

# The Saturday Review

## of LITERATURE

EDITED BY HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

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### Mobilizing Readers

WITHIN the brief period of years which has seen the rise of the radio from the latest invention of science to one of the most effective mediums for the propagation of ideas which the world has ever devised, literature has maintained a more or less distant, if affable, relationship with broadcasting. On the whole it has not attempted much beyond the compressed drama—Shakespeare or Ibsen pruned to the purposes of an hour's entertainment and the necessity of few characters—, book reviews, of which there are many, occasional interviews with literary personages, and now and again informal disquisitions by writers of note. But of the presentation of literary productions themselves, there has been next to nothing.

And yet the radio, it would seem, ought to be an even more far-flung means than the magazine or newspaper for creating interest in works of literature. For its public is immeasurably greater, and it has whatever advantage may accrue to narrative from the dramatic quality that is lent it by recital. The periodical, of course, has an advantage over the radio in that serialization is possible to it and not to the latter. It is not feasible for the radio, it should go without saying, both because continuity is the very *sine qua non* of serialization and unbroken attention is unlikely to be obtained from a radio audience for the length of time required for the broadcasting of an extensive work, and because if it were procurable it would in all probability very adversely affect the sales of the book broadcast. Indeed, it is still an open question whether with some types of books newspaper or magazine serialization is beneficial or otherwise. The publishers of a certain recent important volume of reminiscences of a non-military war-time figure would probably bear sad witness to the havoc which too lavish publication of extracts wrought to book sales. It is a wise provision, which would apply as well to a novel as to a concert which, for instance, determines the managers of the Stadium concerts in New York to permit only the occasional broadcasting of a late half-hour of the program. Anything else would limit attendance; just so, probably, would a popular author like Kathleen Norris lose sales were her novels to be broadcast.

But serialization is not the only means of acquainting the public with an author and his works. There is always the excerpt and the complete but brief composition to serve as an introduction. In them lie infinite possibilities.

Is it not likely that if the Mr. Dooley of Spanish War days had been writing in the radio era of the present, and occasional skits of his had been delivered to the public with all the flavor of dialect which the art of a skilful broadcaster could have lent them, that increased demand for his books would have immediately reflected the interest aroused by them? Does it not seem probable that if a few of Mr. Thomas Hardy's engaging "McAroni Ballads" were to be read over the radio their lilt and Italo-American patois would win readers for the volume which contains them? No one needs to be told how much the voice can do to reveal the qualities of a literary composition and to arouse enthusiasm for its author. Indeed, it can do dangerously much, for it can lend beauty to what is not intrinsically valuable, and create a fictitious tensely and emotion which have no justification in the material on which they are superimposed. The danger is real, but so far as literary broadcasting is concerned it should merely constitute an additional challenge to judgment, discrimination, and knowledge.

We should like to see the experiment tried of having certain of O. Henry's stories, for instance, or of

### Two Old Men

By ROBERT P. TRISTRAM COFFIN

TWO old men who till the earth  
Stand and talk in selfless mirth.  
They are worlds apart in creed;  
But they have sown their fill of seed,  
There is no woman to impress  
At this late time with manliness.  
They have found and left desire,  
They need not veil their eyes with fire  
And look at one another keen  
As if two swords played in between.

Their eyes are naked, kind, and slow  
And shine with love the gods might know.  
Pride is over, passion done.  
They stand together in the sun  
And have no dignity to lose;  
They are unconscious of their thews;  
Age has quieted their wills  
And made them beautiful as hills.

