



Book Club Selections

As They Were

LET STREET. By MICHAEL OSSORGIN. New York: The Dial Press. 1930. \$2.50.

Reviewed by ARTHUR RUHL

AS Tanyusha came out into the Sadovaya that summer morning, wearing, "with quite an unusually cool feeling of freshness," the white dress she had ironed the day before, and as she saw a house with a little green fence, the Red Gates, and, far down the street, the Suharevka Tower, she said to herself:

All the same, how lovely, how very lovely, Moscow is! Dear Moscow! And how like it used to be—unchangeable. It's the people who change, but it is always the same; saddened a little, perhaps, but just as absurd and straggley as it used to be, and just as dear and beautiful and homely.

In this paragraph of Michael Ossorgin's "Quiet Street," you have a suggestion both of the matter and manner of his novel. The thing which distinguishes this from most of the stories which have come out of Russia since the Revolution or which have attempted to picture it, is its understandableness to those who have never been touched, personally, by the Revolution; the way in which it "warms the heart" and makes life, in spite of the Revolution, seem, as revolutionary Moscow seemed to Tanyusha on that summer morning, "unchangeable, just as absurd and straggley as it used to be, and just as dear and beautiful and homely."

Not that war and revolution are prettified. The horror and nightmare are here, but they are, for the most part, implied rather than objectively put. Ossorgin, who lived in Russia through the most hideous part of the Revolution and was then exiled, seems not to have lost his balance or his nerve. Nor does he "fall" for the new order in the way so difficult to escape by the younger writers compelled somehow or other to find their footing, materially and psychologically, in Red Russia itself. He neither shrieks, with the other emigrés, nor runs away from the present to bury his head, as some of the emigré writers have done, in a dreamland Russia peopled with wonder-working ikons, saintly mouzhiks, snow, and tinkling troika-bells.

He accepts the present, at least to the extent of admitting much of its vitality, but endeavors to put both war and revolution in their place in that stream of life in which they will one day be seen, along with other promontories and islands, fading into time's distance. To accomplish this, he concentrates on a certain house and the family in it—one of those old-fashioned, cosy, Moscow houses, that drowned in the crooked, quiet streets leading off the Arbat, and on the lives and thoughts of its old professor, his placid wife, and their grand-daughter, Tanyusha.

The peasant husband of their cook comes drifting back from the front to become a great man in the new order. A n'er-do-well workman in the flat of one of their friends lands a profitable job as the Tcheka's chief executioner. The tragedy of the expropriated is compressed into the case of their old composer-friend—a man without wife or child, whose whole "soul" is contained in his piano—when a pack of blundering, well-meaning enough proletarians come to hustle that piano away. And these, and all the other connections of the little old house, are not mere symbols, but real people, each sympathetically observed and built up, given a run for his money.

In the beginning, the old ornithologist, Ivan Alexandrovitch, is found sitting in his arm-chair "in the immensity of the universe, in the solar system, on the earth, in Russia, in Moscow, in the corner house of Sivtzev Vrazhek"; and at the end, after war and revolution have come, we leave him there, stroking Tanyusha's head, and talking about the spring day when the swallows will return, as they have been coming and going each spring and fall, while dynasties collapsed and the youth of Europe destroyed one another.

This sounds, and I think is, a trifle obvious, and I find Ossorgin's manner and his philosophizing a bit prosy and pretentious at times. There is rather too much of the instellar spaces. The endeavor to "put the war in its place" by having the swallows fly indifferently over it on their way to Africa, or a mouse come creeping out of its hole in the old house off the Arbat, regardless of the Marne and the Masurian Lakes, becomes, at times, a bit too simple-

minded and tricky. But that is when one measures Ossorgin's story beside such somewhat similar attempts as Tolstoy made in "War and Peace." If "Quiet Street" is not "great," it has fine quality, nevertheless, unusual detachment from passing fashions and preoccupations, a very rare warmth, human understanding, and continuing charm.

