

Points of View

Letters discussing reviews are welcomed, but those limited to 200 words will be favored for publication.

Page a Superman

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:

Sir: Carl Van Doren and Lewis Gannett don't know anything about Czechoslovakia. My friend George Rebec of the University of Oregon does, because he is a Czech. So he spots all of Hank Van Loon's Czechoslovakian errors which Van Doren and Gannett didn't detect. Should Rebec, therefore, be the man to review Van Loon's *Geography*? But suppose Van Loon is also all wrong on Bolivia and Sumatra. Would Rebec know that? Who should review books, the literary chaps who can appreciate the style but probably aren't qualified to pass on the facts—or the scholars who know the facts but probably aren't much impressed by the style?

It was Ellsworth Huntington, wasn't it, who reviewed Van Loon's book for the *Saturday Review*, and I remember that he, as a scientific geographer, was irritated because Van Loon had ignored all the new geography, hadn't taken the trouble to study up on it, had merely dressed up old-fashioned geography with sprightly drawings and an irreverent style. So if Huntington is right, you are wrong in your editorial in which you say that Van Loon has popularized the findings of modern geographers.

WEBB WALDRON.

Westport, Conn.

Chills and Fever

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:

Sir: In his review of James Gould Cozzen's "The Last Adam" Alvah C. Bessie seems to have found the trouble with many of the younger American writers who possess technique, highly specialized information, and the ability to tell a tale: they do not know how to move the reader. That is direct and penetrating criticism. But I can not help wondering how many of those who have read Fred Rotherwell's "A Preface to Death" (which Mr. Bessie includes in his list of polished novels that leave the reader cold) will agree with the critic in question in regard to that specific book. No novel that I have read written by an American and published in 1932 stirred me to the extent that his book did.

JACOB H. LOWREY.

Augusta, Ga.

These Evil English

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:

Sir: We westerners out here in the literary Styx who are trying to absorb culture by reading the *Saturday Review of Literature* are becoming somewhat bored over the lavish praises of foreign authors, especially English. I have looked patiently for a word of adverse criticism of anything English. Priestley's "Faraway," so fulsomely praised, I consider bordering on cheap melodrama. Now of course we know full well that if it were not for good old standardized America, these novelists of England would not be half so busy nor half so successful, at least financially. I dare say that the activity they manifest would be much lessened if they depended on home consumption and never had access to the American market for their literary wares.

CLARENCE MILLIGAN.

Detroit, Mich.

Riling Riley

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:

Sir: This is a quite detached remonstrance on Woodbridge Riley's review of John Dittemore's biography of Mary Baker Eddy. It does seem to me that a magazine of critical comment could very well afford to give a biography of one who is bound to arouse sharp feeling to someone who could regard it temperately—certainly not to a Christian Scientist, but not to one whose feelings prevent his regarding a particular book with detachment. I should say that Professor Riley was not a very calm man.

Some feel that Mr. Dittemore was motivated by a desire for power in the days of his association with the Christian Science Church and some feel that he was persecuted; some feel that Mrs. Eddy was a great woman and some do not. I should think it would be well to assign so controversial book as this one to a person who can see both sides of a question. If Christian Science was simply an obscure cult

there might be a slight difference, but considering there is not a city or town in this country without a Christian Science church or society it would seem to merit a little more thoughtful treatment.

HENRIETTE HENTLE.

New York City.

The Fountain Runs Dry

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:

Sir: "The Fountain" again! This reader feels that, although "The Fountain" may easily rank with the best modern books in its fluency and peacefulness (it ranks almost alone in the latter!), it is by no means an important book. I stayed with it three quarters of the way to the end and then gave it up, for the following reasons:

It is thin. It offers neither a complete nor a convincing justification of the contemplative life, even to one with a serious weakness for that life, for it does not tell what is worth contemplating. The only modern chord in it is the admittedly pleasing immorality. (But that is also old.) It has no social implications of value. The "philosophy" is so amateurish that it would alienate any neophyte from entering upon seclusive contemplation. Many authors say, "Oh, that idea—that's what the character thought, not I." But we won't be fooled. Whenever an author's philosophy-in-fiction is good, he wants to take the credit for it to himself; and when it is bad, he blames it on his puppets.