### The World of Henry James

By DESMOND MACCARTHY

IN Henry James's later letters his voice is audible. Nor is this surprising, for his letters were often dictated, and his conversation, in its search for the right word, its amplifications, hesitations, and interpolated afterthoughts, resembled dictation. This sounds portentous, not to say boring; indeed, it was at times embarrassing. But—and this made all the difference—he was fascinating. The spell he exercised by his style was exercised in his conversation. Phrases of abstruse, exaggerated drollery or of the last intellectual elegance flowered in it profusely. At first you might feel rather conscience-stricken for having set in motion, perhaps by a casual question, such tremendous mental machinery. It seemed really too bad to have put him to such trouble, made him work and weigh his words like that and if, through the detestable habit of starting any topic rather than be silent, you had broached one in which you were not interested, you might be well punished. There was something at once so painstaking, serious, and majestic in the procedure of his mind that you shrank from diverting it, and thus the whole of your little precious time with him might be wasted.

How often this happened in my case during our fifteen years' acquaintance! I still regret those bungled opportunities. In conversation he could not help giving his best, the stereotyped and perfunctory being abhorrent to him. Each talk was thus a fresh adventure, an opportunity of discovering for himself what he thought about books and human beings. His respect for his subject was only equalled, one noticed, by his respect for that delicate, deliberate instrument for recording and comparing impressions, his own mind. He absolutely refused to hustle it, and his conversational manner was largely composed of reassuring and soothing gestures intended to allay, or anticipate, signs of impatience. The sensation of his hand on my shoulder in our pausing rambles together was, I felt, precisely an exhortation to patience. "Wait," that reassuring pressure seemed to be humorously saying, "wait; I know, my dear fellow, you are getting fidgety, but wait—and we shall enjoy together the wild pleasure of discovering what 'Henry James' thinks of this matter—for my part, I dare not hurry him!" His possession of this kind of double consciousness was one of the first characteristics one noticed. Often we would both seem to be waiting, palpitating with the same curiosity, for the ultimate verdict. At such moments the working of his mind used to fascinate me, as though I were watching an hydraulic engine through a window, its great, smooth wheel and shining piston moving with ponderous ease through a vitrious dusk. The confounding thing was that the great machine could be set in motion by putting a penny in the slot. And, alas! one often had only coppers in one's pocket!

Such was Henry James the talker, Henry James the writer is still with us; I propose to attempt to find his formula.

He was a conscious artist, who knew more clearly than English novelists what he wished to do and how he must set about it. His books were therefore themes for critics who were anxious to convince a generation, persuaded to the contrary by many dazzling achievements in an opposite manner, that fiction need not be formless, and that a novelist's mastery is shown in unfolding a situation to which every incident contributes. To Henry James a novel was not a hold-all into which any valuable observations and reflections may be stuffed, nor was it merely peptonized experience. He was an artist and a creator. Of course the world he created bore a vital

### This Week

"History of Hudson Bay."

Reviewed by ARTHUR POUND.

"Schumann" and "Giuseppe Verdi."

Reviewed by CARL ENGEL.

"This Our Exile."

Reviewed by BASIL DAVENPORT.

"The Colonel's Daughter."

Reviewed by GEORGE DANGERFIELD.

"Most Women."

Reviewed by GLADYS GRAHAM.

"Halfway."

Reviewed by HENRY WALCOTT BOYNTON.

The Aged Poet Discourses.

By MARY AUSTIN.

Pegasus Perplexing: A Charade Contest.

### Next Week, or Later

The Letters of Keats.

Reviewed by J. MIDDLETON MURRY.

Kipling's, read over the radio, by one whose appreciation of them was equal to his ability to deliver them without affectation or dramatization but with proper emphasis and fluency. We should like to know whether many a listener who was first making his acquaintance with these writers in this fashion would not find his way to a library or bookshop to pursue it further. We wonder whether a story by Ring Lardner, or an extract from Don Marquis would not make new readers for those gentlemen. We should be interested to discover whether the reading of two or three verses by Ogden Nash would produce any repercussions in the bookshops. There is a public wider even than that of the *Saturday Evening Post*, let alone a sophisticated journal, and the daily newspaper which, if its interest could be aroused, could be brought into the field of book readers, if not habitually, at least on occasions. And the radio, we believe, is one method of mobilizing this public.



