrekkers and springbok. All Mayne Reid. The small adventurer would steal alone into the old romantic wing of the Library, catching a permissive spark from Uncle Allen's eye. He would climb the ladder, half afraid of some veto, and creep along the creaking runway, peeping down through the slatted floor at the students reading below. Then there was the open end of the gallery, at the bottom of the room, above the fireplace. This, not to attract comment, must be gingerly crossed on tiptoe. Then, just round the corner, in a haze of dust and book-smell, were the outcast juvenilia. They had to be read in situ, they could not be taken away. So they were read as books are best read in youth, prone on the floor. The reader can still recall the rough prickly feel of the cocoanut matting; and Uncle Allen's little pun about the gallery being young Mistletoe's Mayne Reiding Room.

Ten years later, as an undergraduate, he sometimes used to work in that library, accessioning books, as a way of earning pocket money. You may be sure he revisited that corner of the gallery, and some of the old Mayne Reids were still there. Uncle Allen, when reminded of their history, graciously insisted on his taking three of them as a souvenir. Here, as he writes, is *THE PLANT HUNTERS*, or *Adventures Among the Himalaya Mountains*, by Captain Mayne Reid. Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1858. The word *Rejected* is writ large on the bookplate, but it will not be rejected from Mistletoe's library as long as we have a shelf to stand upon. And does it not seem an odd coincidence that when Mistletoe became interested in the ancient Foundry in Hoboken there were found in the attic of that abandoned machine shop a large collection of old books; and among them several stalwart Mayne Reids?

(To be continued)

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

Two plays, supposed to be the work of Shakespeare, are to be printed for the first time in the autumn. Their titles are "Sir John Oldcastle" and "Henry IV." Dr. E. W. Lummis, who is editing them, is said to have the support of several eminent Shakespearean scholars.

"The constant services of eight experts for a period of at least ten to twelve years; the compilation of some 160,000 columns of entries, 20 entries to each column, in 165 volumes of 500 pages; a systematic survey of the printed books of the world in every language but the Oriental—that, in brief, is the vast undertaking behind the British Museum's plan to issue a new edition of its famous *General Catalogue of Printed Books*," says the *London Observer*.

"We have been induced to undertake the work partly because of requests from America," Mr. R. Farquharson Sharp, Keeper of the Printed Books, stated. "Over there new libraries are springing up almost every day, and they constantly need an up-to-date catalogue for reference, and to enable them to identify any rare book which comes into their hands. With early books, publisher and authorship are not always apparent, and often one can only ascertain them by reference to the catalogue. The present catalogue, which was published between 1880 and 1900, has now, in some cases, two pages of accessions to the original column!"

Books of Special Interest

Vital Mechanisms

THE THINKING MACHINE. By C. JUDSON HERRICK. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 1929.

Reviewed by JOSEPH JASTROW

IT was important that a book of this type should be written, and it is fortunate that it has been done so well. It may be said to be the biologist's version of psychology. It proposes as the solution of that persistent controversy between mechanism and vitalism, the redefinition of mechanism. Man is a machine, and thinking is a mechanism, but a very different type of mechanism from that which makes a river corrode its banks, or a flower turn toward the sun, or a cock crow, or a dog howl at the moon; and again from the man-made mechanisms, from mouse-traps to radio. There is no contradiction in using the phrase vital mechanisms. They are all natural mechanisms, as nature made them.

A survey of nature's many mechanisms fixes the plan of relation between structure and function; biological mechanisms show how living machines are built and how they work, down to every minute detail of their organic service. The psychological mechanisms are of the same order, though far more complex; they represent higher stages in the gradients of evolution. There is no more hesitation in speaking of the organs of consciousness than of the organs of digestion. Consciousness likewise arises from lower orders of awareness, and the subconscious functions are as intimately parts of the natural integration as the simple form of sensitiveness and the complicated issues in the spiritual life. "The evidence so far available seems to indicate that as soon as the cortical mechanism begins to function in a child the spiritual life is born. It is created anew in every growing babe." Human nature is but the highest form of natural evolution; it is subject to constant change by its own self-direction, which in the light of psychology can be done intelligently instead of haphazardly. The story of mind in the making and of the body in the making is one.