G. J. W.

Mountain Lakes, N. J.

A Perfect "South Wind"

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:

Sir: To my mind no adequately illustrated edition of "South Wind" has yet been published. D'Angelo's illustrations were too bizarre; John Austen's were entirely unsuited to the text, as I knew they would be (I am an admirer of John Austen's work) when I read the announcement of his proposed edition; and Miss Petrina's look entirely too wishy-washy, and actually mar the text by their irregularity.

As a matter of fact I believe that "South Wind" is one of those books which should never be published in an illustrated edition, although it should be printed in the best format a skilled typographer can devise—say one by Dwiggin. Moreover the format should be of such a size as to permit, without muscle fatigue, easy and frequent reading. I would like to see it appear in a volume similar to those comprising the Limited Editions Club edition of Balzac's "Droll Stories."

GILBERT H. DOANE.

Lincoln, Neb.

The Superlative Parade

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:

Sir: For weeks I had been containing my wrath with greater and greater difficulty. Violet Hunt's "The Wife of Rossetti" having appeared with advance praise from England, the New York critics had begun to outdo each other in superlatives,—dishonest as ever in being "to the conqueror's banner true,"—over one of the most meretricious pieces of misrepresentation that ever appeared under the guise of biography. As a student and lover of Rossetti, I was overwhelmed in reading the book to find perversions of fact on almost every page. The critics' language was strained for eulogy; they found scholarship (though there isn't a reliable documentation in the book), sympathy, penetration. Even your Mr. Benét recommended it.

At last came the truth I awaited. You had the courage to print Miss Winwar's straight-from-the-shoulder review, putting the miserable fictionizing in its right place,—the sensation novel. You are, and especially she is, to be congratulated for the candor of scholarship.

But we are left with the horrible reflection of how mightily our book-reviewers fail us in our reliance upon them. Authorities in every field, how can they be expected to know anything about any field? What we need is the solid accomplishment of knowledge such as Miss Winwar demonstrates.

LEONARD BOTAL.

New York.

The New Books

The books listed by title only in the classified list below are noted here as received.

Fiction

KETTLE. By GUSTAV ECKSTEIN. Harpers. 1933. \$2.50.

Dr. Eckstein's two preceding books—his admirably understanding biography of the biologist, Noguchi, and his fascinating volume of "Lives"—suggested that he had in him the making of a novelist. Now this venture into fiction confirms that belief, at least in large part. It exhibits one—and the most important—qualification of a novelist; the ability to portray character "in the round," with sympathetic, subtle understanding. His people stand out clearly; vivid, animated figures, truthful portraits. If the book as a whole lacks something of the novelist's craft in its construction, it is none the less a fine piece of work of quite unusual interest. There are plenty of writers capable of making conventionally good novels, but few who have the warmth and intellectual fervor of conviction of this book.

One might almost say that the hero, the true protagonist of this, is Music (one needs the capital) itself—not as a mere abstraction but as, somehow, a living entity above and beyond its concrete manifestations. In some sense, Vladimir Munck, the human centre of the book, embodies this conception, but he is no vague personification of an idea; he is a human, flesh and blood being. Furthermore, Dr. Eckstein has a definite thesis—expounded and carried through to a Q. E. D.—the danger of institutionalism in the arts.

Munck is a pianist and composer who is swept into the organization of a vast Lyceum in New York. The bulk of the book describes the smothering processes of such an institution, and the petty jealousies and conflicts that arise.

Several women come in intimate contact with Munck, but the resultant relationships remain somewhat vague. It is here that the book is rather shadowy, as a novel, though each person is presented with understanding. The chief interest remains that of music itself. Obviously, the fable is open to more or less concrete application.

GAS-HOUSE MCGINTY. By JAMES T. FARRELL. Vanguard. 1933. \$2.50.

In his first novel, Farrell showed talent for—among other things—dialogue that is convincing and effective. This ability to write good dialogue is demonstrated again in "Gas-House McGinty," where dialogue is used almost without the aid of description. The book is something of a *tour de force*, interspersing ordinary dialogue with what might be called collective dialogue—the disjointed conversations, shouts, exclamations, telephone conversations, etc., of an office full of men. The method is a bit annoying at times, when the speakers are not carefully differentiated, but on the whole it is remarkably effective.

