

# The Saturday Review

## of LITERATURE

EDITED BY HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

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### Reluctant Reviewers

FOR a supposedly thick-skinned and certainly a noisy people, Americans make extraordinarily reticent reviewers. Every literary editor knows how hard it is to get his critics to speak out. If they are young, they will be malicious without encouragement, if they are old, they will often be ill natured or patronizing, but when there is need for frank and honest speaking, something restrains them. It may be the tolerance of an easy-going civilization, it may be a democratic deference to a public that does not like strong opinions, it may be some sense of inferiority of the high brow in a low-brow civilization which makes him hesitate to speak his full mind for fear of rebuke. Whatever the cause, every editor knows that the review he publishes is often more, but sometimes less, favorable than the writer's unqualified opinions, and in the case of mildly unfavorable reviews particularly, every editor has his letters which repeat, "Of course this is a terrible book, but I have said the best I can for it."

The merciful reader may answer that since reviewers are fallible creatures, some hesitation before damning a book is a thing to thank God for. It may be better to let ninety-nine books escape from chastisement than to have one book unjustly crucified. Yes, but the critic is neither judge nor jury; he does not have the final word; at the most he is an advisor. And if he lets ninety-nine weaklings escape his strictures, his function as a sanitary officer is certainly not discharged.

We do not ask for more severe reviewing, or more enthusiastic reviewing, but only for more completely honest reviewing. The critic should be asked to say neither more nor less than he means, but, after deliberation and refinement of the first emotions of predilection or prejudice, to say it with neither favor nor fear. There is indeed nothing to justify reticence unless it is distrust of the editor's willingness to publish unfavorable reviews, or that reluctance to come out against other opinions which results in the drab neutral from which no one dissents.



Perhaps the blare and ballyhoo of modern book advertising has something to do with this reticence. The writer may hesitate to say all he feels for some quiet perfection of art he has plucked from obscurity while less modest books are being shouted about in letters three inches high. Or he sees in imagination the severities he wishes to write about some book he believes to be "tripe" set opposite a quotation from the world's best blurb, declaring "great," what he feels to be pretentious or mean.

Would anonymity help this vice of book reviewing? The dangers of anonymity are well known to scholars who have studied the famous English quarterlies. Anonymous blasts nipped many tender talents in the nineteenth century, and political spite or artistic jealousy flourished under the appearance of scholarship whose bias the mere mention of a name would have exposed. Yet the poison of one age may become a purge for the next. It may be that in a time like ours, when parties and classes have become fluid and the individual counts for less and the general public for more, the shelter of anonymity, properly safeguarded by editorial responsibility, would induce a greater frankness of individual opinion. The intellectual in America (and critics are by necessity intellectuals) does not like too much publicity, does not care to have his important opinions always associated with his less important name, shrinks in distaste from the kind of prominence which sponsors

### I Have Seen Beauty...

By DON MARQUIS

I HAVE seen Beauty as a morning star,  
Too exquisite to stay the garish dawn,  
Move down the dim ways that the shadows are  
In crystal victory ere it be withdrawn;  
I have seen Beauty as a valiant wing  
Strike one white blow against a darkling sky  
Of storm, a throbbing thing, a gleaming thing  
All overwhelmed, that leaps and turns to die—  
I have seen Beauty as a woman's brow  
Held banner-like her beaten heart above,  
Which bleeds among the trampled overthrow  
And broken shields of some lost cause of love!  
Be still, O haughty trumpets of success!  
Your conqueror is conquered loveliness.

### This Week

"Philip Eulenburg" and "Kaiser and Chancellor."

Reviewed by POULTNEY BIGELOW.

"The Realm of Matter."

Reviewed by IRWIN EDMAN.

"Education of a Princess."

Reviewed by ARTHUR RUHL.

"Some Folks Won't Work."

Reviewed by PAUL H. DOUGLAS.

"Mackerel Sky."

Reviewed by AMY LOVEMAN.

John Mistletoe, XXII.

By CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

Sinclair Lewis and the Nobel Prize.

By ERIK AXEL KARLFELDT.

### Next Week

The Genteel Tradition at Bay. III.