relation to experience, as all fiction must if it is to bewitch and move us; but the characters in that world, in whose fate and emotions he interested us, existed in a medium which was not the atmosphere we ordinarily breathe. That medium was his own mind. Just as there is a world called "Dickens," another called "Balzac," so there is a world called "Henry James." When we speak of the "reality" of such worlds it only means that we have been successfully beguiled. We are really paying homage to the shaping imagination of a creator. How independent of the actual world, and how dependent for their vitality upon the world in which they are set, characters in fiction are, becomes clear the moment we imagine a character moved from one imaginary world into another. If Pecksniff were transplanted into "The Golden Bowl," he would become extinct; and how incredible would "the Dove" be in the pages of "Martin Chuzzlewit!" The same holds good of characters constructed piecemeal from observation when introduced into a world created by an overflow of imagination. They become solecisms: either they kill the book or the book kills them. The unforgivable artistic fault in a novelist is failure to maintain tone. In this respect Henry James never failed. His characters always belonged to his own world, and his world was always congruous with his characters. What sort of a world was it? And what were its relations to our common experience which made it interesting? The answers to these two questions, which the work of every creative artist prompts, need not be separated. The answer to the one will suggest the answer to the other.

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It is important to emphasize Henry James's world-creating power, because in every novelist who possesses it, that faculty is the most important. Yet in his case it has often been overlooked. Critics have found in his work so much else to interest them—his style, his methods, his subtlety. From their comments it might be supposed that his main distinction lay in being a psychologist, or an observer, or an inventor of a fascinating, but—so some thought—an indefensible style. Yet to regard him primarily as an observer or psychologist or a maker of phrases is not only to belittle him, but to make the mistake we made when first Ibsen came into our ken. It seems hardly credible that we should have taken Ibsen for a realist, but we did. Despite his rat-wife, wild-ducks, towers, and ice-churches; despite the strange intensity of his characters, which alone might have put us on the right track; despite the deep-sea pressure of the element in which they had their being, and the perverse commonness of the objects which surrounded them—as of things perceived in some uncomfortable dream—Ibsen's battle was fought under the banner of realism. Because his characters threw such a vivid light on human nature and our predicaments we took them for photographs from life. And yet we knew all the time what we meant by "an Ibsen character" as clearly as we knew what "a Dickens character" meant. The fact that we are understood when we speak of a "Henry James character" is a proof that his imagination, too, was essentially creative.

Most great novelists have given to their creations an excess of some faculty predominant in themselves. Thus Meredith's characters are filled to an unnatural degree with the beauty and courage of life, while Balzac gives to his a treble dose of will and appetite. The men and women in Henry James's novels, the stupid as well as the intelligent, show far subtler powers of perception than such men and women actually have. It was only by exaggerating, consciously or unconsciously, that quality in them that he could create a world that satisfied his imagination. With this exception his work is full of delicately observed actualities. His men and women are neither more heroic nor single hearted, nor more base than real people, and, granted their superior thought-reading faculties and the concentration of their curiosity upon each other, events follow one another in his stories as they would in real life. The reader may sometimes find himself saying: "No one without corroborative evidence would act on such a far-fetched guess as that," but he will never find himself saying (granted the subtlety of these people): "That is not the way things happen." Whether his characters are children of leisure and pleasure, jaded journalists, apathetic or wily disreputables, hard working or dilatory artists, they are all incorrigibly preoccupied with human nature; with watching their own emotions and the complex, shifting relations and intimate dramas around them. There is

a kind of collected self-consciousness and clairvoyance about them all. They watch, they feel, they compare notes. There is hardly a minor character in his later books, not a butler or a telegraph clerk, who, if he opens his lips twice, does not promptly show the makings of a gossip of genius. There are other generalizations to be made about the people of Henry James's world equally important, but this is the most comprehensive. For the critic this peculiarity has a claim to priority, not on esthetic grounds, but because it leads to the centre of his subject: what, in Henry James's case, was the determining impulse which made him create the particular world he did?

