

vitality of the second. The theme is fruitful, we can imagine half a dozen different authors writing half a dozen different novels about it; and as a matter of fact Mr. Marshall's book reads like all those half dozen possible novels with every bit of juice squeezed out of them and only the pulp left. It could have been filled with almost anything, and is filled with almost nothing—a number of unimportant, blurred, and lethargic figures, an atmosphere so pure that it is hardly troubled with action or burdened with destiny, and a very dignified and melodious prose. "The Appletons of Herne" should have been authentic; privately printed; embossed with a coat of arms. It would have made a handsome appearance—and no one would have been expected to read it this side of the twentieth century.

Mr. Maxwell, for whom I have every respect, writes what is very nearly a good novel—the sort of novel in relation to which "very nearly" has the grimest of grim sounds. "The Concave Mirror" is composed of four things—a promising theme, a simple pattern, an admirable—and difficult—form of presentation, a worthy ambition. It is a middle-aged gentleman's story of his marriage, as it was written down in his own journal. He and his wife were living together in perfect harmony on a moderate income, when a considerable legacy arrived. The wife took to frivolous courses where the husband had no wish and no ability to follow her, and imperceptibly she began to drift away from him, deserting him at last for another man. Within a short time she was herself deserted, and begged to be taken back, and was finally received with kindness. This is a drama which could bear a hundred repetitions, and where the protagonist has every chance of surprising us in the only way in which a character must surprise us—by being alive. Page by page, through all the variations of emotion, affirmation, disillusion, we prepare ourselves for this surprise: but we are never gratified. The reason for this is obscure enough, and I may not have the rights of it, but it seems to me that the husband's dimensions—his passions, sorrows, doubts, belief, and so on—are for the most part artificial, 'literary,' the effect of study; that the poor fellow is half-born, with one foot in the world of reality and the other in Mr. Maxwell's notebooks; half a character and half a concoction. And "The Concave Mirror," with the germs of a great success in it, reads like the work of any of a number of trained and undistinguished writers who might have lived a little, and loved a little, and read a little French literature.

The reviewer of fiction is in constant danger of critical myopia; not from seeing too many books, but from peering too closely into them. No doubt all these three novels ("The Concave Mirror," certainly) have some "small parts of wit" in them, the setting forth of which would be an act of kindness and good conscience. I would rather suggest a desperate remedy, on the worn and melancholy plea of "better readers, better books." In Webster's preface to "The White Divel" there occurs this phrase: "... Those ignorant asses, who, visiting Stationers shoppes—their use is not to inquire for good bookes, but new bookes." We rightly condemn bad or violent manners (having somewhat lost the art of them); but the first three words have no more than an impersonal application, and the whole phrase is so venerable that it could inspire no more than an academic anger. Let it be set up in every respectable book store: and—who knows?—it might in the end save us from all novels which offer at best a pale evening's entertainment, and at worst a great deal of boredom; which are not even negatively endowed—vulgar or brazen or illiterate; and which would be doing us small disservice if they never came our way at all.

Some four thousand five hundred letters written to the great French novelist, Emile Zola, are to be presented to the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.

## Dante in Translation

THE DIVINE COMEDY OF DANTE ALIGHIERI. Translated by JEFFERSON BUTLER FLETCHER. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1931. \$5.

Reviewed by KENNETH MCKENZIE

THE perennial appeal of Dante will doubtless continue to express itself in English translations of the "Divine Comedy." Of the forty-odd complete ones which now exist, not all justify their publication by novelty of method or by special felicity of style. The latest translator, Professor Fletcher, well known for his studies of Dante, has produced a version which takes high rank among those already published. He has devised a new metrical scheme which preserves to some extent the poetic effect of the original without the handicap of threefold rhyme: the first and third verses of each tercet rhyme together as in the Italian terza rima, but the linking into a continuous metre secured by the rhyme of the second verse of each tercet with the first and third of the following tercet is sacrificed. Thus each rhyme occurs twice, not three times; each tercet contains one verse which does not rhyme. Obviously

