maniac.) There is a long and involved plot in which three rivals of the old Jew (one of them a priest suspected of perversion) make various attempts on the old Jew's life, finally succeed, plant the evidence—with the aid of counterfeit fingerprints (!)—on Stéphane, who has by now become an important member of the Front Populaire.

Stéphane eventually goes to the guillotine, after an episode in which Simone is introduced into his cell for a last night of Gallic love, which is described in detail. The whole story is told with a kind of furious insanity; there is nothing to indicate why the author was interested in writing it, or even what it is all about. The book closes with a soliloquy of Simone's which is a travesty of Molly Bloom's in "Ulysses," but which contains one remarkable passage. "Oh paint, my persuaded brush! I have mixed oil and egg." So, it seems, has the author.

To the Manner Born

EARLY STAGES. By John Gielgud. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1939. 311 *pp.* $3.50.

Reviewed by JOHN ANDERSON

JOHN GIELGUD took all the traditional precautions urged upon young actors by having himself born into the right family. His mother, his grandmother, and his grandfather were all players. Ellen Terry was his aunt. While the Lithuanian family that his father belonged to ran, for the most part, to cavalry officers and stockbrokers, it dated back to 1561 and could boast, if it pleased, of such extra-curricular theatricalism as the assassination of General Anthony Gielgud in Poland, in 1831.

Mr. Gielgud, with much talent of his own, has made in the theater the most of his background, and makes

the most of it in his somewhat premature memoirs. He is frank to admit that he wangled his way to important parts in the London theater through family pull, though it is obvious that he wouldn't have been able to work a system of blunt nepotism if he hadn't had ability in his own right.

There is, of course, no more surprise in this than in, for instance, young Ford's going into the motor car business, and any precocity indicated may be tainted with family indulgence. Hence Mr. Gielgud writes no personal story of surmounting difficulties. He is not the boy who made good in spite of everything, and any pressing need for his life story would come, I suppose, from matinee idolatry in London rather than for any special pertinence.

What he has to say makes up an informal sketch casually anecdotal with a few and not very revealing glimpses of the great Dame Ellen. From it we learn that Mr. Gielgud, to use his own phrase, was "delicate and artistic" as a child, fond of playing charades, and doting upon the theater. By inference he confesses to the "Terry charm" and explains that he plays the gramophone after his morning bath, which is just the sort of news Mr. Gielgud's public would doubtless lap up.

Of actual theater comment there is not much that is rewarding, possibly because Mr. Gielgud's experience has not been great, and because he has not had time to formulate his ideas. His experiences at the Old Vic make up the best part of it, and he stops short, rather coyly, with Hamlet's first lines in Mr. McClintic's production at the Empire year before last. "There was more to add, and time to add it."

He read these lines with a fresh and pregnant inflection that promised a brilliant performance. But it was a flash in the pan, not to say panning. The portrayal dimmed and dwindled, with occasional moments to offset its less comfortable fritilary aspects.

Though he is now thirty-five, Mr. Gielgud doubtless has his maturity and his best work before him. If his life, until now, seems rather uneventful, he has obviously had as good a time living it as he has had writing about it, which should make Gielgud worshippers happy too.

Hervey Generations

THE CAPTAIN'S WIFE. By Storm Jameson. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1939. 335 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by BASIL DAVENPORT

THE chronicle justifies itself when, as in "Remembrance of Things Past," it presents a whole cross-section of life and time, or if, like "The Forsyte Saga," it has an artistic unity, climax, and denouement of its own. But too often we see a writer go on writing about a family with which he has become identified, although he has said all he has to say about them, or when what he is saying belongs somewhere else. Thus several of the middle novels which make up M. Roger Martin du Gard's "The Thibaults" are mere interruptions to the theme, and even to the characterization, which begin and end it; it is hard not to feel that Galsworthy was marking time in the last three Forsyte volumes following the "Saga;" and Miss Jameson, having told a good story very well in the group of novels which cover the life of Mary Hervey, now adds to it a dragging coda of books about Mary's daughter Sylvia. "The Captain's Wife" is one of these; and it is also one of those numerous English novels, all too many, alas, which show the most competent writing, characterization, and background, but present a series of incidents with no real plot, climax, or meaning.