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In that astonishing record of imaginative adventure, "The American Scene," he continually refers to himself as the "restless analyst," speaking of himself as a man "hag-ridden by the twin demons of observation and imagination." The master-faculty of Henry James was this power of analyzing impressions, of going into them not only far, but, as they say in Norse fairy-tales, "far and farther than far." Indeed, there are only three other novelists whom a passion for finality in research and statement has so beset, for whom the assurance that everything that there was to be said had indeed been attempted, was the sole condition of a Sabbath's rest: Proust, whom Henry James did not live to read, and Balzac (with whom the later Henry James had more sympathy than any other fellow-craftsman), and Dostoevsky. The last two were very different men from himself, laboring in other continents. Dostoevsky's subject is always the soul of man, and ultimately its relation to God; his deepest study is man as he is when he is alone with his soul. In Henry James, on the contrary, the same passion of research is directed to the social side of man's nature, his relations to his fellowmen. The universe and religion are as completely excluded from his books as if he had been an eighteenth century writer. The sky above his people, the earth beneath them, contains no mysteries for them. He is careful never to permit them to interrogate these. Mr. Chesterton has called Henry James a mystic; the truth is that he is perhaps the least mystical of all writers who have ever concerned themselves with the inner life. It is not the mystical (the mysticism would have shattered his world) which attracts him, but a very different thing, the mysterious, namely, whatever in life fascinates by being hidden, ambiguous, elusive, and hard to understand. And this brings us again straight up to the question of his directing impulse as an artist.

It was an impulse to conceive the world in a light which (a religious interpretation of man's nature being excluded) would give most play to his master faculties of investigation. It was a desire, or rather a necessity, to see people in such a way as made them, their emotions, and their relations to each other, inexhaustible subjects for the exploring mind. Any formula for a great writer is justly suspect; but entertain this one for a moment on approval. It may prove to be "the pattern in the carpet."

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In the first place, it explains his choice of themes. His long career was a continual search for more and more recondite and delicate ones. He begins with cases of conscience, in which, however, already the shades seemed fine to his contemporaries, and in which verdicts depended upon evidence not always visible to "twelve good men and true." The formula explains his early fondness—long before he had found a method of constructing a world of recondite possibilities—of ending with that substitute for mystery, the note of interrogation. It explains also his excitement in discovering Europe, especially the discovery of those secluded corners of European society, where dark deposits of experience might be postulated without extravagance. (In his America everything was depressingly obvious.) It explains his passionate interest in the naïve consciousness of his Americans when confronted with people with more complex standards and traditions. Did they or did they not understand? It explains his later interest in children, in whom it is puzzling to fix the moment of dawning comprehension. It explains his marked preference for faithful failure as a subject over the soon exhausted interest of success. It explains in a measure his comparative lack of interest in the life of the senses (there is no mystery in the senses compared with the mind); also his efforts to keep in the background, so that they might gather an impenetrable portentousness, crude facts, professions, adulteries, swindles, and even murders, which neverthe-

less, for the sake of the story, had sometimes to go through the empty form of occurring in his books. It explains the attraction a magnificently privileged class had for his art, his "Olympians," whose surroundings allowed latitude to the supposition of a wonderfully richer consciousness. It explains the almost total exclusion from his world of specimens of laboring humanity, to whom no such complexity can be with any plausibility attributed—a dustman in the world of Henry James is an inconceivable monster.

It accounts, too, for the blemishes in his books; for his refusal to admit that such a thing as a molehill can exist for a man with eyes in his head, and (how it seems to fit!), for his reluctance, even when occasion demanded it, to call a spade anything so dull and unqualified as a spade. It explains the fascination of his style, which conveyed amazingly the excitement of a quest, the thrill of approaching some final precision of statement. And above all, it explains why he came to endow his men and women with more and more of his own penetration, tenderness, and scrupulousness, till at last he created a world worthy of the exercise of his own master faculty; a world in which human beings, when confronted, saw mysteries in each other's gestures, and profundities in each other's words, and took joy in each other's insight like brave antagonists in each other's strength; a world in which they could exclaim about each other that they were "wonderful" and "beautiful," where they belonged to each other, or fought each other, on levels of intimacy which had never been described before.