Part of this charm, especially for readers in this part of the world, comes from finding that one may live through the revolution without losing one's literary and other manners and becoming quite queer and un-housebroken. Ossorgin's people stand in queues, cook their meals on a "primus," starve, shiver, live on the edge of terror and death, and yet in their thoughts, instincts, and behavior, remain related to the rest of us who haven't, perhaps, experienced these particular things. Tanyusha is a sister to Tolstoy's Natasha, a not too distant cousin to the heroines of quite "old-fashioned" English and American novels.

Astaviev, a sort of Stoic, is complaining to the professor, in the story, that philosophy, in its speculative sense, is bred by luxury or the weariness of life. "It's a cake," he says, "And it's also a grin. And an escape, too. Life at present (i.e. in Russia) is such that if you escape from it for a moment it will escape from you for days. If one wants to survive one has got to cling to it—life, I mean—scramble up and push the others off the step, like on a tram."

"That, too, is a philosophy," murmured the professor, "a depressing one, of course." That was precisely what he and his sort didn't believe in—pushing other folks off the steps of trams.

And Tanyusha, although she couldn't always reply to Astaviev, felt instinctively that he was frequently wrong. "We all talk and think about strange, trifling things, such as herrings, and the revolution, and international relations," she said, feeling that they left out the "really important things." Just what the latter were, she didn't, at twenty, quite know, but among them, she felt, was that of "being near a simple, healthy-minded person, preferably not a philosopher nor a circus showman." She was tired of the "everlasting gloomy grievances and bitter words, so many of them 'about one's self, which makes it worse, all around one's self, and for one's self.'"

It is these "important things" that Ossorgin all the time tries to bring out, although even he makes Astaviev disclaim "any thought of a counter-revolutionary nature. I should have despised the nation if it had not done as it did, if it had stopped half way and allowed learned prattlers"—evidently Miliukov and Co.—"to turn Russia out in English dress—Houses of Parliament, an obliging police, and well-groomed lies."

Just what Ossorgin's political theories, if any, may be, he does not say. He takes no sides—in itself a heresy to the Bolsheviks—and sticks to his "important things." He gives, nevertheless, one of the most nourishing pictures yet drawn of revolutionary Russia. "Quiet Street" happens to be a "book-of-the-month" choice, but has, one suspects, lasting qualities regardless of that.

Book-of-the-Month Club.

The Great Recalcitrant

R. V. R. The Life and Times of Rembrandt van Ryn. By HENDRIK WILLEM VAN LOON. New York: Horace Liveright. 1930. \$5 net.

Reviewed by FRANK JEWETT MATHER

TO this ample and varied comment on Dutch civilization of the seventeenth century, one is tempted to apply anachronistically the mediæval term "Mirror." Almost everything that could be felt and thought in the generation between 1626 and 1667 reflects itself truly if transiently in the tolerant and understanding mind of Doctor Jan van Loon of Amsterdam, the imaginary teller of the tale. We are near the great traders, the Dutch Medici, who ruled unobtrusively from their counting rooms; we share the dynastic ambitions and the clashes of interest between the new trading and maritime nations; Descartes and Spinoza pass across the scene; we feel the jealousies and suspicions of the learned and unlearned mob falling upon the new science and medicine; there is even an episode at New Amsterdam and in the Indian country where we see an aggressive civilization crumbling at the outer edges.

At the outset of our criticism, then, we face the urgent but possibly unimportant issue whether a novel which is so much a corpus of opinions is a novel at all. But were not "La Nouvelle Héloïse," "Les Misérables," "Marius," "Diana of the Crossways" novels of opinion? They were but with a difference. The characters were something more than mouthpieces. In the present volume the central group of friends, free thinkers, *libertins* in the parlance of the day, are in the main vividly conceived, but even they tend to fade out into soft speakers of unpopular truth, while the scores of minor characters are about as vague as the *Bon* or *Mauvais Conseil* of a morality play.

At the center of a world that always seems too reasonable or too mad is the great and gentle recalcitrant, Rembrandt. On the negative side, as a genius in revolt and distress, he is vividly realized, on the positive side any page of Fromentin's impersonal criticism will tell more about him. He fails to serve the intended purpose of a unifying motive in this vast miscellany.

