

since he was the husband of her best friend; 3. (Mme. Bianchi's) That, in her early twenties, returning from "a winter in Washington"—one of Emily's letters to Mrs. Holland says more exactly "we were three weeks in Washington"—Emily fell recklessly in love with a minister whose name is not given but who is supposed to be the Reverend Charles Wadsworth, discovered he was married, fled to her home in Amherst, was pursued by her infatuated innamorato, made the great abnegation, and spent the rest of her life enshrining him in her gnomic verse.

There is a fourth choice, a suggestion made by the present writer and corroborated in this *Review* by Mabel Loomis Todd, Emily Dickinson's first editor. It was suggested that, possibly there was no love story at all; none, at least, in the physical sense; that, as a poet, a particularly sensitive soul, and an inward-looking woman, Emily Dickinson dramatized her sense of loss, dwelling more intensely than ever in her poetry, her retirement being the natural outcome of an unnaturally timid nature. But this interpretation, held by Emily's brother Austin and sister Lavinia, and emphasized by Mrs. Todd, lacks the romantic color, the dramatic pathos, the half-withheld whispering that we demand of a tradition—especially about poets who happen to be women. It is too level, even too likely, to make a legend. Readers are thus rudely returned to the three-horned dilemma of a trinity of stories, each of which contradicts the other at every important point and for none of which is there any ultimate authority.

There remains the far more important matter of Emily Dickinson's writings. Here, one would imagine there is no reason for contradiction or speculation; the record must be clear if not complete. The contrary is true. We have yet to possess a volume in which all the words of the most gifted woman who ever wrote in America are set down as she wrote them, free of error, recognizable as the poet's final intention. Nor is this as strange as it seems. Though instead of being the unconsciously "possessed" visionary that certain admirers have portrayed, Emily Dickinson planned her effects carefully, often rewriting the same poem several times and carefully copying the verses on sheets of note paper, she never prepared a single poem for the press. The work of editing remained for her editors who have performed the task with varying degrees of accuracy and imagination. It was no easy task, for, besides the difficulties of deciphering faded manuscript and the greater hazard of arranging lines that seldom showed an orthodox division or punctuation, there was the choice of epithet. Variants of the same verse were often encountered; not infrequently a manuscript would show the poet's hesitation among several adjectives and no final decision indicated. Small errors in taste and transcription were thus bound to creep in. But one wonders what need was there, in each successive edition, to perpetuate them?

The very arrangement is a case in point. When, four years after the poet's death, Colonel Higginson and Mabel Loomis Todd sponsored the first series of Emily Dickinson's unknown poems in 1890—the rare little gray and white volume with the silver Indian pipes—it was thought expedient to divide the volume in four parts entitled "Life," "Nature," "Love," "Time and Eternity." This evidently served its purpose, as a publisher's device, or a concession, or as a four-part portfolio, for the editors were faced with a mass of unpublished manuscript—countless letters, literally more than a thousand poems—and a sister (Lavinia) prodding them on to publication. But, after three volumes of poetry had appeared, it became evident that the divisions were not only contrary to Emily Dickinson's non-categorical spirit, but were worse than arbitrary, that many of the poems were actually given a false implication by being so tabulated, and that a new alignment was necessary. Yet the latest Centenary edition (1930) follows the divisions slavishly, divisions which the reader should bear in mind were invented neither by Emily Dickinson nor the present editor. Any other arrangement—even a merely alphabetical one—would be an improvement. A chronological arrangement would be better still. Perhaps this would be best of all since it would not only be a boon to students of her style, but might well throw some light on the development of the interior drama. It may be objected that this is an impossible project since few, if any, of Emily Dickinson's manuscripts are dated. But that is a minor obstacle. The kinds of paper used furnish sufficient clues. Besides, Emily's letters, with her characteristic and changing penmanship, are all dated

accurately enough by her first editor and the changes in her handwriting are definite. They define three periods. It might be impossible to assign the exact month to any one verse, but it would require no expert in chiromancy to separate the poems into "Early," "Middle," and "Late" periods, and so to a more meticulous comparison and correlation. No poetry has ever needed rearrangement as much as Emily Dickinson's and none has had so little benefit of editorial examination.

