

The BOWLING GREEN by Christopher Morley

Translations from the Chinese

Cold Turkey

ONCE upon a time, said the Old Mandarin,
Political speeches were limited
To a few thousand simpletons in a hall
Exhilarated by crowd contagion.

But now, sitting at home in cool judgement
Yourself can hear on the radio

Their poverty of intellect,
Their richness of mispronunciation.
I am actually embarrassed for them
Hearing their crisscross of stale quotation,
Their comic argument,
Their gobboon catchwords.

O candidates, be advised:
People are listening.

Whose Ear is Bored

I smile as I hear them reproach each other
For not living up to platforms and pledges,
As though anyone (but the Other Party)
Ever took a political platform seriously.
The very word means platitude, showmanship, artifice.

Even Jehovah, fortunately,
Never lived up to his savage platform
Communicated on Mount Sinai
And warned old Moses to look out
For "the servant whose ear is bored"
(See Exodus, XXI.)

A platform (like a pulpit) is something
to talk on.
Nobody lives there.

Refuted

Gossip said of Lady Curlynostril,
She drinks too much.
But when she invited me
To take wine in her boudoir
I noticed her corkscrew was rusty.

Footnote for an Advertisement

Martini & Rossi, or their local importers,
Show in an advertisement
A picture of a gentleman in a fez
Considering a beaker of Vermouth.
"Mohammedan photographed in Bombay,"
Says the caption.
But if really a Moslem
He was only looking.

According to the scriptures of Islam
He who drinks alcohol
"Will broil on the great fire."
Messrs Martini & Rossi,
Reading their Koran,

Have been misled by the word *jinn*
Which means a different kind
Of spirits.

Ceiling Zero

The ceiling of your Thinking-Room,
O. M.,
Bulges with crack and sag—
It will soon come down on your head.

Aye, said the Old Mandarin:
My ambitious daughter, Lady Quicksilver,
Does tap-dancing in the chamber above
Whenever she feels a small private mer-
riment
Or gets good marks
In her lessons.
If she wins her Imperial Scholarship
I shall be whelmed in plaster.

So does each new generation
Saltarello on the ceiling
Of its apprehensive and dubitating sires
But I rejoice they have something
To dance about.

February Filldye

Snow is beautiful
But there can be too much of it
And the ancient Chinese poets
Who praised it in crystal verses
Never had to drive a car
On icy roads.
But still, enduringly romantic
I maintain that snow
Makes brick steps wonderfully pink
When you sweep them.

Suggestion for Ladies

The sign in the subway said: *Be Considerate,*
Cover Up Your Sneeze;
But changed by the pencil of some kid-
der it
Substituted *Knees.*

Denouement

By old stage superstition
The tag or curtain line of the play
Is never spoken at rehearsal.
There may be some analogy there
That applies to ourselves.

Too Late

Certainly, cried the book agent,
You must have these four volumes
Of the world's greatest Encyclopedia of
Sex
3000 pages in a wooden box
And bound in gold and scarlet.

The autumn colors? said the Old Man-
darin.
No, I don't like your symbolism:

I'm too close to a wooden box myself.
It's too late for me
To learn about these things
From books.

And once again, he added, I implore
Your solemnly annotating sexologists
(Who may have lost much joy
By being too laboratory about it)
To make up their minds
How to spell Krafft-Ebing
Which not even the eminent Santayana
Can get right.

National Emblem

If there were no such thing
As a can-opener
Most of us
Would starve to death.

Narcissism

Spaniels make me think of Mrs. Brown-
ing;
So did they Mrs. Browning.
Did Robert ever tell his Portuguese
How like they were?
Same solemn eyes of saccharine despond
And ears that hang like ringlets.

Rx for Insomnia

Mrs. Browning, incidentally,
Wrote, in *Aurora Leigh*, an excellent
Advertisement for Book Clubs.
Fortunately near the forward end
Of that too solemn work
Or else I'd never find it.
It was old surly Fitz who had the gump-
tion
(While all the world was frothing with
acclaim)



Arnold Genthe
DR. S. I. HSIUNG, AUTHOR OF
"LADY PRECIOUS STREAM."