Although his world is peopled with subtler men and women than any other novelist's, the crown does not go to the clever. It is even tempting to describe him as an inveterate moralist, who, finding ordinary scales too clumsy to weigh finer human qualities, employs instead esthetic weights and measures. The consequent reversal of the verdict was one of his favorite themes. "There are no short cuts," he seemed to be saying, "to being beautiful; to be beautiful you must be really good." He made us understand better the meaning of intimacy and the beauty of goodness.

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When I say "us," I am thinking of my own generation when we discovered him. We young ones, at any rate, read him, apart from our delight in his phrases and metaphors, for his substance, for precisely that side of his work which appears now to be wearing thin. Our generation, at least that part of it with which I was best acquainted and most at home, was interested in those parts of experience which could be regarded as ends in themselves. Morality was either a means to attaining these goods of the soul or it was nothing; just as the railway system existed to bring people together and to feed them, or the social order that as many "ends" as possible should be achieved. These ends naturally fined themselves down to personal relations, esthetic emotions, and the pursuit of truth. We were perpetually in search of distinctions; our most ardent discussions were attempts to fix some sort of a scale of values for experience. The tendency was for the stress to fall on feeling rightly rather than upon action.

It would be an exaggeration to say we cared not a sprat either for causes or our own careers (appetite in both directions comes with eating, and we had barely begun to nibble), but those interests were subordinate. Henry James was above all a novelist of distinctions. He was, indeed, the master in fiction of the art of distinguishing. His philosophy amounted to this: to appreciate exquisitely was to live intensely. We suspected, I remember, that he overvalued subtlety. But whether or not we always agreed with his estimate of values, he was preëminently interested in what interested us; that is to say, in disentangling emotions, in describing their appropriate objects, in showing in what subtle ways friendships might be exquisite, base, exciting, dull, or droll. These characters were detached from the big common struggling world, that its vague murmur floated in so faintly through their windows, that they moved and had their being in an environment entirely composed of personal relations, esthetic emotions, and historic associations, seemed to us unimportant in relation to his art. Nor were we particularly interested in the instincts nor in the will compared with the play of the intelligence. What was the will



a means, a servant? Or the instincts but the raw stuff out of which the imagination molded a life worth contemplating?

It still seems to me, on the whole, a sound philosophy; only the fiction which reflects these things to exclusion of all else now appears to me to shut out much which is both more absorbing, and more important, than I once supposed; also even to falsify the flavor of those very experiences on which it exclusively dwells.

I have described Henry James's youthful audience during those years when his books in the later manner were appearing, because such a description indicates the angle from which his work must always appear important. He cared immensely for spiritual decency. Nothing in life beguiled him into putting anything before that. He had a tender heart, an even more compassionate imagination, but a merciless eye.

I knew him for over fifteen years, but I only saw him at long intervals. In spite of admiration and curiosity I left our meetings entirely to chance, for I soon discovered two daunting facts about him. Firstly, that he was easily bored (not merely in an ordinary but in an excruciating sense of the word), and secondly that he minded intensely the dislocations and disappointments which are inevitable in all human relations. They made him groan and writhe and worry. The measure of how much he minded them could be read in the frequency, extravagance, and emphasis of his signals that all was really well, across even those small rifts (to him they had the horror of gulfs) which absence and accident open up between people. Many have not understood the elaborate considerateness which is so marked in his correspondence. As I read Henry James, it was his sense both of the gulf between human beings and the difficulty of bridging it which made him abound in such reassurances. His manner of receiving you expressed an anxiety to show you (sometimes comic in desperate thoroughness of intention) that, whatever might have happened in the interval, on his side at least the splinters had kept new and fine, so that if your half of the tally was in a similar condition, the two would dovetail at a touch. I have seen him keep a lady in a paralyzed condition for five minutes while he slowly recalled everything about her. And if your talk with him had been something of a failure, his farewell expressed that what you had wanted, yet failed to get, he had also wanted, and that nothing must blind you to his recognition of any affection or admiration you might be so generous as to feel for "your old Henry James."

