

code of the aristocrats who had owned by right, and subtly modified it. They assumed responsibility, developed to a high degree the character indispensable to a governing class in a self-governing community, but began to invite the fatal karma which pursues all men and women whose god is material success. England produced old James Forsyte, and the son of his heart and will, Soames, in whose delineation Galsworthy's powers reached their height; and the rebels Jolyon and Irene; the conformist Annette; the by-products, Timothy and the aunts; the wrecks and the frustrations, Val and Fleur.

But something was left behind by this new possessive class and lost, something crumbled, something rose like a heady fume dulling men and women, puzzling their hearts, and frustrating their desires, while their wills remained more powerful than ever. Responsibility to state and class they kept, and chivalry, and a sense of duty better than chivalry. Nevertheless this possessiveness, this submission to Things, the solid houses, the stocks and bonds, the responsibilities to property of the Forsytes, dimmed the sense of other gods whose altars grow cold only with peril to mankind. They neglected the Cyprian Venus, whose frustration and revenge Ashhurst deplored in that exquisite story, "The Apple-Tree"—

For mad is the heart of love,
And gold the gleam of his wing;
And all to the spell thereof
Bend when he makes his spring.
All life that is wild and young
In mountain and wave and stream,
All that of earth is sprung,
Or breathes in the red sunbeam;
Yea, and Mankind. O'er all a royal throne

Cyprian, Cyprian, is thine alone!
They turned their backs upon the gods
whose duty it is to see that the human heart stays human. Beauty, spirituality, love, even justice which the new possessive class had once demanded, were the victims of Things. Property had achieved a dulling of sensibility, a warping away from pleasure and the healthy satisfaction of the mind, which the greed of the Forsytes, even the necessities of the world, had accomplished. Property made the Forsytes, and property chilled them. And yet these Forsytes in their own way were great. Beside them other racial types seemed lesser breeds without the law. They had the gift of character, the power of strength.

This was the puzzle of the nineteenth century, its challenge to an interpreter, which was like the challenge to the imagination of the young Shakespeare of the brilliant, full-blooded aristocrats of the Renaissance, with their gusto, their beauty, and their defiance of morality. A poet, a dramatist, a novelist was needed to attack this nineteenth century paradox, most of all a novelist, since the Forsytes were prose and their background all of England. An Englishman in England was at the heart of property; a liberal, a humanitarian, a "tender-minded" artist could sympathize and yet attack; an aristocrat could appreciate code and character; an idealist could discriminate where

a satirist might only destroy. John Galsworthy was the man.

And indeed the story of Soames Forsyte is the story of man's spirit in the English nineteenth century, wrestling with property and thrown by it at the moment of apparent victory. It is the story of a defeated spirit (for Soames lost Irene and with Irene the possibility of love and a completed life)—of a defeated spirit rising wiser, stronger, more indomitable in character, making property his servant though he could not make it his friend, until at the conclusion of that extraordinary narrative Soames's very shortcomings have been turned into the steel and fibre of a man who knows what he wants and gets it, and what he cannot have and gives it up—a stoic, not to be envied, not to be loved, but certainly to be respected and approved.

This grasp upon the moral theme of England under industrialism is the key to John Galsworthy's superiority as a novelist of character to far cleverer men, such as Arnold Bennett and G. B. Shaw, to more worldly men and more widely experienced, such as H. G. Wells and Sinclair Lewis. Undeviatingly he pursues through this elaborate process of character building the rich results of tradition until Soames, eccentric and individualist that he is, becomes the symbol of whole shadowy generations of the English middle class. Unwaveringly he searches for the effect upon man of beauty neglected, and spirituality scorned by the religion of property. And yet, though the criticism in his novels is always against the tyranny of Things, his liberal mind admits, his aristocratic nature recognizes, a great character emerging, perhaps unexpectedly, from the havoc that accompanies a too material success. No propagandist could have done this. His Forsyte Saga is a tragi-comedy with a stoic ending, as was "The Tempest," as was "Candide," as was "Tess of the D'Urbervilles."