Taken for what it is, a mirror of a civilization singularly like our own, an irradiation of cold opinion upon the heat and confusion of unreflective living—the book is rich, entertaining, and instructive. One reads it with mingled feelings of pleasure and disappointment. One is dealing with a flexible and charming mind, but one is dealing with it more or less in a literary vacuum. There is no sense of place. One has to remind himself that the actual Holland of red, brick verticals and satiny, watery horizontals, and huge, rising clouds, and short, stately seas is in question.

In short, if it could all have been particularized, centralized, and carried off with a more delicate literary distinction, we should have had a great novel of opinion. As it is, we have a book abounding in wit and tolerant wisdom which without making any pictures constantly "gives to think."

—The Literary Guild.

A Pepys of Wall Street

THEY TOLD BARRON. By ARTHUR POUND and SAMUEL TAYLOR MOORE. New York: Harper & Bros. 1930. \$5.

Reviewed by PAUL WILLARD GARRET
Financial Editor, N. Y. Evening Post

OPPORTUNITY to peep behind the Wall Street curtain comes to few, but Clarence Walker Barron was one of those few. As father of financial news in the form we Americans like it served, and as a bulging personality in himself, Barron held two master keys useful in unlocking the secrets of men versed in the mysteries of the money district. These he worked to the limit, but discreetly.

His itching fingers ran like lightning across little cards, always ready in his pockets, recording what he saw when the curtain was lifted. A few strokes in short hand enabled him to preserve whole sentences under the guise of jotting down a figure when talking to Morgan, Stillman, Wiggin, Ryan, Durant, Ford, Thompson, Doheny, Livermore. These confidential notes Barron intended should refresh his memory some day in writing a financial history.

That history he never lived to write. This whiskered old gentleman of the press, who would not waste his time shaving, was still compiling notes for his book when two years ago at seventy-three he died. So materials by the ream left in their original state, copious notes that he threw together on the run, were left for others to interpret.

Picture him if you can. This 330 pound man, who rose from his bed, dressed, swept up a steak, and then caught his train with a herd behind galloping horses—all as one morning operation. Time he could never waste. His reliable Patek-Phillippe watch never got him to a train more than two or three minutes early—or over a second late. Twenty suitcases he would carry, but never a trunk to delay the procession. On train, on boat, or in a hotel, far into the night, he was gathering news, compiling his notes. What time had he for writing memoirs?

Arthur Pound and Samuel Taylor Moore in "They Told Barron" reproduce these illuminating "confidential" notes, under chapter headings, for the ten years 1918-1928 just as Barron left them, minus the shorthand.

If you like your meat rare you will like these raw notes giving you the views of important men on matters big and small, free

from the usual publicity seasoning. It is a book that should go into every financial library.

You will learn from it the inside story of the Cochran tip on General Motors, given to a *Wall Street Journal* ship reporter in 1926; that the optimistic Charles M. Schwab was so blue in 1921 that at Nice he thought "industry in the United States is worth nothing"; that corsets went out when J. L. Replogle in wartime, on advice of Alice Roosevelt Longworth, refused to allocate steel for stays; that "Honey Fitz" Fitzgerald, mayor of Boston, when abroad once jumped into the royal yacht to carry him out to Sir Thomas Lipton, as the King and Queen stood and cooled their heels until it returned.

We regret the book is so filled with what "they told Barron" that we must still depend on memory and gossip for what "Barron told them." His own life, passed over here in a brief biographical chapter, was more picturesque than that of the men talking to him in this book.

He it was who in 1887 launched the Boston News Bureau to send news for a dollar a day by runners to bankers, brokers, and business men, thus creating the rapid financial service that eventually led to tickers.

As Barron grew into power as a publisher on a large scale of financial news he held fast his intimate contact with employees. Many a Wall Street man in business got his training under Barron, and has tucked away in his desk some precept handed down to him "by the old man."