To say "No more Aurora Leighs, thank God."

And also it was Ba, high-minded dame,
First used the phrase "My public" as a jest.

But if you ever need a soporific
Have someone read *Aurora Leigh*, aloud.

Abstract of Title

Full of circumstance and savory detail
Were the titles used by elderly poets.
Why does no one now
Write poems such as these:—

*Hymn Before Sunrise in the Canal Street
Subway Station;*

*Ode on Intimations of Unpunctuality
From Recollections of the Long Island
Railroad;*

*Sonnet: On the Overdrawing of My Ac-
count*

*At the Williamsburg Branch
Of the Prune Exchange Bank;*

*Lines Composed Several Hundred Feet
Above 34th Street*

*On Revisiting the 88th Floor of the Em-
pire State Building
Where I Once Attended a Cocktail Party;
Or
A Palindrome on Being Cut Off
While Telephoning BRyant 9-0896
To Renew My Subscription
To the Saturday Review.*

Too Busy

Have you noticed, by the way,
Women don't have boudoirs any more.
Boudoir means a room to sulk in
And what woman nowadays
Has time to sulk?
They're either minding the baby
Or out looking for a job.

Thin Air

Most people read poetry
As our wirehaired terrier snaps a soap-
bubble:
An empty gulp,
A frail vapory sparkle on her nose
Not even wondering
Where it went.

Retreat from Utopia

(Continued from page 4)

with the dogged and silent practicality that always characterized his mundane life, testing the rum that was sent to the Guinea Coast,—for he meant to see that the darkies had good, strong rum,—while the poet slept within him. Three years of an outward stupefaction, years in which the shipmaster's son, who might have quelled a mutiny, obliged his incompetent staff to toe the mark. In the evenings, he read De Quincey with his wife. What music, what perfection of style in the less laborious passages! How could Hawthorne talk to these Salem people? Why should he talk, indeed, when the presence of an uncongenial person caused an almost physical contraction of his great masculine frame?

At the end of the three years, he moved to Lenox. He had written "The Scarlet Letter" in Salem, the book that had won his freedom; for under his mask of insensibility the poet had been alive and brooding there. In this winter of his discontent, he had also written a few fables and sketches, worthy of one whose first American forebear had brought from England with him a copy of Sidney's "Arcadia." The tone of "Main Street" and "The Great Stone Face," like that of "The Snow-Image," was of a dove-like innocence that often cloaked the wisdom of the serpent. No one else in New England had written such stories, or only one man, William Austin, the Boston lawyer, Dr. Channing's classmate. This well-known Harvard scholar and legislator, who had studied law in London, where he had known Washington Allston and written the "Letters from London," which all the American lawyers read because they contained such good descriptions of the British lawyers and statesmen, had published a handful of tales in the eighteen-twenties that were almost prophetic of Hawthorne. In "Martha Gardner," Austin, a Democrat and a radical, had scarified the modern corporations that fed on the miseries of the poor. Better than this was "The Man with the Cloaks," based on a German fairy-tale. The best was "Peter Rugg, the Missing Man." Austin had a robust, Rabelaisian humor that ran to the gigantesque, as in the story of the hungry teacher who wandered about the country drinking all the cows dry and cutting steaks out of the living oxen. "Peter Rugg" was a great invention, or one of those bold formulations of ancient inventions, the Flying Dutchman, the Wandering Jew, which, like "Rip van Winkle" and "Peter Schlemihl," come to the same thing. This tale of the man who disappeared from Boston and was constantly seen on the roads for fifty years, desperately whipping his horse, trying to find his way back, had all the overtones of the true folk-legend, the haunting suggestions of a symbolism that is always lending itself to some new turn