Lo fugge di che confugata gran d'entimento: e da questo ne nasce un atto  
do ne li habito et quale uoce di l'ama. SI CHI URGIA la porta di fan li  
del purgatorio. Impeche Pietro cioe ell'omo potesse et tutti el caridou  
folito l'ama dalla colpa fanno habile apotere andare apurgarli: et noi  
all'inferno. Ne mi pare che si debbe intendere la porta del paradiso perche  
effere sufficiente a condurlo. ALL'HOR li moffe; Danche che e l'appetu  
prize la ragione tu pensore che lo guida alla contemplatione et allora la r  
gr alla contemplatione et Danche cioe eplo appetito gli tien dietro perche



CANTO SECONDO DELLA PRIMA

O giorno senanfatia et laer bruno P Offiamo dire d  
to gleia gl'antimali che sono in terra quasi una prop  
dalle fatiche loro: et to solo uno lauer: non si  
role quello che per lui

A DRAWING FOR THE FIRST ILLUSTRATED EDITION OF DANTE.

this scheme reduces the difficulty of translation in so far as the finding of rhyme-words is concerned. Professor Fletcher believes, moreover, that it has a better effect in English than three-fold rhyme, while at the same time it emphasizes the unity of the tercet as blank verse cannot do.

He remarks in his brief introduction that it is hard to see how the "monotonous rhythms" of unrhymed verse "have much advantage over good prose—unless perhaps to the eye." In fact, he continues, "the prose translators have, up to date, the better of the argument," because they can at least give accurately the substance of the poem even though they make no attempt to reproduce its beauty of form. But is there not a fallacy here? The beauty of form depends not merely upon rhyme and metre, but also upon the choice and arrangement of words, so that a masterly prose rendering like Norton's certainly does suggest at least some of the elements of Dante's style as well as his substance. A translation into threefold rhyme, if it reproduced the meaning of the original without addition, subtraction, or distortion, as prose may do, would perhaps be the ideal; but no rhymed translation, not even Professor Fletcher's compromise, has yet attained this ideal. He attacks the problem with understanding of Dante's meaning and with skill and taste in the use of English verse; his additions may be in the spirit of Dante, but additions there are. Thus "Inferno" III.49, which Longfellow renders literally:

No fame of them the world permits to be,

becomes in Fletcher, through necessity for a rhyme with "pass,"

Their fame on earth is as a breath on glass.

"Inferno" IV.47,48 in Longfellow:

Began I, with desire of being certain  
Of that Faith which o'ercometh every error;

in Fletcher:

Began I, seeking comfort to the faith  
Which against error is a flaming sword.

To give an idea of the really admirable quality of this new version, and of the effect produced by the rhyme-scheme adopted, we may quote a passage, one among many, in which the rendering is thoroughly satisfactory ("Purgatorio" XXX.22-33):

Full often have I seen all rosy red  
The quarter of the east at break of day,  
And heaven serene in beauty overhead,  
And the sun's countenance so shadowed rise  
That by the tempering of the vaporous air  
It might be long endured by human eyes:  
Even so it was within a cloud of flowers,  
Which from those angel hands was floating up  
And dropping down—within, without  
in showers,  
That, under a mantle green, a Lady came,  
Enwreathed with olive over a white veil,  
And robed in color of the living flame.

Whether Professor Fletcher's theories be accepted or not, he has produced an extremely interesting translation which can be read with pleasure. The book contains no notes of any kind; but it is most appropriately illustrated with a frontispiece reproducing the painting by Michelino in the Cathedral of Florence, and with thirteen of the drawings by Botticelli.

Kenneth McKenzie is professor of Italian at Princeton University, and has edited and written on many of the Italian writers. He is a contributor to the "Annual Reports of the Dante Society," and has edited among other books Dante's "Vita Nuova."

## The Beloved Physician

THE GREAT PHYSICIAN. A Short Life of Sir William Osler. By EDITH GRIFFITHS REID. New York: Oxford University Press. 1931. \$3.50.

Reviewed by ARCHIBALD MALLOCH, M.D.

