

# The BOWLING GREEN by Christopher Morley

## Retreat

I SAW a broken soldier in the West  
With antique tricorné hat pulled forward low,  
His poor old shoulders hunched, his chin  
on chest  
And belt and sabre sagged. I saw him go  
Reeling and tottering, but still he pressed  
In one direction only. Driven so,  
A left, a right, mechanical, possessed,  
The Guard retreated in the Russian snow.

I looked again: my veteran was gone  
Across the frozen wilderness of space,  
But somewhere he slogs desperately on  
Limping, and accoutrement awry,  
Like Napoleon's marshals in disgrace—  
Orion, that great straggler of the sky.

## Turbary

*The Knothole, April*

I was declaiming a sonnet to myself,  
to see if it had a good sound (and it's  
easy to fool yourself: one's own voice is  
so agreeable to himself when we are  
alone; but I wish something could be  
done about English pronouns) when I noticed  
that I was disturbing a robin who  
is building her nest in the grape arbor  
just outside this window.

No matter where you go in this exciting  
world you interrupt somebody; or  
vice versa.

I discovered in Webster the delightful  
word *turbary*, which means the right to  
dig turf on someone else's land.

With the present controversy going on  
in this *Review* I'm almost afraid to mention  
Shakespeare: but I was naturally  
pleased to find Professor Schelling  
(*Shakespeare Biography*, Univ. of Penna.  
Press) saying that "the strangest book  
in any Shakespeare library is one entitled  
*Select Observations on English Bodies of  
Eminent Persons in Desperate Diseases*,  
1679, by Mr. John Hall, Physician." Mr.  
Hall was Shakespeare's son-in-law; for  
his wife, Shakespeare's daughter, his most  
successful prescription was "a pint of sack  
made hot." Last autumn I had a chance  
to persuade the Library of Duke University  
to buy a copy of this rare book. The  
date of the Duke University copy, however,  
is 1657.

All this public discussion whether the  
various universities will or will not send  
delegates to the 200th anniversary of Göttingen  
seems to me wretchedly bad manners.  
If they don't wish to be represented  
let them say no and keep quiet about  
it. I can't help thinking that if they're  
so keen on vindicating intellectual independence  
they'd be glad to send their delegates  
to a place where (we are told)  
it needs help. What have universities to

do, in essence, with momentary political  
absurdities?

Does anyone remember the song by  
George Canning that began—

When'er with haggard eyes I view  
This dungeon, that I'm rotting in,  
I think of those companions true  
Who studied with me in the University of Göttingen.

Myself I'm pleased that my own small  
college (Haverford) is one of the few  
who have accepted the invitation. The  
small colleges don't make nearly so much  
sanctimonious ballyhoo about liberalism  
and academic freedom as do the big universities,  
but sometimes I think they live  
up to them better.

One of the most interesting catalogues  
I've seen lately comes from Scribner's  
bookstore. It lists over 400 works (mostly  
first editions) illustrating the progress of  
Science and Thought in the 19th century.  
A student could scarcely find a more provocative  
guide-book for speculative reading.  
I like the quotation it uses as motto:  
—"The frequent and rapid transition of the  
mind from one subject to another. It is said  
booksellers have sometimes become deranged  
from this cause."—This is quoted from  
Benjamin Rush, *On the Disease of the Mind*,  
published in Philadelphia in 1812.

This leads into something that justly  
solicits the attention of solvent book-lovers.  
The Library Company of Philadelphia,  
the oldest literary society and

public library in America (founded in  
1731 by Benjamin Franklin) is in serious  
need of more members. Owing to decline  
in value of its invested funds there has  
been an operating deficit for the past five  
years, and the endowment must be increased.

The Library Company, whose collections  
in early Americana, history, fine arts  
and general literature are among the  
most remarkable anywhere, is not merely  
of importance to Philadelphians. Its scholarly  
resources and its service of sending books  
by mail to subscribers have made it  
useful to students everywhere. Except  
in the case of current books (published  
within two years) the subscriber has the  
privilege of taking out as many as 12  
books at a time, for a period of one month.  
Among its members have been Benjamin  
Franklin, George Washington, Tom Paine,  
Lafayette, Talleyrand, William Cobbett,  
Edgar Allan Poe, Thackeray, Walt Whitman.

Of the Library Company, Owen Wister  
has written:—

"It was here when Philadelphia was a  
village thirty-nine years old, before the  
State House was built, before Washington  
was born. Benjamin Franklin fathered  
it, James Logan was its godfather, ten  
of its members signed the Declaration  
of Independence, Lafayette made it a  
present, British soldiers used it. Ninety  
years later some of its property reappeared,  
sent from England—Crantz's  
'History of Iceland,' two volumes, bor-



"THE LIBRARY COMPANY," PHILADELPHIA  
(Founded in 1731 by Benjamin Franklin)

Philip B. Wallace

rowed by Major Trent during Howe's occupation of the city, which the Major had forgotten to return before he went away."

The Library Company does not ask for charity but needs more subscribing members. The cost of a share is \$20, and full information can be had by addressing The Library Company, Philadelphia.

In answer to my question, what do collectors do with their "small wares," Rollo G. Silver (Brockton, Mass.) reports:—

"In almost every library there is a closet and in that closet there is a metal filing case (brought home while instituting A System). The closet is used for catalogues and the filing case used for everything else. When the door of the closet is open, this section is part of the room. When it is closed—all is safe.