By GEORGE SANTAYANA.

for cigarettes and cough drops enjoy. He knows most of the authors and thinks them good fellows, underpaid and overworked. To come out with hot damns or fervid enthusiasms seems a little too much like loud-voiced talking at the dinner table. Under his own name, he becomes reticent when he should be outspoken, or, by a readily comprehensible inversion, exhibits his own personality when he should be sticking to his business of thorough-going criticism. Anonymity would help him.

But whether the American public, even that intelligent fraction of the American public which reads book reviews, would be willing to accept the authority of the journal publishing a review, instead of clamoring for the name and distinctions of the reviewer, is a question we should like to ask our readers. If they could trust to the responsibility of the editor and the internal evidence of the reviews, they would probably get better criticism than is just now being written in the United States.

### The Emperor's Court\*

By POULTNEY BIGELOW

SUCH books as these are highly controversial and merit discussion from several angles. My own views are in opposition to those of many honest Germans and most of my English and American friends; and I console myself by reflecting on the many changes in popular opinion during even my short span of years. Not long ago William II was held in almost universal abhorrence because we gauged him by the newspapers which printed the usual war fabrications. At last we know how those tales were invented and circulated; and at last we, who profess to be historians, rejoice in finding that such books as those of Nowak and Haller can be profitably published in English, and let us hope that they lead ultimately to an impartial history of Germany since the accession of William II in 1888.

In these volumes Prince Eulenburg is referred to as "The Kaiser's Friend"; as though this distinction implied that William II had no others or none quite so important. Perhaps Professor Haller was intentionally ironical or his American publisher eager for an attractive title. In either case this friendship ended abruptly when in 1907 Eulenburg was prosecuted and imprisoned on a charge of homosexual practices. The charges were not proven, his wife remained loyal to him, and the proceedings throughout bore the character of political persecution rather than judicial impartiality.

But the friendship of Eulenburg and his Kaiser, unlike that between Frederick the Great and Voltaire, was never patched up afterwards. The whilom favorite companion and political mentor died in 1921—having lived to see the shameful treaty of Versailles and the fulfilment of his most cheerless prophecies.

Shortly before his death he made this confession:

It will always be a puzzle to me how Germany could come to such utter grief as she did in the sphere of statecraft and diplomacy. . . . Bismarck destroyed what he sincerely wished to foster by the fact that he always, at home and abroad, appeared in uniform.

Eulenburg was over seventy when he penned this valedictory admission. His memory may have weakened, or maybe he did not anticipate so unsparing a biographer as Professor Haller.

Yet we welcome the book as laying bare the poisonous atmosphere in which William II lived—a court full of self seekers—of professional soldiers who never contradicted—of salaried bureau clerks who flattered him and then called him names behind his back. As we lay down the book we marvel—not that the Kaiser committed so many blunders, but that Germany was able to make any progress at all during his reign of thirty years.

And what remarkable progress!

Where in the whole world is there another example of prosperity more striking than that between 1888 and 1918? The war I include advisedly, for Germany then showed her power to hold in check the rest of Europe in arms. Her shells fell in Paris and her troops might again have paraded the Champs Elysées had not America at the eleventh hour turned

\* PHILIP EULENBURG. *The Kaiser's Friend*. By JOHANNES HALLER. Translated by ETHEL COLBURN MAYNE. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 2 vols. 1930. \$10.

\* KAISER AND CHANCELOR. *The Opening Years of the Reign of Kaiser William II*. By KARL FRIEDRICH NOWAK. Translated by E. W. DICKES. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1930. \$3.50.



the scales in favor of—Democracy and—Bolshevism?

The Kaiser is now blamed for all that went wrong. Should he not be credited with what went right when he was at the helm? Must we deny that under him his country challenged the world in the field of transportation—railway, canal, aviation, and shipping on the seven seas? His country was a model of internal organization especially in the field of education, scientific research, and the government of cities.

Yet we quote Eulenburg—not as history, but as material out of which the historian can find some valuable help. Eulenburg was honest and represented one class and one set of ideas. But whoever uses these volumes, should read on the other side also. Remember also that Eulenburg was of the so-called artistic temperament, brilliant when in good humor, an accomplished musician, a poet and also a dramatist of merit. As host he entertained handsomely and what was most important, the Emperor found him agreeable personally—vastly more so than the others in his very formal and military environment.