McGinty is, at the opening of the story, chief wagon dispatcher for the Continental Express Co., Chicago. Before the end, he is demoted to dispatcher, and another man takes his place. The story is essentially one of defeat and frustration, but these elements are not insisted upon. Rather, we are given a series of vivid and vigorous impressions, which are left almost entirely to our own interpretation.

Farrell does not soften the coarseness of the men's conversation in the office, and he does not avoid expressions that are ugly and obscene. The immediate impact of his book is strong; it also leaves us with something for reflection.

THE YEARS OF LOVE. By MARGARET WIDDEMER. Farrar & Rinehart. 1933. \$2.

Genuine old-fashioned romance is something one can grow very tired of, unless it is presented with the light touch, the spring-like variety, and the unfeigned zest that Margaret Widdemer, for instance and particularly, gives it. "Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose," said Grandmother Warner to the very modern Lila of 1933. "The effects and dresses . . . change about one every five years." And all the marriages in the Warner family had been romantic, even the marriage of old Miss Lallie, the spinster who never grew up. Spiced with humor and a dash of social history, they made good stories.

Grandmother Warner's idea is that woman's place is the home, and she is very persuasive about it. Working girls who

secretly desire to be convinced of this, who surreptitiously feel that a typewriter is inherently no more exciting than a dish-mop, especially when one has to use them both, should by all means read this book. It does not shun the wildest melodrama, nor does it neglect the appeal to the feminine imagination by careful description of costumes, decorations, and amusements.

This, of course, is the charm of a period piece, that melodrama is more easily credible and that the appointments are a necessary part of the story. Miss Widdemer evokes her past days by references to things frequently remembered or read of, and gives her heroines liveliness by contrasting them with the fad-ridden majority of their times. Unusual, almost to the point of eccentricity by the standards of their times, all these girls are, and the things that happen to them are unusual by any standards. What, dear reader, was the secret of the golden curl that Great-grandfather Barr carried till his death? Not what you think, at any rate. Who was Chrissy's Prince Charming? Was there really a ghost at the Love-Gate? But trust Grandmother Warner: they all married, and lived happily ever after.

THE MEN OF NESS. By ERIC LINKLATER. Farrar & Rinehart. 1933. \$2.50.

Mr. Linklater has first of all told a roaring tale, and told it with commendable terseness and a hard and pithy brevity that make the wild adventures and incredible visitations from the dead as real as a state of mind. He has told this tale of the Orkney Islands in the ninth century as an Icelandic skald would have told it; he has revived an old conventional form and cast his story in its mold. So far as I know he had had no one original but has borrowed here and there, taken stories and incidents where he found them, and added to them. He is the first to realize the vitality of this form and make use of it.

There have been authors enough who were fascinated by the great body of fiction of the North and have translated or revised translations to a romantic model nearer their heart's desire, or nearer to what they thought the public would stomach. Both translations and revisions, however, have had one of two fatal flaws that have kept them hidden from all save enthusiasts: they have been either too smoothly literary, or so archaic in diction that the average man needed a glossary to detect the full meaning. In neither version could the full vitality or the full reality of these ancient stories strike the reader with the force that they should. Mr. Linklater's saga reads like a contemporary story. The reader becomes a participator in the action—the responsibility of judgment and imagination is given him again. He will find a wild world where dead kings reclaim their property, where revenge is a sacred duty, a world where men are ruthless but die nobly. And the story of that disastrous sea voyage should cling to him for days—and nights.

THE SINNER (YOSHE KALB). By I. J. SINGER. Translated by MAURICE SAMUEL. Liveright. 1933. \$2.50.

Many readers will be familiar with the subject of this novel from the excellent play, "Yoshe Kalb," made from it and presented by Maurice Schwartz. But one must go to the novel for the picture in its completeness; an extraordinarily brilliant portrayal of the life of the Chassidic Jews of Poland and Russia. The Chassidim (Saints) are modern sectaries, dating from about 1750, as a revival of the ancient Assidæans who opposed Hellenistic innovations in the third century B. C., but they are essentially medieval Puritans, with an addiction to thaumaturgy. It would be difficult to find any people more of an anachronism in this twentieth century. Yet they have furnished the background for a considerable segment of today's American population.