The well-known "Life of Sir William Osler," by Dr. Harvey Cushing, which gained for its author the Pulitzer Prize, has already been reprinted several times. Dr. Cushing described the work as containing "records which are *memoires pour servir*." It is an open secret that Mrs. Reid was asked by the Oxford University Press, publishers of the former volume, to write the book under review, and therefore the two works cannot be regarded as rivals in any sense. Those who read Cushing's *Life* will wish to read this one too; and many of those who read the present, shorter one will not rest content until they have devoured the former. Mrs. Reid seeks to portray the spirit of the man and she is highly successful. Dr. Cushing quoted a number of charming and amusing letters written by Osler to a little girl at Baltimore named "Doris." The author was a friend of the Osler family and is the mother of that little girl of former years. The book is beautifully printed and well illustrated, but there are a few misprints which should be corrected for the next edition.

William Osler, the son of a Church of England missionary, was born in 1849 at Bond Head, then almost in the wilds of Ontario, and he died seventy years later as Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford. Several of his brothers were distinguished in their various activities, but none of them were as widely known. He was humble and thought he was possessed of but ordinary abilities. He would have admitted that his master-word was work, but he insisted that any success he had achieved was due to the fact that the profession had "pushed him forward." William Osler was ever ready to give credit to others and always said he owed much to the example and inspiration of his three teachers, Father

Johnson, Dr. James Bovell, and Dr. Palmer Howard. For a time he intended to enter the Church—what a loss that would have been to medicine as an art and medicine as a science. Although she mentions it, Mrs. Reid might perhaps have told us more of the struggle within him which led to his giving up theology. The writings of Darwin and others drove the ardent naturalists, Father Johnson and Dr. Bovell, to defend the old views of Creation, indeed in the latter's case they led him to forsake medicine and become a Church of England clergyman. On the mind of the younger man, William Osler, they had an entirely different influence, so that the older views he then held were recast and he entered upon the study of science and medicine with a new vigor. It was characteristic of Osler, however, then as in later years, that he sympathized with the beliefs of others, differing so much from his own, and his friendship with his teachers remained unbroken. And it may be remarked that Mrs. Reid has well described Osler's genius for friendship.

At McGill University as Professor of the Institutes of Medicine (now called physiology and pathology) and as a physician to the Montreal General Hospital, Osler laid the foundation of work which made him a foremost clinician throughout his life, at the University of Pennsylvania, as Professor of Medicine at Johns Hopkins University, and finally at Oxford. He entered through the gateway of morbid anatomy, still for most men the soundest way of becoming a good doctor. His knowledge of pathology and of the natural history of diseases, and his sane views of the limitation of treatment by means of drugs were the foundations of his textbook, "The Principles and Practice of Medicine," first published in 1891. It is without doubt one of the most considerable medical works of modern times. It made him known throughout the world, for it was translated from later editions into French, German, Spanish, and Chinese. It was the standby of medical men in all branches of the profession, but especially so of general practitioners for whom Dr. Osler had the greatest admiration, which often was expressed in the words, "they bear the heat and burden of the day."

Quite naturally Mrs. Reid has more to say of William Osler's relations with his students, his *confrères*, his patients, and with the rest of his fellow man, than with the advances he made in the science of medicine. The time is now not far off, when it will be possible accurately to portray his contribution—and it was important—to the rapid progress made by medicine in the late nineteenth and early years of the twentieth centuries. In one of the most charming chapters of the book Mrs. Reid quotes a number of unpublished letters written to young children, most of them relations of his own. It was a delight to see him, even in his latest years, play with youngsters like a child himself. Such play and practical jokes innumerable were his outlets, outlets for a man who carried such a heavy load of responsibility upon his shoulders.

William Osler was a hero to his students and many think he was greatest as a teacher. They saw in him a student like themselves, who encouraged them to their best efforts, not a distant professor far above them, and they worshipped him for a life and conduct in which charity towards the failings of men was always uppermost. His assistant, Dr. William S. Thayer, has in several papers shown this as no one else has done. Mrs. Reid's book is appropriately dedicated to Dr. Thayer. In no matter what community William Osler lived, he gained the admiration of his elders in the profession, never as a consultant "lording it over" anyone. His love for young men never outran his love for older ones. Mrs. Reid records many beautiful memories, recounted to her, which patients have retained of Osler as their doctor. Not alone was it his knowledge of disease, but it was his profound knowledge of human nature that made him a good doctor. He always inspired his patients with hope which after all is a patient's greatest asset.