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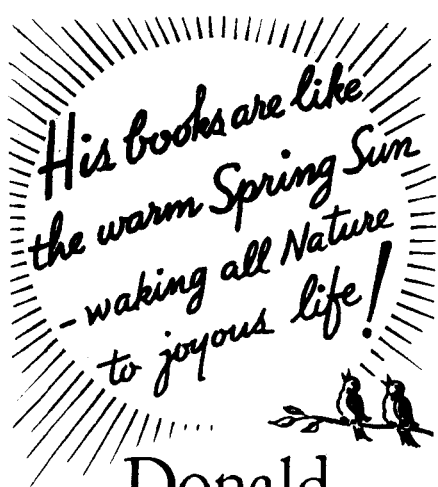
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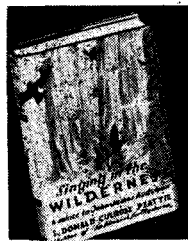


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Retreat from Utopia

(Continued from page 14)

of affairs. There were many Peter Ruggs, in days to come, trying to find their way back to Boston, the good old Boston of 1820; and the story was retold by later writers as if it had been a popular myth. The ambiguous atmosphere of the tale, the mingling of the dubious and the real, the play of light and shadow suggested Hawthorne. So did the old New England setting and costumes. Hawthorne was familiar with it. Peter Rugg appeared in one of his own tales. He was the door-keeper in "A Virtuoso's Collection."

At Lenox, the air was scented with sweet-grass and clover; and there, in the little red cottage on the lonely farm, Hawthorne had his year of wonders. There he wrote "The House of the Seven Gables" and planned "The Blithedale Romance"; and, while his wife made tracings of Flaxman's outlines on the dull-yellow painted chairs and tables, he told the children stories that explained the drawings, "The Wonder Book," "The Tanglewood Tales." Tanglewood, as the children called it, was a wild spot in the woods nearby where they all went for picnics in the summer and autumn. Hawthorne played the magician there. He was a great tree-climber, up in a flash to the topmost bough showering nuts all over the floor of the forest. From old door-knobs and strips of shingle, he carved little yachts and figures, a pugilist who swung his arms in the wind. In winter, he made images of snow. The image in the tale he wrote was singularly like a man of genius, a moral that he neglected to point. The father of the children who made the image, a man of common sense and kind intentions, wished to make the image comfortable, even in spite of itself. He carried it into the warm room, where it rapidly melted away beside the fire. Alas, for the poor snow-image that loved the cold, the frosty air, the north wind! The children had known very well it could only live under the stars that glimmered in the arctic night.

Hawthorne had become a father-confessor. Letters poured in upon him from unhappy souls who had been touched by his books. Secret criminals sought him out and came to him for counsel and relief. Most of his Berkshire neighbors were less exacting. Miss Sedgwick, the ageing novelist, lived at Lenox. At Mrs. Sedgwick's school, Harriet Hosmer, the merry little gnome, the sculptor of the future, was one of the pupils. Hawthorne was to meet her again in Rome; still later, he described her in "The Marble Faun." The Sedgwicks pervaded the Berkshires. Even the grasshoppers chirped, "Sedgwick, Sedgwick!" as one of their friends remarked; and Mrs. Sedgwick said, with a measure of truth, "En France tout arrive." Everything happened at Lenox, and everyone came there. Close by lived the lovely Fanny Kemble, whose Shakespeare readings in Boston were events of the forties and who also

