

sealed both their dooms. After that there was no possible end but the axe of Fotheringay and the dungeon at Dragsholm.

In sympathetic hands such as Mr. Gore-Browne's, Bothwell loses the disfiguring taints which have so relentlessly pursued his memory, and acquires a kind of nobility. Lawless, obtuse, dangerously proud and obstinate as he was, he still commands the respect due a hero—a misguided hero, even to his defender, but one whose sins have not deserved the opprobrium meted out to them. To cleanse him from the dirt of his legend is the book's prime purpose, but to fulfill that purpose its author has had to write a complete history of Mary and her court. And this he has done with such imaginative insight and such skillful narrative ingenuity, with such rightness of phrase and flavor of wit, that the result is a book to renew an appetite for Marian history even among readers whose digestions have rebelled against the spate of biographies of the Scottish Queen which the last thirty years have seen.

Murder in the Fourth Dimension

TO WALK THE NIGHT. By William Sloane. New York: Farrar and Rinehart. 1937. \$2.50.

Reviewed by N. L. ROTHMAN

THIS is a really superior mystery story that has moved out of the Criminal Record and claims attention as a novel. Readers of Miss Dorothy Sayers know how fine such a story can be. This one is an especially remote variation from type, for there is no detective in it but only an absorbing and impenetrable problem, a group of finely developed characters, and a terrifying solution that fights its way up to the surface and makes you believe in it. Even the sketchiest mention of plot would be treachery, but it can do no harm to suggest that if Mr. Sloane had been content to write his story as a straight thriller he might easily have called it "Murder in the Fourth Dimension." He has done a great deal better than that; his book is probably twice as thrilling as the easier one might have been because of the style and deliberation that have gone into it. It is true that Mr. Sloane permits his first person narrator to stop too often for such banalities as this: "I stopped speaking and began to sift the sand of my memory once again—." These interpolations make the story creak a little. Yet it keeps moving and building its tension and grasping at your imagination until the creaking vanishes out of hearing. "To Walk the Night" is the work of an interesting writer whose next book, whatever it may be, will be well worth reading.

Lonely Bluestocking

THIS SHINING WOMAN: MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT GODWIN, 1759-1797. By George R. Preedy. New York: D. Appleton-Century Co. 1937. \$4.

Reviewed by ALEXANDER COWIE

"I HAVE long ceased to expect kindness or affection from any human creature." In these words, written two years before her death, Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin unwittingly called attention to the essential irony of her life. A champion of women's rights and the rule of reason, she was governed in her own life by imperious emotions. Most of all, her nature craved a happy domesticity. This was denied her in a childhood home harshly controlled by a drunken father and a domineering mother. Her many lonely, celibate years as governess, teacher, and writer brought her economic independence and fame but not solace for her sensitive spirit. First awakened to romantic love at the age of thirty, she set her affections on a man (Henry Fuseli) whose wife could not be reasoned into sharing her home and husband with an eccentric bluestocking. Finally Mary formed a precarious home with Captain Gilbert Imlay, father of her first child. She was ineffably happy, but she had given herself to Imlay "without pact or bargain," and when his fancy rode away, she had recourse only to impassioned pleas: rights she had none. Twice she attempted suicide. Later she lived with and (still later) married the extremely unromantic but kindly William Godwin; at least he could give her life some stability. She died at thirty-eight in giving birth to a daughter, who was Mary Godwin Shelley.

A new biography of Mary Wollstonecraft should do one (or all) of three things: present new facts, offer a reinterpretation of her character, or retail the story of her life so well that the book should stand as a work of art in its own right. George R. Preedy's "This Shining Woman" is wholly successful in none of these respects. The author makes no claim to having presented new materials; indeed he has apparently not examined all the old. Mr. Preedy performs a service in emphasizing the fact that Mary Wollstonecraft was often a difficult and perverse individual. Yet there is in his commentary an undercurrent of impatience, almost of censoriousness, which impairs the critical value of his work.