Only in England I think could such books have been written. Proust's great study of an aristocracy decaying in the refinements of ultra-cerebration, belongs in a very different category. It is intensely French, and yet has no relationship with France at large in the century, not much indeed with Paris except as a background. The "Forsyte Saga" is intensely English, and quite as intensely upper and middle class, since to Galsworthy, humanitarian though he was, the lower classes were only shadows throwing into relief the responsible reality of his Forsyte world. And yet there is the character of a nation and of a race in the Saga. Narrow as its cross-section, the type is there. It is a national study or it is nothing, whereas Proust has only the universal validity of a Racine—the actual existence of his cerebral Paris is of little importance; the psychology is all. Not so with the Forsytes. They are geological, and have in them the secrets of racial evolution. They are not all England, yet as they go, so goes England. Like Hardy's peasants and Shakespeare's Mercutios, Hotspurs, and Falstaffs, they are so racial that they can afford to be individualists.

All this explains, I think, Galsworthy's great reputation on the continent of Europe, where he was thought to be England's foremost novelist because in him and his were to be found the living explanations of what England was in the period of her dominating greatness. This explains the award to him of the Nobel prize, which never came to Hardy. His foreign readers also saw, as some of his compatriots have failed to see, that whatever were their faults of sentiment, diffuseness, and a reach beyond the author's grasp, the novels of Galsworthy were epic in their scope and had that broad stretch of significance which, since Balzac and the Russians, we have expected of fiction that deals with mores rather than manners. This explains also, I believe, his great vogue in America, but with a difference. For here unquestionably we, whose culture and training more than our blood, have owed so much to the English tradition—we read Galsworthy for news on a grand scale of the English character, so subtly like our own while so obviously different from it. The Forsytes are potentially Americans of the age of property who stayed at home, who never sailed for Plymouth and the Hudson and the Delaware and the capes of Virginia, to break up the sense of class in the forests while the struggle for property went on.

He wrote too much. He should have let the Americans alone, for he could understand only the English aspect of them, and his fastidious ear made a jargon of their speech. He should have lived in a world where there were no magazines, with their constant urging of the established writer to write more than he wills, and their subtle moulding of his work to the stock emotions of vast audiences. He should have seen his Saga early in its length and breadth,—and gone to some Walden Pond to write it—and stopped when he had finished. I do not know whether he was a great artist, although there are passages in "The Indian Summer of a Forsyte" and in "The Apple Tree," and "In Chancery" and elsewhere, which only a consummate artist could write. Yet certainly he had that insight which is given to someone in every generation, and which, if used, explains us to ourselves. He had a message. I use that word with reluctance, for a message means usually a dogmatism, a moral, and designates that part of a book or a lecture which sticks in the memory like a lump of undigested dough. None of this in Galsworthy. Rather he is the moving finger that writes. You see in him, often through clouds of words, what the Greeks saw in Sophocles, the moral meaning of a generation. Sophocles dealt in heroes and in a superb style of heaven-sent rhetoric. Galsworthy treats of stiff old men, hiding, beneath Anglo-Saxon phlegm or a dry humor inappropriate to tragedy, the powerful prejudices, the passions, of a people heart-wrecked by their devotion to property, but become great because they identified property with the welfare of a state. Yet both Sophocles and Galsworthy are concerned with fundamental morality. And this is what gives dramatists and novelists magnitude, precisely as the power to realize, to make their problems live as a Soames, as an Irene, as a Hamlet, is what makes them novelists and dramatists.

I have said little of Galsworthy's plays because this essay is not concerned primarily with literary criticism, and for Galsworthy the stage (so I think) was only an escape for the emotions aroused by those unavoidable contradictions in a society supposedly founded on justice which stirred his humanitarian spirit to a pitch that only drama would assuage. The theatre never gave him room. It exaggerated the lesson at the expense of the

background in which the true moral lay. He saw best pageant-wise, not drama-wise. His strength, like so much English strength, was in the slow tenacity of descriptive narrative, not in quick symbols or isolated event.