The central figure of the piece is Nahum, a young Rabbi, a mystic and ascetic, engrossed in the lore of the Kabbala, who is dragged from his study to be married at the age of fourteen. He pines in the alien environment of his father-in-law's Rabbinic court—a vast, complex establishment, important as a business concern as well as a religious centre—until the advent of Malkah, the sixteen-year-old

(Continued on next page)

BY

NORMAN
DOUGLAS

AUTHOR OF "SOUTH WIND"

LOOKING
BACKAn Autobiographical
Excursion

The celebrated author of "South Wind" has at some time or other known almost everyone who has touched the life of literary Europe since the eighties. His memoirs review his own many-sided and unconventional career, creating again a whole gallery of personalities—D. H. Lawrence, Rupert Brooke, and Frank Harris, to mention but a few—and painting a portrait of himself that is sharp and lively as any he has created.

The first edition in America is
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Less than two months ago a novel appeared—an exciting, panoramic, trenchantly written novel of a great city. It was the author's first published book. For four years he had been writing and putting his work aside. For four years his publishers had encouraged him to carry on confident of his ultimate success. At last he achieved a remarkably fine major novel. The critics welcomed it with unusual acclaim, hailed its author as an outstanding literary find—

BUT unfortunately for him the day his book was published the national bank holiday began. The public had neither the inclination to read reviews nor available cash for the purchase of books—not even for one so exceptional as this.

SO the publishers, confident of this book, certain of its author's importance and of his future, knowing that many who missed this book would thoroughly enjoy it, want those missing readers to read

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by Albert Halper

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The New Books
Fiction

(Continued from preceding page)

bride of old Rabbi Melech, Nahum's father-in-law, disturbs his seclusion. She is a vivid young rebel. Nahum "sins" with her; she dies in childbirth and Nahum sets forth, as a beggar, upon a life of penitential wanderings, under the burden of sin. This sense of sin is the central theme, the chief leitmotif of the book. It is worked out dramatically with great power and subtle insight.

The translation, so far as one can judge without comparison with the original, is exceptionally good in that it rarely gives the reader any feeling that it is a translation.

POINT TO POINT. By M. J. FARRELL.
Farrar & Rinehart. 1933. \$2.

Partly in the romantic tradition of Byrne—and the humorous one of Somerville & Ross—Miss Farrell presents a worthy successor to her "Young Entry," and more recent "Mad Puppetstown." The peculiar enchantment of the Irish scene so vividly set down, the charm and raciness of so irresponsible a way of living, the natural picturesqueness of people and speech so nicely revealed, combine to make this story of the sporting gentry a novel of distinction.

Beauty sometimes courses headlong through its pages. So long as there's a horse or hound left in Ireland (and it will take more than a dictator or Free State to uproot fox hunting and racing there), and rich and poor alike may indulge their love of a gamble,—just so long the attraction and authenticity of such a tale will not fade. The book is without a truly defined plot. Yet the reader is content that it should be so, since that modicum of happenings is so engaging. While the narrator, Captain Pulleyns, at the invitation of old Sir Richard visits his Irish cousins at Pullinstown, all manner of sports are lightly included, from the hunting and racing of our ancestors to salmon fishing and even a little love-making. One fairly tingles to the excitement of the game. The back-chat and the immortal patter of the horse copers and the joys of a horse trade steeped in ancient etiquette; Irish roguery and love of conspiring, local color in the race-going crowds, and the easy familiarity of old servant James with his master and young overlords; the vivid account of the stirring point-to-point race,—the roving pattern of the story permits of countless anecdotes and sketches of all these things.

What the book lacks in shading and interpretation of character is compensated for by an ability to make the moving pageant of a fox hunt live in the imagination of the uninitiated and be reborn in the minds of the experienced. Where the writing seems instinctive, it is best, otherwise it verges on the "literary." Like the new beer this is light lager fiction, not for the taste of those who prefer a headier variety.