So far I have been concerned with matters of speculation and taste. I come now to the graver matters of error in transcription and error by omission. Let me take up the first. I am not in possession of a single manuscript and I have looked over only a few of the originals. But since my short study of an isolated case or two and happy chance have yielded more than I hoped for, I suspect that many surprises would result from a thorough re-examination of the material—a labor that would require the energy of an Amy Lowell and the pertinacity of a Leslie Hotson. For example, there is the extraordinary cryptic verse quoted in the 1930 edition of the "Poems":

The zeros taught us phosphorus,
We learned to like the fire
By handling glaciers when a boy,
And tinder guessed by power
Of opposite to equal ought,
Eclipses sums imply
Paralysis our primer numb
Unto vitality.

Here a fine variant of a poem already quoted in "Life and Letters" is reduced to gibberish by an obviously incorrect transcription. Emily's debated obscurity vanishes when the sixth line is purged of its error which, incidentally, has crept in since Mrs. Todd's volume of "Letters"; for, since each thing implies its opposite, eclipses imply "suns"—not "sums"! Similarly (in the "Life and Letters") Emily is quoted as saying that "Paul took the marine walk at great risk." Surely this is careless copying, for Emily knew her Bible too well to rob Peter of his adventure merely to pay Paul a tribute.

Other instances could be multiplied. In the "Further Poems," presumably discovered (or recovered) in 1929, there appeared the lines beginning "To disappear enchancess" (page 197, though not listed in the Index of First Lines), Mme. Bianchi's footnote reading "the first three stanzas have never before been published." Yet the stanzas had appeared twice—once in Mabel Loomis Todd's "Letters of Emily Dickinson" (Volume 1, page 323) and once in Mme. Bianchi's own "Life and Letters" (page 303).

The matter of Emily Dickinson's portraits is equally confusing. The world is familiar with two—one obviously misrepresentative, the other obviously "faked." The first—the picture of a little child about nine years old—is copied from a canvas made by some journeyman painter who painted, in the convention of his day, Emily and her brother; the result being scarcely the Dickinson children, but nothing more than a stereotype of Child. The other and more familiar picture is even more of a counterfeit presentment—using the adjective in its worst sense. It is the one that acts as frontispiece to both "Life and Letters" and the centenary "Poems." "From a photograph retouched by Laura Coombs Hills," runs the accompanying legend to the befrilled and patently modernized miniature. But were there photographs in 1847 when Emily was seventeen? And if so, why has the original never been reproduced? And how is Mme. Bianchi's sponsorship of the "photograph" to jibe with her statement (in "The Single Hound," page XVI) "Since there is no portrait of Aunt Emily?" And why is this picture of Emily in her teens accompanied by a signature of her last period?

We are left with a host of unanswered questions. Why, returning to Mme. Bianchi, has Emily's niece said so little about her own father? Letters revealing Emily's closeness to her brother have been printed, but we know little more about this dynamic personality. Is it not strange that in a volume devoted to the Dickinsons, embellished with portraits of Helen Hunt and Samuel Bowles and Maria Whitney, there is not even a likeness of Austin Dickinson? In the interests of scholarship—to say nothing of art—an editor should respect even if he does not mention his sources. Yet what credit do the recent editions pay to the pioneering industry of Colonel Higginson and Mrs. Todd? The two volumes of letters compiled by Mrs. Todd in 1894 have been liberally drawn

upon by Mme. Bianchi for the 1924 "Life and Letters," yet some of Emily's most revealing touches are missing and the 1894 edition is out of print. Several of the best letters are omitted. So are many of the verses. There are almost a hundred poems contained in the 1894 series of letters which one cannot find in the current "Poems of Emily Dickinson," supposedly complete. There are batches of letters known to exist which have never been allowed publication.

There is need for sharper scrutiny than this work has yet received—textually, chronologically, comprehensively. A general editorial overhauling is indicated. Were this the remains of some minor versifier or criticaster it would not matter. But we are confronted with one of the chief figures in our literature, "the greatest woman poet of the English language." We should have an accurate Emily Dickinson, and we should have her complete.

[There should be an "Amherst Edition" of the prose and poetry of Emily Dickinson, sponsored by Amherst College, and edited by a group of scholars in collaboration with Mme. Bianchi.—THE EDITOR.]

A New Philosophy

SCIENCE AND FIRST PRINCIPLES. By F. S. C. NORTHROP. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1931. \$3.

