

continents. I believe that if the whole population of some industrial cities, down on their luck, could be shipped out for a sight of The Narrows, beyond Para, or were taken one sunrise between the volcanoes, peaks lost in the clouds, which guard the narrow channel leading from the Java Sea to the Indian Ocean, Bali to starboard, Lombok to port, they might bring back a recollection of the light they saw, of the glory of the earth, which would help to dissolve the dark problems of home; our difficulties would become the less dark, and our mills not so satanic; opinions would be levitated, become less sad and congested. Yet so large an enterprise, for the revelation of the possibilities latent about us, is past praying for, as well as paying for.

Those of us who are in the habit of exploring literature—some long voyages out of soundings may be made that way—know that intellectual critics will describe some excellent reading-stuff, and with hauteur which dismisses it from further notice, as "books of escape." They mean, I suppose, that those books are a form of cowardice; attempts to get away from reality to the Isle of No-Land. On that plea, those critics made an attempt to push Stevenson out of our sight. But, if their charge is just, away too goes "The Pilgrim's Progress." Is not that a book of escape? It looks as though much depends on what is meant by reality.

A worthy definition of Reality, honestly attempted, would keep an intellectual critic so long brooding with a wet towel that we might despair of getting so much as a mumbled and indistinct reply from him. For all novels, at least, are means by which we can escape from the insistent present, perhaps only to meet worse trouble. If those novels truly are books, and give the mind a sense of precipitancy and danger, then they must have been done by poets who had freed themselves from whatever has us in bond; books, not so much of escape, as of release. When Melville went to sea in a whaler, to get marooned in the South Seas, he did that, and gave the mind a sense of precipitancy and danger, then they must have been done by poets who had freed themselves from whatever has us in bond; books, not so much of escape, as of release. When Melville went to sea in a whaler, to get marooned in the South Seas, he did that,

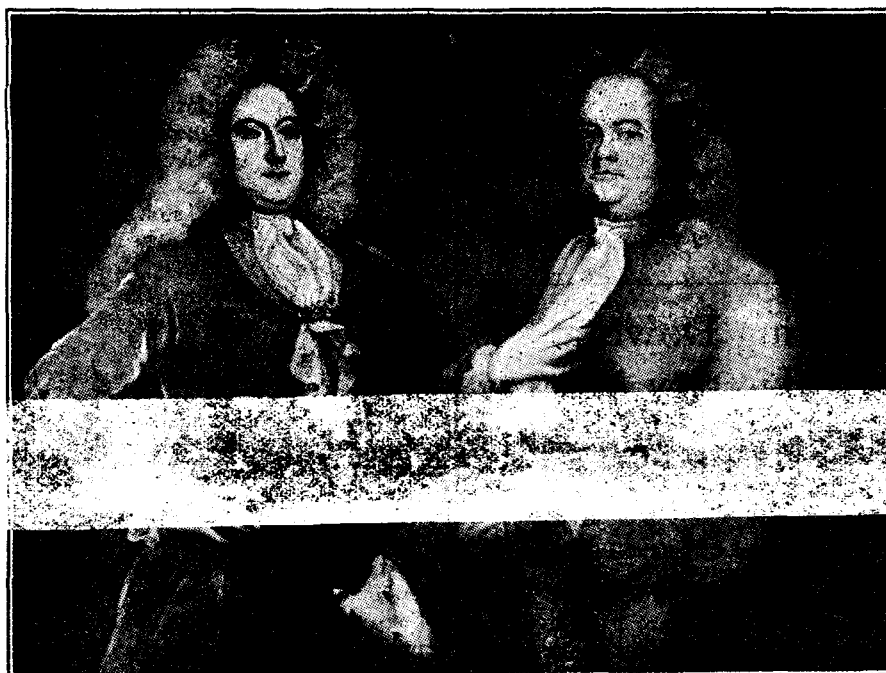
its possibilities may be divined by an imaginative man who is confined all his days to a banker's desk or a farmer's fields, but for most of us the release of the thoughts from whatever immures them—the narrowness of our task, the oppression of memory, misfortune, or anxiety—comes more readily through going up a ship's gangway. That certainly gives the illusion of severance, even when you have become used to it.