appeared in one of Hawthorne's novels. Samuel Gray Ward had another villa. This dearest of Longfellow's friends, the correspondent of Emerson, the well-known banker in New York, had taken his degree at Tübingen. He had gone to California for a while and had learned so many Indian languages there that he had acted as an interpreter between the chiefs of various tribes who could not understand one another. He had translated a volume of Goethe's essays and had written a paper on Boccaccio that was one of the best in *The Dial*. His admirable essay on criticism, in Elizabeth Peabody's "Aesthetic Papers," contained two phrases, "creative criticism" and "significant form," that other men in later generations were to render more than familiar. Ward had bought Lafayette's library at La Grange and had paid for the publication of the poems of his old friend and schoolmate Ellery Channing. At Pittsfield, which had once been Wendellboro, named after his forbears, Oliver Wendell Holmes spent his summers. There he planted seven hundred trees and built himself a snug little villa on a knoll of the old Wendell farm; and there he wrote his best bucolic poems, "The Ploughman," for one, for he liked to play his part at the Berkshire agricultural fairs. At Broadhall, the old Melville house, where Major Thomas Melville had lived,—Holmes's "Last Leaf,"—Longfellow spent a summer, with Ex-President Tyler and Charles Sumner, for it was now a boarding-house. Major Melville's grandson, Herman Melville, was living at Arrowhead, on the outskirts of Pittsfield. Melville was composing "Moby Dick" and the great white whale was in his flurry. He was attracted to Hawthorne and wrote an essay on his books, and he often drove up to the little red cottage, with his big Newfoundland dog in the buckboard beside him. He told tales about the South Seas that were more exciting than Dana's. Once, describing a fight there, he laid about him as if with a club. It was so real to the Hawthornes that when he had gone they all asked, "What became of the club?"—which Melville had neither left nor taken with him. Melville and Hawthorne liked to lie in the barn, on piles of new-mown hay, discussing time and eternity.

Not far away, at Northampton, where Bancroft, at the Round Hill School, had taught Ward, Motley, and Ellery Channing, another writer had spent his childhood, the Hawthornesque novelist, Sylvester Judd. This hypersensitive, humble, shrinking soul, a Unitarian minister at Augusta, Maine, bred in the rigors of Calvinism, had passed through the Transcendental movement. His doubts and ecstasies had deranged his nerves. As a student of theology in Cambridge, he had been stirred by Goethe and Carlyle. He wished to destroy the barriers of the sects and exhibit the errors of false theology, war, capital punishment, the prison sys-

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*The record of a vanished era
that left its mark on all of us...*

ALMA MATER

THE GOTHIC AGE OF THE AMERICAN COLLEGE

BY

Henry Seidel Canby

author of THE AGE OF CONFIDENCE

THE men who went to college at the turn of the century are now in charge of this country. Their codes, ideals, manners, and designs for living imposed on so many of us, were born and bred on the college campus at a time when the new architecture was stepping it back to an imitation middle ages. What effect this Tudor atmosphere had on the minds and spirits of the young romantic barbarians who walked the college towns of the Gothic age . . . and what it did to the teachers and their wives, the alumni, and the college widows, has long remained an untold story in American education.

Henry Seidel Canby, a real son of alma mater, has here set down his matured impressions of this Gothic age of the American college. His has been the slowly shifting perspective of the student, the graduate, the teacher, and the critic looking back from the world outside. And having seen life at college from every point of view, he writes of it now with penetrating criticism, but also with that gently-humored affection which mellows the remembrance of things past.

