

An Honest Portrait

JOSEPHINE, WIFE OF NAPOLEON. By E. A. Rheinhardt. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1934. \$3.

Reviewed by CHARLES DAVID ABBOTT

THERE is a legend about Josephine to suit every taste. She was the elegant aristocrat to whom Bonaparte owed his first political successes and his manners; she was the wanton whose infidelities revolted the natural innocence of her husband; she was the queenly arbiter of fashions whose originality created the tone of the Empire period; and a hundred other roles she played, each dependent upon the whim, the political bias, or the affection of each legend's sponsor. She has served as the subject of too many lyric and adulatory biographies; she has been the scapegoat of too many apologists for other people; and never, until now, has she received the justice which is without flattery and without rancor.

Mr. Rheinhardt has a passion for truth, and in presenting Josephine he has allowed nothing to prejudice him either for or against her. He has dug out the facts—a difficult but not impossible undertaking, in the face of all the legends—and these facts he has skilfully welded together into a narrative that is rapid and clear, filled with details and yet not obstructed by them. The facts alone, however, are not enough in the case of Josephine. For a proper understanding both of her personality and of her place in the events of the Revolution and the Empire, the biographer must possess an unusual power of analysis and an ability to see through the facts into the reasons that lie behind them and the temperament that evolved them. This is a task for a psychologist who is not obsessed by pedantic and rigid theories of sex, a task for which Mr. Rheinhardt is ideally equipped. A native of Vienna, learned in that city's psychoanalytical knowledge, he is at bottom a poet who uses the Freudian method neither to distort a character nor to point a thesis, but as a means to honest understanding.

The zealous care and deliberate thought which he has expended upon Josephine have been more than rewarded, for he has produced a biography of permanent interest, a sincere and graphic study of a woman whose life was, by chance, of considerable importance but who never realized the greatness of her own position. Young, ignorant, not even pretty or very well-born, she came from Martinique to an unfortunate marriage in Paris. Her re-



THE EMPRESS JOSEPHINE
Painting by Guillaume Lethière

silience carried her through the disaster of this marriage and the catastrophe of the Revolution, and from experience she learned to know her own talents which were entirely social and extremely of the surface. She had the wit, however, to cultivate them, and in the end they brought to her Napoleon, whom she married unwillingly, mainly because she feared that her advancing years would make a later and better marriage impossible. Napoleon's passionate devotion she neither wanted nor understood; it distressed her,

and she came to respect her husband only after her own coldness and willfulness had caused it to subside. Then in the days of imperial glory she enjoyed the splendor and the grandeur. She had at last the opportunity to indulge her most pleasant vice, extravagance. But it was a personal extravagance; it played no part in affairs of state, and benefited no one except herself and the merchants. She shared Napoleon's throne, but took no part in the direction of events and never comprehended the possible power of her position. Posterity has idealized or reviled her, quite without reason; she deserved neither the praise nor the blame. She was, as Mr. Rheinhardt has so brilliantly and painstakingly shown, an ordinary woman with a social talent, unconsciously important, but harmless.

Charles David Abbott is a member of the department of history at the University of Colorado.

Thump—Throb— Thump—Throb

THE SHADOW BEFORE. By William Rollins Jr. New York: Robert M. McBride & Co. 1934. \$2.50.

Reviewed by SELDEN RODMAN

SINCE the publication of James Joyce's "Ulysses" in 1922 there has been a procession of intricately constructed novels characterized by the technique of broken narrative and the exploration of the subconscious.

With material far more potentially epic than that of Halper's "Union Square," and with a steadier hand, William Rollins Jr. has taken a typical mill-town at strike-time and has constructed a powerful and gripping novel in this technical tradition. The long list of testimonials on the slip-cover must nuzzle the free spirit of many a reader (they certainly impel the reviewer to murderous intent!) but the book cannot be denied.

The author has taken a cross-section of the society of Fullerton: the Jewish mill-owner, correctly invisible behind the scenes; the Puritan middle-class super who has "made good," his nostalgic wife and neurotically aspiring but weak daughter; the harassed, sensation-seeking son of the owner, plagued from the start by the double handicap of wealth and race; Micky, the fighting Irish girl, torn between her love for Ramon the scab and her loyalty to the great cause; Marvin, the idealist, the organizer. On the fringes are the "liberal" lawyers, romantic, "Socialistic" young girls of the leisure class, righteous editorial writers, brutal vigilantes, and cops. In the background the desperate workers, pitted against the whole community, the whole world, first:

tails between their legs; going back to "their" machines, the machines they belonged to according to the bosses . . . until they got too old or got hurt, when they'd be unchained and chucked away, and new fellows and girls chained to them.