Galsworthy is just dead, and America, in which he was as much honored as at home, and perhaps more widely read, may well take stock of what his insight may mean for us. For ours is a country bred in the English tradition, though intensely changed by circumstance, a country not devoid of character as the English and as Galsworthy understood character, not unaware of the code of duty, for of the Puritans who gave fibre to that code the

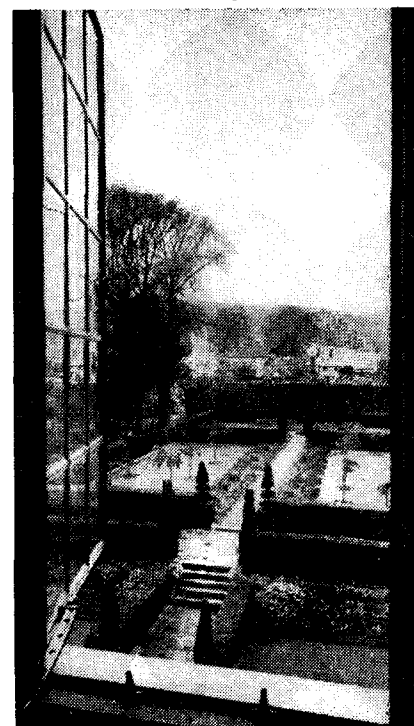
best came here, not without the desire for order which was so strong in all the Forsytes, nor the sense of fairness, nor the instinct to be humane.

Our problem has been different. We have had to contend with less rigidity of ownership, we have been able to escape many responsibilities in the easy recourse of our oppressed and our turbulent to the spaces of the West, we have been far more fertile in experiment. But to suppose that the karma which pursues all greed for Things, all obsessions with property, is to be spared us, would be unrealistic. Our karma is different. We threw out our Soames

Forsytes a generation ago—the selfish individuals, the so-called builders of American prosperity, men not too scrupulous, who believed that in making themselves they were making America, and attained a certain bad eminence of character from their loyalties so energetically if so selfishly pursued. Yet those pirate captains of the last generation of American industrialism in their way were patriots, as Soames Forsyte was a patriot.

Are there any patriots left? In our sectional blocs? Among our tariff mongers? In our local interests? Among the veterans? In Congress? Undoubtedly, but it has been months since we have heard from them. One grows skeptical. Is there any character in our new society to take the place of the old character of individualism? Is the humanitarianism which the last generation suppressed in business and exuded upon foundations and universities, more vital now that the strong men who took with the right hand and gave with the left are gone? Is the beauty which they, like Soames, forced out of their lives, and then sought, like fugitives, in pictures, and bronzes, and opera, and Tudor Gothic, where it took the form of property—is it dealt with more intelligently today? Is religion? Is love? This is what an American thinks, what he must ask, as he reads Galsworthy, seeing in the special English problem a reflection of his own. And we understand the grim sadness of Soames Forsyte at his life's end, self-critical, skeptical of the future; and we realize, as Galsworthy the idealist was forced by his own imagination to realize, that life is a series of defeats and compensations, of values frustrated to the peril of the race, of character that may emerge as a result of frustration—or may not.

The nineteenth century, liberal, progressive, hopeful, intensely possessive, was a laboratory of human nature. The books of John Galsworthy are a report of what happened in the English section, which was so much then the center of the modern world. If the reader reflects upon the story of how Soames Forsyte bought, and how he lost, Irene, who was the symbol of the "life that is wild and young" which belongs to the Cyprian alone, he may sum up the whole matter by saying that love and Irene fell victims to property, yet from their loss stoicism shaped that character which gives to society a backbone if not a heart. Where are our



VIEW FROM GALSWORTHY'S STUDY.

Bavarian Gentians*

By D. H. LAWRENCE

NOT every man has gentians in his house
in Soft September, at slow, sad Michaelmas.

Bavarian gentians, big and dark, only dark
darkening the day-time torch-like with the smoking blueness of Pluto's gloom,
ribbed and torch-like, with their blaze of darkness spread blue
down flattening into points, flattened under the sweep of white day
torch-flower of the blue-smoking darkness, Pluto's dark-blue daze.
black lamps from the halls of Dio, burning dark blue.
giving off darkness, blue darkness, as Demeter's pale lamps give off light,
lead me then, lead me the way.

Reach me a gentian, give me a torch!
let me guide myself with the blue, forked torch of this flower
down the darker and darker stairs, where blue is darkened on blueness
even where Persephone goes, just now, from the frosted September
to the sightless realm where darkness is awake upon the dark
and Persephone herself is but a voice
or a darkness invisible enfolded in the deeper dark
of the arms Plutonic, and pierced with the passion of dense gloom,
among the splendour of torches of darkness, shedding darkness on the lost bride and
her groom.

