

Letters to the Editor: *A Housman Variant; What Women Like*

Not a Misprint

SIR:—In your issue of January 9 John Haynes Holmes queries the reading of one line in A. E. Housman's "More Poems." The variation he notes between the reading of that line in the poem and the reading as it appears in the table of contents is a genuine variant, inserted by Laurence Housman himself. It is not a mistake.

The artist who drew the frontispiece of A. E. Housman is Francis Dodd. On the picture it is printed as Francis Todd but this is an error which was corrected in later editions.

BERNARD SMITH

(for Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.)

New York City.

(According to another correspondent, the variant reading does not appear in the English edition.—Ed.)

Generalizations

SIR:—When you talk about Books Women Don't Like, don't you think you ought to say *what* women? In I. S.'s list, for example, I find three of my own prime favorites, Voltaire, Fielding, and Flaubert. I don't think taste in books is a sexual characteristic. In general, people like books consonant with their own temperaments and experiences, and women as well as men have changed since most of those authors wrote. I imagine most men also would be bored today by Sterne or Smollett. I have found that only one generalization is valid—and that is that generalizations generalize too much!

MIRIAM ALLEN DEFORD.

San Francisco, Cal.

A Wyoming Library

SIR:—The day after I received an excited letter from a friend in Wyoming, telling me about the new library in the little town of Dubois, the *Saturday Review of Literature* with its "Library Crisis" editorial arrived.

Dubois, a town about ninety miles from a railroad station and with a population of 177, is starting a library with 800 volumes and five magazine subscriptions. No wonder you say that "there must be a highly efficient library system in Wyoming."

Being a librarian by profession (sometimes I think it was by birth) I should like to borrow some of that Western enthusiasm for both our library patrons and staffs.

KATHARINE D. PATTERSON,
Sullivan Memorial Library,
Temple University.

Philadelphia, Pa.

"Beggars Ape"

SIR:—Because I received no proof before the publication of my introduction to Richard Niccols's "Beggars Ape" by the Scholar's Facsimiles and Reprints of 106 Seventh Avenue, New York City, I wish to explain a seemingly categorical statement in the final sentence. The gist of this sentence was that the Ape in "The Beggars Ape" and the Ape in Spenser's



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"Mother Hubberds Tale" represented the same man, Sir Robert Cecil. No one has ever stated in print that Spenser's Ape represented Cecil; but for reasons of unity and space I could not defend the theory there. My copy therefore bore a brief footnote to the effect that I should presently publish the interpretation elsewhere. That footnote was omitted entirely. May I say here that an article entitled "The Ape in Spenser's 'Mother Hubberds Tale'" will appear soon?

BRICE HARRIS.

Pasadena, Cal.

Erratum

SIR:—Through a slip in the manuscript, for which you are not responsible, an error appears in my recent review of Guérard and Plekhanov. As printed, I am made to say that none of the great

Shakespearean tragedies is laid in England. The phrase should be "contemporary England," "King Lear" being, of course, a play about supposed English history.

HOWARD MUMFORD JONES.

Cambridge, Mass.

Fishing Cat

SIR:—Old Quercus's mention of the All-Nations prize book and the Rue du Chat Qui Pêche makes me think perhaps you are not familiar with a story by Edna St. Vincent Millay in *Century* some twelve or fourteen years ago. The title is (I believe) "The Inn of the Fishing Cat," and the story concerns the last remaining eel in a tank in a restaurant where the diner might order his dinner alive.

WILLIAM B. THOMAS.

Wichita, Kansas.

Juicy Missiles for Pacifists

WE CAN DEFEND AMERICA. By Major General Johnson Hagood. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1937. \$2.50.

Reviewed by

R. ERNEST DUPUY, Major, F.A., U.S.A.

IT is unfortunate that General Hagood has seen fit to combine in one volume a rehash of World War history, some premises—both sound and unsound—upon national defense, some aspersions upon the War Department and particularly upon the General Staff, and lastly, some extremely interesting observations from his own long experience, upon the American soldier, his capacity for work, and what an enterprising commander can get out of him to the benefit both of the individual and the government. Doubly unfortunate, for the resultant pot-pourri, well seasoned with General Hagood's "they're all out of step but me" attitude, will not only cause much heavy breathing in the over-stuffed chairs of the Army and Navy Club but will furnish ammunition for every half-baked amateur seeking a short cut to national defense as well as providing juicy missiles for pacifists to hurl.

