half destroyed and soon likely to be made a waste appalled those who survived. When Shaw and Wells proclaimed the sins of Victorian England they spoke for the Edwardian conscience; theirs were the plays and novels of ideas. Galsworthy, with his accounts of breeding and ill-breeding, class, race, and justice, carried this work towards practical humanitarianism. Bennett showed, as none of the others did, the working of time on society and human nature. Since Mr. Maugham's interest was rather in the follies and pretenses of individuals, and he carried the almost Gilbertian flippancy of Wilde into situations made familiar by Jones and Pinero, he could not hope, and did not hope, to be taken seriously as a social critic. He was amused; he had nothing to offer men and women to whom Shaw was a prophet.

N
OR, since his early plays and novels followed conventional designs, could he win admiration from Henry James or Edward Garnett, for whom Turgeniev was the great master of fiction and form, and what James called "the refinements and ecstasies of method" were the sole justifications of the novel. "In my twenties," Mr. Maugham has written, "the critics said I was brutal; in my thirties they said I was flippant, in my forties they said I was cynical, and now in my sixties they say I am superficial." They said all these things. Were they wrong to say them?

It was Mr. Maugham himself who said, also in "The Summing Up," "I am not my brother's keeper." He said: "I do not seek to persuade anybody"; and these two remarks show why he could not enjoy the suffrages of the ethical and political schools. I have already quoted an explanation of his method of tale-telling round the cavern fire. In explanation of a later failure he said, further:

The intelligent critics, the more serious novel readers, have since then given most of their attention to the writers who seemed to offer something new in technique, and this is very comprehensible, for the novelties they presented gave a sort of freshness to wellworn material and were a fruitful matter of discussion.

Now in Mr. Maugham's case the technique was in novels undistinguished by novelty. He several times used the comfortable method of Kipling and the early Henry James of explaining from the wings; and in "Cakes and Ale," which followed "Ashenden," it was Mr. Maugham who appeared in the stories as knowing whatever was to be known. He showed the characters in action; he did not intensively study their mental processes. But Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, T. S. Elict were all delving within-Mrs. Woolf with the poetic vagueness of one to whom sensitive impressions and memories were a delightful jumble making up conscious-

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| THE WAIKIKI WIDOW <br> Juanita Sheridan (Crime Club: \$2.75) | Honolulu café society ponders death of Chinese escapee; $\because N Y$ trip elucidates. | Ladies have big edge in kaleidoscopic, smoothly handled yarn. | Nice dish of tea |
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ness, Joyce with sharp, destructive, egocentric humor and a passion for the manipulation of language as music, Mr. Eliot as a despairing conscience seeking to lose individual man in metaphysics. Mr. Maugham found all such manifestations distasteful:

Of the other experiments that have been made the most important is the use of the stream of thought. Writers have always been attracted by the philosophers who had an emotional value and who were not too hard to understand. They were taken in turn by Schopenhauer, Nietszche, and Bergson. It was inevitable that psyehoanalysis should captivate their fancy.

He did not want to psychoanalyse those whom he met in his travels and brought to bock. They were simple.

On taking thought it seemed to me that I must aim at lucidity, simplicity, and euphony. I. have put these three qualities in the order of the importance I assigned to them.

Lucidity, then, was his lifelong aim. It is not a quality much comprehended by youth. Nor is the quality
of detachment. Until quite recently, therefore, young men and women, especially those who were proud of their intelligence and intellectual learning, read Mr. Maugham without feeling any need to extol him.
To the metaphysical school of Mr. Eliot, however, has succeeded a generation which learned fatalism in the last very destructive war. This war affected not only soldiers; it came into every home as a daily, nightly threat of obliteration. It was everywhere, and incessant. It left whole populations shaken, and perhaps impatient of the abstract. Mr. Maugham to the newer generation represents something outside the daily; but he does not represent escape from the real. He represents something lucid, something to be understood and enjoyed. "I have a clear and logical brain, but not a very subtle nor a very powerful one." That is exactly what intelligent people now need in an author. At the age of eighty Mr. Naugham for the first time enjoys a popular admiration so great that critical admiration cannot resist it.
How long this state of affairs will last I do not know. Nor does Mr. Maugham. That his estimate is lucid and ironic cannot be questioned.

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Solution of last week's Double-Crostic will be found on page 16 of this issue.