—and then suddenly with the strike, to this "drab underside of the city, their comings and goings unnoticed, never News, never counting, just the dark gloomy props that held up an unaware society":

Like a tropic sun rising on arctic land, came an unexpected blossoming. Pool-room boys picketed, made speeches . . . worked all day for nothing. . . . Timid alien mothers, of the shawl-clutched-around-the-chin type, threw off the shawls and came out . . . to get arrested.

Through the dramatic narrative of the novel, picketing, pitched battles, tense court-room scenes, incendiarism,—a series of sinister motives punctuate the action and the thoughts of everyone:

thump throb; thump throb

the voice of the factory in the distance; or inside, CLAMP THEM ON AND SNAP THEM OFF, CLAMPING THEM OFF AND SNAPPING THEM OFF; or the daughter of the super, like a character in "The Three Sisters," yearning for the city but unable to leave the house.

Sometimes the technique verges on the melodramatic and the reader becomes aware of it, but more often his heart will pound to the living suspense and imagination of the author, as these real, very real, characters move to their destinies.

The Southern Point of View

ROBERT E. LEE. By Robert W. Winston. New York: William Morrow & Company, 1934. \$4.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE

JUDGE ROBERT WATSON WINSTON, a member of the North Carolina Supreme Court, and for years a director and active member of the North Carolina Historical Society, who has written, according to his "Who's Who" report, many books "interpreting the South to the nation, and the nation to the South," has done his country a signal service in contributing this biography to the literature of understanding and reconciliation. His service is more than a scholar's service.

For this Life of General Lee is more than a biography. It is a painstaking, unimpassioned presentation of the Southern point of view of the Civil War. That war left scars and hatreds more than a generation after it had passed; scars and hatreds that were revealed by the very designation of the conflict when the North called it "the War of the Rebellion," and the South called it the "War Between the States." It is still the War Between the States in the South today, nearly seventy years after Appomattox.

Judge Winston's biography of Lee is written so dispassionately, so honestly, with such kind candor that it may well be called the first and, from certain aspects, the best of the later literary endeavors to record from the Southern point of view the four year struggle of the South for what it earnestly believed, then, was its freedom. This record, of course, is circumscribed by being dramatized around General Lee, but its very limitations broaden it, for Lee himself was one of the broad and liberal leaders of his people and his time. A biography of Jefferson Davis, however fair, could not have presented the Southern case so convincingly as this story of the great Southern military hero.

Probably Lee will survive in American history as a military hero, though he is, of course, something more than that. He is the ideal Southern gentleman—a man of education and parts; a man of sophistication, broad in his tolerances, wise in his judgments, far-seeing in his vision, and without self-seeking in his aims and ambitions. Probably no more selfless man has ever appeared in American public life than Robert E. Lee. He emerges from this book as a man, despite the fact that 275 of its more than 400 pages are devoted to his career as a soldier, that is, to the four years between '61 and '65. These 275 pages of military history are probably the ultimate record of the Southern military struggle under Lee for independence. It may be the last of a large library of military histories written from each side of the conflict;—much of it worthless; nearly all of it devoted to propaganda for some general, and no small part of it badly exparte memories of, fervid apologies for, elaborate explanations of the military records of heroes now all but forgotten—heroes of both armies. As they came out in the seventies, eighties, and early nineties—these stories of the generals published either as memoirs or as family biographies—what an uproar greeted each book. Clamor and contention were aroused by each and every general's story and the tumult was not entirely from his sectional opponents. Criticism of General Grant, General Sherman, General McClellan, or General Hancock in the North and backbiting of General Gordon or General

Longstreet in the South was just as fierce as it was on the other side of Mason's and Dixon's line. A whole literature of regional polemics directed at its own heroes rose on both sides of the Ohio River, and while the soldiers of the Civil War lived, how it raged! It died down as death came to the veterans. And now the storm is over. The gashes the war made in our national life are fairly well healed and this vast bulk of books and pamphlets lies forgotten and dusty.