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I imagine being interrupted here by a pointed question: "But did not this agitated anxiety to signal defeat its own end and make complications?" It often did so, just as some of his letters, long as they are, were sometimes almost entirely composed of signals and gestures. But to many sensitive natures who find the world only too full of callous, offhand people, this exquisite and agitated recognition of their own identity, and of their relation to himself, was a delightful refreshment. He himself was clearly one of the most sensitive of men. The importance to him of urbanity, money, privacy, lay in the fact that they were salves. His art was a refuge to him as well as the purpose of his life. The brutality and rushing confusion of the world, where the dead are forgotten, old ties cynically snapped, old associations disregarded, where one generation tramples down the other, where the passions are blind, and men and women are satisfied with loves and friendships which are short, common, and empty, horrified him. I picture him as flying with frightened eyes and stopped ears from that City of Destruction till the terrified bang of his sanctuary door leaves him palpitating but safe; free to create a world which he could people with beings who had leisure and the finest faculties for comprehending and appreciating each other; where the reward of goodness was the recognition of its beauty and the past was not forgotten. His sense of the past—of the social world's, of his own—which he recorded with a subtle actuality and piety never excelled in autobiography—was almost the deepest sense in him. Such reverence for human emotions is usually associated with the religious sense, but that is singularly absent from his work. While we read his books only the great dome of civilization is above our heads—never the sky, and under our feet its parti-colored mosaic—never the earth. All that those two words "sky" and "earth" stand for in metaphor, is absent.

## Annals of Hudson Bay

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE EARLY HISTORY OF HUDSON BAY. Edited by J. B. TYRRELL. Toronto: The Champlain Society. 1931.

Reviewed by ARTHUR POUND  
Author of "Johnson of the Mohawks"

WHEN the Lindberghs, charting a new air route from New York to Nome, reached Moose Factory at Hudson Bay, they were again in a land of history. In the day's flight from Moose Factory to Churchill, they passed over a shoreline containing outposts of white civilization older than the first settlement on Manhattan. Yet on leaving Churchill they were soon crossing a wilderness so little touched by the systematic hand of civilized man that some of it is as yet unmapped.

Henry Hudson discovered the Bay which bears his name in 1610, a year after he found the Hudson River and ascended it to an island near the site of present Albany. In the latter case the Dutch acquired his findings, because Hudson had hired out to the Dutch East India Company. They might have lost the Hudson River and won Hudson Bay instead, ex-



From BACQUEVILLE DE LA POTHERIE'S  
"Histoire de l'Amérique Septentrionale."

cept for a mutiny which kept the great navigator from seeking for the Northwest passage in high latitudes. Balking in going North by the opposition of his crew, he turned westward to find the raw site of New York City and to establish a solid Dutch claim to New Netherlands.

This suited the Dutch but not Hudson. He was after the fabled Northwest Passage, and did not propose to be balked by Dutchmen afraid of the cold. The next year he set forth from his native England in the bark *Discovery*, on his fourth quest of the dream which he followed to his death. He sailed through Hudson Strait into Hudson Bay, exultingly viewed its broad waters, and said, "I've done it at last." But, tragically enough, after wintering in its southernmost part, James Bay, he had to make his exit by the "self-same door wherein he went." By this time even his hardy Englishmen had enough of Hudson and the frozen North. They mutinied, and set him adrift with eight loyal companions to die an unknown death on the great inland sea which bears his name.

The "Documents Relating to the Early History of Hudson Bay," so well published by the Champlain Society of Toronto, includes a preface which identifies the authors and documents, an introduction covering the long struggle of the French and English for the possession of York Factory, translations and texts of three French narratives of French-British struggles there and elsewhere on the Bay, and John Oldmixon's account of the beginnings of the fur trade in that region, taken from his "History of the British Empire in America," 1708. In writing this part of his history, Oldmixon had access to original documents of the Hudson's Bay Company.