And more, the smell of a ship, the unfamiliar camber of the foothold, the strange sounds you hear even before she is under way outside in the wind and light, the quiet and seclusion of the cabin, your introduction to the steward, a stranger who knows so well what you do not that he guesses what you want before you are aware of it, no more than little things of that sort, in memory afterwards, are enough to draw you to sea again. For once, you are surprised by your own identity. You hear from yourself again after having supposed you were quite lost in the confusion of the multitude; you have a chance to measure the values of things in relation to your own integrity, which was vague and negative amid the distractions and restlessness of affairs in the city. Even books, in a ship, either gain in value or lose. It has to be a good book which can maintain its value beside the lamp of a ship's berth at midnight—the best time and place in all the world for reading, for me—for the mind is apart and at rest, and there is no sound but a murmuring which might be that of the destined universe. You feel for once that if the truth of things did actually show on the printed page, you would know it instantly. I once forgot the heat of the Red Sea in a ship's berth, and in the middle watch, with a volume I should not have looked at ashore, the Admiralty Directions for Pilots in those very waters; somehow I felt not only like Sindbad with the wonders about me, but that I was being shown the proper way to relate them.

There is something about a voyage you are barely aware of while you are making it. The light you get at sea never fades. It is not only revealing; it has a suggestion of imperishable origin. You bring a reflection of it ashore with you, without knowing it. You never packed it, but you have it. It is absurd to suppose that voyages for discovery are over. We have not to begin where James Cook and Robert Scott ended.

There are regrets that the pioneers have left nothing for us to do; all the islands are found, the poles have been reached, and the summit of Everest has heard the roar of an aero engine adding to the voice of its eternal wind. But all that is only the beginning. Now we have peeped into every corner of the globe, to see what is there, we have to learn what is best to do with it, and that needs as much selfless enterprise, and probably a greater effort of the imagination, than planning a flight over the Himalayas and persuading an engine to the task.

We are not likely to learn so much on one pleasure cruise, it is true, but what the world wants now, as much as anything, is to calm down a little. At the very time when its excitability is even morbid it has awkward problems to solve that are not likely to untangle except to minds at ease. Some of us, when the tangle of affairs, if not insoluble, at least compels a groan, have been in the habit of dropping it, and idling down to the quays,



ADDISON AND STEELE ABOUT 1712

From an unpublished painting, reproduced in "Sir Richard Steele" by courtesy of the Governors of Chetham's Hospital and Library, Manchester.

looking for a ship. Matters will be different when viewed in a sea light. They will ease away. They will lessen; the perspective is changed there. Melville, in the first chapter of his great romance, describes all that in humor extravagantly sad. Yet there is truth in his wild fun; even so, we had better not do as he did, and ascend the ladder of a whaler. That would be over-doing it. It would be foolish to add the awful problem of the White Whale to our normal difficulties. The pursuit of that monster leads to a voyage without end; and we want one rather shorter than that. The usual gangway for us, to be met by a friendly quartermaster, and no shipmate such as Ahab!

And experience tells us that, however short the voyage, we never lose all the shine of it. We get something for which we did not pay. There was that wild sunset in the Western Ocean, with something of fear in the overfall of big waters, and yet briefly, after the sun had gone, we thought we saw the assuring glow of our own living planet. Or the approach, stealthily, with the engines slowed, to the still apparition of a strange city at dawn; or the bearing of seamen, ordinary fellows, when there was a sudden call on nerves and skill; or the surprise of a tropical landfall, so fragile and filamentous that it was hardly believable till the master cried "Let go," and the cable shook reality solidly about us. A reflection from such a scene is never lost; nor is it only the memory of a pleasing experience. Its virtue is that it helps us afterwards to see the day's affairs in a long view.

Incomparable Dick

SIR RICHARD STEELE. By Willard Connely. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1934. \$3.75.

Reviewed by CHARLES DAVID ABBOTT

NO lover of the eighteenth century could fail to appreciate this book. It is long and solid, so rich in detail as to be, at times, almost heavy, and yet so compact of humor and enthusiasm that only the most anaemic of esthetes could call it dull. It is now forty-five years since Aitken, "that major-general of research," as Mr. Connely calls him, provided the world of letters with a compendious life of Sir Richard Steele. His was a full and authoritative work, to which this new biography gratefully pays homage. It is, however, no sin of supererogation for Mr. Connely, in his own vein of gusty but learned liveliness, to reinterpret Aitken's solemn array of facts and to add whatever details more recent delving has unearthed. Of these new findings, few are of more than minor significance, but among them are many that serve to increase the general air of hilarity that ought, by right, to surround a man of the Tatler's stamp.