Here is one we recently ran into in the office of an executive who had once been with Barron:

From any standpoint, a man can make himself a master in the world, provided only he gets both feet on solid ground, mastering more than any one of his fellowmen, that which is immediately beneath him. From this vantage point he can expand over the whole world without limit, providing he sticks by the principles that made him first master beneath his own feet.

You will find no account of Barron's stock operations in this book, but one way he kept close to the market was to buy and sell actively. In earlier years he operated on his own account, but right up to his death he personally ran something like fifty brokerage accounts for friends. Not only did he guarantee all of these accounts himself, he put up most of the money. They were scattered far and wide among different brokerage houses.

—Business Book Club.

How to Be Happy

THE CONQUEST OF HAPPINESS. By BERTRAND RUSSELL. New York: Horace Liveright. 1930. \$3.

Reviewed by JOSEPH JASTROW

THE engaging frankness, the absence of cant, flashes of humor, a humane commonsense, and a reflective insight disarm the critic who approaches the subject of this volume in a sceptical or despondent mood. Mr. Bertrand Russell has printed and platformed on many subjects, on some of which he speaks with authority, on all with interest, while yet he has been justly accused of "uncontrolled thinking" on social and educational questions in which his predilections replace responsible judgments. The "Conquest of Happiness" will find a large and appreciative audience; it is a talking not a silent filming of the world's discontent; its causes and cure.

Bertrand was precocious enough to reflect, at the age of five, that if he lived to be seventy, he had only endured a fourteenth part of unendurable boredom; at adolescence he hated life and was restrained from suicide only by the desire to know more of mathematics. At fifty-eight he finds himself increasingly happy with an annual increment, since he laid aside the Puritanic habit of meditating upon sins and follies, found available outlets for his affections, and abundant exercise for a brilliantly active mind.

There is no consistently constructive system running through the Russellian code. There is a ledger and day-book with the debits, "causes of unhappiness," and the credits, "causes of happiness," recorded by a philosophical appraiser. Self-absorption is a major cause of an unhappy life, and its varieties make the sinner—the sin-conscious despondent—the narcissist, and the megalomaniac. The "sinner" finds his pleasures poisoned; the narcissist carries his tether with him, seeking pastures new; the megalomaniac

for the Month of October



maniac, insisting that the world is his oyster, fails to find the pearl.

Mr. Russell employs the Freudian concepts sparingly but not expertly, finding, as does his predecessor in the field, Mr. Pitkin, who films happiness journalistically, that the maladjustment between urge and satisfaction is a workable formula conferring a moderate psychological insight. So we make ourselves unhappy; and reflection, from Ecclesiastes to Krutch via Byron, is but psycho-analytic frustration made explicit by verbal adeptness.

There are some characteristically modern aids to unhappiness, and among them is competition and the competitive temper, which eats up energy, distorts values, and seeks compensation in violent, exhausting recreation. All the gentle and leisurely arts are lost in the shuffle—which has the din of jazz—and money involves a newer slavery. Thus conditions of the psychic climate play their part. But more fundamentally the search for happiness proceeds between the margins of boredom and excitement. The antiquity and universality of the drug-route suggests the desire and its temptations; while the urge is reinforced through relief from what makes work not a blessing but a curse, fatigue. The tired man has no happiness resources.

Equally concerned in the modern repertory of unhappiness is the Puritanic sense of sin which spoils many a promising day, and the persecution mania that insists on conformity, aided and abetted by the fear of public opinion for which Mr. and Mrs. Grundy are equally responsible. Release from these balls and chains is indispensable before the constructive foundations can be laid.

Happiness in a machine age, Mr. Russell contends, is not as difficult as it is rated to be. It requires a simple psychological readjustment; and the ingredient to be saved at any price is zest. The I. Q. and the Z. Q. must somehow be combined. The route of bliss by ignorance, though the favored highway for the *polloi* of whatever social complexion, has no appeal to the reflective mind.

Yet the resources of the man of bigger and better brains, who has learned to use them wisely, offer no erudite formula, only a content more refined in a recipe equally compoundable in commoner stuff. Granted health, zest, affection, family ties, grateful work, impersonal interests, effort, and resignation, and there emerges a happy man even in a forbidding climate. The good and the happy life converge as if by some rendezvous of life, for what is done by self-denial, always with a back fire of self-absorption, is then done spontaneously and naturally. The hedonist and the sane moralist agree.