In 1899 Eulenburg wrote from aboard the Kaiser's yacht a confidential note to Prince Bülow retelling a conversation with his Imperial friend. In those days he regarded Bülow as another "dearest friend." In this conversation he hinted to the Kaiser that he must restrain himself more, that his utterances were open to misconstruction, and that there were signs in South Germany of serious discontent which might mean disloyalty—even revolution.

The Emperor looked very grave and asked with whom such ideas could originate. I answered, very firmly, that I did not wish to give any names for I possessed no proofs. . . . But I could tell his Majesty of something said to me by Cardinal Hohenlohe, whom his Majesty had greatly revered.

Shortly before the Cardinal's death he had said to me very earnestly: "I know that you are absolutely devoted to the Emperor and moreover in a position to give him really outspoken advice. Tell him to be very much on his guard, very careful. I know for a positive fact that the idea of declaring him to be irresponsible for his actions has been widely discussed; and that very many persons, among them highly placed ones, would be willing to support such a proceeding. You must warn the Emperor."

Very much against his wont the Emperor did not break off with a joke or some strong language *à la* Royal Regiment of Guards. No—he was very thoughtful for some time. In his eleven years of sovereignty the Emperor has outwardly grown much quieter. We, on our eleventh Norwegian cruise, have been very much struck by the alteration. But psychologically speaking there is not the slightest change. He is the same explosive being, if not even more violent and unaccountable from his sense of being more experienced—which in fact he is not in the smallest degree. His individuality prevails over the effects of experience.

He does not belong to our times—and in all times there have been natures which broke the frame of their epoch. Real genius shapes the age to its own pattern; weaker spirits are ground in the mill.

When so markedly eccentric a nature dominates a realm there cannot but be convulsions; and we are heading straight for a period which will decide whether the age or the Emperor is the stronger. I am afraid that it will not be he, for at the moment his strength consists chiefly in the skill of his advisers, especially you (Bülow!)"

I close this long letter feeling wretched and sick at heart . . . The poor dear sovereign is more alone than ever . . . I summoned all my courage and spoke almost word for word as follows. . . . "The parties, usually so divided, are united in embitterment against Your Majesty."

The Emperor said: "That's nothing new. If I could fight Bismarck for eight years, no one else is going to frighten me" . . . Afterwards the Emperor recurred to our talk and said: "When I get back to Germany I shall make Bülow set the press on the lunatics who see in me the absolutist Emperor. Have I ever taken a single step which could be said to infringe the Constitution? Never! How on earth do people get hold of such ideas?"

In June of 1900 the Kaisers *chargé* in Pekin was murdered; and on July 27th was uttered an imperial speech in the presence of his troops then embarking for China. On this Eulenburg wrote:

He took the murder of Ketteler as a personal insult and wanted the troops to avenge it! As I knew that reporters from Berlin must have arrived to see the troops depart I sent a request through some police officials that they would come to me on board the *Hohenzollern* and arranged it so as that they should miss the Emperor's speech. I was most polite to them and told them that His Majesty was very much upset by the insult put upon the German nation. He had told me, I added, pretty much what he had intended to say. I then read them the speech which they took down in short hand.

But the Kaiser did not speak as Eulenburg pretended that he would—he rarely did. On the contrary he used fierce words, such as: "Give no quarter"—"Blood for blood."

That speech did immense wrong to the Kaiser for the press drew the inference that he was cruel and favored a war waged in the manner of legendary Huns.

Much more does Eulenburg relate of imperial blundering and palace intrigues evoked by jealousy

of him and his influence at court. We are from page to page instructed that from the very moment of his accession William II was in daily danger of a ministerial crisis if not a bloody revolution; and that if these did not prove disastrous it was because at his elbow stood one with Godlike prescience and a gift of language little short of miraculous. Eulenburg persistently proclaims his own loyalty and above all his moral courage in telling his Emperor what others feared to utter.

All this doubtless reflected the Eulenburg mind; but if half he wrote was true then has he made for us a picture of German court life which is calculated to make the reader think of Prussian officers as painfully lacking in the honor we associate with a soldier and a gentleman.

He does not say that William II was a lunatic, but he writes of him frequently as of one so impetuous and unreasonable as to appear on the edge of a nervous breakdown. "Preserve us from our friends—I can handle my enemies!" Many have ejaculated that sentiment since Byron.