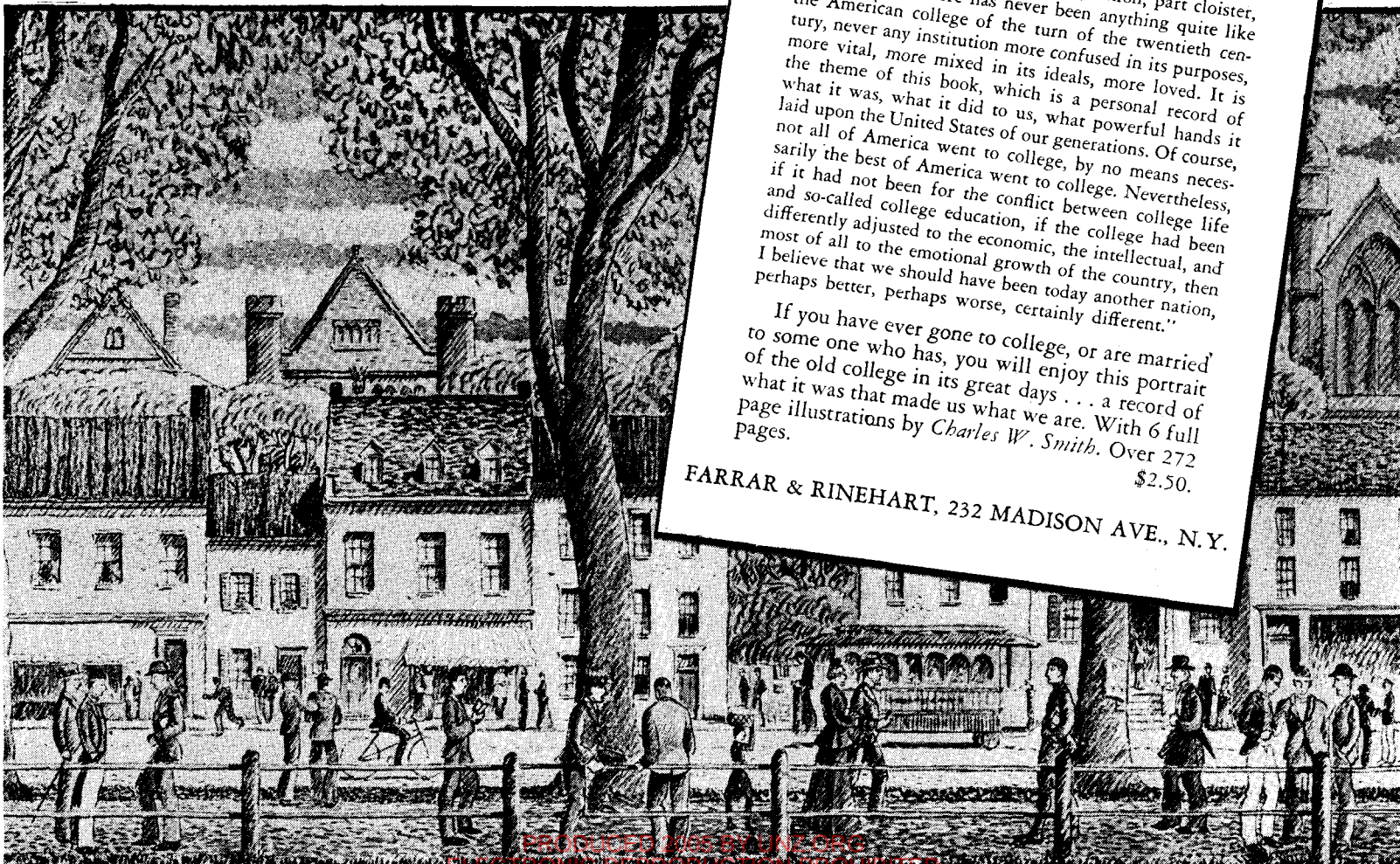
In this critical memoir of a long college experience in a time of change, Dr. Canby shows us, among other things, why professors' wives were dowdy, what their husbands *really* thought about, how college widows came to be, how the character of the students was strangely moulded by the great teachers of the past generation, why scholarship so often was arid and what influences of yesterday have conditioned the ruling class of today.

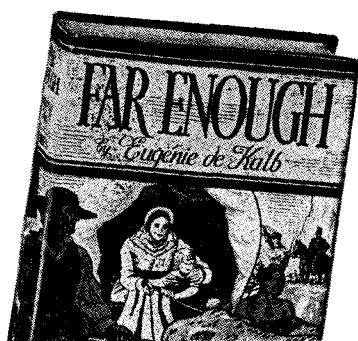
"The college I write of was more than an institution," he says in his preface, "it was a community with a vital life of its own, a state within the state . . . And just as the typical American of the nineties was a small-town man, so the dominant American type of our thirties is college bred. He chiefly, but also she, has been conditioned by the unique circumstances of a curious society, part training-ground for a ruthless competition, part cloister, part romance. There has never been anything quite like the American college of the turn of the twentieth century, never any institution more confused in its purposes, more vital, more mixed in its ideals, more loved. It is the theme of this book, which is a personal record of what it was, what it did to us, what powerful hands it laid upon the United States of our generations. Of course, not all of America went to college, by no means necessarily the best of America went to college. Nevertheless, if it had not been for the conflict between college life and so-called college education, if the college had been differently adjusted to the economic, the intellectual, and most of all to the emotional growth of the country, then I believe that we should have been today another nation, perhaps better, perhaps worse, certainly different."