Dick Steele was the most human and natural of the great Augustan writers. The others were each somehow abnormal

Ach and should be glad you would come to me in good humour, which would always banish any uneasiness of temper from, Dear Prue, your Fond Fool of a Husband.

He was extravagant and wasteful, not only of Prue's substance but also of his own talents and energies. He gave all that he had to each of his enthusiasms—to his friendship with Addison, which began in schooldays and outlasted even Addison's frigidity and greater worldly success; to the Whigs, whether in or out of power, for whom he suffered expulsion from the House of Commons, and from whom he received nothing like his just deserts; to the theater of Drury Lane where his own plays were acted, of which he was a manager, and which he served constantly with his knowledge and his influence; to the whole long series of his journalistic ventures, of which *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* were the most noteworthy and most long-lived; even to the promotion of his company for constructing fish-pools whereby live codfish could be supplied to London housewives at a reasonable price. He frequently failed, but no failure could leave him pessimistic. His vigor carried him through, dauntless and still jovial. Unflinchingly loyal, hearty, and honest, he blustered his way through life, making up with sheer courage whatever he lacked of finesse. He is a prime example of that rugged, full-bodied, eminently sane Englishman that John Bull is supposed to represent.

The great merit of Mr. Connely's book is that it presents Steele both as a public figure and as a private man, without for a moment losing sight of the essentials that made the important henchman of Lord Halifax and the agitated author of "The Crisis" identical with the seducer of Tonson's daughter and Prue's wastrel of a husband. Mr. Connely sought, he says, for five years "to know Steele as a human being."

Charles David Abbott, until recently on the faculty of the University of Colorado, has just accepted an appointment to the University of Buffalo. He is an authority on the literature and history of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and has done special work on Napoleon.

The Trance

By GENEVIEVE TAGGARD

IN middle life, that time of highest light,
When under every object clings its
shade,
I fell into an apathy of sight
From looking at the pattern overlaid

Across the earth, the dazzling bright and
dark
Complexity, the strange elaborate braid,
The tattoo, good and evil, heavy mark
Like that long twist the Snake in Eden
made

When he through pure pale leaves ran
mazy lines.

The diamond back of evil in all things
Copies that mark, its multiple designs
And still he falls along our earth in rings.

Such webby tangle in all earth's array!
My apathy like any shadow clings
To all the happy objects of high day.
Before the snake the bird shuts down its
wings.

Only declining sun or hazy eye
Can help indelible lines to shift or fade.
Then can the rigid bird come to and fly
Into the wave of the oncoming shade.

Himself, he has no shadow—belly tight
He skims our land and under him no
shade.

It is the sun, the very bliss of light
That gives the shadow out of dazzle made.

His coils are melancholy. Heavy snake
Crawl off a little way a little while!
When shall I from this reptile slumber
wake,
Move, salute the sun and smile.

Macaulay of the Microphone

THESE HURRYING YEARS: An Historical Outline. 1900-1933. By Gerald Heard. New York: Oxford University Press. 1934. \$3.

Reviewed by FRANK H. SIMONDS

IT is clear that what Mr. Heard is here attempting to do is to combine the separate arts of the historian and of the broadcaster. His obvious ambition is to be the Macaulay of the microphone. What he achieves is something vaguely recalling Fred Allen's "Only Yesterday" and much more exactly repeating the weekly reviews of *Time*. He is, as his book indicates, a master of the technique of the radio and also a skilful manipulator of the swift, condensed, and epigrammatic phrase which is the necessary detail of what one may describe as the literature of the air.

The merits of the method and of the style are obvious and there can be small question that listening to Mr. Heard over the radio would be at once stimulating and enjoyable, at least when he is discussing current events and more particularly questions that fall within his immediate field, which is that of scientific discovery. Applied to less recent happenings, employed to illustrate and illuminate the history of the years between 1900 and 1934, this fashion is less fortunate.

The explanation is simple. The business of the broadcaster is to capture his audience instantaneously, hold it continuously, and leave it with the "knockout" phrase which exactly coincides with the expiration of his time. Events have therefore to be dramatized, colored, marshalled in such fashion as to produce a vivid impression rather than to convey any notion of what actually occurred. What the listener actually gets is the report of how events should have happened to suit the needs of the radio. But of course history does not happen that way and the result is distortion.