* The following poem is to be included in "Last Poems," by D. H. Lawrence, to be issued next week by the Viking Press.

own minds at this end of the age of possessiveness? Have we the self-knowledge of Soames Forsyte in his Thames-side gallery? Can we hope like the couple in Noel Coward's "Cavalcade" for a future for our country of dignity, and greatness, and peace again? Or must we live our own Forsyte Saga to its end, and wait for a John Galsworthy to tell us what it meant?

The Will of a Liberal

(Continued from first page)

and Strachey unfolded his red flag, as he does with an annoying eye to the psychological moment, Gibbs would feel like the parent who still regards his son as a baby at the precise moment when that son has made him a grandfather.

I commend this book of Sir Philip's to all who are striving to find some way of clarifying in their own minds the contrast between the recent past and the immediate present, between the liberal world which the war destroyed and the revolutionary universe in which we now live. Do not read Gibbs for economic remedies. To be sure he has a program to transport the surplus population of England to the "empty places" of Canada and the other Dominions. But of course the obstinate Briton will not migrate and the selfish colonial will not let him in.

No, Gibbs was a sentimentalist at Armageddon and he remains a sentimentalist in the Great Depression. I remember at the beginning of the present crisis, Benes, the great Czech Foreign Minister, said to me—"I am an unrepentant liberal." Two years later he recalled the earlier declaration and said—"Now I am only a humble believer." Gibbs is at bottom a liberal and in this post-war world with humanity uprooted and the Manchester School of *laissez-faire* gone to the damnation bow wows, your true liberal must either take refuge in philosophy or religion. He must either see things as they are, realistically, and quit altogether, or turn his eyes inward or upward toward pure reason or blind faith.

Knowing Gibbs you would have guessed that in the end religion rather than philosophy would attract him. He says—

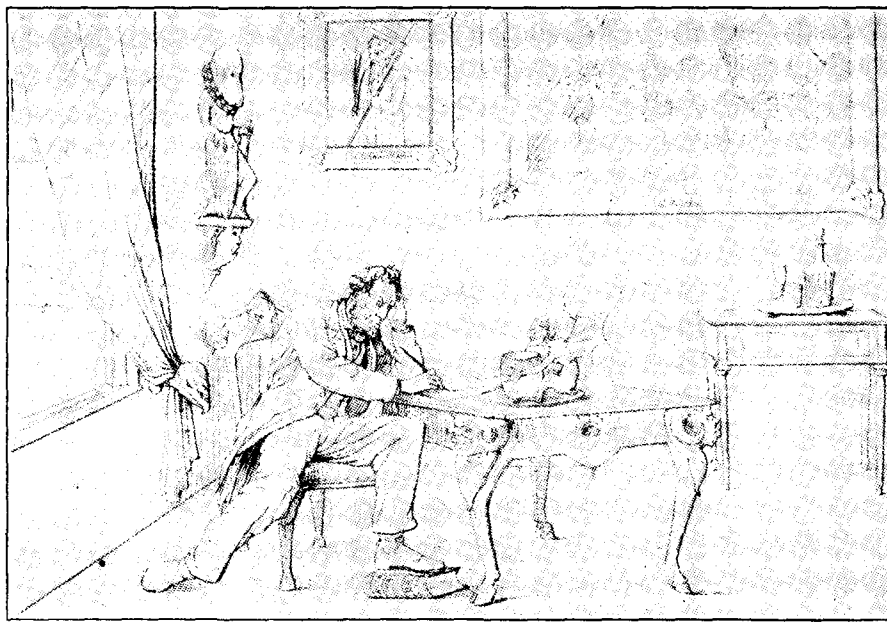
Only by a supreme faith in a divine meaning behind all appearances can man find any reconciliation between his yearnings and his disillusion. Without some faith in some God there is only despair in the end.

