

Women in History

ON UNDERSTANDING WOMEN. By MARY R. BEARD. New York: Longmans, Green & Co. 1931. \$3.50.

WOMAN'S COMING OF AGE. A Symposium. Edited by SAMUEL D. SCHMALHAUSEN and V. F. CALVERTON. New York: Horace Liveright. 1931. \$3.75.

Reviewed by FRED KIRCHWEY

MARY R. BEARD'S book is suggestive rather than final, a tempting invitation—which she herself should surely accept—to further, more detailed explorations. With a comprehensive sweep she scoops into a single volume an outline of human history as it concerns women. Is it necessary to assert that such a gesture must leave out more than it gathers in? One is tantalized rather than satisfied by momentary glimpses of women philosophers and poets in Greece, of women rulers in Egypt, of mathematicians and courtesans and learned abbesses and king-makers and murderers, all fitting into the background of their times, not yanked out as they have so often been for mere display as edifying or horrible examples. If the result is sometimes irritating it is not because the book is sketchy or slight, but because it is necessarily abbreviated—like the news reels that snatch you off to the military maneuvers in Berlin before you are half through watching Mrs. Lindbergh crane her neck to see the flooded areas of China. I should like to read whole volumes about certain women or periods that Mrs. Beard leaves with a paragraph.

Nonetheless, the author has done what she set out to do with a good deal of deftness: she has repopulated the ages with the female members of the human race, and has demonstrated that the place of women in history as it was made has little or no relation to the place of women in history as it has previously been written. She documents her contention with a breath-taking array of evidence, the more impressive since she, too, is limited by the commissions of other historians. She does not seek to show, as some critics of her book seem to have assumed, that women have rivaled men in the fields of public affairs or learning or religion or the arts. She merely puts in their proper places the achievements of persons whose names have generally been ignored or whose work has been minimized because they were women. And when the record is unfolded it offers facts that can be used by feminists and anti-feminists alike, if the book is to be employed as an arsenal.

Since the dim, almost-lost periods when women seem generally to have dominated group life or at least established and carried on the first functions of civilization, the public importance and recognition of their role has surely diminished. They may have been responsible—as Mrs. Beard and contemporary anthropologists agree—for most of the arts and industries that catered to the earliest demands of settled living: cooking and the making of utensils, the guardianship of fire and of the sacred oven; probably the development of agriculture and the use of herbs for healing; textile weaving, house construction, the care of animals, and the rich variety of art forms that were applied to vessels and materials. But the later, large-scale development of this culture has been dominated by men, not only in popular belief and conventional history, but in the pages of Mrs. Beard's volume. Men have set the stage for the drama of civilized life, grabbed most of the best parts, taken the applause, and walked off with the flowers.

That they have been able to do so is their triumph, and it can be laid to any of several causes. It can be attributed, as it generally is, to woman's lesser capacity or to man's overreaching ego. Or it may be that women have never ceased to be the creative, inventive, fruitful creatures who founded the civilized arts. Those arts in their early forms contributed to and grew directly out of women's collective and biological functions. To care for children and to invent techniques and tools for weaving clothes to cover them are parts

of an economic and emotional whole. But to discuss philosophy with Socrates or to run a factory in America is to set up conflicts with many deep impulses. And so, perhaps, woman lost the center of the stage only because civilization grew away from the roots of life; and mankind has ever since charged her with a lack of the very abilities she had been the first to display.

Mrs. Beard indulges in no such loose speculations. She is content to show that whoever dominated the scene, the drama of life was in all ages bisexual. In her picture of developed civilizations, beginning with that of Greece, she shows the prominence of women in a multitude of shifting roles—as oracles and teachers and poets, as rulers and scientists, even as warriors and athletes. And if any generalization emerges from the careful particularity of her story, it is the rather obvious one that people—including women—achieve most when most is expected of them.

A symposium is usually a clumsy ve-

Books and Music

FIRST NIGHTS AND FIRST EDITIONS.

By HARRY B. SMITH. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1931. \$3.50.

Reviewed by H. THORNTON CRAVEN

"COMIC opera would be all right," observed W. S. Gilbert "if it were not for the music." Harry B. Smith in his "First Nights and First Editions" quotes this pungent dictum for what it may be worth.