Mr. Russell, by attempting nothing very deep, nothing very scientific, keeps his gallery interested by the skill of his drives and putts from green to green of the chapters of his pleasantly laid out course. He is not a professional psychologist but a well trained amateur, who appreciates the technique under which the modern game of happiness must be played. And that is all to the good. He is sympathetic with the approach which the psychologist would place first and give far ampler consideration. This Professor Pitkin attempted by the biographical method rendered somewhat too journalistically, selecting types of men who failed and who succeeded in securing the elusive golden apple of happiness as they played their courses on very different links with varying hazards.

What is gratifying to the psychologist is the appreciation from various sources that the "pursuit of happiness" is not a constitutional guarantee, nor yet a moralistic prescription, but a psychological quest—a topic of deep significance. The psychologist has something important to contribute and the sociologist is never reticent on any occasion. The problem goes deep. It touches upon the fundamental biological possibility that the cerebral growth that gave man a super-brain brought with the tree of knowledge the forbidden fruit that embitters life and makes happiness not an easy issue but a complicated conquest. For a section of humanity—small statistically, momentous by virtue of its social leadership—the problem of problems is to be happy though reflective. Living in a vale of tears with a bad climate, the big brain that brought human greatness must now be put to the service of the eternal pursuit.

—Book League of America.

The Glory That Is Rome

THE RESURRECTION OF ROME. By G. K. CHESTERTON. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company. 1930. \$2.

Reviewed by BERNARD IDINGS BELL

THIS is probably, from a merely literary point of view, Mr. Chesterton's worst book; and yet no one can afford not to read it, or at least portions of it. He has set out to show the glory that is Rome, and to explain her history as a series of resurrections, that thereby both Fascismo and the great growth and new life of contemporary Roman Catholicism may not merely be recognized, but also be understood. The first twenty-six pages, in which he states his general thesis, are as pungent, forceful, arresting as anything he has done, and the forty pages which he devotes directly to the Duce and "the return of the Romans" are simply not to be missed; but in between the going is rather dreadful in spots; or rather, only tolerable in spots.

The author, unfortunately, feels that he simply must stop to defend that pest of bad sculpture and baroque ornamentation which makes Rome an affliction, not merely to medievalists, but to anyone whose artistic honesty in the least matters. G. K. C. loathes the stuff himself, as is more than evident here and there when he is off guard—as for instance in the well-written passage where he admires the restrained medieval tomb which Leo XIII erected for Innocent III in St. John Lateran, and then turns with loathing on the blatant monstrosity which has been erected over the bones of Leo XIII.

Chesterton is a convert to Roman Catholicism, and he must do a book on the Holy City. It is to his credit that he refuses to pass over, as any clever man might easily have done, the whole hideous, pseudo-artistic mess that the Counter-Reformation fathered; and it is an evidence of how bad that *olla podrida* really is that even the cleverest man of letters in England cannot explain it away. To say, as he does, after huge mouthfuls of verbosity, that such art was a necessary advertisement to entice the masses into church again, is not complimentary to either the Roman Church or the common people. More true explanation lies in remembering the baroque as the last decayed consequence of that digging up of an ancient corpse which is mistakenly called the Renaissance. G. K. C. knows, of course, about that explanation, and dismisses it with an airy abuse; but he fails to see that his own explanation is really an insult to the Tridentine Church and to the Jesuits.