Reviewed by H. B. SMITH
University of Pennsylvania

THE philosopher without science is empty, the scientist without philosophy is blind. And be it said in advance that Mr. Northrop's "Science and First Principles" is neither empty nor blind. Relativity, quantum and wave mechanics, the nature of life and the particular nature of man are tied together by a new monadology which seems to have a certain kinship with Bruno and his infinite worlds, and which is not afraid to acknowledge its debt to the Greeks. One examines history to revive issues that are dead, to discover possibilities that have been overlooked. And here one finds that sympathetic understanding of the past that betokens the mind already ripe. Moreover the author has a competing theory of his own in opposition to those now at large in the world. It is the theory of the macrocosmic atom.

"In opposition to the contingent changing forms which the kinetic microcosmic principles of our theory introduces, there is also the eternal perfect spherical form which the macrocosmic atom imposes. The presence of this atom with its spherical form throws an entirely new light upon the foundations of logic and reason in man and nature. In it we have a form which is a cause of the order of nature and the organization and intelligence of man."

For the foundations of a theory one must look (among other things) to its mathematical dress. But these chapters are lectures addressed to a popular audience. The system awaits a more technical development. Nevertheless, if one would know the outcome as applied to man's consciousness, it is this:

"When one senses what it is to be one's self, the atoms of our theory are joined to the knowing subject by the relation of identity; one knows the atoms that constitute one's self and nature by being immediately aware of what it is to be them. Now, I am conscious. Hence they must be also. . . . Man has a subjective character and is conscious . . . because the ultimate atomic entities of which everything is constituted have psychical as well as physical and formal properties. Man is conscious because he is the entities of the macroscopic atomic theory . . . and these atoms are inherently conscious."

And if one would know at once the outcome or a part of the outcome for theology, it is this:

"The spherical shell of the macrocosmic atom is a tremendous object off at the edge of the whole physical universe. This is God in the awe-inspiring, overwhelming, transcendental sense. But the inner field of this atom is in each one of us. This is God in the immanent sense. In fact, the body of man is partially the body of God. If this be true, then, since the consciousness of man is but the consciousness of his constituent materials, the actual calm, perfect, conscious, rational experience of God is literally in the foundation of our own conscious nature."

But these "outcomes" as here set forth are truncated parts divorced of their context like some organ dissected from the body-whole. If the reader would know this rich mind, which is the author, he must read for himself. A new and fresh philosophy lies in store for him.

Our War with Spain

THE MARTIAL SPIRIT. By WALTER MILLIS.
Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1931.

Reviewed by WILLIAM E. SHEA

TUCKED away in a note of bibliographical acknowledgment, between Chapter XIV and the Index of "The Martial Spirit," is a statement by the author that, to the reader "it may seem that I have stressed the satiric aspects of the [Spanish-American] War." This is a lapse into supererogation. That Mr. Millis has focussed on the events and personages of the Spanish American War which will best illustrate his conviction that all wars are stupid and ridiculous, will be apparent to any one who even reads his table of contents and looks at his illustrations. The book is satiric, but also it is a tremendously interesting and stimulating study of that vicious malady of nations, the propensity of people collectively to seek for an antagonist and murder him.

As a satirist Mr. Millis most definitely has "the goods." His style has verve and sparkle and he possesses ability amounting almost to genius for bringing out the ludicrous in situations which nobody up to now has realized were funny. I cannot recall any book on history which yields up so many sardonic chuckles to the page. That the humor is in a few places cruel, and in one or two instances misplaced, is natural and forgivable. Happily the author does not make the mistake of pitching his book to too high a key throughout, but instead secures heightened effectiveness for his "situations" by frequently reverting to "straight" writing—many of these oases being endowed with a romantic and mystical beauty. In illustration, here is the way he pictures the emotions evoked by the arrival of American troop ships off the south coast of Cuba:

During the day they caught occasional glimpses of the high mountain peaks of Cuba itself standing silent and remote in the blue distance—the land about which they had all heard so much; that strange, romantic, and for some obscure reason important, island, with its queer Spanish place-names, sonorous and fascinating; with its memories of the old, high power of imperial Spain blending with the mystery and color of the tropics and tropic seas—the island which they had come to conquer upon the old trail of the Conquistadores.

