

this mystic sense, the author considers fallacious, for he claims that there being but two sources of knowledge, that of the senses and that of reason, intuition must be simply an intermediate stage of thinking, a variable composite of instinct and reason; it is half automatic and half rational and illustrates the logic of the unconscious mind. In a case cited it is said that a good cook is an intuitive cook; should she begin to think, her hand may be thrown out, or, as Bobby Jones once said, the way to play golf is not to think of all the directions given by the professional, but to forget them and hit the ball.

This is a valuable book. It gives not only the technique of effective thinking and the impediments thereto, such as the logic of superstition, idols subjective and objective, and prejudice and prepossession, but it also adds some interesting material on creative intelligence and the limitations of the intellect.

A New Life of Roosevelt

THEODORE ROOSEVELT. By WALTER F. McCaleb. New York: Albert & Charles Boni. 1931. \$4.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE.

THE emotional content, indeed the explosive qualities revealed in the life of Theodore Roosevelt as one reviews it in the perspective of time, of even a dozen years, makes it a most difficult story to tell and tell fairly. It is easy to hate Roosevelt and strafe him in a biography. It is also rather a simple matter, and has been done admirably, to adore him and write a biography which in effect makes the biographer one of the cherubim and seraphim who go about throwing down their golden crowns before the glassy sea in which a holy Roosevelt is reflected.

This biography is the first one that has appeared which obviously is striving to be fair, exactly fair, and the experiment is most interesting. And the marvel about the book is that the author evidently started to write a disagreeable book; but could not finish it on a sour note. Mr. McCaleb is almost a contemporary of Roosevelt, born a Texan in the 1870's, who left the newspaper business to become a banker. More than that, he is a Democrat, but also a scholar, being a Phi Beta Kappa, and has written a number of books, "The Life of a Bee," "The Life of an Ant," and a number of books on financial subjects. He has dedicated his book to Franklin Roosevelt, which is a sign and a token that the author has no intention of making it a Rollo book with a gold-plated hero all haloed and prettied up for company.

Mr. McCaleb confesses that he approaches his task with an appreciation of its dangers. In his foreword he declares that "there appears to be no neutral ground" between the "blatant panegyric and the fault-finding criticism." And yet he has done the difficult thing. It is fortunate that although he had seen Roosevelt in the flesh and had heard him speak, yet he had not come near enough to him to "be taken captive as was nearly everyone who approached him." The earlier part of the book reveals more resistance to the Roosevelt myth than the latter part, and yet even in the later chapters of the book, when he is dealing with Roosevelt as a crusader in those last years after the passing of the Bull Moose party, Mr. McCaleb holds an even balance. Apparently he believes that Wilson was right but he does not question Roosevelt's sincerity. Even in the discussion of the Panama Canal and the events leading up to the revolution in Colombia under which America acquired her title to the canal zone, Mr. McCaleb does not shield his hero. He tells the truth, disagreeable as it is. But he is not bitter or carping and we see Roosevelt striding to his goal in this episode, rather humorously conscious that he is participating in a sort of vast Pickwickian pretence of diplomacy, when he is relieving Colombia of her title to the canal zone.

So we see emerging from the picture not a villain, certainly not a wax-works saint, but a man whose flaring patriotism had made him choose a course which afterwards his country itself had to disavow by the payment of damages to a weaker nation. But there is the canal. Appraising the theft of Panama, Mr. McCaleb cites the so-called Mahan law, as formulated by Captain Mahan, our naval authority, which affirms that if primitive peoples are permitted to retain control of a land it is in defiance of any natural right, but because it is being developed in "such a manner as to insure the natural right of the world at large, that resources should not be left idle but be utilized for the general good." Whereupon Mr. McCaleb declares:

These adventures did not come about because of native failures but because there were goods to be appropriated and peoples to be exploited. When people can no longer protect their possessions by force of arms they become fit subjects for the operation of Captain Mahan's law, which in simple English is that might makes right. Panama offers a perfect example of the operation of the law. Roosevelt called it imperialism in the process of unfolding.