In reviewing, however, his own voluminous contribution to light opera, Mr. Smith gallantly refrains from Gilbertian acidity. He has a good word for most of the scores for which he has supplied verbal structure. At the same time, he does deplore the scant attention accorded the art of the librettist. Mr. Smith believes it to be an art and he should know. For he has turned out in his own time more than two hundred books, usually with garlands of lyrics, for operettas and musical comedies. His delightful book of mem-

alibi in case his work should be found even remotely imitative of Genée's operetta, "Nanon."

"There was," he confesses, "no such interlude but it seemed to be perfectly familiar to Mr. Krehbiel of the *Tribune*. . . He said that I was 'probably indebted to a French Version of Goldoni's work,' as he did not think I could read French."

The chronicler makes the somewhat surprising point that fashions in stage humor change less than in serious drama.

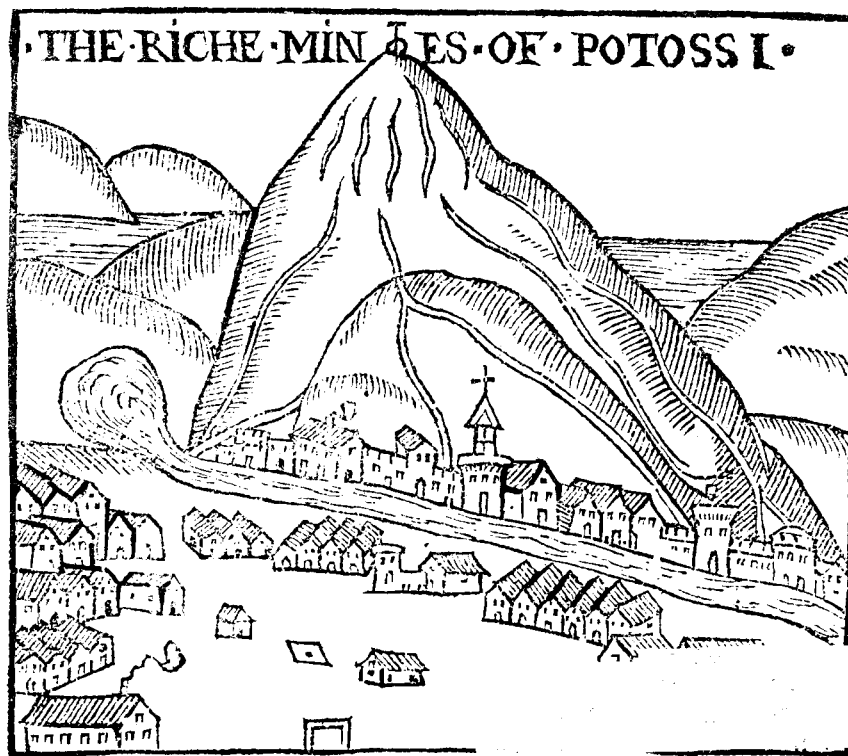
Early Explorations

ANZA'S CALIFORNIA EXPEDITIONS.

Edited by HERBERT EUGENE BOLTON. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1931. 5 vols. \$25.

Reviewed by ALLAN NEVINS

THESE five handsome volumes represent a discovery and a historical rescue of much importance and of still greater interest. Anza has fallen short of the fame as explorer that belongs to Narvaez and De Soto, Laudonniere and Raleigh. To most Americans he has been not even a name. Yet his obscurity has been largely accidental, and he should now take the rank in the galaxy of Western adventurers which belongs to him. He was the first European to mark a path from Sonora in Mexico to New California; the first white man to open a route across the Sierras; and the first to plant a colony on the shores of the North Pacific. Dr. Bolton assigns him a place superior to that of Lewis and Clark. If Lewis and Clark, he says, had on their return from their explorations stopped in Missouri, raised and equipped a colony of two hundred and forty people, and led them to the Columbia River to hold the country against some foreign power, they would then—and not till then—have equalled Anza's achievement. To this it may be demurred that in his marches from Sinaloa to Monterey in California Anza did not cross a country so difficult.