"This Shining Woman" is avowedly "the story of [Wollstonecraft's] life . . . not her opinions or time." As such it is an orderly and substantial summary of known facts plus a certain amount of conjecture. The author avers that his work is no "romantic biography," but he does not scruple to supply facts and even scenes where history leaves lacunæ. He believes that there is justification for



MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT GODWIN
From the portrait by John Opie.

giving problems their "most likely solution" in the interest of "a connected narrative." The point is doubtless debatable, but in this instance the author leaves the reader with the conviction that the tragic history of Mary Wollstonecraft needs no touching up by the methods of fiction. The style of the book is too often marred by cumbersome and repetitious expression. This is the more deplorable because there are many passages which prove the author capable of writing good prose. The book as a whole probably achieves something like what the author intended, but it is a fair question whether the aim was worth while.

Japan Meets America

THIS SOLID FLESH. By Bradford Smith. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co. 1937. \$2.50.

MR. SMITH'S novel of inter-marriage between Japanese and American presents the usual array of conflicts: the cultures that cannot blend, as well as the sharper, internal schisms that torture each of the lovers. But more notable than the plot itself, which is thoroughly and soundly developed, is the perfection with which the Japanese characters of this story are made known to us. Here is a writer who can perform that miracle of understanding, letting us know the Japanese as they know themselves, from behind their own eyes. The portraits of Yuki, the daughter of a Samurai, and of her son Masao, whose American education bridges the gap between the old and the new Japan, are profoundly realized. Certainly Masao's view of American life will prove a healthy experience for anyone who, like this reader, too often forgets to look up and try to see it afresh. We may hope for a Japanese novelist who can give to his people as intuitive a perception of the American mind as is Mr. Smith's of the Japanese.

The BOWLING GREEN by Christopher Morley

The Folder

It Well May Be

WE, being lovers, find abundant share
Of beauty on this earth. We've caught our breath

In wonder, praise and thanks for many rare

And many common things. We fear not death,

We who have lived with beauty all our days.

It is by death that beauty is reborn
In all the myriad numbers of her ways
That change eternally from morn to morn.

For when we die, it very well may be
A blade of grass in spring will seem more green,

A drop of water in the sea more blue,
A breath of air we must have breathed more free.

So shall we be eternal on life's scene
Recurrent and as timeless as the dew.

F. P. F.

The Green, cleaning up for a vacation, asks permission to ventilate various matters that have piled up in the Folder. ☞ Rod Maclean (Glendale, Calif.) asks us to include in our list of rivers with picturesque names the *Snoqualmie*, in Snohomish County, Wash. ☞ Peter Greig (vintner) writes imploring us to state that "the wine best adapted to the American summer climate is *Tavel*, a Vin Rosé from the Rhone Valley. Walter Duranty and I had a bottle for lunch last Saturday at the —, 375 Park Avenue." Peter's cunning in omitting the name of that famous café but giving the address, wins our heart. But after that he gets carnal and talks about breasts of Guinea Hen and a Tart of Artichoke Bottom. ☞ The oldest library in New York State, the Society Library of N. Y. C., founded in 1754, moved last week to its new home. We know a landed proprietor down on the Chesapeake who will not borrow books from any other library. ☞ Columbia University Press remarks that the earliest Rental Library in New York was started in 1763. ☞ Replying to an inquiry what do Librarians read, Carl Milam of the A. L. A. was found in his room at the Waldorf (during the recent convention) poring over *An Iris Lover's Catalogue* from Schreiner's Iris Gardens, St. Paul, Minn. He told us that all the famous *Mitchell* variety of irises are named for Sydney B. Mitchell, director of the library school at the University of California. ☞ Mr. Milam had on his table *Gardening*, by Montague Free, and *101 Ranch*. His room-mate Charley Rush of the Yale Library didn't have any books at

all but was smoking his famous pipe shaped in a likeness of Napoleon. ☞ Delighted to find our iconoclast friend Albert Mordell (in the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, June 17) boldly escaping from the inundation of McGuffey publicity that has swamped the U. S. in recent years. There was one region, Mr. Mordell points out, where we never heard of McGuffey. Lewis B. Monroe, a Boston elocutionist, was the fellow who taught us Philadelphians to read, and Mordell has finally gathered a complete collection of the old Monroe Primers and Readers, which were universal in schools of Philly and neighborhood in the 80's and 90's. The Bowling Green paid tribute to the Monroe Primer 2 or 3 years ago, and we gladly echo Mr. Mordell's halloo. Up Monroe, and conspuez McGuffey—who was probably responsible for the rubber-plant flavor of much American writing in late 19th century.