Since the earlier biographies of Roosevelt were written during the first five years following his death, much correspondence has been published in letters and memoirs which has revealed an inwardness, for instance, of the relations between Taft and Roosevelt—relations that were not known at the beginning of the third decade, and Mr. McCaleb has availed himself of this correspondence. Particularly has he had access to the Archie Butt letters and the Lodge correspondence. The story of the rise of the insurgent movement and the formation of the progressive bloc and finally the Progressive party as it unfolded from 1910 to 1912 has never been told better than it is told in this biography. One gets President Taft's slant on the break that was inevitable when one reads that he warned Norton, his secretary, not to commit him "to anything which would look like fawning or seeking favor at the hands of the ex-President." Also we read that Mrs. Roosevelt was



Lytton Strachey

included in an invitation to the White House only at the suggestion of Major Butt, so far had personal relations disintegrated between the two when Roosevelt returned from Africa in 1910. It was inevitable that the two should differ. It was probable that they should quarrel and it was well for the world that the issues between them should have been dramatized by their gargantuan struggle in 1912. In that day America went to school in certain fundamentals of democracy, and in discussing that day Mr. McCaleb makes it evident that he followed the more strenuous teacher and sympathized with the progressive movement.

There rises from the pages of this book a robust figure, full of foibles and frailties, but also strong and wise and very brave; not omniscient, prone to mistakes and errors and, alas, often proud of them. But the new generation can read this book, fairly certain that it is getting an approximation of the truth, as much truth as any other one book about Roosevelt and his times will reveal, certainly more truth than may be found in the outgiving of either his panegyrists or carping critics. Mr. McCaleb has done a difficult thing well.

The always watchful F. H. P. remarks the following in a recent issue of the *London Observer*:

"A pathetic interest must ever attach to Bowling Green House, on Putney Heath, which is being offered for sale by Messrs. Constable and Maude, of Mount Street. There, in a first floor room, on January 23, 1806, died William Pitt. The house, of which he had taken a lease some eighteen months earlier, had been marvelously translated. It owed its name to its original status as an inn with a cockpit and a bowling green, but had been enlarged and made into a rather elegant abode for a gentleman, with a verandah, French windows, and a projecting porch. As regards size, it was never more than a cosy villa, but it stands in rather more than five acres of wooded grounds, with lawns and masses of rhododendrons. It was, however, large enough for the modest needs of 'The Great Commoner' and his niece, Lady Hester Stanhope, and it is a curiously interesting circumstance that the house is a mere quarter of a mile from the dell in which Pitt had fought his duel with Tierney. The story that it was at Bowling Green House that he received the news of Austen's death, and told his niece to roll up the map of Europe, appears to be apocryphal."

Vignettes of the Small

PORTRAITS IN MINIATURE And Other Essays. By LYTTON STRACHEY. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co. 1931. \$2.50.

Reviewed by ERNEST SUTHERLAND BATES

WHEN the *New Statesman* hailed the advent of Lytton Strachey's "Queen Victoria" with the words, "a masterpiece that will influence the art of biography," that organ was certainly endowed with the gift of prophecy. In fact, its utterance was, if anything, too cautious. It would hardly be going too far to say that Lytton Strachey in that work created the art of modern biography. Immediately before his day, biographies were usually written by friends and relations, or at any rate admirers, of the mighty dead, and their highest goal was to attain sympathetic understanding. Mr. Strachey started the vogue for a new type of work the keynote of which is critical detachment. As the modern world already prided itself on its detachment from Victorianism without knowing much about the subject, it welcomed a book which enabled one to say, "Ah, that is what I always thought about the smug, hypocritical crowd; now I know that I am right." And, possessing the happy human faculty of generalization, people came to the conclusion that probably other periods as well needed a sharp looking into. There resulted that critical revaluation of history by means of biography which has formed the distinctive literary achievement of the past decade.