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Retreat from Utopia

(Continued from page 16)

tem. His "Margaret" was a Utopian romance, the story of the daughter of a German musician, brought up in an old New England village who ends by transforming the village into a Mons Christi, with fountains like those of the Tuileries, belvederes and gardens, music rooms, observatories, halls of art, where the barren lands bloom with rye and corn, and statues of Peace and Truth and marble muses line the Delectable Way, where industry, economy, and love, simple fare, and attractive toil create an earthly paradise and men of all nations meet as brothers. This Fourieristic fantasy, more than a little drawn from "Wilhelm Meister," with a heroine often suggestive of Mignon, was quite in the Brook Farm spirit. It symbolized the feeling for art that was dawning in New England, the messianic socialism, the inspiration of German studies; and Judd's poem, "Philo," a metaphysical epic, found readers who believed it would convert the world. "Margaret" was obscure and confused, but many pages and even chapters were vividly picturesque and charmingly written. Judd had studied New England. He had filled his notebooks with observations of old houses, costumes, and village ways, the talk of the farmers, the husking-bees, Thanksgiving, the pedlars and hawkers of ballads at country fairs. His best scenes were as good as the best of Hawthorne. There was a touch of ecstasy in some of his descriptions, the thunder-storm, the winter scenes, the snow-storms, the sunny clearing in the summer forest, the coming of the flowers in spring, the horse-tails with their storied ruffs, the fleecy mouse-ear buds, the straw-colored blossoms of the bell-wort, the little polypods with their feathery fronds and the young mulleins, velvety, white, and tender.

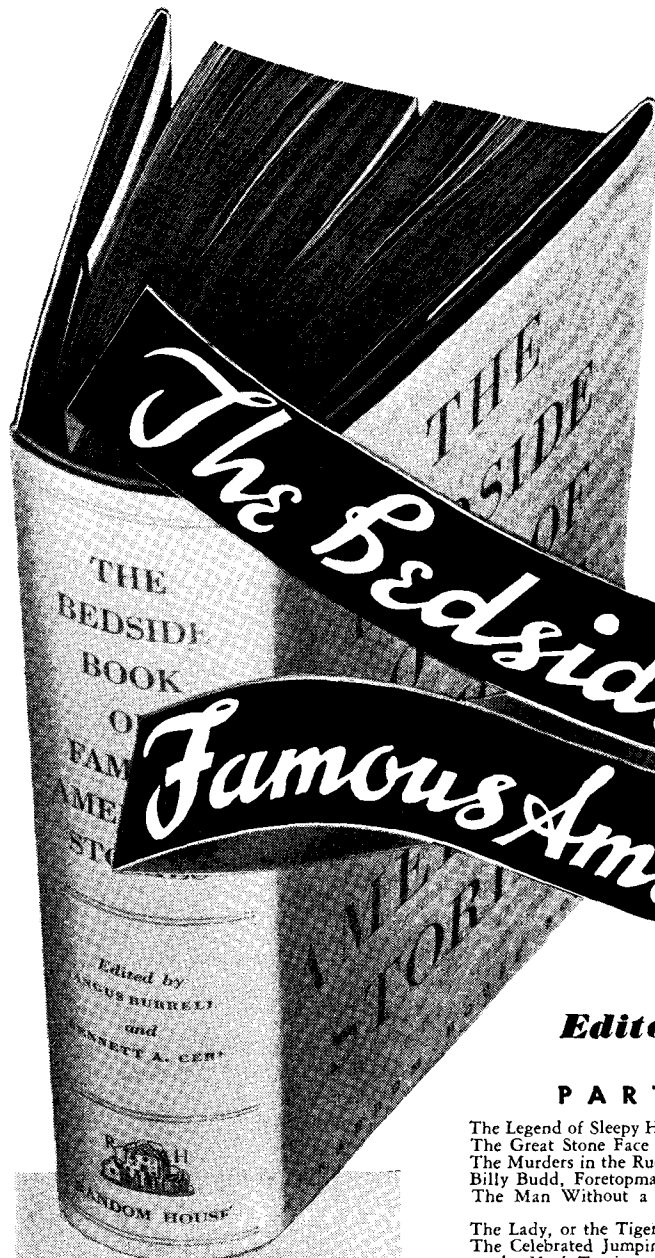
These were the scenes that Hawthorne knew at Lenox. Never quite at home away from the seashore, he still had hours there, on summer evenings, when he felt as if he could climb the sky and run a race along the Milky Way. Free at last after the leaden years he had spent at the Salem custom-house, his mind was at its fullest flood. His bones were astir, even to the marrow. Salem, the ancient sea-port of his boyhood, never loved by him, shunned indeed, and yet his own so deeply, seen afresh after his life at the Manse, which had given him a standard and a measure, Salem, dust of his own dust, and with it the Boston of Puritan times, pressed against and filled his consciousness. The scarlet letter A that had haunted his mind ever since he had written the "Twice-Told Tales," the witch, whisked up the chimney on a broomstick and flying away to a devil's communion far in the depths of the dark, still forest, the old colonial governors, the ruffed physicians, the ministers godly and of