When one has waded, however, through a hundred pages or so of this wobbly defense of bad art, and arrives with the author at the Fascisti, one is repaid. Here is almost the only really penetrating examination as yet done in English of what Fascismo really means, of its essential rediscovery of "the Prince" or the State as something distinct from either employers or employed. "It is not so much a revolt against the Communism prevailing in Russia as against the Constitutionalism prevailing in England." It is a régime hated more and wisely by capitalists than it is by laborers. It is essentially syndicalist in economic philosophy. Its hatred of luxury is of a piece with St. Francis and Thomas Jefferson, rather than with Roger Baldwin and Andrew Mellon. It has suppressed an independent press as openly as England's pluto-democracy has suppressed hers indirectly; and by decree has limited the freedom of choice in elections as certainly as is the case in England, where "the elector does in fact choose between two or three candidates, each provided by a recognized caucus and each supported by an unrecognized fund." Its faults are those of all revolutions. G. K. C. cannot admire the Fenians and denounce the Fascisti for the same sort of acts. Fascismo's weakness is that, like all minority movements, it must be extreme so as to impress the majority. Fascismo will fail unless it can appeal not to force but to eternal principles of right—which is at the base of the new Concordat. It is a brilliant chapter, with Chesterton at his best—philosopher rather than apologist.

There is a final word or two about the new Vatican City and its meaning, which is not much good. The author is really less interested in the Holy Father than in that which the Holy Father has taken as his instrument wherewith to unite a decadent and mechanized Europe, the phenomenon of the ancient Roman manhood resurrected. The legions are again on march, the civilizing legions of an Eternal City. G. K. C. makes

even mild-mannered Nordic liberals feel like cheering them on.

—Catholic Book Club.

The Progress of Life

PARADE OF THE LIVING. By JOHN HODGDON BRADLEY, JR. New York: Coward-McCann. 1930. \$3.

Reviewed by HOMER P. LITTLE
Clark University

THERE have been numerous attempts to popularize paleontology and some have been notable successes, such as Lucas's "Animals of the Past" and Hutchinson's "Extinct Monsters and Creatures of Other Days." Few, however, have been as ambitious in extent of the field covered as Dr. Bradley's "Parade of the Living." The book is, in fact, a popularization of much of the material contained in the second half year of the usual beginners' course in college geology with, at the end, rather more philosophizing on the meaning of it all than is ordinarily introduced in a college course. It is in most respects just what every professor of historical geology who loves his subject, and wishes that the every-day man loved it also, must have dreamed of producing. It is readable, breezy, and at the same time sound in its presentation of the present beliefs of geology as regards the progress of life on the earth and its interpretation. Even in the midst of almost flippant paragraphs the initiated can recognize the teachings of Clarke, Lull, Matthew, Osborn, and many other authorities of the present and past generation. It is brought up to the minute, as the reference to Peking man shows. As a rule, theory and knowledge are carefully differentiated, although occasionally the desire to make a sentence striking leads to the statement of theory as though it were proven fact, as where, in speaking of the origin of bipedal dinosaurs, the author writes that four-legged forms "prodded on by the death at their heels, rose off their bellies and ran like kangaroos," and again where, in explanation of the return of certain of the reptiles to the sea, it is stated that "many of the strong were lured back to the water by their hereditary love of sea food."

The word descriptions are frequently excellent as, for instance, that of the stegosaur. The value of the book would, however, have been greatly enhanced by the inclusion in the text of a few line drawings in each chapter dealing with the main divisions of life. No matter how well described a trilobite, a dinosaur, or an ancestral horse may be, a few simple sketches add greatly to the understanding. At times the effort to be popular and hold the attention becomes a bit forced, and the reader tires a little of so many animals who were "gargantuan." Yet the whole of Dr. Bradley's volume is so much better than most could do or have done that it seems unkind to mention its flaws.

The book opens with a brief review of the leading hypotheses to account for our solar system, followed by a concise statement of the problem of the origin of life and the indefiniteness of the boundary between the organic and inorganic. The author then leads from the earliest known remains of life through the intermediate steps to the first vertebrates as exemplified in the fish. The conquest of the land by amphibian and more completely by reptile follows. After an interruption which brings the story of the plants abreast that of the animals, and a short digression which explains the great changes in life at the close of the time of "ancient life," the thread of animal development and evolution is again taken up and carried quickly and with appropriate warnings of its incompleteness, through reptilian and mammalian stocks to man himself. The book closes with a brief but interesting account of the history of disease as revealed by fossils, of the origin and function of sex, and the place of man in nature. The latter's shortcomings and promise are both recognized—"A sheep starves if he strays from the pack, and I am ridiculed if I wear a straw hat in January" coupled to the statement, referring to man, "If he does not reach the moon it will be his own fault."

