

Baker — Grayson

NATIVE AMERICAN: The Book of My Youth. By Ray Stannard Baker (David Grayson). New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons. 1941. 336 pp. \$3.

Reviewed by ALLAN NEVINS

THIS graphic narrative opens with a picture of the arrival of little Ray Stannard Baker, wondering-eyed, at the age of five, in the frontier village of St. Croix Falls in northern Wisconsin. Grant was in the White House. This wilderness area was just being exploited by the lumber interests. So rough was the environment that when Baker's mother saw the sun rise next morning on the straggling, unpainted hamlet, populated by woodsmen, rivermen, French-Canadians, and Scandinavians, she wept. But as a sturdy urchin Baker soon learned to like the forests, the swift streams, the Indians, the lumberjacks, and the untamed life of the area.

The book ends nearly twenty years later, when Baker is settled in Chicago as a reporter on the *Record*—the paper of Eugene Field, Brand Whitlock, and George Ade. Cleveland was in the White House. The city was filled with poverty and unrest; indeed, the whole country was seething with discontent. Baker had made up his mind to write the great American novel, and he was intently studying the poverty and resentment that sent Coxe's army marching on Washington, produced the clash between Federal troops and the Chicago railroad strikers, and made Bryan the leader of millions of angry farmers. Between frontier St. Croix and boiling Chicago the youthful Baker had trodden a tortuous path. He had been student, school teacher, business man (a very poor one), library-worker, and journalist. For long he had been uncertain of his goal. But at last he had found himself. Studying social conditions with a keen eye for wrongs but with a deep conviction that reform must be gradual and organic, he had become certain of his calling. Soon he was to be writing for *McClure's*.

In these many-faceted pages, full of simply-told incident and homely dialogue, we have essentially a tale of spiritual and intellectual growth. Baker is interested chiefly in the forces in his environment that awakened his natural gifts. He was of Yankee stock, almost purely English in origin, with a background on his father's side of generations of landholders and pioneer farmers, and on his mother's side of dissenting ministers. He had the stuff for growth, but it took a good deal

of stumbling to find where he could best fit himself. His mother, gentle, beautiful, and sensitive, never fitted the frontier, and taught him her taste for beauty. His father, robustly adventurous, a believer in discipline and effort, and a lover of books, was a born story-teller and teacher. He liked to pour out anecdotes, to pump sudden questions at the six boys, and to argue with a cousin for hours over Herbert Spencer. Two old aunts had a hand in moulding the lad, and one of them indented endless romantic stories for his delight. He fell in with a State Geologist—no less a person than T. C. Chamberlin, later president of the University of Wisconsin—who showed him the meaning of the rocks in the Dalles, and fired his enthusiasm for geology. For a time he thought he would become a scientist. That ambition was temporarily confirmed when, going to the Michigan Agricultural College at Lansing, he fell under the spell of Dr. William J. Beal. It was an enduring spell. Beal, a man of great gifts, had learned part of his teaching method from Agassiz; part he had invented for himself. He

trained a large group of scientists who set their mark on agriculture and forestry all over the United States—Eugene Davenport, Kenyon L. Butterfield, J. W. Toumey, and many more. He made Ray Stannard Baker's brother Charles, in later life long dean of the University of the Philippines and a noted entomological collector, an ardent scientist. He almost made the author one. But the young man met Montaigne; he went on to the University of Michigan and met Fred Newton Scott and Kipling. Out of his wider reading and slow thought gradually emerged a sense of mission that led to great hardships, many hard knocks, even with Jane Addams, with numerous journalists and social workers, and with Opie Read. The new Baker, the man who was to be in the forefront of the muckraking movement had fairly well emerged when he met "the potato-car boy," whose rough lot gave his interest in American injustice a new stimulus. He was ready for his lifework. The story of how that was done, Mr. Baker reserves for another volume—which we hope may be as simple, warmly human, as philosophical and thoughtful in temper, and as winning as this tale of boyhood, youth, and young manhood.

Your Literary I. Q.