William Osler was the author of numerous essays and addresses by which he is almost as well known as by his purely medical writings. "Æquanimity" (a word which he took for his motto), "The Student Life," and "A Way of Life," for instance, should be on the shelves of every student of medicine, and the laity, too, will find them full of the charm of fine writing and allusion to the best litera-



ture of the world. Osler was an omnivorous reader of the best, but above all, Sir Thomas Browne was his life-long companion, Mrs. Reid writes,

Open his books: read his essays—his words reach you like the sound of an organ interpreting the lines of the long dead; his spirit brings back to us their thoughts and loves and the wisdom of the far past, the truths that have not been invented but have always existed. The charming whimsical touch which entered into what he wrote would not have struck a discordant note with the saddest of themes. . . .

He was a bibliographer in the widest sense and a bibliophile who loved books as much for their contents as for their form, and was just as interested in the lives of the men as in their writings. Osler was a historian of medicine, but, as Mrs. Reid very happily puts it, "the dust of past men never got into his eyes or mind." The books and manuscripts which he collected so carefully now form the valuable Bibliotheca Osleriana bequeathed to his university, McGill.

If Mrs. Reid's phrases in praise of William Osler seem at times extravagant to those who did not know him in the flesh, she is not alone in her admiration of him, for almost all who have written have felt that they must put down on paper exactly how he appeared to them, so powerful an influence had his presence and voice upon them. Mrs. Reid, however, does not hesitate to point out some of his faults; they are not glaring ones; we must admit. Osler spoke good of every man, so well did he know the evil wrought by the word uttered in haste or unkindness. His descriptions of people he had met therefore remain rather colorless; there are few lights and shades. We cannot help wishing to know what his inmost thoughts were of some men.

No one has written a better characterization of William Osler's wife than Mrs. Reid. She was as remarkable a woman as he was a man, and was of incalculable aid to him in carrying out the task he had set himself. But for her he could not have been active in so many different ways. Together they shared unbroken happiness and the final sadness when their only son was killed in the European War.

Mrs. Reid quotes Colonel Fielding H. Garrison's opinion of Sir William Osler: He was the "best-balanced, best equipped, most sagacious, and most lovable of all modern physicians." The medical world needs a leader today. Would he were still among us.

"The practice of interlarding speeches with quotations has greatly decreased of late years," says *John o'London's Weekly*. "But quotations in literature, especially journalism, are as common as ever; probably more so now that everyone is supposed to be more or less educated. And misquotations are undoubtedly on the increase.

Some well-known passages are so often mangled that one is almost surprised if they are correctly given. When Greek joins Greek then comes the tug-of-war is generally rendered: When Greek meets Greek, etc. Another instance is Milton's To-morrow to fresh fields and pastures new, instead of fresh woods. A very common error is to quote from *The Ancient Mariner*:

*Water, water everywhere,  
And not a drop to drink,*

instead of Nor any drop to drink. Most people would pass without question A fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind, and Small by degrees, and beautifully less, instead of makes one, and Fine by degrees, the correct versions."

If only it were possible for the custodians of all libraries to write their reports as brilliantly as Miss Lucy E. Osborne does those for the Chapin Library at Williamstown, Massachusetts, public interest in such institutions would be far greater than it is. Among the matters of which she writes are the Roxburghe-Sir James Lewis Knight-Bruce copy of the first separate printing of the whole Bible in Greek, and proceeds to give a perfectly clear and fascinating account of Greek Bibles in general, including even the Complutensian Polyglot, down to the Isaiah Thomas edition of the Greek Testament in 1800. Later, when she writes of William Gilmore Simms and Stephen Crane, she shows a critical appreciation of American literature that is unusually fine and sensitive. E. M. T.

## The BOWLING GREEN

### Translations from the Chinese

#### RIDING ON ROME

WHAT is all this about giving up Latin?  
Your civilization rides on Rome  
Without realizing it,  
And will continue to do so,  
Like the mounted police.

Yes, on every New York policeman's saddle-leather  
Is a little brass seal:  
SIGILLUM CIVITATIS NOVI EBORACI.

#### A HOT SPOT

When the reporter from the *Saturday Review*  
Asked the Old Mandarin  
What he considered the best bookstore in town  
He was admirably discreet  
But he did remark  
"I often travel all the way up to 116th Street  
To buy something from the Columbia University Bookstore,  
For it is a pleasure to my soul  
To visit a bookshop  
That doesn't have to depend  
On All the Latest Novels.