It was a picturesque era which followed the Civil War; picturesque in its writing because the writing was highly emotionalized and because its emotions never were

adequately expressed in its contemporary writing. The South, of course, was crippled. Its young men, who might have expressed its rancor and anguish at the humiliation put upon the South by reconstruction, died in the war. The flower of the South went down in Lee's battles. A few young men, born in the late forties and early fifties, too late to get into the war, survived but unless they

came north, few of them had perspective upon the great struggle or its aftermath. They were too close at hand to describe it intelligently. So when they wrote, the few who did write, Harry Stillwell Edwards, Joel Chandler Harris, F. Hopkinson Smith, Thomas Nelson Page, George W. Cable, they wrote sentimentally of the Old South, the ideal South before the war between the states. They seemed to reflect to the world no conception of the stark and terrible realities through which the South was living during the days of the sixties and seventies. Sometimes a bitter writer came like Thomas Dickson, Albion W. Tourgee, but he lacked skill. His emotions got the better of him. He became a controversialist and his work is interesting now merely as a museum piece.

In the north conditions were not materially better. The writing of that period so far as it referred to the Civil War and reconstruction, was pretty bad. It was not much above the "Bigelow Papers" and Petroleum V. Nasby. And all the while on both sides of the Mason and Dixon Line, bitterness rankled. The appearance of a book like Grant's "Memoirs" was the signal of a whopping row, a row in the north among Grant's rivals and his enemies and a row all through the South sponsored by the friends of the various generals whom Grant encountered.

Today the record seems scarcely worth making. This biography of General Lee is fair to General Grant. It is adequately critical of Lee's military associates. Yet the book is obviously an attempt to tell an unbiased tale. But this generation sees no need for bias. The ancient wrath has cooled. So to the grandchildren of the veterans of the sixties, this story may seem to be painfully meticulous.

Judge Winston has done a fine piece of work. He has made one of the two or three important figures of a terrible time live for another day. One realizes after reading this book, the military greatness of Robert E. Lee. But also one feels his greatness as a man. Lee the gentleman, might be stressed more than the author stresses it. He was so much more than Grant outside of battle and of war's alarms, that it seems a pity that Lee's human qualities might not be set down more elaborately with greater artistry so that the man might overshadow the general.

Nevertheless this is mere carping. Judge Winston's story of Lee is a good story, well worth reading.



LEE AT TWENTY-EIGHT

The BOWLING GREEN

I HAVE remarked on the fact that one does not find in the dictionaries the word *leotard*, in familiar use in the theatre as the name of a sort of jerkin or one-piece garment worn for chorus rehearsals. Now, in rereading Jules Verne, I get a clue as to its origin. Passepartout, the valet of Phileas Fogg in *Around the World in 80 Days*, remarks that in his youth he was a circus-rider, "when I used to vault like Leotard." So I take it that the garment was named for some famous acrobat.

Speaking of *Around the World in Eighty Days*, surely one of the most permanent books of the nineteenth century, it seems to have been fairly well translated in the familiar version except for one obvious error. Great Salt Lake is spoken of as "three miles eight hundred feet above the sea." Is this perhaps a mistranslation for three thousand eight hundred? I don't remember the altitude of Salt Lake, but the Union Pacific timetable, my authority on all such matters, gives Ogden as 4298 feet. Why doesn't the Union Pacific put a copy of the book in each of its club-cars? The description of Phileas Fogg's journey on the Overland Limited in 1872 is fascinating reading for the traveler of today.

VILLAINY ON THE FLUTE

SIR:—Another book which richly deserves re-entry into print is E. F. Benson's "The Luck of the Vails," which Appleton published here in 1901. It was considerably in advance of its time. As a combination of a corking mystery yarn and a novel of manners it ranks with A. A. Milne's "The Red House Mystery." Among the considerable debts I owe E. Nesbit is that she put me on its trail. (She might very possibly have read "The Red House Mystery," since it was published before her death in 1924, and it probably gave her a nostalgic twinge, thinking of her own Red House, Well Hall, her Kent home which she introduced so often into her novels besides the one of that name, and which she struggled so gallantly to maintain). Mabel, the housekeeper's niece in "The Enchanted Castle" (reissued by Coward-McCann last fall) had read it, and it sent her hunting for secret passages. (One of the boys in "The Luck" announced he felt yew-hedgy, and discovered a tunnel in the middle of the overgrown hedge). When I came to New York in 1917 I also went hunting, for "The Luck," in second-hand bookstores, and have turned up several copies, one of which I generously presented to Medium Quercus the other day. Perhaps he'd lend it to you. The Luck was a richly jewelled cup, for the possession of which a villainous great-uncle (who whenever contemplating villainy played his flute) sent the Vail heir through various ordeals of frost, flood, and fire.

And speaking of "The Lost Special," I'm lucky enough to own a copy of the American edition of the collection of Doyle's stories, one of his finest, in which it first appeared. ("Round the Fire Stories.") McClure Phillips did it up to the queen's taste. Do you remember the frontispiece, which accompanied that curdling yarn, "The Leather Funnel," and illustrated it only too vividly? It pictured a dream in which the extraordinary question, several buckets of it, was being administered to the Marquise de Brinvilliers.