Not that General Hagood has wittingly adopted any other basic attitude than that of the true pacifist—the patriotic soldier, who knowing war, hates it and its horrors and desires only that his country be so strong as to prevent that calamity falling upon it. His avowed objective is adequate national defense. However, as he himself expressly states in his introduction—"Whatever I have to say is directed against an institution set up many years ago and the results of its gradual development." It is here that this reviewer feels that General Hagood, in his enthusiasm multiplying his objectives, has violated, as many other soldiers before him, several of the sound principles of war, to wit: the principles of the objective, of economy of force, of simplicity, and of coöperation. Hence his attack, losing momentum, bogs down in a mass of glittering generalities and bitter scoldings.

General Hagood proposes in brief, and I quote him, this defensive policy:—

First, we can stay at home and attend to our own affairs.

Second, we can build a fence around our property and warn everybody to keep out.

But a warning must be backed up by a force. An ugly dog in the yard or a peaceful bull in the pasture is very discouraging to trespassers. If, in addition, to this, it be known that Uncle Sam has a shotgun handy, it may save considerable trouble.

He proposes abandonment of protection to our seaborne commerce; he dubs this country self-sustaining and independent for vital necessities except "rubber, chromium, antimony, and tin." And he makes

some interesting and provocative arguments upon our future world policies. His defensive recommendations are first, a high-seas navy second to none; second, a permanent and powerful system of sea-coast-harbor defense; third, an up-to-date air corps of reasonable size, and fourth, an essentially defensive army based upon American needs. "Let us keep out of foreign entanglements," writes General Hagood. "Let us pray for peace but keep our powder dry." Here are sentiments which every patriotic American must applaud.

It is to General Hagood's proposed mili-

tary remedies that most soldiers will take exceptions. He tosses aside the theorem that the best defense is the offense. He points out, and properly, that our geographical situation is enormously favorable to defense. But he is seemingly concerned only with east-west defense, and, urging modernization of harbor fortifications to prevent an enemy seizing a necessary base, ignores our north-south defense insofar as a mobile army is concerned. Yet—granted the friendliest relations with our neighbors—it might be logical to assume that the mythical enemy could make his base in their territory, willy-nilly.

But it is in his attack upon the entire existing scheme of national defense that General Hagood is at his worst. He ig-

Spanish Burning

BY AUDREY WURDEMAN

... The destruction this week of Liria Palace, seat of the Duke of Alba and Berwick in Madrid, by fire caused of insurgent incendiary bombs, wiped out one of the finest palaces and part of one of the most notable art collections of Europe ...

—New York Sun, November 21st, 1936.

I CAN imagine water out of a rock,
Or God in a burning bush, with a fiery accusing hand;
I can imagine how the heavens darkened and the whole earth shook
On that first Good Friday: miracles like these are not hard to understand.

But it is hard, even as we see it, as we remember,
To know how any man can keep courage or pride,
Or find any peace or time for peace, in the number
Of those who pillage and slay, or have starved and died.

Men have endured somehow, through drouth and winter.
Some died; a small but a hardier growth remained,
Even as the sea-pine, precarious on a craggy splinter,
Splits the cliff with its root, forces the rock to retain it, finds substance and so is sustained.

Men can endure the things that earth does to them
Better than the passionate wrongs they do to each other,
Better than the crucifixion, the arenas, the gassed lungs, the bullets, the bayonets
through them,
The child stabbed, still in the womb, the pain-mad mother.

Men have endured even these, and come out clean after,
With a lowered pride, perhaps, and a horror behind them,
And still they could learn again the uses of laughter,
And after a little the grass grows over the trenches, and there is nothing to remind them.

Knowing all this, still it is easier
To believe the miracle of the rod of Moses,
Than to think that men will ever again prefer
Peace, and thought, the olive groves and the garden of roses,

Since they bombed the castle and burned its façades and approaches,
And the mocking birds sang with terror in those fiery halls,
And the tapestries writhed like marvelous monstrous torches,
And El Greco and Goya charred upon the walls.

There are certain acts that shame this earth and its people:
The burning at Alexandria, the bonfire of books at Berlin,
While the righteousness of tyranny clanged from every steeple,
And clear flame turned to a filthy thing, and men canonized their sin.

A Caesar could loot the world, slay and be slain, yet decently value
The Antioch Cup or the art of Praxiteles.
Ask the burner of beauty, the civilized slayer, and he will tell you
That the Caesars were pagan and savage; nevertheless they were not of these.