Granted, then, that the Kaiser has been guilty of unreasonable explosions. What of it? Show me a list of the great leaders—from Alexander to Napoleon—from Anthony Wayne to Marschall Vorwaerts and I'll show you a goodly percentage of men whom their contemporaries called crazy. Had Lindbergh been lost in the Atlantic he too would have been accused of insanity; Fulton was looked on askance until the first steamboat reached Albany.

It is a hopeful sign that such books as this of Eulenburg can today find readers in America. The Kaiser asks not for praise, much less would he avoid criticism. But history clamors for the truth and such works as this of Eulenburg are of real service to Clio.



While Professor Haller's two volumes are an elaborate and valuable contribution to our knowledge of William II and his court they also serve to rehabilitate the much persecuted Prince Eulenburg in the world's opinion. To him the matter is of little consequence for he died in 1921; but history owes it to his descendants that he be declared innocent or at least, that the verdict be "not proven." The charges that forced Prince Eulenburg out of public life are the same that caused Major General Sir Hector MacDonald to commit suicide in 1903. Each of these men was far above the average in physical, mental, and spiritual gifts; and each of them became a target for him who seeks to magnify himself by dragging down an aristocrat.

Let me also add that the translations are excellent; the illustrations really illustrate, each has an index, and finally that the publishers deserve credit also for their share, particularly in typography.

Herr Nowak has also done an important book on the first few years of the Kaiser's reign. I say "important" because the book is in contrast with such misleading historical romance or propaganda as is associated with ephemeral "best sellers" labeled Emil Ludwig. Of Mr. Nowak I know nothing personally; he belongs to a new generation, his name is not even in the 1930 edition of my German Encyclopedia. Yet the Emperor has placed at his disposal much material, for which the author expresses gratitude in his preface. His Majesty has also had an opportunity of reading the MSS before publication, but has preferred to let Mr. Nowak reap all the glory, as he must necessarily bear also the brunt of any criticism. He cannot henceforth shield himself behind the exile of Doorn.

Nowak portrays the home life of the prospective Kaiser as paralleled only by that of the Great Frederick, when as a boy he contemplated an escape, even a suicide. It's a sad grey picture that, that of those first years at Potsdam—the twelve first ones. We are told that his mother hated him; that his father dared not interfere.

It was difficult to say which of the two parents sinned the more in the bringing up of their son. The mother applied unrelenting severity as a means of ripening and strengthening the frail boy. . . . The father stood aside, left her to do as she would.

And now comes a picture of Hinzpeter—, his tutor—"a dogmatic Spartan who considered laughter as a superfluous element in boyhood" . . . "he had his own positive ideals, stiff and bony as himself" . . . "devoid of humor, strict with himself, a dry idealist who became a pedant the moment he began to set his ideas in order, he reduced all morality to two things—duty and abstention. His face had no life in it, his sharp cut features damped down all

enthusiasm in advance and made a dogma of dour correctness, etc., etc., etc. . . ."

Mr. Nowak makes here admirable pen pictures for a prospective dramatist who must have deep shadows before the curtain is raised upon a scene of sunshine and triumph. During those years I was myself in Potsdam and had also a tutor much resembling Hinzpeter. Both were very learned and very conscientious educators. Hinzpeter preserved the love of his Imperial pupil until his lamented death in 1907—past ninety years of age. My own beloved Professor Schillbach remained in constant friendship and correspondence until he also passed away. Yet in either case we could if we chose make ourselves out martyrs of pedagogical severity. I saw much of Hinzpeter in my Potsdam years (1871, 1872) and romped much with his princely pupil. The Kaiser himself has written most vividly of those early years and in my book: "The German Emperor" are many first-hand records about which Mr. Nowak evidently knew nothing. Nor has he referred to my "Seventy Summers" in his Bibliography.

And so I can imagine a mysterious reticence on the part of William II when Mr. Nowak solicited official sanction for his highly colored and very readable biography.

Hinzpeter was for ten years tutor in the family of Frederic III, then Crown Prince, and from then on was treated with affectionate regard by the pupil who soon after became Emperor. Indeed, so strong was this personal affection, that on my first meeting the Kaiser after his accession in 1888, he urged me to stop over at Bielefeld and visit his former tutor—which I did.