EARLE F. WALBRIDGE.

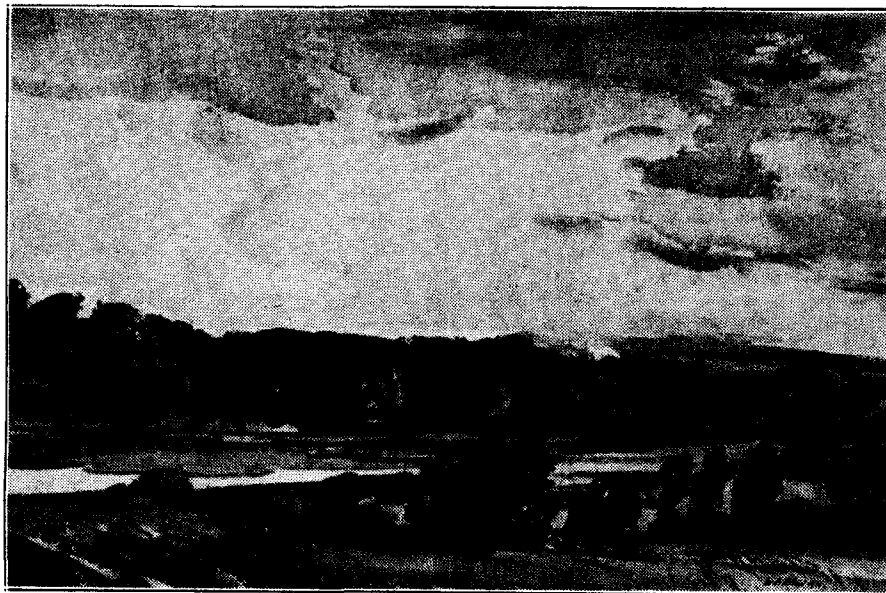
SHERLOCK HOLMES'S RELIGION

SIR:—A recent discussion of Holmes's religious tendencies in the *Bowling Green* leads me to suggest that in spite of Sherlock's unfortunate encounter with Victor Trevor's bull terrier, a hidden stratum of religious feeling outcrops occasionally.

A few instances occur to me; others may be found by thorough searching. In

the "Adventure of the Naval Treaty," Holmes makes a pointed reference to Deity, when, in discoursing on the beauty and purpose of the rose, he speaks of "the goodness of Providence." A strong religious feeling is manifested in the "Adventure of the Cardboard Box," when he says: "else our universe is ruled by chance, which is unthinkable." Our last words from Holmes carry a message of religious significance. In the last paragraph of "His Last Bow" occurs the prophetic reference to "God's own wind." In reading of the solution of Porlock's cypher message in the "Valley of Fear," one suspects a Bible is close at hand.

Mr. Vincent Starrett, in his recent book, notes that many of the problems repeat themselves. In addition to the instances given by Mr. Starrett, one may point out that the "Red Headed League," and the "Three Garridebs" seem to be poured in the same mould. Also the curious tendon



PASSING STORM OVER MARTLESHAM CREEK
Watercolor by W. P. Robins, from *The Studio*

nicking practiced in "Silver Blaze" is repeated in the "Sussex Vampire."

HORACE REYNOLDS STAHL.
of the Baker Street Irregulars.
Desloge, Missouri.

THE CONFEDERATE PRAYER BOOK

SIR:—Anent your mention of the Church of England prayer book, and the several changes and revisions that have taken place from time to time, there is one rare edition of the Book of Common Prayer that deserves special mention.

In 1863, there was printed an edition of the Book of Common Prayer by G. E. Eyre and W. Spottiswoode, London, England, for J. W. Randolph, Richmond, Va. In this edition, the usual prayer for The President of the United States was changed to read, ". . . thy servant, The President of the Confederate States and all in Civil Authority." The prayer for Congress was changed to read, ". . . as for the people of these Confederate States in general . . ."

This edition of the Book of Common Prayer was a part of the cargo of the Anglo-Rebel blockade runner "Minna," captured off Wilmington, N. C., December 6, 1863, by the United States dispatch ship "Circassian."

S. A. HAND.

Associate Editor, American Machinist.
Nassawadox, Virginia.