"Thus in my file, there are such souvenirs as a page of the Gutenberg Bible, a towel from the Walt Whitman Hotel (Camden, N. J.), an advertisement for Socony gasoline which shows you on the air, a book dealer's boast of a 'beautiful Trollope in parts,' and a few spare tins of tobacco."

### Buckingham Palace

(After You, Mr. Milne)

They're changing kings at Buckingham Palace—

Christopher Robin went down with Alice.  
"The Bachelor King was off his guard  
And Cupid hit him terrible hard,"

Says Alice.

They're changing kings at Buckingham Palace—

Christopher Robin went down with Alice.  
We looked for Edward, but George Sixth came.

"Oh, well, whatever is in a name?"

Says Alice.

They're changing kings at Buckingham Palace—

Christopher Robin went down with Alice.  
"A Coronation is grand, but zounds!  
I wouldn't be King for a hundred pounds,"

Says Alice.

ALICE GOULD.

### Intellectual Slavery

The Caliph A. Edward Newton, founder of the Trollope Society, has quoted almost everything available apropos in praise of old Anthony. But I have not noticed whether he has used the closing words of the late Professor Saintsbury's *Trollope Revisited*—

"Commending Trollope, as a first step backwards, to any one who has the praiseworthy desire to free himself from the most degrading of intellectual slaveries—that of the exclusive Present."

This is to be found in Volume 2 of the 3-volume set of Saintsbury's *Collected Essays* (Dutton, 1923), which we have so often mentioned as (next after a subscription to the *S.R.L.*) the ideal graduation handseil for a student of literature.

# Uncrowned King

EDWARD VIII. By Hector Bolitho. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co. 1937. \$3.

CORONATION COMMENTARY. By Geoffrey Dennis. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co. 1937. \$2.

Reviewed by GEORGE DANGERFIELD

WHEN Edward VIII abdicated, Messrs. Bolitho and Dennis—each of whom had written a book for his coronation—were, one imagines, faced with an extremely nice question. Should they destroy what they had written, and thus lose all? Or should they, by revision or addition, invest the friendly pages intended for their former sovereign with an opposite but more up-to-date significance?

Mr. Bolitho's book, we are told, was all but completed "before the Simpson affair had become public knowledge. After the abdication he was forced to rewrite, revise, and add a great deal of new material to his manuscript." What the biography must have been like before Mr. Bolitho was forced into this revision, it should not be difficult to guess. Biographies of kings, published at the time of their coronation or accession, necessarily have one thing in common. They present their subject as an idol which, being discreetly deprived of feet, seems to float a little insubstantially above the common earth. Mr. Bolitho's revision was a simple matter of putting in the feet: and these, of course, he speedily discovered to have been composed almost exclusively of clay.

Had circumstances been different, his enthusiastic and easy pen would undoubtedly have traced as conventional a portrait of Edward VIII as ever was imprinted on a coronation jug; but now this figure has to share his pages with a less prepossessing personage—"a man of promise who came to disaster through the slow disintegration of his character." There was a Hyde, it seems, as well as a Jekyll in Mr. Bolitho's former sovereign. Jekyll is generous, gentlemanly, energetic: Hyde is an irresolute, parsimonious, frustrated creature with a propensity for sacking old servants. Each character seems to have canceled the other out.

Mr. Geoffrey Dennis, not pretending to that intimacy with royal affairs which a sojourn in the Deanery at Windsor had bestowed upon Mr. Bolitho, found himself with quite a different sort of book on his hands. "Coronation Commentary" is a history of one hundred years of British royalty, tracing those steps by which the Crown lost power and gained prestige; and to this there was appended some very adequate theorizing on what the King Is and what he Does. Unhappily, however, there were two further chapters called "All The Other Edwards" and "Edward VIII." What was Mr. Dennis to



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EDWARD VIII (Portrait by Lander)

do? He steered a bold course and, without changing a word of what he had already written, tacked on another chapter called "Abdication."

Of the King's private life he had remarked in a previous chapter, "little remains of it. Leave it to him." But this thoughtful advice did not, of course, apply to an ex-king; and in "Abdication" Mr. Dennis rather let himself go, with the result that his victim instituted a libel suit. Here are a few examples of what Mr. Dennis can do. "His lover's prodigality; his shrill King's rage." "Hours of erratic, or erotic, obstinacy." "He left his land with kingly dignity; he repaired to the welcomer company of rich American Jewesses." "For Queen of England an itinerant shop-soiled twice-divorcee with two ex-husbands living was not good enough." One does not have to be a supporter of monarchy to find this inept invective a little difficult to swallow. It is easy to see that Mr. Dennis has assumed, for his last pages, the mantle of Carlyle, a garment more calculated to envelop than to invigorate its wearer. It is more difficult to see why he bothered to write them at all, since the most careful investigation reveals nothing more than facts which we already knew and fancies in which we had already indulged.

What the two books have in common is a certain agility in the transferring of allegiance from Edward to George. Where they differ is upon the one point of interest which the abdication ever raised. Was the King forced off the throne, or was he not? Mr. Bolitho, all discretion, assures us he was not; Mr. Dennis is convinced that he was. Which leaves us just where we started.