By Howard Collins

LITERARY LADIES

Miriam Allen DeFord, of San Francisco, is the author of this week's quiz. She says: "These literary ladies all have husbands who also possess literary connections. They write, however, under their maiden names. What are the names which appear on the title-page? Allowing 10 points for each correct answer, a score of 60 is par, 70 is good, and 80 or better is excellent." Answers are on page 18.

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| 1. Mrs. Herbert Agar. | () Clare Boothe. |
| 2. Mrs. Joseph Auslander. | () Dorothea Brande. |
| 3. Mrs. Henry Beston. | () Vera Brittain. |
| 4. Mrs. George E. Catlin. | () Eleanor Carroll Chilton. |
| 5. Mrs. Seward Collins. | () Elizabeth J. Coatsworth. |
| 6. Mrs. Horace Gregory. | () Josephine Herbst. |
| 7. Mrs. Harold M. Harwood. | () F. Tennyson Jesse. |
| 8. Mrs. John Herrmann. | () Dorothy Thompson. |
| 9. Mrs. Sinclair Lewis. | () Audrey Wurdemann. |
| 10. Mrs. Henry Luce. | () Marya Zaturenska. |
| 11. Mrs. Norman Matson. | () Leonie Adams. |
| 12. Mrs. John Metcalfe. | () Pearl Buck. |
| 13. Mrs. Harold Nicolson. | () Babette Deutsch. |
| 14. Mrs. George Oliver.
("Oliver Onions") | () Sarah Bard Field. |
| 15. Mrs. Allen Tate. | () Susan Glaspell. |
| 16. Mrs. William Troy. | () Gloria Goddard. |
| 17. Mrs. Richard J. Walsh. | () Caroline Gordon. |
| 18. Mrs. Charles Erskine
Scott Wood. | () Berta Ruck. |
| 19. Mrs. Clement Wood. | () V. Sackville-West. |
| 20. Mrs. Avrahm Yarmolinsky. | () Evelyn Scott. |

"From Beowulf to Wodehouse"

THE CONCISE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE. By George Sampson. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1941. 1094 pp., with index. \$4.50.

Reviewed by R. ELLIS ROBERTS

"FROM Beowulf to T. S. Eliot and P. G. Wodehouse"—thus the blurb; and it by no means fully represents the scope and ambition of the original fourteen volumes, which Mr. Sampson has epitomized with an uncanny tact and skill. For Beowulf, T. S. Eliot, and P. G. Wodehouse, not to mention a fair number of poets, dramatists, novelists, essayists, humorists, and nonsense-writers intervening between the heroic Beowulf and the tremendous Jeeves, are primarily "makers," aim at creative art. The great Cambridge History, however, deliberately and wisely included in its survey philosophers, theologians, preachers, diarists, men of science, gossip-writers, antiquarians, etymologists, and what have you—so that the fourteen volumes were a record not only of the best that has been written by "British" authors—for Irish, Scotch, Welsh, Manx, and all Colonial authors were included—but also of many books more notable for their content, for their impact on thought and manners than for their esthetic value. This was a sound policy: no one reads, to take various examples, Juliana's "Revelation of Divine Love," Reginald Scot's "Discoverie of Witchcraft," Isaac Newton's "Principia," Charles Darwin's "Origin of Species" or even Burnet's history of "My Own Times" primarily for esthetic reasons; but it would be absurd to omit all reference to them in a history of English literature.