My quarrel with Mr. Heard is perhaps the natural quarrel of the reporter with the dramatist. His book is a description of men and events over a period during which I have been interviewing the men and reporting the events, and in his narrative neither are recognizable to me. On the contrary, both have been "built up" until what results is comparable with a Hollywood version of any novel translated to the film. The film may be good or bad, but the fact is that the novel has largely disappeared. Such a transformation becomes more serious, too, when one is dealing with history.

There is, moreover, another vice in this radio technique. And this is the inevitable tendency to seize upon the propaganda interpretation of an event and use it as a realistic explanation. And in our times, when the propaganda machine of every nation is at work translating everything that happens into endorsements or indictments, justifications or condemnations, the distortions are beyond exaggeration. History becomes drama, the actors become heroes or villains, the outcome is high virtue or low vice.

Let me give an illustration of this, because it occurs over and over in this book.

"In May, 1915," Mr. Heard writes, "Italy was bought on the Allied side. She had been frank. The highest bidder should have her hand and sword." Now what actually happened was that Austria held in Trieste and the Trentino upwards of three quarters of a million of people who were Italian by race. These lands and peoples had been Italian Irredenta for half a century. What the Italian government did was to offer not its sword but its neutrality as the price of Austrian cession of this territory. When that cession was refused—Prince Bülow tells the story in his own memoirs—Italy joined the Allies, on their assurance that she should have her Irredenta after victory.

Mr. Heard's picture is that of a street walker among the nations selling her favors indiscriminately. Actually, however, the sole direct concern of Italy was to complete her national unification and it was undeniably a legitimate concern. Wisely her government sought to achieve

that end without war, but it never offered to fight with Germany against the Allies if it received Trieste and the Trentino.

The propaganda detail crops up in Mr. Heard's description of the German attack upon Verdun in 1916. He writes—

Strands of the meshes broke but the Retiarian defender had only to throw more nets over the stumbling aggressor until the attack collapsed in a squalor of destruction beyond anything humanity had so far achieved in the whole history of violence. The French lost 350,000, the Germans 500,000.

Now, in point of fact, the idea of Verdun as a "trap" into which Joffre lured the stupid Germans was the interpretation Allied propaganda gave to the operation at the time and everyone was deceived by it. But actually the German strategy after the first attack just missed success, was to "bleed the French white" by subjecting them to persistent pounding. Their situation tactically was such that they were bound to suffer heavier losses than the Germans and they did. Mangin, who played a conspicuous role there, reports in his "Comment Finit La Guerre" that up to the end of June the French killed numbered 156,000, the wounded and evacuated 243,000, that is 399,000 irrespective of the captured which must certainly have brought the total up to 450,000. By contrast, in the same time the German losses were less than half.

The German offensive at Verdun, while it failed to take the city, inflicted a terrible wound upon the French army, cut down the French participation in the Somme offensive decisively, and was one of the major causes of the mutinies and disorders in the French army in the summer of 1917 after the defeat at the Aisne. After Verdun, the French army was never the same. But for the purposes of radio history, just as drama is best served by presenting Italy as a prostitute, it is similarly advantaged by making Germany the stupid, hulking creature baited and netted by the clever adversary.

Perhaps I may be permitted one more illustration. Concerning General Pershing Mr. Heard says—

So May saw another smash, this time at Soissons, and till June the German last agony drove against the pricks. This was partly due to the United States stubbornly refusing to be amalgamated under Foch, Pershing (its commander) declaring that he would see the front back at the Loire rather than put his men in the hands of the French.

What actually happened was that after the defeat of the British Fifth Army in March, Lloyd George and Foch tried to persuade Pershing to let his soldiers be used as replacements to fill the gaps in the British and French ranks, although the British had large reserves in England. He refused, but he did send his green divisions to hold quiet sectors on both the British and the French fronts and his combat troops to fight with both armies under foreign command. And it was not

until after the victory of July, when the tide had turned, that he undertook to create a separate American army.

As for telling his fellow soldiers he would see the Allied ranks behind the Loire rather than his own troops under French command, that of course is sheer nonsense. Pershing has told the true story of the Abbéville Conference in his own book and no one has ever questioned his version. It was, at the moment, the British and not the French, who were pressing the issue. Pershing was not refusing to lend them all of his divisions until the immediate crisis was over. And while he was capable of telling both Lloyd George and Foch that he would see them in hell before he would surrender his troops for cannon fodder under alien command as mere replacements, he actually offered the Allies everything at the moment when Ludendorff smashed Gough in March and when the Loire came up in the Abbéville discussion he refused to take seriously what was intended as a bluff.