☞ If I ever compile an anthology of *Letters That Don't Get Answered* (with an Appendix saying Why) here will be one of them. This is not only textual, but frequent, under the modern Project System of Trying to Get Other People to Do Your Work For You:—

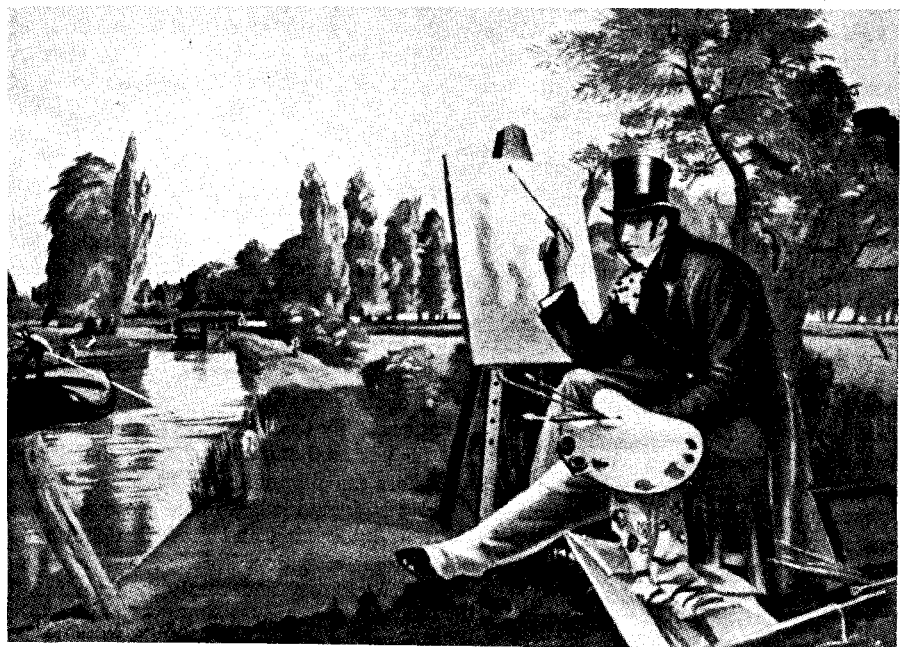
"As a graduate student in the English Department of — College I am interested in securing the personal viewpoints of American men of letters regarding Current Trends in American Literature. These expressions of opinion are to be included in an original essay which has been approved by Professor — in fulfill-

ment of the requirements of his course. Will you . . . ?"

The exciting word here is *original*.

☞ Hearty support should be given to the University of Pennsylvania Press (3622 Locust Street, Philadelphia) in its gallant Proposal to publish some hundred hitherto unprinted American plays, mostly of the 19th century. By the diligent efforts of Mr. Barrett H. Clark the MSS have been brought to light from public and private collections. They include unpublished dramas by John Howard Payne, Montgomery Bird, Boker, Boucicault, Daly, Steele MacKaye, Bartley Campbell, James A. Herne, Charles Hoyt, and many others. It is hoped to begin publication, about five plays in a volume, in 1938. The price is tentatively put at \$4 a volume; it would greatly facilitate the plan if the publishers were to receive now assurances of subscription when as and if the volumes appear.

☞ I asked whether the C. B. & Q. Railroad had ever noticed Willa Cather's charming poem that begins "How smoothly the trains run beyond the Missouri." Mr. A. Cotsworth, Jr., Passenger Traffic Manager, showed me that they have reprinted it in their advertising booklets and also occasionally on dining car menus. ☞ The most unusual instance of a railroad getting steamed up about poetry was when the Official Guide of the Chicago and Alton Railroad, in 1873, reprinted large slabs of Browning's *Sordello*. Why, we can't imagine. For the curiosity of



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