SANTAYANA AND A RED PENCIL

SIR:—Santayana's *Character and Opinion in the United States* is one of the most thwarting books I've read. I went through it last fall, a first reading, with a red pencil and a typically receptive undergraduate mind. I was prepared to be convinced. And through the first two chapters I was, agreeably so. But in the chapters on James and Royce, and particularly in the one on

Later Speculations, there was a wrongness that I could not explain. Towards the last of the book I realized that I had been delighting, consciously, with multitudinous red underlinings, in the way Mr. Santayana was saying things and disagreeing subconsciously (for he is a Very Great Man) but heartily (for I am quite strong-minded for an undergraduate) with most of what he said, though I couldn't discover why I disagreed.

Mr. Santayana admits in his preface "that other people's idea of a man is apt to be a better expression of their nature than of his." And of course, the ever-quotable Pope has a pair of lines pertinent and neat,

"In every work regard the writer's end,
Since none can compass more than they intend."

I know too little about philosophy in general, about pragmatism and transcendentalism in particular, to be sure of myself here. But it seems to me that Mr. Santayana is criticizing James's philosophy for not being Santayana's. It is all right to condemn blue for being too blue, or not blue enough, but to condemn it for not being green is obviously wrong. Yet that is exactly what Santayana is trying to do. He does not do it consciously, and that caused my confusion and still does to the extent that I can't quite catch him in the act. It is clearest in the chapter on James.

carved in the main corridor of Hart House, at the University of Toronto. Mr. J. B. Bickersteth, the Warden of the House, sends us the text, which begins as follows:

"That Hart House, under the guidance of its Warden, may serve in the generations to come, the highest interests of this University by drawing into a common fellowship the members of the several Colleges and Faculties, and by gathering into a true society the teacher and the student, the graduate and the undergraduate; further, that the members of Hart House may discover within its walls the true education that is to be found in good fellowship, in friendly disputation and debate, in the conversation of wise and earnest men, in music, pictures and the play, in the casual book, in sports and games and the mastery of the body.

I found in the *World-Telegram* a note to the effect that "the last day of Bruce Lockhart's visit here was spent on a boat ride up the Hudson." That is an understatement; it was much better than that. Mr. Lockhart was invited by the Tugboat Committee of the Three Hours for Lunch Club to join them in a morning spent aboard their favorite towboat, *Alice M. Moran*, to watch the docking of the *Aquitania* and the *Berengaria*. It happens by pleasing chance that the chief officer of the *Aquitania*, Mr. Moss, is a friend of Mr. Lockhart. As the liner was swung in toward her berth by the traditional push of *Morans* and *Barretts*, Mr. Moss was leaning over the taffrail with his megaphone to supervise the putting out of the stern-hawser. His surprise was great when he saw the British Agent leaning from the pilot house of the *Alice M. Moran*. "What the deuce are you doing?" he shouted. To which Mr. Lockhart, with readiness learned in a thousand diplomatic encounters, yelled "I just wanted to see you got in safely."

Mr. Andersen, chief engineer of the *Alice*, reports that not long ago he went to see a movie, *Gallant Lady*, in which, he says, the heroine sails from some French port. And the tugs ostensibly taking her out of harbor, in France, were our loved familiars of New York harbor, the *Alice* and *Eugene Moran*, the *Howard Moore* and the *John Nichols*.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

The Big Top

CIRCUS COMPANY. By Edward Seago.
Illustrated by the Author. New York:
G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1934. \$3.25.

MR. SEAGO is a painter, and attached himself to a circus partly to paint, partly because he was young. But he grew to love the life and the circus people. He found he was happier there than elsewhere, and alternated for years between the world of comfortable conventions and the world of tents and wandering wagons. His friendships there became a major interest. It is a society by itself. Show people are mainly the descendants of show people, and intermarry with one another. Besides the big circuses, there are a great many small ones in England, and on the Continent they are innumerable. Mr. Seago's feeling for them is comparable to Mr. Hemingway's for the bullfighters in this respect, that he feels for the technique, the craftsmanship of the *artistes*, the riders, tumblers, clowns, and so on, for the quality and finish of the great performers, the Paderewskis of the ring. In any craft or profession the more you get inside the more predominant becomes your interest in the methods and personalities of its distinguished practitioners.

With such magnificent material this might have been a better book. It ought to have been full of curious episodes and vivid characters. But Mr. Seago's anecdotes are not very well told, and his conversations not very significant. There is little order or arrangement either chronologically or by subject. But there is informational value. Circus people seem to be very much like other people, however peculiar their way of life, hard working, absorbed in their own affairs, and proud of their craft.

EMILY TOMPKINS.

Northampton, Mass.

Several clients asked us to look up the exact wording of the dedicatory prayer