SHE LOVES ME. By NORMAN KLEIN. Farrar & Rinehart. 1933. \$2.

Mr. Klein, whose first novel, "No! No! The Woman!" called attention to him as a newcomer of promise, has done a good piece of work in this more ambitious tale. It is of interest primarily as a series of well-related character studies of the youth of today, especially in the case of the heroine whose growth from girlhood to matronly maturity is the backbone of the book. All of the young people, including the rather weak second husband of the heroine, are drawn with intelligent insight and completeness. One is not so sure as to the success of the picture of the enigmatic middle-aged Claude. He is a striking conception, but he remains somewhat sketchy.

The story opens in Mexico and progresses through Hollywood and Los Angeles to New York.

ART

Making a Water Colour. G. P. Ennis. Studio. \$3.50. Line Drawing for Reproduction. Ashley. Studio. \$2.50. Early Steamships. (Currier & Ives Prints.) F. Riesenberger. Studio. \$2. Metropolitan Museum Studies. Vol. IV. Part II. Metrop. Museum. \$4. George Washington in Sculpture. F. D. Whittemore. Marshall Jones. \$3.50.

BELLES LETTRES

Challenging Essays in Modern Thought. Ed. J. M. Bachelard and R. M. Henry. Cent. \$2. The Mind of Poe and Other Studies. K. Campbell. Harv. Univ. Pr. \$2.50.

BIOGRAPHY

Lawrence and Brett. D. Brett. Lip. \$3. The Desert Island Adventure Book. Ed. J. Grove. Macmil. \$1.90. Twelve American Ports before 1900. R. Brenner. Harc., Bra. \$2.50. Essays in Biography. J. M. Keynes. Harc., Bra. \$2.50. Looking Back. N. Douglas. Harc., Bra. \$3.50. Prince Charlie. C. Mackenzie. Appl. \$1.50.

DRAMA

Alien Corn. S. Howard. Scrib. \$2. Twelve Famous Plays of the Restoration and Eighteenth Century. Mod. Lib. \$1.

FICTION

Great German Novels and Short Stories. Mod. Lib. 95 cents. History and Destiny of the Jews. J. Kastein. Vik. The American Gun Mystery. E. Queen. Stokes. \$2. Other Fires. M. Gorki. Appl. \$3. Arctic Village. R. Marshall. Smith & Haas. \$3. The Chamber Music of Brahms. D. G. Mason. Macmil. \$3.50. Take Up the Bodies. K. I. Knoblock. Harp. \$2. Great Circle. C. Aiken. Scrib. \$2. The Incompetents. R. E. Spencer. Knopf. The Golden Piper. F. A. Kummer. Sears. \$2.50. Danger Zone. P. Lee. 3rd. Sears. \$2. The Dark Adventure. A. Muir. Put. \$2. The Bar X Golf Course. R. Santee. Far. & Rin. \$1 net. They Could Do No Other. E. Phillpotts. Macmil. \$2. Death Tolls the Bell. P. McGuire. Cow-McCann. \$2. This Above All. M. P. Shiel. Vang. \$2. Crooks in the Sunshine. E. P. Oppenheim. Lit., Brown. \$2. Grand Canary. A. J. Cronin. Lit., Brown. \$2.50. Full Circle. J. Collier. Appl. \$2. Wind in the East. A. R. Burr. Duf. & Gre. \$2. White Money. M. Lulofs. Cent. \$2.50.

INTERNATIONAL

History of Foreign Policy of the United States. R. L. Jones. Put. \$3.50.

MISCELLANEOUS

Social Planning and Adult Education. J. W. Herring. Macmil. \$1.25. Game Management. A. Leopold. Scrib. \$5. The Introduction of the Ironclad Warship. J. P. Baxter, 3rd.