Once more—and for a British audience—how much more satisfactory to present the American general and his country as setting their own pride above the common cause and slyly intimating also that it was French command which was uniquely repugnant. But once more, nothing could be further from the truth and most British commentators of a later period have conceded that Pershing was right. It wasn't Pershing's fault the Germans succeeded at the Chemin des Dames; that came about because of Foch's miscalculation and the bad generalship of the French Army commander.

I have dwelt upon these details because they seem to me to be illustrative of the basic defect of trying to write history to accord with the double method of the screen and the air. Mr. Heard is the best example of this cinema-radio style I have met. His analysis is always plausible and not infrequently penetrating. His narrative has life and movement. His style is an amusing mixture of the firecracker and the wisecracker. Thus he notes—"How Europe blundered to and fro between two ways—the way of the Sermon on the Mount and the way of Machiavelli's Prince—(the year) 1926 illustrated vividly." And of the Ottawa Conference he writes—"So much water was put down and it is so uncertain whether a drop has come back that future historians may point to the heights of Abraham near the city of Quebec as the site where the Empire began and the city of Ottawa as the place where it was ended." These statements, I submit, might serve as fair examples of the new style to be described as "radioese" as contrasted with the "journalese" of my youth.

Reducing history to terms of the radio is, after all, a little like translating the features and figures of great men to marble—invariably, the better the statue, the less exact the likeness. Always, too, the sculptor is firmly resolved to subordinate accuracy to art. Only Winston Churchill, in our time, has been able to use the radio-cinema method to present history; all the others have employed history as an adjunct to the screen and of the loudspeaker.

Two Kinds of Magic

(Continued from first page)

nearly all the converts and even a white man in their following.

Miss Manners-Sutton first shows the whites as incontrovertibly opposed to the jungle and its life. She does little to explain directly how the Empire-builders are undermined by their own slow change, but her stories speak for themselves—the woman who bought a jar made by Googli and who fell ill and would have died if the jar had not been broken: Sister Marte, who tried to run away from the drums and in the end went back to Belgium a ner-



PAINTING BY C. LEROY BALDRIDGE
From the jacket of "Black God."

vous wreck: Admiral Delabouche, who met death in a crazy lone adventure. Magic wins, every time. The Congo remains the Congo in spite of electric light and iron bridges—that is, until M. Lafontaine fights the Black Master with his own black tools. For once civilization is saved, though M. Lafontaine himself is lost.

The book could be called a fantasy were it not for the flashes of grave, true detail which permeate the most fantastic passages. It could be called a true picture, save that there are deliberate impossibilities in it—for instance, the presence of the Black Master as a social equal among whites in the town bar, and the mysterious tribe of Monkey Men about which no one knows anything. We are even given a glimpse of that old Tarzan prop, the elephants' dying-ground. But what difference does it make?

No one will be able to confute Miss Manners-Sutton's interpretation of the black man's mind and its workings. The reviewer, disagreeing, is inclined to suppose the average black man as a creature more similar to the white man, as simple and as materialistic and very nearly as ignorant. But this is a question of opinion. It is a striking picture we have here, less of individuals than of an enormous pattern of people equally deftly drawn.

One remembers clearly the dwellers in the town. They are painted as they should be, at close range, with the merciless detail always evident in a constructed small colony. Madame Boul-Boul with her parrot. Lardi the ferryman. Llewellyn Jones the missionary. Brother Francois, who committed a horrible crime and was meted out a horrible punishment. It is nearly all beautifully written, and M'Kato himself could have given no better portraits of these puppets who lived and died before his eyes as he counted his beads and waited for his day.

"Black God" is on the surface detached, impartial. It is immensely superior to such sensation-mongering African books as those of Mr. Seabrook. In sum, it is not so much Africa, the true Congo, which is the substance of the book as it is the hidden meaning of it. In the words of M. Lafontaine, who wrote each day in his exercise-book in thin, old-fashioned handwriting, "It is not the jungle of which man should be afraid but his fellow-man."

Emily Hahn, who a year ago recorded her African experiences in "Congo Solo," is shortly to have a novel with that region for background published.



"THEY SHALL NOT PASS"—DEFENDERS OF VERDUN
From "The First World War" (Simon and Schuster)