The French narratives are of especial value in

establishing a balanced view of Hudson Bay history. They are:

1. The Journal of Antoine Silvy, a Jesuit missionary, who after service at missions as far separated as Michilimackinac and Tadoussac, accompanied La Martinière to Hudson Bay in 1684-5. Since their respective sovereigns were at peace, the critical meeting of French and English on that far shore ended as the Fashoda incident did three centuries later, with the British holding their ground and the French retiring in good order. Silvy later returned to the Bay and spent six years at Albany, but his account ends with the return of La Martinière's expedition in 1685.

2. A report by letter from another Jesuit missionary, Gabriel Marest, to the overseer of Canadian missions, written about ten years later, probably when its author was en route to England as a prisoner or soon after he landed there. Marest accompanied the famous Sieur D'Iberville of the Le Moye family on the invasion which, in 1649, took York Factory from the English, who promptly recovered it the next year.

3. The letters of Claude Charles LeRoy de Potherie, French sailor and scholar. These, addressed to the Duke of Orleans, regent of France, and others, were published in the first volume of "Histoire de l'Amérique Septentrionale," by Bacqueville de la Potherie, in Paris, 1753. Prior editions are dated 1722 and 1723, and the letters may have been printed as early as 1716, though the "Privilège du Roy" is dated 1721. In literary style and breadth of information, these letters are the pick of documents presented.

Potherie's little squadron, which left La Rochelle April 7, 1697, stopped at Newfoundland to help d'Iberville complete his conquest of that colony. Taking that daring commander and part of his troops aboard, the French ships sailed from Placentia on July 4. Three of the bold Le Moyne brothers were on this expedition, Sieurs de Serigny and de Maricourt accompanying d'Iberville. After a slow, disheartening journey, being baffled day after day by headwinds in a strait, they finally reached the bay to find three English ships in possession. Separated from his other vessels, de Potherie in the *Pelican* gave battle to the enemy—three against one, and his ship no stronger than the others. He sank one of the three; but soon after his *Pelican* foundered in a storm. The other French ships escaped the storm, and after their forces were reunited, Serigny led a siege of Fort Nelson which surrendered November 14.

Other lively letters of de Potherie's describe the country, the manners of the natives, and earlier campaigns for mastery of the region. While his contributions are sprightlier than those of the priests, all describe in faithful detail the misfortunes of life in what still remains, in spite of airplanes, a difficult, dread country. Father Marest rather liked the long winter, which at least relieved him of insect enemies, but he confesses something like failure when he says that in spite of his translations of various church offices into the Indian tongue, he could baptize only two natives "who died immediately afterward." Potherie celebrated his departure from Hudson Bay with these heartfelt words: "Thanks to the Lord, Sir, I have escaped the most dreadful country in the world. I do not think they will catch me there again." Yet Potherie had an easier time of it than many of his companions.

In the extract from Oldmixon, we perceive the bulldog British are back again in command of the situation, and there they stay. The Hudson Bay country meant far more to the British than to the French. If London were to share in the fruits of the northern Canadian peltry, the English must risk those difficult waters. The French merely wanted to put the English out so that the northern furs would not be diverted from Quebec, which was their natural market unless the trade was interrupted. Once the British posts were closed, the French lost interest in Hudson Bay, and the English returned to sidetrack the pelts from Paris to London. Consequently whenever British and French fought in Europe, cannon spoke in Hudson Bay, and even when peace reigned in Europe there were no guarantees that peace reigned from Rupert House to Churchill.

While this collection brings no "finds" to the notice of historians, it makes a large amount of notable material more easily available than before. The Champlain Society, the translator and cartographers, and the editor of the volume, Dr. J. B. Tyrrell, have reason to be proud of this handsome limited edition. The appearance of the volume is timely, moreover, as the Hudson Bay area is coming into general inter-