But Nowak's book is important, as are all such books when honestly done. The only book I hate is that by him who writes for money.

We have here also a vivid picture of how the illustrious Count von Arnim was insidiously driven from court and condemned to the penitentiary on a charge of treason. The son of that Count married an English lady whose writings have enriched our literature. I refer of course to the Author of "Elizabeth and her German Garden"—now Countess Russell. The elder Count Arnim became a victim of Bismarckian jealousy, much as Eulenburg was also offered up as a sop to popular clamor—and Holstein.

Bismarck employed this Baron Holstein as an attaché in Paris when Arnim was Ambassador. The old chancellor sought for evidence on which he could cook up a charge of disloyalty or constructive treason. Holstein at first hesitated—and said to Bismarck: "Your Highness, it smells of espionage." But Bismarck soon overcame all his scruples and Holstein's political fortune was made from this dirty moment.

The service he had rendered was recognized by the chancellor. But from the day of his return every acquaintance at his Club cut him. He was just a spy—no one would shake hands with him. He returned a third and a fourth time to the club; there was no change. The many Counts von Arnim, their cousins, their friends were stronger than even Bismarck's efforts for his protégé. The spy was not only ostracized, he was quietly driven out of the Club. . . .

By nature he was a seeker after the good things in life. But now life had thrown him out of her great reception room into the ante room. He went no more to the club—no more into society at all. He would not even order an evening dress suit from his tailor. He withdrew entirely, took a simple lodging, received no one, had no valet. An old woman looked after the needs of this ex-cavalier and hedonist. Two consolations only still held him to life: Prince Bismarck and work in the Foreign Ministry.

It is material for a moving drama—strong, individual, wicked, virtuous, all marked with Dickensian vividness, each character sketched ready to take the stage and stir us in extremes of emotion. Nowak's book is good—I had almost said too good—too well adapted to the stage.

H. W. Nevinson, writing not long ago in the *Manchester Guardian*, said: "There are some books which I can reread every five or ten years and find always new. Not that they have changed, but that I have changed. Such books, I mean, as the 'Odyssey,' the 'Agamemnon,' the 'Troades,' the 'Clouds'; parts of the poets Lucretius, Catullus, Virgil, Juvenal, Dante, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Goethe, and Wordsworth; and parts of the prose writers Thucydides, Tacitus, Sir Thomas Browne, Swift, and Carlyle. Those names are all enshrined, and one must approach them with awe and a delighted reverence that increases with increasing years. But to them I could now add some of my own contemporaries. For our century has already been singularly rich in great writers, almost as rich as was that Victorian age which some of my fellows affect to despise."



## The Origins of Spirit

THE REALM OF MATTER. By GEORGE SANTAYANA. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1930. \$3.50.

Reviewed by IRWIN EDMAN

FAITHFUL readers of Mr. George Santayana have these last years been troubled a little by the eloquent adieu he seemed to be bidding to all the furniture of Heaven and Earth and all the sphere of mortal concerns. That homesickness for Platonism which has in him been discernible from the beginning began in "Platonism and the Spiritual Life" to turn into an actual going home. In "The Realm of Essence," mingled with a not always clear psychology and a metaphysics far from easy, sounded the unmistakable note of Pure Spirit, and the theme of free and bodiless Intuitions beholding Essences timeless and pure.

Mr. Santayana once long ago played ironically with Matthew Arnold's comment on Shelley "as an ineffectual angel beating his luminous wings in the void in vain." It was a notation some of his more carnal readers were beginning to make on the margins of his own thought. Even the less carnal ones were indeed beginning to regret the apparent passing of that naturalistic sanity and sensible consciousness of earth and sky and the things between them which marked "The Life of Reason," the realism which disciplined Santayana's eloquence, and gave pertinence to his most lofty flights. He seemed latterly to have fled not simply from America, but from earth itself to some interstellar Nirvana, the Alone, soliloquizing in a style, at once passionate and impeccable, upon the Alone, "loving too much to be ever imprisoned, understanding too much to be ever in love."