The reason for this is "The Captain's Wife" so completely violates Aristotle's rule for tragedy, that the action should be single, complete, and of a certain magnitude, as also that it should have a beginning, middle, and end. In these post-"Anthony Adverse" days of bulky books and trilogies issued together, there is no excuse for bringing out a volume of which the action is not reasonably self-contained and comprehensible; but "The Captain's Wife" is full of allusions to important past incidents which have no meaning to a reader who has read some but not all of its predecessors. At the opening, Sylvia is already married to a man of lower station than hers; she has already quarreled irretrievably with her mother; she has already ceased to love her husband. There might still be a field of action for the book, if Sylvia made any effort to make the best of her life and her relations, but she does nothing of the sort. Her three children grow up, the boy is killed in the war, and one of the girls makes a success of writing; but Sylvia herself is unchanged. She merely spends half a lifetime repining at her changed circumstances. Now, if that is all that is to happen to her, then her story is all over before the rise of the curtain, by the time she has found that she does not love her husband; the story that is told of her here is neither beginning nor middle, but only one long bitter end. Admirers of "The Lovely Ship" and its companions can only hope that it will be the end indeed, and that Miss Jameson will find for her great talent some vein where the returns are not so diminished.

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Dream and Poetry

(*Continued from page 4*)

playwrights. These poets as continually frequented this disastrous no-mans'-land, this frontier between the known and the only imaginable, as did the merchant adventurers of their era the frontiers of danger and romance. Mangan, Thomson, George Darley, Christina Rossetti, and, in his own peculiar kind, Richard Barham, poring "past midnight over his black-letter folios and his port"—theirs, too, is a limbo of treacherous twilight, or that Egyptian darkness which in nature, but less seldom in their writings, precedes the dawn. Their rhythms echo with "those cadences That breathe in night from the secretive ground"—the secretive ground of the spirit of man.

For moral or conventional reasons, we may regret that every creative work of the imagination had its seed in the "Unconscious," and that its flowers and fruit, like those in Aladdin's magical garden, owed their origin to a graft of the waking mind on the wild and ancient stock of dream. Human dignity would prefer to assume that what we think and do solely by conscious and rational effort, by an act of the will, is of a greater value and merit than anything else we achieve. Indeed, will and effort in this world's affairs—we know it to our cost—are of paramount importance. But that we should owe a debt past all computing to subliminal resources that we cannot even define! Well, our "gifts" are gifts; no faculty of mind or body is self-acquired; the self-made are only the self-adjusted or mal-adjusted; self-interest is not Self-interest; and genius seldom boasts. Nor, again, is it by an act of will or by the exercise of reason that we take pleasure in color and form and pattern, an acorn, a rainbow, a tree in the wind, a dancer at rest; that we delight in beauty, welcome goodness, recognize truth, acquire ideals, choose our friends, or fall, and stay, in love? Or even, for that matter, see a joke? Can argument, however cogent, finally break us of any innate conviction and belief; that, for instance, in "the vision of the wholeness of life" which inspired T. E. Lawrence?

In a poem, we may demand "meaning": clear evidence of an intellectual aim and purport; and many fine poems have this in abundance. Yet a mere trace, and that perhaps prosaic when it is detached, is all that is needful. "Even," says A. E. Housman, "when poetry has a meaning, as it usually has, it may be inadvisable to draw it out." And so too, again, with dream. The more beautiful the beads or precious stones, the less attention we pay to the thread. Are our wild daisies any the less lovely when only very loosely woven into a chain? A poem's supreme significance, like that of a child or a bird or a loved one or a saint, is purely its own beautiful pregnant self. If music is the most perfect of the arts because it is the least diluted, and if poetry most closely approaches music when it is most poetic, when its sounds, that is, and the utterance of them, and when its rhythms rather than the words themselves, are its real if cryptic language, any other meaning, however valuable it may be, is only a secondary matter.