ungodly fame, the women not to be repressed, the inquisitorial deacons, the elfin children of that Gothic world, prolonged from the Middle Ages, the Boston he had imagined, the Salem he had known, the queer gabled houses and the queerer people, the cobwebs visible and invisible, cobwebs of family pride and secret fraud, bloodstains telling tales and beams of innocent sunlight piercing through: all this had waited for the dam to break, for the moment of leisure and freedom, for his dismissal from the custom-house, another of those politicians' tricks,—a score that he could repay by picturing his enemy in Judge Pyncheon,—to be written out at his desk with the secret drawers, the haunted writing-desk with the tiny panels. He had painted these little panels with impish faces, staring and smiling, while he sat in his purple writing-gown, covered with golden palm-leaves. The dam had burst, in Salem, with "The Scarlet Letter." The overflow was "The House with the Seven Gables."

Years before, in Hawthorne's youth, in Salem, when he had written his tales in the little chamber, there had always seemed to be a driving snowstorm on the other side of the casement, or a cloud of dust in summer, a film, a veil. When he had stood at the window, on Sunday mornings, studying the church across the way, watching the sunlight stealing down the steeple, he had always stood behind the curtain. To see the world with a sidelong glance, "by a certain indirection," was second nature with him; and this was the mood his romances conveyed, as if, in spite of all their air of daylight, he had never looked straight at Boston or Salem, as if he had always seen them over his shoulder. It was this that gave him his effect of magic and made these beautiful books, with their antique diction, something other than novels and, if not greater, more intimate in their spell than novels can be. They clung to the mind like music, like Glück's mournful strains of the land of shades or the solemn joy of Mozart. Or, better still, like masques written for music in the far-off days in England of which one caught the dim reverberations in the scene of "The Scarlet Letter." Round about the players in the greenwood, one felt and saw the encircling darkness gather. The deepest shade covered "The Scarlet Letter." But the flickering play of the sun and leaves set the note of "The House of the Seven Gables." The story moved in a soft September light, melting like a happy dream of Shakespeare.

Van Wyck Brooks was an associate editor of the old Freeman and is one of the foremost critics of the country. His "The Ordeal of Mark Twain" was the forerunner of the re-estimates of American authors so general in the last few years. The essay printed above is to constitute a chapter in his forthcoming book, "The Flowering of New England," to be published in July by E. P. Dutton & Co.

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Moody's Love Letters

LETTERS TO HARRIET. By William Vaughan Moody. Edited by Percy MacKaye. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1935. \$3.50.