"The Martial Spirit" treads on many toes, smashes much crockery, and plays havoc generally with practically all of the glamorous and kindly and romantic memories we Americans have been holding of our war with Spain. It shows the American statesmen of the period, with few exceptions, as either knavish or witless, and in many cases both. It pictures the great Dewey violating Navy tradition and pulling political wires to get command of the Asiatic Squadron, and assenting to the proposal of the too enterprising Roosevelt, then Assistant Secretary of the Navy, that in the event of war he would proceed to Manila and destroy the "ancient and helpless war vessels" of the Spanish Asiatic Squadron—an adventure in statecraft which bids fair to find its termination a generation later in independence for the Filipinos—at the behest of wrathful American beet-sugar interests. It shows the flimsiness of the evidence on which a case was made against Spain in connection with the sinking of the Maine, which "did in fact destroy herself, through the intervention of no outside agency save an act of God." It shows the Peerless Leader succumbing to the lure of martial life and drum and donning a colonel's uniform, and naively hoping that a Republican administration would give him and his Nebraska volunteers a place on the firing line. It brings to light again the fetid story of the "embalmed beef" fed to the troops, the riotous confusion in the training camps, the breakdown of the supply services, the blundering and worse of officers of both services. It asserts that it was not the superior fighting ability of the Americans that won Santiago but the skill of the elephantine General Shafter at the fine old American art of bluff. The only strategy worthy of the name was "Fighting Joe" Wheeler's outmanoeuvring of General Lawton so as to be first to have the honor of coming to grips with the Spaniards—with almost catastrophic results to himself and the troops he led. It reveals that our sympathy for Cuba was largely misplaced and that it owed its origin to a mendacious but effective press bureau maintained in the United States by the Cuban revolutionary forces, and to the sensational journalism of two New York newspaper publishers, Joseph Pulitzer of the *World* and William Randolph Hearst of the *Journal*.

With only one of Mr. Millis's judgments, his treatment of McKinley, am I disposed to disagree. He puts that much abused gentleman far down on the list of our Presidents, far down, even, on the list of our Republican Presidents. He endorses unreservedly Spanish Minister Dupuy de Lome's "accurate" characterization of McKinley, contained in the inexcusably brash letter de Lome sent to a friend in Cuba (which found its way into Hearst's hands and was published, with resulting disgrace for de Lome and incalculable damage to Spain):

McKinley is weak and a bidder for the admiration of the crowd, besides being a common politician who tries to leave a door open behind himself while keeping on good terms with the jingoes of his party.

Now, McKinley was not a Washington nor a Lincoln, nor even a Cleveland, but he was far from being the hypocritical weakling de Lome described him as being. Any estimate of the works of a public man which presumes to be fair must take into account conditioning factors such as national psychology, the play of interwoven forces, social, political, and economic. It remains to be proven that a "strong" man in McKinley's place could have functioned better than he. Mr. Millis condemns



Illustration, by Diego Rivera, for "Mexican Maze."

McKinley because he did not keep us out of war. Considering the temper of the American people in 1898, exasperated beyond endurance by the years and decades of bloodshed and disorder and pestilence at our very doorstep, irritated by Spain's procrastinating diplomacy, could any man occupying the Presidency have prevented the war? And if he had, can we be certain that such a course would have been more honorable, more humane, or in any other way better in the long run than the patient, forbearing, and finally uncompromising policy adopted and followed by McKinley?

Mexico from the Inside

MEXICAN MAZE. By CARLETON BEALS. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co. 1931. \$3.

Reviewed by ARTHUR RUHL

MR. BEAL'S "Mexican Maze" is itself rather mazy. It isn't, like Flandrau's little "Viva Mexico!" of happy memory, something complete within its own prescribed limits; the impressions, done *con amore*, of an outsider's urbane and adult mind. It isn't the work of a historian or statesman, although it touches the stuff of each, and ventures into rather windy literary and artistic criticism. It contains much "fine writing" and writing that might have been clipped from any newspaper special article. It hops from estheticism of the primitive to topical pamphleteering on oil and imperialism, and even drops occasionally into routine travelogue.

Mr. Beals beat his way down into Mexico a dozen years or so ago, a rambunctious young rebel against what he regarded as the Babbitttry of his native land. The country and people charmed him, as they have many Americans. He caught on and stayed there; found, in somewhat different shape, emotional nourishment similar to that which many volunteer expatriates find in Europe; was caught up, in the nature of things, by the vitality of the revolution; wrote a book or two, many articles, and began to take himself, as writer and interpreter, pretty seriously.