Since language is acquired and is not innate, the intellect must supervise its use as a medium; but it cannot of itself originate poetry—any more than a craftsman originates the material in which he works. The mind is in the service of the imagination, not vice versa. So too, like Newton voyaging into strange seas of thought alone, the man of a poetic genius discovers his own ocean; he cannot create it. Nor is he wholly responsible for the scrawled chart in his pocket, although, if he is to bring his pined-for cargo home, he must be master of his craft. Intent on a stuff as nebulous as that of dream, he must so record this inward vision that his refractory symbols, words, shall lull here, awaken there, any reader enchanted by them into listening. The sounds enshrine a curious and exquisite mimicry of the bodiless phantasmata that were occupying his solitude, that were his joy and his despair. Nor is his incentive a mere John-o'-Dreams lullaby, or a target easily detected or hit. Energy alone can reach that gold, given the archer and the arrows of desire.

"Men," says John Aubrey, "fall into an Ecstasy many ways . . . and Ecstasy is a kind of medium between sleeping and waking as sleep is a kind of middle state between life and death. Things seen in an Ecstasy are more certain than those we behold in dreams: they are much more clear, and far more evident." The effect of a fine poem resembles this ecstasy. The rainbow is on the water; there is a murmur of the deep; the mainland vaguely looms on the horizon; and from out of the green corners of the earth and the blue regions of the day the sirens are singing. If, as I have proved at the suggestion of a friend, Dr. Scott Williamson, if, when at rest we quietly contemplate an object but release our direct attention from it and let that attention stray instead hither-thither over what is to be discovered in motion in the field of vision, not only is the experience likely to be memorable, but, however wide awake the mind may then be, consciousness is apt to stray into a state of delighted abstraction. I recall at this moment a scene so watched—a pool of grey-blue water under an autumn sky and within sound of the sea; reeds, grass, solitude, silence; and a host of martins criss-crossing in their mazy flittings as if they were inscribing some ancient rune on the empty air. This remembrance has all the qualities of a rare dream. So with a poem. Consciousness, as we read, becomes a passive mirror of how wide a field of echo and solitude and beauty; and this also within sound of the Sea. An invocation has transported us, in both senses of the word. The body, as in sleep, is bidden not to interrupt us, not to attract that attention without which the workaday world ceases to exist. The poetic experience is an island of rapt realization. We turn away, as from the characters in a loved, and yet, at last, elusive face. If we are interrupted, then the immediate memory of the poem resembles in its own small fashion the shattered dream of the Lord God that was the garden of Eden.

All lyrical poetry beats with the heart, tells not of things coldly and calmly considered, but of things seen and felt in a sudden clearness of the senses, and with a flame in the thought. An insatiable delight in life haunts it, and the keen mortal regret that stalks in life's shadow. It springs from a height of living, however transitory, a tension of spirit, a sense of wonder and mystery, a faith in all that is held most dear, a hope and hunger for an unknown that transcends the known. This can only be partially expressed in language, and in glimpses — only in "a net of thoughtless delight," perhaps. How, indeed, does the commonplace and the obvious look, when the eye regarding it is haunted with passion or sorrow or despair?

Just, then, as the leopard or the lamb is one species of living creature, and the hawk or the ox is another, so among humans stands out this particular temperament. It shares the life that is common to all men, but it possesses life in this kind more acutely and abundantly, and it has the faculty of communicating it. Why this is, and why it is the gift in particular of certain races, who can say? It reveals, past reason, an unearthly rapture, a desire that will not perish in the having, the vision of the immortal beyond change.

And in sharp contrast to these graces are weariness and homesickness, a vain longing, a craving for sleep and for death. Yet even to the keenest home-sickness there is an edge of rapture. Burdened with the

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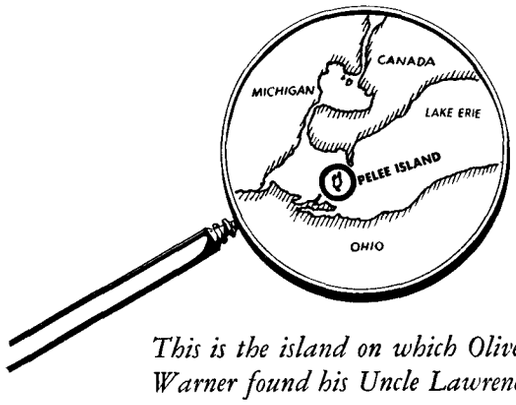
complexity of the lives we lead, fretting over appearances, netted in with anxieties and apprehensions, half smothered in drifts of tepid thoughts and tepid feelings, we may refuse what poetry has to give; but under its influence serenity returns to the troubled mind, the world crumbles, loveliness shines like flowers after rain, and the further reality is once more charged with mystery.