All told, the reader will find this as interesting and suggestive a book as he has read in many a day. And he will be sadly deceived if he permits himself to think that beneath the light treatment there is not a sound basis of geologic fact and theory and plenty of material for careful study and reflection. The reviewer knows no better book of its kind.

—Scientific Book Club.

Famous Shipwrecks

FULL FATHOM FIVE. By FRANK H. SHAW. New York. The Macmillan Co. 1930. \$3.

Reviewed by ALFRED F. LOOMIS

UNDER this poetic title Captain Shaw relates the stories of a score of famous shipwrecks, and brings to the work vivid description and a sympathetic background gained of his own experience at sea. Reading such a collection of marine tragedies might be a gruesome business, for in nearly every one the loss of life has been great and the record of lives saved has been correspondingly poignant; but by the magic of his language and by his emphasis on the exalted heroism frequently displayed in sea disasters the author has lifted the book above the level of morbidity.

It is inspiring to be reminded of the steadfast discipline of the soldiers aboard H. M. S. *Birkenhead* who stood in rigid formation as their ship broke up beneath them, and of the high valor of the bandmen of the *Titanic* who played "Nearer My God to Thee" as the lifeboats, insufficient in number, put off from the stricken vessel with their cargo of women and children. As a sailor himself the author has a fine feeling for a ship, recognizing in her something more than wood, steel, and canvas; but as a special pleader (perhaps unconscious) for naval discipline and British seamanship he does not always strike the note acceptable to a layman.

The collision between the battleships *Victoria* and *Camperdown*, for instance, resulted in the loss of the *Victoria* and 359 lives. It derived from an inexplicable quirk in the mind of an admiral who directed that the *Victoria* (which carried his flag) and the *Camperdown*, flagship of the junior division, lead a turning movement toward each other. The junior admiral aboard the *Camperdown* knew that the movement could not be executed without piling one ship upon the other. Yet, knowing this, he persisted in obedience to the order to the end that the *Camperdown* cut the *Victoria* nearly in half. The lay reader, for all the court-martial's exoneration of the junior admiral, and his expert exculpation by Captain Shaw, will continue to believe that obedience, discipline, and the personal careers of junior admirals cannot be balanced against careful seamanship and the value of 359 lives.

Similarly the author pleads the orderly courage of officers, men, and upper deck passengers of the *Titanic*, struck down by ice on a smooth night and granted by fate time to embark all her 2208 souls in lifeboats before her final plunge—if she had had enough lifeboats to do so. But she put to sea on her first and last voyage without enough lifeboats for half her complement, and it seems that whereas "the North European in hours of crisis maintains his coolness and his determination to die like a man" the Latins in the steerage "had shamelessly forgotten their manhood, and fought like wildcats around a boat ready for lowering." Perhaps these cowardly South Europeans (who had had nothing to do with specifying the amount of life-saving apparatus in the *Titanic's* equipment) realized that the North Europeans (who had) were in better position to take advantage of the few lifeboats available.

But I find myself becoming a special pleader whereas I mean only to suggest that many of the world's most deplorable shipwrecks are traceable to man's vanity, stubbornness, greed, and ignorance rather than, as Captain Shaw says in his introduction, to the sea's devastating, merciless, relentless, and treacherous autocracy. Granted that the sea is the cruelest of teachers, ever watchful to take advantage of man's mistakes, it must also be admitted that on this book's evidence the sea usually reserves its cruelty until the mistake occurs. Fortunately man is of a disposition to profit by his mistakes and the mistakes of others, or he never would have attained even his partial ascendancy over the sea. It is of much purpose to learn of the advances that have been made as a result of such tragedies as those related in "Full Fathoms Five." But for landsmen the book should be reserved for the conclusion of an ocean voyage, rather than devoured at the outset of one.

—Junior Literary Guild (Boys 12-16)

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