He has seen a lot of Mexico and Mexican life;

poked, on foot and on horseback, into all sorts of out-of-the-way places. Just now, he would appear to be in the state of mind of those who have, as they say in the tropics, "missed too many boats." He is too far in, that is to say, to look at things as the frankly detached outsider, and yet has suffered enough disillusionments not to be able simply to swallow his adopted habitat whole and drift there in a sentimental dream. His new book has the solid value of his first-hand observations; the disunity of his own inner feelings; and it is marred pretty generally by his fierce determination to make the reader sit up and take notice of him as a writer, cost what it may.

Nothing so hard for Mr. Beals, apparently, as to say what he has to say in simple, direct English. Everything must be spiced up, "dramatized," even nature's routine. The sun can never merely "shine"; it must "stab," at the very least. A troop of horsemen can't merely disappear over the top of the trail; they must "vanish from a sheer skyline that sent the eye hurtling down over a vast empire to the Pacific." Of course one knows what he means. There's grandeur in "them thar hills" and we mustn't miss it; but the picture of Mr. Beals's optic bouncing down the mountainside like a stray rubber-ball is not at all what he really intended. This sort of over-emphasis and loose picturesqueness is characteristic and the reader soon rebels at it.

In a Montmartre café, Mr. Beals discovers a former Mexican Cabinet Minister drinking with a pair of cocottes. The language roundabout is naturally French; or, as Mr. Beals must needs have it, "the sweet snarl of a greedy foreign tongue in his ears," and the former Minister is not only carousing but "kneading the white flesh of poison-sweet breasts with heavy, brown fingers." Well, maybe so. But in this too evident straining to impress, as in other similar references to women, the reader's attention is inevitably distracted from the matter supposedly in hand to the fact that the author is going to some pains to show that he, too, knows his way about, and at being a devil with the ladies is himself no slouch.

In his comments on Mexican writers and painters, Mr. Beals falls into quite the Caribbean custom of describing his subject by calling on all the literary heroes from Homer down. The author of "Periquillo Sarniento" has "pitiless insight and tremendous humor," "Dickensian flare (sic)," "a flare of Smollett and Fielding. And so far as social scope goes, the sweep is Balzacian." And so on.

Against these characteristic mannerisms, it is a pleasure to quote such an admirable passage as that about the villagers of upland Milpa Alta, "never swept into the stream of what the world calls progress":

The dwellers of Milpa Alta do not argue with their own quaint beliefs; they are willing to call all outsiders "*gente de razón*—reasoning beings"; they prefer, simply, to live, leaving logic to habit. There is a beauty of daily existence we can never know. Life swings through its elemental cycles; the blood answers the rhythm of the days and the rhythm of the seasons. Milpa Alta stirs with the chickens; it sleeps at the fall of night. There is a true inwardness of spirit in the people; they are content with little, even in the way of food. They will spend hours making beautiful things which have scant market value. There is pride of workmanship. There is the satisfaction of working well with simple tools and materials, of creating objects which require much calm and patience. The people have fortitude. They are not weighted down by a frenzied desire to improve their standards of living. They are not envious of those endowed with this world's goods. They are not burdened with consciousness of their poverty as is the European peasant; they do not fret because they do not sit in the social sun; nature's sun is sufficient.

Is this too placid an existence? Perhaps. Yet they are far happier, I am convinced, than a New York office clerk, clogged in eight hours of routine, flinging his pleasure into evenings that have no coördination with his day or his tasks. The American lives in compartments of uncorrelated action. The Mexican peasant's life is one texture. Work is pleasure; and pleasure is work. The day, for him, is woven into a unity, satisfying in its completeness.

Is this too animal an existence? Certainly it is elemental, but not animal. The Indian's handicrafts, his love of mystery, his courtesy, his fearsome poetic awe of all things on the face of nature—these tasks and emotions are, as far as we know, not animal in their nature. He asks little of the universe and receives much.

His island universe, probably, is doomed to extinction—and soon. Yet somehow, sometime, the world will have to rediscover, in new form, the essential values which he knows and cherishes.

This passage puts, in simple, human shape, one of the author's more significant points of view and its implications. Territorial absorption of Mexico by the United States he thinks would be disastrous for all concerned. The peace and happiness of both countries would best be served by Mexico's maintaining