Mr. Strachey's followers have been legion, but it is generally agreed that no one of them has quite learned to bend his master's bow. The Strachey detachment, though difficult, may indeed be acquired. And that saturation with events and characters which enables Mr. Strachey to envelop his subject and to give the impression always that he is telling only the smallest part of what he knows about it—that, too, with sufficient time and effort might be acquired. But over and above these qualities Mr. Strachey is an artist, one of the greatest writers of English prose now living. His insight into both patterns and idiosyncrasies of character, his narrative skill, his eye for the significant detail, above all, his charm of style with its ease, lucidity, and restrained irony—these are the latest flowering of the classical tradition in a unique personality, and are not to be repeated at either wish or will. The character of Mr. Strachey's style is fundamental to his work even considered purely as biography. What he says, in his latest volume, of Edward Gibbon's masterpiece, that its whole scope and nature were determined by its style, is equally true of his own writings.



Thus it is almost a positive gain that in his latest work the subjects, for the most part, have no obvious interest of their own to interfere with that which Mr. Strachey finds in them. Aside from the six historians at the end of the volume, of the eighteen figures presented in "Portraits in Miniature" only Congreve and Boswell are generally known. Students of English literature may recall the eighteenth century Richard Bentley, impeccable scholar and redoubtable tyrant of Trinity College, Cambridge, or Sir John Harrington, the Elizabethan translator of Ariosto and inventor of the water-closet, or John Aubrey, the seventeenth century antiquarian, all of whose affairs, as he said himself, "ran kim kam," and who was, as a contemporary said, "inclined to credit strange relations." But who has heard of Dr. Colbatch of Trinity, or Dr. John North, or Lodowick Muggleton? Mr. Strachey has found significance in these shadows and given them their hour of kindly if unflattering immortality. Humor governs the tale of Colbatch who wasted his life endeavoring to oust the terrible Bentley from Cambridge and succeeded momentarily more than once only to have the despot immediately restored by tricks of law or fate—a dazzling academic battle which modern universities can only imitate afar. The story of Dr. North of Cambridge is gruesome-humorous, that of a timid, repressed student, who on being made Master of Trinity suddenly became so assertive a disciplinarian that all the college hated him—until, one day, after years of arid pedantry, he fell in a fit of apoplexy and awoke half-paralyzed, to solace himself henceforward with bibbling and ribaldry companioned by a gay young scholar of the university. The account of Muggleton again is pure humor—Muggleton, a masculine Aimée Semple Macpherson of 1650, who with his cousin Reeves founded the sect of Muggle-

tonians which still persists in London chanting their ancient song:

I do believe in God alone,
Likewise in Reeves and Muggleton.

Amateur of strange events, Mr. Strachey tells us of the aged love of Horace Walpole for that Mary Berry who lived to discuss the incident with Thackeray, of the sexagenarian liaison between Guizot and Madame de Lieven, of Freeman the historian going mad when it was proved that the Battle of Hastings was really the Battle of Hastings and not the Battle of Senlac as he had argued with many thousands of words. But none of these stories, fascinating as they are, is told for its own sake. Each character, each incident, is made in some magical way the center of a cultural epoch which casts its penumbra around it. Minor figures are perhaps more suitable for this revelatory purpose than major ones who, at least as far as artists and writers are concerned, usually express their period only antithetically by their rebellion. So Mr. Strachey's studies of these little men and women, mainly of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, give us perhaps a better understanding of their times than would any vignette of the great (who, for that matter, customarily refuse to be vignettized.)

Hence it is of less moment that the essays on Hume, Gibbon, Macaulay, Carlyle, Froude, and Creighton are, as a group, a little disappointing. Those on Hume, Gibbon, and Creighton are judicious and illuminating, but the artist that is Mr. Strachey finds the three moralists well-nigh intolerable. His failure to render even-handed justice to Macaulay, Carlyle, and Froude is the more easily forgiven as it may serve to soothe our vanity. Envious and discouraged writers may take heart again with the thought that even Lytton Strachey is not quite universal.

Decline and Fall

HATTER'S CASTLE. By A. J. CRONIN. Boston: Little, Brown & Company. 1931. \$2.50.