Reviewed by JOHN CORBIN

THE love story which underlies Moody's letters to Harriet Tilden Brainard is only half revealed, yet so far as one can gather and surmise is of rare biographic and human interest. Rather unexpectedly in a poet of moods so intense and full of color, it is not at all passionate, being rather a thing of tender and exalted friendship. It began in an accident while they were walking beneath the stars, a precipitous fall which shattered Mrs. Brainard's ankle and made her a cripple. Moody was a newcomer in the group of poets, professors, and artists who frequented her Chicago drawing room; but sympathy with the sufferer, together with “a sense of deep—bear with me if I say religious—gratitude for your gift of friendship,” impelled him to write to her. “I feel that in knowing you I have had a rich blessing—one that will enter for good into all that I do or become.” That was in 1901, when he was thirty-three. It was eight years later, in 1909, that they married—when he was himself a sufferer from the brain tumor of which he died in 1910. Throughout, the mood of that first letter is maintained, expressing itself in discussion of what he was seeing and thinking and writing, and of the books and plays of the moment.

And, throughout, both seem to have accepted long periods of separation as a matter of course. Harriet had a prosperous business in Chicago from which she could not absent herself; but she encouraged Moody to spend his long leaves of absence from the University in traveling abroad, and in residence in the literary metropolis. His travels ranged from Greece to the Arizona desert, and he had always a studio apartment in New York. Yet even so, individualist that he was, he had moods in which he felt her solicitude for him, her incitements to exalted achievement, as an intolerable burden.

At the time of the letters, most of the poems had been written which made Moody's first reputation and he was a commencing dramatist. Years before, Edmund Clarence Stedman had predicted that the next movement in American literature would be on the stage; and Moody and his friends were bent upon making the prediction good, preferably with poetic drama. “Our little group” he called them; and Percy MacKaye, in his scholarly and enthusiastic editorial comment on the present volume, names the “phalanx of five”—Moody, MacKaye, Edwin Arlington Robinson, Ridgely Torrence, and Josephine Preston Peabody. Moody's

poetic “Masque of Judgment” and “The Fire Bringer” did not reach the stage; but two realistic prose plays did, and they achieved a reputation which makes his comments on them to Harriet of prime interest today.

Of the second, “The Faith Healer,” William Archer once said to me that it was the finest American play to that date. He commended especially its simple naturalism and technical forthrightness. But to most of those who saw the performance it lacked conviction both as to the faith which the Healer professed and as to the nature of the love affair which played havoc with his power as healer and which is the dramatic core of the whole. One never quite knew what it was all about. Moody's letters, I think, show that he was in the same quandary.

“The Great Divide” bears traces of a similar indecision but the upshot was quite opposite. Stephen Ghent rescues Ruth from two drunken marauders bent on raping her, but his price (he also being in liquor) is that she go with him. They are married and there is a child. Shame for what he has done and a genuine love of Ruth bring out the best in a nature not really bad. But Ruth, out of an ingrained puritanism, steadfastly loathes him. As the play was first written, her similarly minded brother did likewise and finally shot Ghent. But somehow the end was wrong. After cudgeling his brains, Moody emphasized Ghent's essential decency and his doglike devotion; and, in a scene highly dramatic and convincing, Ruth recognizes that in his case the wages of sin are—regeneration. Never was a happy ending more sturdily resisted or more thoroughly warranted, artistically as popularly. Technically the play lacks decision and rhythm in outline; but it is by no means certain that a quarter of a century has brought us anything better in its kind.

To those who did not know him intimately, Moody seemed a creature proudly aloof and subject to glooms. He was, indeed, shy and—moody. But these letters, together with comments by the “little group” which Mr. MacKaye has piously assembled, reveal a nature of the most human and sympathetic charm. The humor which trickles from Polly of “The Great Divide” and illumines that really great poem “The Menagerie” was his lifelong companion. He loved animals as only a humorist and a humanist can, and he loved his fellow men as few humanists have succeeded in doing. And, for all its aloofness and its insistence on individual freedom, his love for Harriet and his steadfast devotion to her shine forth among the purest of epistolary gems.

John Corbin was for some years dramatic critic of the New York Times and later of the New York Sun.