In a sense this volume of Sir Philip constitutes the last will and testament of a pre-war liberal. Like so many of the rest of us, who belong to his generation, he saw the war as a single, clear, and definite episode in time and space. It was terrible, but out of its terrors something better and nobler would arise, not in the long future, but in our own time. The war was a detached and evanescent bit of madness, a gap between sanities. That was what the song of the thrush meant to Gibbs huddled in a trench under "The Ridge" where the Bapaume Road climbs beyond the shambles of Fricourt. That was what the Russian Revolution, the Irish Rebellion, the American irruption into the world, meant to him—once.

But look at the thing now! You see the incredible advantage the John Stracheys of to-day have over the generation which inherited liberalism as a religion and lived to find out that it was only a superstition. They inherit nothing. They can dispossess capitalism with a word and dismiss divinity itself, by a gesture. They are not like their predecessors, condemned to start life on an unseaworthy craft, watch it suddenly settle under their feet and, finally, huddled in a fragile lifeboat launched out on an angry sea, commend their souls to the Unseen. On the contrary THEY START SWIMMING!

"The Way of Escape," Sir Philip calls his book. But the significant thing about it is that his "way" is not forward or backward but upward. The young Fascists can go back to Napoleon with Mussolini or Hitler. The young Communists can go onward to Marx with Lenin and Stalin. But for us old liberals, what is there left—after prayer—but "to put out the light and go to sleep?"

Frank H. Simonds, it hardly need to be said, was himself one of the most outstanding commentators of the World War period.



WRITING THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION.

A Confederate Caricature showing Lincoln, his foot resting on the Constitution, and Satan holding the inkpot.

Reproduced from James Truslow Adams's "The March of Democracy (Scribners)."

Barton on Lincoln

PRESIDENT LINCOLN. By WILLIAM E. BARTON. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co. 1933. \$7.50.

Reviewed by CARL SANDBURG

WILLIAM E. BARTON, Congregational clergyman of Oak Park, Ill., was the author of a formidable row of books on Abraham Lincoln. In his early fifties this field of study attracted him to the extent of writing books, and a steady output poured from him for fifteen years, death overtaking him with this latest production lacking his revisions and his concluding chapters. In two areas of the Lincoln tradition his services were distinctive and surpassing, his researches in the ancestry and forebears of Lincoln piling up an unprecedented array of fact, deduction, and speculation, while his volume, "The Soul of Abraham Lincoln," probably assembles more concrete data than any other work on the religion of Lincoln. No other volumes except those of Nicolay and Hay attempt and realize so complete a presentation of the facts about the man who in early 1861 went from Springfield, Ill., to the national capital to try his prentice hand at running the United States government through a storm that couldn't be laughed off by the most gargantuan comic approach. The author in a foreword records pertinently that "in the multiplication of books concerning Abraham Lincoln there is conspicuous lack of the thoughtful and systematic attempts to interpret the period of the presidency," and indicates that the precise point for the beginning of such an attempt might well be "the time Lincoln appears to have been putting forth his first deliberate effort to gain the presidency."

Therefore the opening chapter sees Lincoln in Kansas in 1859 just after John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry. Chapters on the nomination, campaign, and election of Lincoln to the presidency and his final days at Springfield and the journey to Washington require nearly half of the first volume. Then the narrative flows on under the familiar heading ranging from the inauguration, the cabinet, Sumter, Bull Run, McClellan, to Sherman's march to the sea, the second inaugural, the fall of Richmond, Appomattox, the assassination, burial at Springfield. Under these well worn headings where usually there is no fresh material presented, Dr. Barton recurrently sets forth data not hitherto appearing in studies of the period of the presidency. He is unique in his employment of the diary of Gideon Welles, secretary of the navy under Lincoln, and of the diary of Orville Hickman Browning, United States Senator from Illinois, and an old law practice associate of Lincoln. Others have made use of these diaries, but less adequately than Dr. Barton.

Regarding the famous letter of admonition to Gen. Hooker, we are told that after writing it Lincoln didn't sign it, but "apparently rose from his chair and walked the floor, reading the letter aloud to himself as was his custom, and debating with himself whether to send it or not; he decided to send it, and signed the letter

standing up." Now in a case like this, those who knew Dr. Barton were well aware that he had some well grounded reasons for saying Lincoln signed the letter standing up. He offers none of these reasons, however, and we may know the basis for it when we have gone to the work referred to in a footnote, "Abraham Lincoln and the Hooker Letter," an address by Dr. Barton before the Pennell Club of Philadelphia.