"The Realm of Matter," the second volume in the enterprise of analysis of the Realms of Being that Mr. Santayana has set himself, is sufficient reassurance. Mr. Santayana's feet are, where they always have been, on the ground, and his eyes, though they scan the heavens and see, perhaps beyond them, have taken note in their time,—and still do—of infra-celestial things. "The Realm of Matter," for all its celebration of spirit, "has now, conceived how it came into existence and how it is the natural light by which existence in its waking moments understands itself."

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Mr. Santayana has in other words returned, though we were mistaken, perhaps who supposed he had ever quit, to his initial and enduring wisdom, to his comprehensive sense that there is a world with its own order of genesis, a realm of matter. Spirit discovers, so far as it is possible or needful, its urgent or compulsory objects, as well as the organs ailing or healthful which give it play. Santayana has studied in other places, as incidentally he studies here, the objects with which spirit is concerned and the meaning of spirituality. He is here more exclusively concentrating upon the origins of spirit and the conditions which give it birth, perspective, fuel, and possibility. The skylark and his song have preoccupied him more elsewhere. He is intent in this volume upon reminding the reader of the earth from which the skylark rises, the earthly origins of its song, and the natural conditions of its singing.

In an essay on "My Friendly Critics" some years ago Santayana advanced the suggestion that he was the only honest and thoroughgoing materialist. But his materialism is far from being identical with or dependent upon that tight nineteenth century mechanism which has now long ceased to be in vogue even among physicists. Except that he prefers to avoid words with rhetorical or false poetical associations he might, as he remarks in his preface, have used the word nature or revolution instead of matter. Matter is his name for something very like that *phuesis* which is the condition of all action and understanding and the dynamic source of all spiritual life. It is fertile, generative, and contingent. Matter is (the pun is almost inevitable) Mater Genetrix. However refined into intelligence sensibility may become, however contemplative and detached spirit may think itself, matter is its source and its condition and provides its occasion and its themes.

Santayana's "Realm of Matter," therefore, provides a double corrective. It is a cure for that materialism that is merely abstractionism turned into idolatry, a worship under the name of Law of some observed regularities in the various and generative flux. If he is a materialist, he is yet one who recognizes of how much novelty, creation, and dreaming infinitudes matter is capable. He is much more like

Lucretius in his pæan to Venus than to Democritus or even to Lucretius in his atomic scheme. If he accents that candle which is the body, he does it, like Aristotle, in many ways his master, to remind us simply of the conditions of that flame which is the soul and which alone gives the candle worth. He thinks nature must be explored to be understood and must be understood, if life, certainly if spiritual life, is to flourish. But he does not think the understanding is rigid or mathematical, or that nature is anything less or other ultimately than a mystery.

But his materialism is a corrective also to hasty appreciations or egotistical idealisms. The reader is reminded again and again of those various forms of evasion or delusion by which idealists in love with essences persuade themselves that their love or contemplation of them has no natural conditions or material origins. He neatly pictures those egotistical philosophers so in love with a private consciousness that they try to pretend through psychologism that there can be consciousness without objects or psychical, that is, mental life, without material conditions.

No one could be more deeply in love with essences, the infinite catalogue of eternal forms, nor more devoted to their tranquil, almost Buddhistic, contemplation, than Mr. Santayana. But he is more



Illustration, by Donald McKay, for Mark Twain's "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer" (Random House). See page 526.

than enough of a realist, sceptical and humble, to refrain himself, to ask others to refrain, from converting ideals into facts and forms into powers. Platonism inhabits a heaven of forms, but Santayana reminds us that that heaven is one of the imagination or of intellectual insight, and that imagination and insight are both engendered and nourished by the natural world.

One of the finest single chapters in this volume is that on the Psyche where Santayana in a few paragraphs, apparently merely poetical, packs more illumination than is crowded into a dozen volumes of the ordinary or even the most fashionable psychological theories. What could be neater, for example, than his description of the psyche (which is for him largely what it is for Aristotle, the entelechy of the body, a trope, a pattern, a complex habit in matter) as it understands itself:

Of her life as a whole the Psyche is aware only as we are aware of the engines and the furnaces of a ship in which we travel half asleep or chattering on deck.

Many psycho-analysts have said less in a dozen pages or a dozen volumes.