Whatever one's reaction to the philosophical issue underlying this position, the

value of the contribution remains. Here is a clear-cut, interesting account of the varieties of natural mechanisms set forth in a lucid, logical array. Whether that is all there is to it or not, there certainly is an essential mechanism underlying such varied procedures as the simpler reflexes, as emotion, as instinctive responses, as learning, as the thinking processes, as voluntary control; and whatever our final conclusions as to the differentiations in grade and pattern of such responses, the mechanical aspects must be understood. And it isn't enough to recognize that we have brains and that without the spinal cord the brain would be useless in some respects, and both so without the muscles in other respects, but we must be intimately informed in regard to the minutely adaptive nature, the finer organization, from glands to cortex, by which we have our spiritual being. It is the wealth of detail that makes the story intriguing and gives it the precision of science, even though the gaps are as conspicuous as the established connections.

But there will be no psychological peace-conference because Professor Herrick has written a conciliatory book. The extreme behaviorist will be as rampant as before. He will insist that by recognizing consciousness Professor Herrick has left in the mystery which he insists he has removed. Professor Herrick will reply that the behaviorist is merely confusing the simplest patterns of mechanism with the whole of which it is a part. Others will add that analogies are not realities; and things are not made alike by giving them the same name. Yet the movement of emergent evolution will find many supporters, who believe that the depressing and limiting effects of the older concept of mechanism has lost its sting. We emerge into the controversial issue of values. Does life under the one interpretation contain and sustain as adequate a set of values as under the other? Is one justified in subjecting value to truth? Professor Herrick is convinced that no values are lowered by understanding the truth of their foundations. We shall continue to think as well and as nobly, if not more so, when acknowledging the reality of the thinking machine within us.

Eternal Rome

POPE OR MUSSOLINI. By JOHN HEARLEY. New York: The Macaulay Co. 1929. \$2.50.

Reviewed by V. F. CALVERTON

FEW political gestures of late have excited as much international comment and discussion as the recent alliance of the Pope and Mussolini, and Mr. Hearley's book, coming as the first American study of this new relationship and its influence upon world affairs, deserves more than casual consideration. Here again, with the signing of the three-fold Convention in the Lateran Palace, which involved a Treaty, a Concordat, and a financial stipulation, we have Church and State united in open organization and array. This union, which we had once looked upon as medieval, and which we thought could never be renewed, is achieved in our own day without furious protest or revolt. Is this because no one takes the union seriously? Or is it because too few understand its real significance in world events?

Mr. Hearley, who is well known for his numerous articles on Italian affairs, and who was one-time United States Government official at Rome and an American newspaper correspondent in Italy, is convinced that the absence of vigorous protest on the part of the various nations of the world as well as of the Italian people as a whole is due to ignorance of the actual consequences of this alliance between Church and State. He has written this book in an attempt to point out the disastrous effects that will eventually grow out of this alliance. With patient and exacting detail he has shown the part the Papacy has played in Italian affairs previous to this threefold Convention, the pledge that the Italian government, before it entered the World War, demanded of its allies in reference to keeping the Pope and the Roman Question out of the Peace Conference, and then the gradual change of attitude that has occurred under the rule of the Duce. While his analysis is overburdened with quotations, many of these quotations in their contrasts cover an enormous area of the whole conflict. Over a year ago, for instance, as Mr. Hearley shows, the Pope called Mussolini "a limb of Satan," while to-day he calls him "a man of God," and avers that he "was sent by Providence." Mussolini, on the other hand, who to-day maintains that he is a Roman Catholic, not many years ago, by way of defiance of religion, declared that "if within five minutes God does not strike me down, I have demonstrated to you that God does not exist." In the chapters on The Peace-Making Pope and Mussolini the Savior, these contrasts in the history of the two men are vividly amplified. The Pope and the Duce are analyzed in terms of personality as well as attainment.

One of the most interesting aspects of the whole situation is its reflection upon the American scene. Whichever way American Catholics may react to the situation arising from the new relations between the Church and State, Mr. Hearley contends, will result in the creation of difficulties that can end only in disaster. While Mr. Hearley fails to reach certain radical conclusions which are implicit in his thesis, and lets his study decline somewhat toward the end, his book raises once again, in the light of contemporary events, those questions which have busied and will continue to busy diplomats and governments for years. In addition, he has provided in his numerous quotations, —so numerous in places, alas, as to cloy the text,—a source-book of materials that in many instances will be of value to the future historian. Unfortunately, his tendency to excessive quotation robs his book of a certain force that otherwise it could have obtained. Nevertheless, while "Pope or Mussolini" does not pretend to be more than a journalistic study of the situation, its very timeliness and interrogational challenge makes of it, as the first book of this type since the Concordat, a volume of international interest.

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