Harv. Univ. Pr. \$5. Monetary Theory and the Trade Cycle. F. A. Hayek. Harc., Bra. \$2. Law and the Social Order. M. R. Cohen. Harc., Bra. \$3.75. Towards Mental Health. C. M. Campbell. Harv. Univ. Pr. \$1.25. Modern Women and Sex. R. S. Yarros, M.D. Vang. \$2. The A. E. F. in Cartoon. A. A. Wallgren. Phila.: Somers. \$1.50. Reading at Random. B. R. Redman. Oxford Univ. Pr. 80 cents. Twenty-Eight Days: A History of the Banking Crisis. C. C. Colt and N. Keith. Greenberg. \$1. Stamp Scrip. J. Fisher. Adelphi. \$1.50. Amana That Was and Amana That Is. B. M. H. Shambaugh. Iowa City: State Hist. Soc. of Iowa. A Bibliography of the Writings of Edith Wharton. L. Davis. Portland, Me.: Southworth. From Chaos to Control. N. Angell. Cent. \$2. Rooftrees. P. L. Goodwin. Lip.

PAMPHLETS

Spinoza: The Man and His Thought. Ed. E. L. Schaub. Open Court. 75 cents. Farewell Worry. J. Brent. Morehouse. 35 cents.

POETRY

The Queen of Seven Swords. G. K. Chesterton. Sheed & Ward. \$1. Summer Goes On. L. Lee. Scrib. \$1.75. Glory of Earth. A. W. Scruggs. Oglethorpe Univ. Pr. \$4. Poems B. Dewey. Ripberger. 125 West 16 St., New York. \$2.50. Arcady and Other Poems. A. Price. Pearsall Printing Corp. 150 Lafayette Street, New York. Sunward. T. Sweeney. Put. \$2.50.

TRAVEL

Impressions of South America. A. Siegfried. Harc., Bra. \$2. All about Chicago. J. M. R. Ashenhurst. Hought. Mif. \$1.

The Criminal Record
The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	Crime, Place, Sleuth	Summing Up	Verdict
FOOL'S GOLD Stanley Hart Page (Knopf: \$2.)	Two implausible prospectors murdered while in New York to finance gold mine. Christopher Hand solves it.	Characterization childish; deduction gratuitous and amateurish; plot incredible; style pretentious but unfortunately illiterate.	No.
BULLDOG DRUMMOND STRIKES BACK H. C. McNeile (Crime Club: \$2.)	Government official murdered; Drummond & Standish won't play with Scotland Yard; result, 91 more (unnecessary) murders.	One of those incredible international plots, plus a fool heroine; but Drummond's adventures are worth it.	Good of its kind.
THE GOLF HOUSE MURDER Herbert Adams (Lippincott: \$2.)	Strange will cutting off beloved foster daughter and odd murder of witness to testament puzzle "Yard" and young bar-rister.	Takes so long to get started that speedy latter chapters lose zest, and criminals are obvious from beginning.	Oh my!
THE BANK VAULT MYSTERY L. F. Booth (Dodd, Mead: \$2.)	Looted vault; old man walled up in concrete pillar; New York "gentleman" detective.	Robbery motive hinging on impulse of amateur criminal and tangled lives of ordinary citizens. Sleuthing adequate.	Good
THE EEL PIE MURDER John Rhode (Farrar: \$2.)	Swift-living young divorcee found dead on islet in Thames and Inspector Bull is called in.	Plodding work with infinitesimal clues plus humorous touches of tale interesting. First class puzzler.	Good
TIGER STANDISH Sydney Horler (Crime Club: \$2.)	Noble lord, also football (British style) star, succors distressed lady and breaks up criminal gang.	Bad melodrama.	Hard labor

GOOD READING

The New Commandment

by the author of "Three Pairs of Silk Stockings"

Panteleimon Romanof

"Aside from its merit as a picture of modern Russia, it is just about the best study of possessive married love that has yet appeared in fiction."—New York Sun. \$2.00

For All Those Who Like Adventure

Grain Race

by Alan Villiers

Hurricane-tossed around Cape Horn in a sailing ship. "A grand story."—New York Sun. With 39 photographs. \$3.00

True North

by Elliott Merrick

Life in Labrador as found by a fugitive from city streets. "Has in it the splendid spirit of all pioneering."—New York Times. \$2.75

"Its spell is as potent as the spell of 'The Good Earth.'"—Phila. Ledger.

South Moon Under

by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings

"She has drawn a people fresh in literature and rich in reality. . . . A book full of life, and of insistence that life is a choice thing."—Saturday Review. 60th thousand. \$2.00

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