FIRST EDITION IN ENGLISH OF THE FOUNDATION OF ALL SUBSEQUENT HISTORIES OF THE CONQUEST OF PERU.

FROM THE LIBRARY OF THE MARQUESS OF LOTHIAN WHICH IS ABOUT TO BE SOLD

hicle of expression; and a symposium on women is definitely repellent, hard even to open. I am glad, however, that I overcame this resistance sufficiently to read some of the chapters in "Woman's Coming of Age," a symposium edited by Samuel D. Schmalhausen and V. F. Calverton, who have been responsible for other similar omnibuses of opinion. Much of the book can safely be skipped, but Lorine Pruette has contributed a truly distinguished essay entitled *Why Women Fail*, and the chapter on women as artists by Rebecca West is provocative and somehow invigorating. As an unintended appendix to Mary Beard's book, this collection is surprisingly apposite, and often amusingly opposite as well. In Samuel Putnam's chapter, *The Psychopathology of Prostitution*, one is offered a depressing view of the status of all women in early Greece, even the most free and privileged groups of foreign women and hetairai, while Joseph McCabe's blast on *How Christianity Has Treated Women* is a record of oppression that omits almost all mention of the outstanding feminine achievements cited by Mrs. Beard even in the ranks of the Church itself and in its darkest ages. I can imagine nothing more entertaining than a detailed review of "Woman's Coming of Age" written by the author of "On Understanding Women."

Recently, in defining the word "Serendipity" Dr. Leslie Hotson said, according to the Haverford College daily, "that it was coined about 1754 by Horace Walpole. Walpole wrote an account of three officers who journeyed through the mystic, elfin land of Serendip and constantly met with entirely unexpected adventures. 'Therefore,' [said Dr. Hotson] 'Serendipity is the capacity for discovering things you aren't looking for.'"

ories really constitutes a history of the so-called lighter side of the American stage for more than a generation. His achievements include the still vital "Robin Hood," with its lovely woodland verses fashioned to De Koven's charming music, "The Serenade," with a Victor Herbert score, innumerable other pieces with the same composer, and a staggering profusion of frameworks for both operetta and its stepchild, musical comedy. Mr. Smith even sired the modern revue, for he wrote the first "text" for the first "Follies" (1907), and numerous glittering, if amorphous, shows put out by Ziegfeld.

The history of native musical comedy—using the term in its broadest sense—thus becomes the autobiography of Harry Bach Smith. Incidentally, he admits consanguinity with John Bach McMaster and this tie perhaps accounts for the accuracy and particularity of detail with which Mr. Smith handles an elusive subject. Theater-wise folk should revel in these memories, which, though random and breezy are painstaking.

Away from the footlights, Harry Smith has flourished as a fervent bibliophile. His reminiscences emit much more glee over a first edition "Pickwick" or a "Lamia" leafed by Fanny Brawne than over any resplendent comic opera triumph. As a book collector, Mr. Smith lets himself go. As a "book" compiler for composers, he writes modestly, but without affectation, of himself, and furnishes simultaneously a rich pageant of one province of the American theatre from the late 'eighties to the present day.

Nearly all the anecdotal recollections are of the better sort. One of the most amusing explains that mysterious notation on the playbill of "The Serenade": "The plot was derived from an interlude by Goldoni." Mr. Smith was seeking an

the loss of only one life.

It is remarkable that till lately little note was taken of the Anza expeditions, for few explorations have been so well described and documented. If H. H. Bancroft had searched the Mexican archives as zealously as he searched book markets and deposits of family papers, he would have found complete records to utilize in his Western histories. No fewer than thirteen diaries for the two expeditions were kept, and a chronicle of the first trip written in the form of a long letter by a priest who accompanied it makes a fourteenth document. Dr. Bolton now publishes twelve of these for the first time. The most important of the diaries are the two written by Anza himself. Altogether, the diary material fills three volumes. To these, Dr. Bolton has prefixed a history of the expeditions and of the San Francisco colony planted by Anza, filling one volume; while he has appended another volume containing the official correspondence relating to the expeditions.