Reviewed by GEORGE DANGERFIELD

"*Omnia praeclara*," said Spinoza, "*iam difficilia quam rara*." I should ask no mercy for borrowing this statement if I were not forced to criticize "Hatter's Castle" on the sole ground that it is not a masterpiece. For how else can one approach a novel whose virtue lies not in what it is but in what it evokes, and when it evokes a whole dynasty of English novels which began with the Regent and ended with Edward VII? Nothing is so various as the fiction which falls within this period (or periods), but now that a number of years have slipped between, we can see certain characteristics which persisted throughout—chief among them a more "literary" manner than we cultivate nowadays, a more obvious devotion to literary etiquette, which does not necessarily imply better writing; a slow and detailed growth with unswerving direction; and a respect for the privacy of its characters which did not entirely depend upon social modesty. One finds these characteristics in "Hatter's Castle," just as one finds echoes of writers as diverse in method and intention as Dickens, De Morgan, and Hardy: in fact the book represents in its way an opposition to the present government in fiction, but an opposition that is not properly organized. For what Cronin lacks is the power to round out his characters, to make them fulfil themselves and their destinies and become, however slowly and however discursively, either the scapegoats or the champions of humanity.

The story is not an easy one to paraphrase. The scene is set in the Scottish Lowlands of the last century. We have James Brodie, the hatter, who built himself a castellated freak of a house which in England would have been called a "Folly," and who domineered his own household and bullied his acquaintances, so great was his pride. His elder daughter was cast out of his house for the obvious reason and at the same time his business was undermined by an enterprising shop which set up next door to it. Then his wife, who was his terrified slave, died of cancer and his household fell into dirt and disorder. He was declared bankrupt: unkempt and morose, with no more than the rags of pride left to him, he took to drink, got the local barmaid for his mistress, and was robbed of her by his son whom he had quite rightly thought to be no more than a failure and a weakling. He loved his younger daughter in a twisted way and became more and more obsessed with the idea that she should retrieve the family for-

tune by winning a town scholarship. With alternate threats and promises he drove her to work day in day out, and when she failed to win her scholarship she hanged herself. These are the bare facts of "Hatter's Castle"—nearly six hundred pages of decline and fall.

The early part of the book is full of possibilities. Let us take a single example. Mary is cast out into a terrific thunderstorm with the pangs of a premature childbirth on her, hurled to and fro by the wind in a dark wood, nearly drowned in a flooded river, almost swallowed up in a bog, only to end in the straw and the ordure of a rough cowhouse where she bears her child alone. All this in a few hours! "The elements" (how else could one speak of such phenomena?) were a naive and ponderable and exceedingly effective convention in the Victorian novel. And now Cronin has used the same convention and used it in such a deliberate and such a gentlemanly way that we are convinced against our will. More generally, to all this early part he brings a sense of destiny that is larger than the characters require and of space that is wider than the confines of a Scottish town. Up to a point, then, the story has growth with direction: and just as certainly it afterwards loses direction. It descends by imperceptible degrees into a series of events, a respectably motivated plot—and one domestic tragedy plot can be very much like another. We do not accuse Cronin of slipshod work—his story is well knit together—nor of lack of force; nor yet of wanting the instinct and the instinctive good manners that is common to the Regency and the Victorian novel; but he lacks the genius.

Some of his writing is indifferent, which could be said of the greatest English novels; but the characterization is not so much indifferent as imperfect. In fact, nothing in the book fulfils itself—it is second rate, whether good or bad second rate the reader must decide for himself. But who knows if it is not prophetic? Many of us think, to take a solitary example, that Jane Austen's heroines are among the most vital women in English literature, a fact which can neither be explained nor explained away: and "Hatter's Castle" might also prove, from the tragic side, that there is room for the reticent as well as the outspoken novel, since its occasional "modern" detail is unnecessary if not intrusive. At least it recalls many of the solid and peculiarly English virtues of an earlier fiction—and we cannot call this imitation though we might give it no better title than conjuring. No doubt the book will appeal more to England than to America, for the English public is sentimentally inclined to its past. But not one of us who has any allegiance to nineteenth century literature or any belief in its resurrection can afford to neglect "Hatter's Castle."

Quite Out of It

(Continued from page 969)

are so highly marketable that publishers and magazine editors are constantly in a perfect lather trying to secure their services. Publishers have to live, or that is the contention, and authors like to live, they like even to live luxuriously. The Golden Age is upon them, with a little adaptation. No more of this starving in a garret.