For this reason every imaginative poem, as we allow it to use us, itself resembles in its onset and in its effect the experience of dreaming. Only listen to a few such onsets: "Fly, envious Time, till thou run out thy race"; "Faire fall all good Tokens"; "Full fathom five thy father lies"; "Hide, Absolon, thy gilte tresses clere"; "Sweet *England's* pride is gone, *welladay! welladay!*"; "Leave me, O Love, which reachest but to dust"; "My Soul, there is a country Far beyond the stars"; "Of all chaste birds the Phoenix doth excel"; "O, what can ail thee, knight-at-arms, Alone and palely loitering?"; "Tyger, tyger, burning bright"; "Wake, all the dead! What ho! what ho!" Is it in *these* terms that our day-life presents itself? What effect on the gravest and sagest conversation, let alone a frivolous, would be the least explosive firework of this order? What kind of self is here self-communing? What order of listener lies in wait for incantations such as these?

A dream-self, surely; as well as a waking self. Just as it was a dream-self that kept the poet company in the conception and in the actual composition of his poem. "I can aver," declares Mr. Herbert Read in his "Collected Essays," "that all the poetry I have written which I continue to regard as authentic poetry was written immediately, instantaneously, in a condition of trance." In widely differing degree this is true of all poetic experience. But a poem, however ethereal its content may be, has been packed in a material verbal basket, has been distilled into a transparent phial. Yet its symbols carry it as lightly and unobtrusively as a rose carries its dew, or an animal its nature. It therefore has a formal and finished loveliness which few dreams can achieve, but which even dreams may occasionally bestow. It is exquisitely at liberty in a cage of words which it is not only a joy to examine, but which is as necessary to all that it holds for our delight as the skin of a cherry is for the security of its stone.

The foregoing article will constitute a section in Walter de la Mare's forthcoming book, "Behold This Dreamer," shortly to be published by Alfred A. Knopf.

The story of a little island, a fascinating gentleman who lived there, and a strange and unusual book



This is the island on which Oliver Warner found his Uncle Lawrence

ONE summer Oliver Warner, a young Cambridge student, set out for Canada to find his uncle, who had been lost to his family for years.

Now when you think of a "Colonial," you picture a big, outdoorish Englishman, perhaps engaged in ranching or farming. Oliver Warner had never seen his uncle, but he never could have imagined what he found!

For Uncle Lawrence turned out to be a shy and diffident little gentleman, threadbare and existing from hand to mouth in the midst of the wilderness; his home a shack full of tin cans and wild-eyed, hungry cats; a man who could hardly see because his one pair of glasses (patched together with adhesive tape) were twenty years old—yet who had kept, somehow, the culture and habits of English life, a humorous, gentle philosophy and faith to carry him through the loneliest of existences.

Surely Stanley's meeting with Livingston was no stranger than that of this uncle and nephew on a little island in the middle of Lake Erie . . . "All my life I have dreamed of this moment" . . . "Does it seem far away—England, and all that?" "It did—till you brought it back to me." . . . Nor has Kipling or Conrad or any other chronicler of England's far-roaming empire-builders ever written more feelingly or graphically of the empire's outcasts. Gradually Uncle Lawrence's story becomes that of a whole group of exiles, differing widely in circumstances and occupations, drawn together by a common anxiety to keep up their own self-respect and a common affection for the country which few of them would ever see again . . .