The three concluding chapters by William Townsend, author of "Lincoln in His Wife's Home Town," "Lincoln the Litigant," and other pieces of scrupulous workmanship in this field, bring the narrative to a well sustained close.

Carl Sandburg, whose first reputation was made as a poet, is the author of one of the most popular biographies of Lincoln of recent years.

Concerning an Art

THE ART OF FRIENDSHIP. By ABEL BONNARD. Translated from the French by PERLIE P. FALLON. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1933. \$1.75.

UNDOUBTEDLY this compact little book will be widely read, and many of its sentences and entire paragraphs thoughtfully transcribed to notebooks. The author, M. Abel Bonnard, member of the French Academy, is presented by Abbé Ernest Dimnet in his Foreword as being full of sensibility but even fuller of intelligence. In its mode, which is French and exquisite, the book is excellent, though to some tastes it will seem too French and too exquisite. It contains wisdom expressed meticulously, which to some will seem a collection of platitudes. It is the wisdom of a perfectly-ordered French life, so perfectly ordered that one might call it precious.

The first section of the book, Concerning the Foundations of Friendship, is followed by a series of reflections on the main theme; further reflections bridge the third part, Concerning the Modes of Friendship, and the fifth, which is a dialogue on the possibility of friendship between man and woman; the concluding section is entitled The Art of Life. The book is full of such aphorisms as these, by which you may judge it: "True friends are those seeking solitude together"; "Love can die of a truth as friendship of a lie."

The Stage and the Study

WHAT THE AUTHOR MEANT. By GEORGE R. ROSS. New York: Oxford University Press. 1932. \$2.50.

THE CASE FOR TRAGEDY. By MARK HARRIS. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. Reviewed by ARTHUR COLTON

THE drama is both a stage thing and a book thing; it has a theatrical history and a literary history; and there are several curious incidents to this linked and duplex situation. No play endures long on the stage only. However popular or esteemed it may be at the time, unless it is also interesting in print, it is soon forgotten. If there are any exceptions, they are very few. The great dramatists keep the bulk of their immortality in books, not in the theater. Elizabethan as well as Greek drama has a hundred, perhaps a thousand, readers to one spectator. On the other hand the drama in literature seems to lose its firmness and vitality unless it has one foot on the stage. A story can be written in dialogue as well as in narrative, but the drama has always drawn its vertebrate consistency from the necessities of the stage. Moreover, it is evident that the reader who only reads and never sees, or better attempts to produce, a play that was written for the stage, never gets all the point of view of the playwright.

Mr. Ross's author is Shakespeare, and he assumes that "What the Author Meant" is what comes out when a Shakespearean play is produced, that he "meant" the theatrical only. "I have endeavored to guess what the author's intention was before he began to dress it up in gorgeous poetry." This also assumes that the intention was settled, the play thought out, before the writing began. Now my guess would be that it was not. I think that he did not start with a formula of meaning but with a story, usually a simple minded story, which grew subtle, complex, sometimes incongruous, under his hand. If "what he meant" means antecedent intentions, I think they were to make a successful play out of a given story. The rest was what happened in his extraordinary mind while he worked. Ibsen must have started with a carefully thought out theme and written his play to demonstrate it, but the evidence indicates that Shakespeare did not. I think that his hit or miss method, as it seemed to Ben Jonson, must have been partly what the latter had in mind when he said that Shakespeare "lacked art." I think, moreover, that he meant a great deal which was not theatrical at all. A large part of his values are not stage values, are not playable, and have never been played. But they are also a large part of his enduring fascination, and so have had a deal to do with keeping him on the stage. The plays were popular from the beginning; he understood stage values; he was a man of the theater. But he was more than that. So were other playwrights among those strange Elizabethans. The scholar in his study misses many solutions because he does not understand footlight effects, but the actor or producer, who only cares for what he can put over those lights, does not care for a great deal that nevertheless is there. "One cannot hope to understand thoroughly a play by a great dramatist until one has had to produce it." Probably true. Neither can he understand a great poet until he has spent solitary hours over him, oblivious of actors and scenery.

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