And then get well out of it—retreat across seas or into some mountain fastness, and, if you are a writer, sit down and think it over. We are not counselling mutiny. You probably have to deliver your new book by a certain date in the fall. You have signed a contract, and a bond is binding. But most important, to your publisher as well as to yourself, is the fact that you produce, not the mere trademark product up to the old grade, but rather the most honest and personal work that is in you. Enough pitfalls of temperament yawn, as it is, between your work emerging as you have dreamed it and your actual completed manuscript. Sheerly honest and unexpedient writing is a difficult job enough in itself, without hearkening to the big business talk of organization that rumbles from afar. What matters is that you recapture something of the spirit of the profession of letters, the old profession of letters.

With all the quick work for quick money rampant in our time, with the advertising department's slogans and the promotion expert's pronouncements dazzling your vision, new obstacles are placed between honest work and the public. Their very fame harasses honest workmen more than their obscurity. Suddenly they are exalted to gods. They are supposed to be capable of anything at a moment's notice. Witness the reportorial questions that enfilade them when

they visit us or return to us from abroad. What do they think about Relativity? Is there a God? Is there a Fourth Dimension? The author knows very well that he possesses a certain gift of which he apprehends the distinct limitations. If he can be left in peace and quiet, he can do the special type of thing that is his own province. But just because a book of his has suddenly become a best-seller he, very likely, knows no more about God or the Fourth Dimension or Relativity than he did in the beginning—and very likely such matters have never been his chosen field.

We should advise authors to keep out of the toils of organized "literature" as much as possible. We should advise publishers to recognize more acutely than they do the fact that when literature leaves off being a profession and becomes factory-toil it is extremely liable to deterioration. The machine-made thing remains merely the machine-made thing. You cannot predict lightning—and it seldom strikes twice in the same place.

Historicus writes from London that in the Newspaper Room of the British Museum he has discovered, in the London *Daily Telegraph* of July 5, 1855, a correspondent's description of the effects of the then prohibition law in the State of Maine:

"Every person is his own publican and sinner, and every private house might with propriety hang out the sign of an unlicensed victualler. The effect of this is the violation of State law, the promotion of thirst—for the prohibition acts as caviare—and a great deal of immorality in the shape of deceit, lying, and hypocrisy. Many humorous stories are undoubtedly told of the evasion of this law. If a stranger ask for a glass of lemonade, he is treated to whiskey and water, and told, with a grin, that the weather is so hot they are obliged to make that beverage strong in order to keep it. Teapots are perverted from their proper use to an extent terrible to the sober mind to contemplate; druggists compound nothing save alcoholic mixtures. You are constantly misunderstood if you ask for any mild beverage such as milk or chocolate—silence is interpreted by rum, a nod by peach brandy, and the act of shaking hands by corn whiskey. A remark concerning the weather is a request for mint julep, and an inquiry after a friend's health means brandy cocktail or brandy smash. The merchant gets elevated in his counting house, the parson in his study, and everyone else where he can."

It is reported from Vienna that a hitherto unknown MS. of Schubert has been discovered. It is said to consist of six German dances written for pianoforte.

A Balanced Ration for Week-End Reading

HATTER'S CASTLE. By A. J. CRONIN. Little, Brown.

A first novel by an English author, built about the theme of egoism and parental tyranny, which has met with wide acclaim in Great Britain.

PORTRAITS IN MINIATURE. By LYTTON STRACHEY. Harcourt, Brace.

Vignettes of a few great personalities, and several lesser ones, written in the best manner of their author, with all his customary brilliance and scholarship.

THE GARDENER'S YEAR. By KAREL CAPEK. Putnam.

A gay little book about amateur gardeners for lovers of the garden.

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Published weekly, by the Saturday Review Co., Inc., Henry S. Canby, President; Roy E. Larsen, Vice-President; Noble A. Cathcart, Secretary-Treasurer, 25 West 45th Street, New York. Subscription rates per year, postpaid: in the U. S. and Mexico, \$3.50; in Canada, \$4; in Great Britain, 18 shillings; elsewhere, \$4.50. All business communications should be addressed to 25 West 45th Street, New York. Entered as second class matter at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 1, 1879. Vol. 7, No. 52.

The Saturday Review is indexed in the "Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature."

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