These books—or at least volumes one, two, and three—are not for the specialist alone. While the literary quality of the records kept by Anza, Father Diaz, Father Garces, and the others is far from high, they are always readable, and sometimes graphic. Taken together, these records furnish a remarkably full picture of life in parts of northern Mexico, and along the Tucson-San Francisco route, in the years beginning 1774; of the conditions met by California colonists at that time; of the state of the missions; and of the character, customs, and mentality of the Indian tribes. Dr. Bolton's history of the expeditions is written in popular style (in the best sense of the adjective) and is so good that it ought to be made available separately. At first glance the set seems an exceedingly heavy monument to two exploring trips and the planting of one small California colony; but—with the possible exception of the dull volume of correspondence—it thoroughly justifies itself.

Petrarch in English

By CHARLES HALL GRANDGENT

TO Americans unfamiliar with Italian, the year 1930-31 offers unprecedented opportunities for real contact with Italian literature. For the last twelve months have witnessed the publication of Joan Redfern's translation of De Sanctis's "History of Italian Literature," Jefferson B. Fletcher's superb rendering of the "Divine Comedy," and now this welcome interpretation of Petrarch's Sonnets* by Joseph Auslander. As a general thing, we read translations as a matter of duty, because we feel that in the interest of culture it is our business to have some knowledge of such and such a foreign masterpiece. Real enjoyment, aside from the satisfaction of enlarging our outlook, we scarcely expect. The glamor has to be supplied at second hand, from our faith in other people's appreciation, from our imagining on that basis what the effect of the original must be. In the cases now under consideration, however, the allowance we have to make is reduced to a minimum: we are brought very close to the state of an Italian reading the works in his own language. In fact, we are scarcely conscious that we are dealing with a foreign reproduction; and, when we bring that fact to our consciousness, we have the conviction that we are perusing verses that Petrarch, for instance, would have written, had he been an Englishman of a later day.

For a prose work, such as De Sanctis's masterly discussion of Italian civilization and letters, the achievement, though difficult enough, seems less marvelous than the task of turning one's self into an English Dante or an English Petrarch. Confronted with these greatest of poets, the very reputation of the originals is almost enough to strike one dumb with fright. To produce on the English reader an effect comparable to that produced on an Italian by the Italian poet—that is the desideratum—a goal to be attained only by a real poet thoroughly at home in both languages. How few translations have been made by real poets! And so often the work is not really good, even assuming that inspiration is not required! So often the current is rough and jolting, indicative of the throes of difficult production. With Petrarch such a defect is peculiarly irritating; for Petrarch is essentially smooth. He has indeed an habitual smoothness hardly found before him and seldom found again until the days of Ariosto and Tasso. In this respect he reminds one of the English verse of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. His evenness, together with his continual use of the sonnet form, may give one a superficial impression of monotony. Yet how mistaken such an impression is! How many different moods are voiced in the easily running sonnets, from the airy fancy of *Erano i capei d'oro all'aura sparsi* to the sensitive melancholy of *Solo e pensoso i più deserti compi* and the stately remorse of *Padre del cielo, dopo i perduti giorni!* These varying moods are caught and faithfully reflected by the sympathetic Mr. Auslander, who has verily made his own the spirit of the poet. As we read his lines, then we follow close upon the varied turns of Petrarch's emotional course.

An intricate road it is to follow; for Petrarch, unchanging in his love of beauty, is forever changing in almost every other respect. Petrarch is frequently called "the first modern man," a designation justified, it would seem, on more grounds than one. Conspicuous among his "modern" characteristics is his complexity. He strikes us distinctly as a person of many more facets than any of his predecessors. He cannot be enclosed in a formula, nor in a considerable series of definitions. Possibly this impression is to some extent illusory. Perhaps his apparent complexity is due in part to the fullness of our knowledge of him. His verse, rich as it is in contrasts, shows us only a

*THE SONNETS OF PETRARCH. Translated by JOSEPH AUSLANDER. New York: Longmans, Green & Co. 1931. \$2.50.

restricted number of his sides. For a closer acquaintance we must turn to his very copious correspondence. Not until we come to really modern times do we find another great man who has so frankly and abundantly revealed himself. And the many-sided human being there exhibited is expressed in some measure in the "modernity" of his kaleidoscopic verse. Even more violent contrasts, to be sure, are visible in the lyrics of Dante. Would he seem to us as "modern" as Petrarch, had he been a daily and intimate letter-writer?