But the book as a whole with its insistence as firm as it is genial, on the material conditions of the life of the spirit, of the natural genesis of understanding and of the objects of understanding, reminds one again of the paradox in Santayana's thinking, a paradox characteristic of every sensitive modern, though in Santayana expressed with unusual subtlety. There is always the naturalist's honest sense of conditioning realities, there is always the Platonist's half happy, half nostalgic turning toward those eternal essences which mortal things may transiently embody, and which spirit, in any individual being also mortal, may momentarily behold, the fated mortal partnership in immortal things. Even in this volume, where the theme is the realm of matter, Santayana cannot help

commemorating once more the essences toward which the free or the relatively free spirit turns and the timeless essences which it beholds.

The author's concern in this analysis of realms of being may be compared, if so fastidious a work of literature may be compared with so banal a work of music, with the Poet and Peasant Overture. At least the title of the latter is appropriate to Santayana's theme. It is the poet in him that turns so often and broods so persistently upon these infinite lights of essence, clear, abiding and *non-existent*. It is the poet in him that is thus preoccupied with the infinite realm of forms which the thinker may discern in existence or, not discerning, may imagine or conceive.

But it is the peasant in him, the sturdy child of nature, who realizes and remembers always the soil which nurtures the poet, and is ultimately if sometimes obliquely the source of his most unearthly visions. Yet even where the *motif* is, as in this volume, that of the peasant, it is a lyrical peasant who speaks, a poet who has made for the moment his earth and the realm of matter his theme.

It would be trivial or insulting at this late date to praise at length Mr. Santayana's style. But at some date and soon by some one there should be an attempt to analyze and define the miracle of this instrument of his at once so just, so eloquent, and so serene. It is a style that in one sense has betrayed him. For readers have frequently reduced his finalities of thought to mere felicities of utterance, forgetting that in great literature as in great music the two are profoundly one.

## Remembered in Tranquillity

EDUCATION OF A PRINCESS. A Memoir by MARIE, GRAND DUCHESS OF RUSSIA. New York: The Viking Press. 1931.

Reviewed by ARTHUR RUHL

A FEW weeks ago, on the screen of a little Times Square "movietone" theatre, Marie, grand-daughter of Alexander II of Russia, and niece of Nicholas II, appeared in a five-minute talk in which she spoke of the change that had taken place in her fortunes and her determination to succeed in the job at which she is now working in New York. It was a good little talk, in its mingling of modesty and pride; there was everything in the young Grand Duchess's pluck and tragic experience to touch the sympathies of her audience, but she was ill at ease and had an unhappy way of breaking the continuity of her words, every sentence or two, with a hesitating "A-a-a . . ."

This mannerism, so natural in the circumstances, had, on the screen, all the effect of premeditated burlesque. First the crowd tittered; before the unsuspecting Grand Duchess was through, fat men in thick overcoats were bellowing aloud.

On the same bill was Mr. Shaw. He bragged about himself and his plays; turned himself about, front-face, both profiles, backview; acted the clown, in short, but with such ease, grace, distinction, such an air of smiling down at a squirming mass of Liliputians, that the house listened with deference and chuckled its admiring delight. In that curious place and moment, it was the Grand Duchess who was merely a diffident, rather awkward woman of forty, and the British Socialist who had the air which kings should, but so rarely do have, in everyday life.

The little episode was, of course, merely one of those common examples of the theatre's peculiar values, of the unconscious cruelty of the theatre audience. But reading the Grand Duchess Marie's reminiscences, one may see behind it, I think, something more than that—see that strange, repressed, often wounded, childhood; that royal isolation and education which, as Marie now looks back at it, tended to atrophy rather than to develop natural powers and produced "an inferiority complex against which I had to fight"; that macabre marriage to a foreign prince, with whom, as with his people, she remained spiritually a stranger; a whole train of absurd, pitiful, tragicomic episodes which make the personal life of this Russian Grand Duchess a sort of museum-piece of the repressions of the Victorian era and of the wrong-headed, anachronistic, and unreal existence, into which the members of the Romanoff family were driven in those bat-eyed decades immediately preceding the Great War.

It is through this part of her story that the Grand Duchess Marie makes her most valuable contribution to the history of the time. All of the story is interesting, for it is all well written and part of an unusual life, but there have been innumerable memoirs