Out of these strange circumstances, it is not surprising that Oliver Warner has produced one of the surprising volumes of the season . . . a book which, recently published in England, has captivated the critics there. DAVID GARNETT in *The New Statesman* called it "One of the most charming sketches from real life that I have ever read. It is extremely moving." SEAN O'FAOLAIN said: "This little book is a gem among books; a lovely thing. I beg, almost implore, that it be read by everybody who has a regard for that rare enough thing in English fiction—warmth of heart . . . So tender and so touching that nobody need be ashamed of admitting that it brought tears to his eyes . . ." The correspondent of *The Christian Science Monitor* wrote: "The humor, the emotion of that visit have been caught by him with a remarkable art." "The story could have been told in no other way . . . Uncle Lawrence is an acquaintance worth making" said *The London Times.*

"Uncle Lawrence" is a short book, as short as *Mr. Chips* . . . and like that other little masterpiece it introduces a character so lovable, so gentle, and so real that he will linger in the reader's memory for years. Random House has just published it in America, with the sincere feeling that very many readers of the *Saturday Review* will find it moving and memorable . . . a book for that favorite shelf limited to volumes which will be read and reread.

UNCLE LAWRENCE

by OLIVER WARNER

A RANDOM HOUSE BOOK • $1.50

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Inspired Rebellion

WHISKEY REBELS: The Story of a Frontier Uprising. By Leland D. Baldwin. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press. 1939. 326 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by ALLAN NEVINS

IT has long been evident that a little more lay beneath the Whiskey Insurrection than the conventional historians have indicated. It has usually been treated as the great initial test in which the strength of the new Federal Government rose superior to its semi-traitorous enemies. When challenged by disorder, the national authorities proved that they had sufficient vigor to maintain domestic tranquillity and enforce law; and they thus won a much-needed respect for the Constitution, and set valuable precedents for the future. This is the Federalist or Eastern point of view. Congress in the spring of 1791 had passed a much-needed excise act to provide adequate revenues. The turbulent inhabitants of the frontier got a wrongheaded view that their just interests were being assailed—though Hamilton correctly explained to them that the whiskey-consumer would pay the tax—and rose in revolt. When Washington asked the governors of four States for 15,000 militiamen, the disorders promptly ended; but not until a valuable lesson had been taught. The Western point of view, however, was very different. By exploring both sides of the controversy impartially and analytically, Mr. Baldwin has shown that the subject was more complicated and its rights-and-wrongs were less clear than has been supposed.

He does not deny that the case of the Western frontiersman against the excise law was by no means good; but he does show that it was decidedly better than Alexander Hamilton would allow. By virtue of heredity, frontier psychology, and geographical situation, the Monongahela farmer disliked excise taxes. He thought that the government's needs should be met by a direct tax on land, the chief burden of which would fall on the East. Since he did not see twenty dollars in cash a year, the payment of the tax on his whiskey—which he bartered for groceries and other commodities—was a difficult problem. He disliked the searches and seizures of excise officers as Eastern colonials had disliked the searches and seizures of British revenue agents. But worst of all to him was the fact that when he was arrested he was haled off to trial in a federal court in Philadelphia. Apparently the law was contrived to catch him; and when caught he would have to drop farm work, leave wife and children, go three hundred miles to court, and pay lawyers and witnesses. It was too much; and when prosecutions began, the marshal who tried to serve processes encountered armed men. What was needed in face of these armed men was tact, and tact was just what Secretary Hamilton did not supply. He acted with a provocative ineptitude that, according to Mr. Baldwin's evidence, looked rather deliberate. For Hamilton was never inept in such matters unless he meant to be.

Mr. Baldwin brings out clearly some of the reasons why Federalist leaders wanted a little rebellion which they might neatly crush. Still, admitting frankly that the rebels were in the wrong, he makes it plain that they played completely into the hands of the East. The episode justified all the preachments of Hamilton and his associates upon the importance of a standing army. It greatly strengthened the Federalists in the election of 1794, when they kept control of both houses of Congress by safe majorities. It gave full strength to the refunding and assumption laws, in which the propertied classes of the Atlantic seaboard were so much interested. In short, while the crushing of the disturbances was no doubt most patriotic and just, it also had certain political and economic results which were extraordinarily welcome to the party and the economic class in power. This may have been coincidence, but one suspects coincidence when Hamilton is in the background. As for the still deeper significance of the revolt, it pointed to a growing cleavage between the agrarians and pioneers on one side, the industrial and mercantile class on the other.

It should be added that Mr. Bailey has recounted the incidents of the rebellion with spirit and color, and has painted an especially good portrait of that extraordinary figure Hugh Henry Brackenridge.

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