However that may be, Petrarch has left us sufficient evidence of his own complexity. Not all of this complexity, indeed, crops out in his poetry; and, in his poetry, some features of it are reserved for poems other than sonnets. Only the sonnets are to be found in Mr. Auslander's volume. The ingenious *sestine* and the majestic *canzoni* are lacking. One almost wishes they had been included, notably the famous *Spirito gentil*, so long associated with Rhenzi in the mind of readers. Even more desirable, perhaps, is the *Chiare, fresche, e lucide onde*, so enticing and so puzzling. This last characteristic suggests, perhaps, a valid reason for their omission: the rendering of the *canzoni* would have involved the answering of many important and hotly debated questions—many more than are involved in the sonnets. Even in a text without annotation, some lines would have stirred the critical reader to animosity. This thought, while reconciling us more or less to the exclusion of a series of superior poems, suggests another question: would it have been better to add a few explanatory notes—about as many, for instance, as Leopardi furnished, aside from his discussion of problems? Such notes surely would have facilitated understanding of some sonnets whose subject is not fully elucidated by their titles, on the other hand, it would have been next to impossible, in the simplest annotation, to avoid controversial interpretation, and controversy evidently lay outside Mr. Auslander's purpose. Let us, then, be content, and more than content, with what he has chosen to offer us: to wit, Petrarch the Sonneteer—an English sonneteer, published without display of erudition or presentation, as Petrarch himself no doubt would have preferred.

That the English sonnets tell the same tale as the Italian ones can be said without reservation. And they are good English sonnets. They do not try to ape too closely the Italian model. We are often told that English verse never can give the same kind of pleasure as Italian, because English rhymes are normally monosyllabic, whereas the Italian language runs naturally to rhymes of two syllables. The translator's aim, however, must be to cause a certain reaction in the English reader, a reaction corresponding to that caused in the Italian reader by the original. Now, to the English reader, a long series of dissyllabic rhymes does not give the mellifluous impression that it gives the Italian, whose language naturally lends itself to such a flow. Aside, then, from the prohibitive difficulty of creating such a monstrosity in English, the product, if possible, would not serve its purpose. Some years ago, I read a version of the first canto of Dante's *Commedia in terza rima* with all the rhymes feminine. Not only was the result harrowing esthetically: it was achieved only at the expense of introducing a lot of extraneous concepts, since not one of the rhyme words corresponded in sense to a rhyme-word of the original. On first opening Mr. Auslander's book, one fears that he has attempted such a trick; for the first sonnet there is all in feminine rhymes, and so is the octave of the second. After that, however, normal English verse prevails, the dissyllabic rhyme turning up only occasionally, as it might with an English author.

Mr. Auslander's sonnets, however, are of the Petrarchan type, as one would nat-

urally expect. In fact, in our day, even in English, we hardly accept any other. Nevertheless, the sonnet form has undergone manifold modifications. From the moment of its invention by the early Sicilian poets, probably by Giacomo da Lentino, it was subject to considerable variation. We have the *sonetto candato*, the *sonetto rinterzato*; Dante has left us two examples of the latter type. In the arrangement of the rhymes, too, there has been some uncertainty. Fundamental, in Italy, has been the division into two parts, one of eight lines, one of six. To be sure, the Elizabethan sonnet, in England, departs from this model, transforming itself into three quatrains plus a couplet, thus sacrificing the peculiar effect of the original model—the effect of a longer air in a major, followed by a shorter one in a minor key. In the earliest output the scheme seems to have been, in the octave, simply two alternating rhymes; in the sestet, either a similar arrangement of two new rhymes or a pattern *abc, abc*. The scheme now familiar, however, was not long in appearing, and won the preference of Dante, who used it beside several others. Petrarch's preference, when he appeared on the scene, was still stronger—so strong that it established this one type as the standard; for Petrarch was for centuries the model lyric poet, imposing not only his excellencies, his delicacy and smoothness, but also, and especially, his faults—his tendency to conceits and his weakness for puns. Can the latter be reproduced in an English version? For an answer, one turns with curiosity to Mr. Auslander's text; and there one finds strict renunciation, the *laura* and *laureta* being either ignored or simply transferred, with no attempt at translation—doubtless the only wise course.