Okay, here, cried the Business Manager;  
That's a Hot Spot with us too;  
That bookstore, and the news-stand hard by  
Sell over 100 copies of the *Review*  
Every week.



CÉZANNE AND THE ELDER  
BY WALDO TEIRCE

#### WHEN YOU'RE WRITING

Remember, when you're writing about New York,  
Faces are as important as buildings.

Dive deep into the subway, that gallery of portraiture;  
Bathe your eyes in that flood of bitter truth.  
It is not lovely, it proves no theorems,  
But there is no weariness it cannot heal.

Generalizers on human trouble,  
Have you courage to face those faces?  
You, and you, and you, seen only once,  
Goodbye forever, and good luck.

#### UPPER WEST SIDE

Where I should most like to live in your city  
Said the Old Mandarin  
Is that mansion at the South corner  
Of 89th and Riverside  
For there, the Guide Book tells me,  
Was founded (by Mrs. Isaac Rice)  
The Society for the Suppression  
Of Unnecessary Noise.

(And what, by the way,  
Has become of that Society?)

Then, at lunch time, I might stroll gently  
To the restaurant of the Roerich Museum,  
Surely the most esoteric of rendezvous,  
Where, among Thibetan paintings  
And magazines of New Thinking,  
An Oriental mahatma  
Would feel at home.

Is it the sunset breeze from New Jersey  
That makes the Upper West Side so mystical?  
But one dark evening  
As I passed the front door  
Of the Rosicrucian Fellowship  
I saw a young couple exchange a secret kiss  
In the vestibule,  
And said to myself  
Even the occultists are human.

And at Riverside and 99th  
I found the symbolic American home:  
An apartment where the corner window  
Is occupied by your sacred idol  
(Shaped like a tiny church)  
Faced inward to its devotees  
With its naked little tubes and kilocycles  
Exposed to the passer-by.

#### HE WEAKENS

That fine old dwelling on the Jersey palisade  
Just below the great Washington Bridge  
Would also, methought,  
Be an excellent home for a mandarin  
To watch at dusk the bridge's long catenary of lights,  
The to and fro of mortal traffic,  
The blue-clad pontiff who shouts "Cut it down, cut it down!"  
You're going way over 30."  
Then it occurred to me  
It would be a long way  
From news-stands and cinemas.

#### MISUNDERSTOOD

In the Coffee Shoppe near 172nd Street  
Was a card: DISHWASHER WANTED  
But as the inquisitive Old Mandarin  
Peered in the window  
In solemn observation  
Of a frizzling hamburger,  
The young woman came hastily  
And removed the sign.

#### ALTERNATIVES

Literature now really competes  
With the necessities of life.  
I have to choose, in the modern pharmacy,  
Whether to spend my 39 cents  
On psyllium seeds  
(Which seem very fashionable on Upper Broadway)  
Or chicken-and-noodle dinner in a glass jar  
Or a copy of *Saturday Papers*  
An excellent volume of editorials  
Reprinted lang syne  
From the files of this Review  
And now mysteriously emerged  
(Publishers have their vaults.)

#### OBLIQUE SUGGESTION

Although generally a considerate nation  
It has never occurred to your customs officials  
To put baggage counters on the steamship piers  
For the convenience of travellers.

One of the Government's few remaining pleasures  
Is to see returning voyagers  
Repacking their rummaged luggage  
On humble knees.

#### THE MONKEY

The monkey in the pet-shop  
Earnestly explores the bottom of his cage  
Which is deep in clippings  
Of Sunday newspapers.

He arches his orbits gravely:  
All his reading matter says  
Now, only \$4.39.

#### SEED IN THE WIND

On a day of keen October  
The city was filled with floating seeds,  
Tiny fluffs of milkweed or cat-tail  
Blown from Hackensack meadows  
Where autumn is something more  
Than a forest of stone perpendiculars.  
And all day long  
On busy street crossings  
Men reached to grasp the drifting gauzes  
With twinges they couldn't explain.

#### MISTAKE

I woke drowsily in the night  
And heard a rush of cars.  
Country ears, quicker than reason,  
Thought: what a wind has risen  
Among my tall strong trees.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.