The decision to include such books meant that the history had to be written by various authors, and again the editors were, on the whole, very successful in assembling an able body of contributors, and the completed history compares very well with the other huge Cambridge enterprises into general history. I have read all those volumes, and I reviewed most of them on their appearance, and, speaking from recollection only, I am staggered at the neatness of Mr. Sampson's miniature. As a work of reference, as a handbook for beginners this volume, in so far as it is an epitome, cannot be too highly praised. But the book is more than an epitome, and its fresh pages, lively as they often are, provocative, sensitive, a little too severe at moments, cannot be so thoroughly com-

mended. As an epitomizer Mr. Sampson has indeed "respected his terms of reference" though he has abandoned the rule that living authors may not be mentioned; a rule which, as he points out, involved the original history in the absurd difficulty of discussing J. M. Synge as though he were a sort of dramatic Melchizedek without father or mother. Mr. Sampson has abandoned this old rule; in consequence he is alone responsible for a good many additions—some of great importance (for instance, the pages on Thomas Hardy, on Rudyard Kipling, on George Moore, on John Galsworthy, who died after the last volume of the original history was published)—to the record made in Volumes XIII and XIV; and he has written an estimate, nearly 50,000 words in length, of Late- and Post-Victorian literature. In this living authors are included though ordinarily "those born after 1890 are not regarded as having passed into history." This exception produces its own problems; Mr. Sampson lifts the ban for poets killed in the war of 1914-1918, for Mr. J. B. Priestley, and, very oddly, for Mr. Noel Coward whom he just had a yen to slap good and hard.

When I say that Mr. Sampson is not the man for this very ticklish editing and writing about our recent literary history on the inclusive plan I must also say that I know no living critic who could do it. I doubt if even George Saintsbury could have done it. It was a grave mistake to ask one man, especially a man of Mr. Sampson's strong prejudices, first, to select the notable authors in so many kinds of writing, and then to write himself about all of them. I cannot judge how well he has done with the scientists; but he has failed dismally with the philosophers, the theologians, the biographers, and the gossip-writers. He is so busy puncturing Lytton Strachey's reputation—the pages are a lovely example of an old-fashioned professor exposing a governor of doubtful antecedents—that he entirely ignores the fact that between 1890 and our own day were written some of the best biographies that

lovers of literature can desire. Mrs. Creighton's life of her husband, Wilfred Ward's Life of Cardinal Newman, Lady Burne-Jones's Life of Edward Burne-Jones, St. John Ervine's Life of General Booth, Charnwood's Lincoln—none of these is mentioned. The strength of the original history was its constant insistence on literature as a part of English life, and the consequent history of books and authors remarkable for other than purely literary distinction. Thus was explained the inclusion of "The Paston Letters," the "Verney Diaries," the books of Ned Ward and Pierce Egan. Yet Mr. Sampson ignores Lady Oxford's autobiographical volumes, Augustus Hare's diaries, all the lively books, full of sidelights on Victorian history of G. W. E. Russell, and the equally informative books of E. F. Benson.

AGAIN Mr. Sampson follows his model in sections dealing with journalists, some of whom, H. M. Tomlinson and C. E. Montague, are also men of letters. Yet strange as it seems to any one familiar with British journalism in the last fifty years, he does not name J. L. Garvin, H. W. Massingham, E. T. Cook, or most incredible of all, H. W. Nevinnson. The faults in these sections, however, are small when we compare them to the omissions in the sections dealing with philosophy, psychology, and theology. The years between 1900 and 1941 witnessed a more radical revolution in these departments of thought than any since Bishop Butler disposed of deism. Let me first say gladly that Mr. Sampson gives proper honor to that genuine pioneer Havelock Ellis; and he remembers a few other rather lonely figures such as Lowes Dickinson and MacTaggart. But the student would, from this volume, have no idea of the influence of the new philosophy or the new psychology on literature—there is no mention of W. H. Rivers, of Malinowski, or T. W. N. Sullivan, or Arthur MacDowell, or Neville Figgis. In the realm of philosophical theology, and of scholarship, the new chapter is even worse. So far as Mr. Sampson's information goes, the Catholic revival in England might have stopped with Church's "History of the Oxford Movement" sixty years ago: no word here of Charles Gore, of T. A. Lacey (incidentally a delightful essayist), of R. L. Gales, of Sabine Baring-Gould, of Percy Dearmer, of Evelyn Underhill, of Scott Holland, of J. R. Illingworth, of Lionel Thornton, of Aubrey Moore, and H. O. Wakeman. Nothing of the great Roman Catholic phil-