It is curious, by the way, to compare Dante's estimate of the sonnet with ours. For us, of course, it is a courtly form of verse, essentially literary and conspicuously difficult. This opinion has certainly prevailed since the day of Boileau, who voices it in his "Art Poétique." In Dante's judgment, on the other hand, the sonnet is an inferior type, on a distinctly lower plane than the *canzone*, and far less exacting. The immense vogue of Petrarch was required to exalt it to the pinnacle it now occupies, an eminence on which Mr. Auslander's art will help to maintain it.

Charles Hall Grandgent is professor of Romance languages at Harvard University and was Exchange Professor in Paris from 1915-1916.

Boies Penrose

POWER AND GLORY. The Life of Boies Penrose. By WALTER DAVENPORT. New York: G. P. Putnam. 1931. \$3.50.

Reviewed by ROYAL J. DAVIS

AS coarse as if he had sprung from a gutter instead of from an old and highly respected Philadelphia family, unscrupulous and domineering, "Matt" Quay's successor, the last of the "great" party bosses, is presented in these pages with the vividness of a moving picture. The author spends almost no space upon trivial matters like political issues, his object being limited to making his readers see and hear Penrose—to startle them with his grossness, his epigrammatic cynicism, his poise, his uncanny attainment of success and power. To this end there is much quotation of remarks by Penrose and there is also a large number of stories about him, both the remarks and the stories being supplied by persons who knew him. The result is a fairly accurate portrait, although an ill-concealed desire to astonish if not to scandalize results in a tendency to exaggeration. Incidents of importance, such as Penrose's apparently spontaneous winning of Quay's confidence in his first term at Harrisburg, are told in melodramatic style, but also with melodramatic unreality. Omission of dull details sharpens the story, but leaves it incomplete. Penrose is too much a man of magic instead of a human being of certain extraordinary qualities. His decline, however, is set forth as crisply as his rise. "It was romantic," says Mr. Davenport, "to read that from his cell of a room in his Philadelphia home he had

dictated the nomination of Harding, but it was also untrue." The paradox of his character was reflected in the paradox of his career—he could be elected Senator by popular vote, but he could not realize his pet ambition, to be Mayor of Philadelphia. Between him and that goal stood the foulness of his private life. And for the boship of Philadelphia he had to bargain with the Vares. Power he had, but "glory" is a strange word to associate with Boies Penrose.

Christmas Poetry

(Continued from page 389)

fruitful field uncultivated. They could write—

Star-led philosophers,
What rustic imperative,
By ox, ass, sheep,
Heads bowed,
Thoughts wild,
Conquers sophistication?

Or phonetically (style of Joyce), where a great belly of connotation stands upon tiny legs of denotation:

Hark, the armorial fishes sing
Tidings of the Newgate ring.
Nunc dimittis, Noël viva el rey.

Or anarchistically (style of Gertrude Stein)—

Coming Merry Christmas and hope
having gifts. Turkey, turkey, turkey,
tree tinsel. Sing Noël happy, coming
Merry Christmas, and hope having gifts.

Speaking personally we shall stick to
the good old wares for our Christmas.
There will be two kinds of cards on our
mailing list. One will show a pink hunts-
man in a tavern, above a motto—

In the jolly Xmastime

I greet you with this little rhyme,
and the other will have two angels in
white gowns and blue ribbons suspended
above a snowscape with camels, sheep,
negroes, and shepherds, and it will say—
Christmas comes but once a year

So may you have the best of cheer,
And Happy New Year that comes after
I hope may find you full of laughter.

And just to give that hint of distinction
which the advertisements say is so im-
portant, each card will bear in sparkling
mica letters the word Noël (pronounced
Nowell), which means Merry Christmas.
What a world!

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