



WE are cursed with organization. The immense number and variety of time-saving devices have left less time for anything valuable or important. Those men whose successful actions should be the fruit of sessions of silent thought have no leisure for meditation. Some men are so busy that they have no opportunity to become acquainted with themselves, and are shocked when they find out from others the kind of persons they really are. Many leaders in the business and professional world have no time for consecutive thinking except after a major operation. There are too many *committees*—and I know of no more certain way to waste time and energy than by committee meetings. It is better to give the job, whatever it is, to one man, and hold him responsible. Instead of attending a committee meeting, where some come late, and those who were not at the last meeting have to have the matter explained to them, let each man be responsible for one thing, and hold a meeting (at his convenience) with himself—he may find out what kind of a man he is, instead of being so wastefully active as never to know and never to live. A college president should be a leader in educational policy, which means that he should have time to think, to develop the fruits of thought and experience; but his time is taken up with “seeing people,” with details, with machinery. Machinery is no good unless it fulfils its purpose—which is to make something. The pastor of a large city church is so busy in organization that his original animating purpose is lost—how can he communicate the life of the spirit to others, when it is many years since he has lived it himself? College teachers should be thoroughly and increasingly familiar with the subject (their specialty) and with the object (their pupils); but how can they be, if they rush from one committee meeting to another, and spend so much energy on the machin-

ery of education that no one, not even themselves, can become educated? Nothing is more important, in a kindergarten, and in a Graduate School, than the relation between teacher and pupil; let us minimize the machinery and get back to teaching. Organization is the thief of time.

After writing the above paragraph, I read in Ed Snover's column in the *Port Huron Times Herald*:

System is something by which a fellow is enabled to use \$9 worth of stationery and \$17 worth of time to obtain a 10-cent bottle of red ink from the stores department of the corporation for which he works.

The death of Keith Preston, literary editor of the Chicago *Daily News*, is a national calamity. He died June 7, at the age of forty-two. After being professor of Latin at Northwestern University, he entered journalism, and was one of America's shining lights, for the best foundation for a newspaper career is a classical education. Mr. Preston conducted the book department of *The News*, and in addition a daily column of wit and humor and satire in prose and verse. Harry Hansen, in the New York *World* wrote an admirable tribute to his memory, ability, and influence, and quoted, among other things, the epigrammatic

THE LIBERATORS

Among our literary scenes,
Saddest this sight to me,
The graves of little magazines
That died to make verse free.

A work that Keith Preston would have enjoyed is “*Reliquiae*,” by the late A. D. Godley, public orator of the University of Oxford. It is in two volumes, edited by C. R. L. Fletcher, and consists of light and serious essays in prose and verse, in English, French, Latin, and Greek.

Travelling in America in 1913, he saw a copy of the Oxford University *Gazette*:

Far hence a lonely exile strayed
By dark Potomac's brim;
The world Columbus erst surveyed
Was now surveyed by him:
He pined to view with yearning eye
His own domestic hob,
Nor solaced was by Pumpkin Pie,
Nor cheered by Corn-on-Cob! . . .

'Twas then, 'mid alien scenes and men,
All in that distant place
There dawned upon his visual ken
One, one familiar face!
Amid that Press of Yellow hue
One sheet was yellower yet:
It was (great Heavens!) the OXFORD U-
NIVERSITY GAZETTE!

In deep amaze the Wanderer sat,
Nor checked a natural tear;
"Tremendous Rag!" he cried, "and what
(In Thunder) dost thou here?
Are these the things that Georgia reads
And Texas wants to know?
Are Congregation's last misdeeds
The theme of Idaho?"

A work of immense learning and wide interest, the kind of *Weltgeschichte* that we more often associate with Continental than with American professorial learning is "A History of the Ancient World," by M. Rostovtzeff, professor of Ancient History at Yale. The author wrote it in Russian; the admirable English translation is by the accomplished scholar, J. D. Duff, of Trinity College, Cambridge, who made so fine a version of Aksakov. After studying and teaching in Russian universities, Professor Rostovtzeff came to the University of Wisconsin, and later accepted a call to Yale. It was while he was at Wisconsin, lecturing (in English) on Ancient History to freshmen, that this book was planned and partly written. Two large tomes have already appeared, the first dealing with the Orient and Greece, the second with Rome. Each volume contains over four hundred pages, and is copiously illustrated. These quotations from the preface are significant:

My own interests and studies have been directed, and are still directed, to certain subjects in particular. . . . But I have done all I could to prevent the matters in which I am specially interested from being too prominent. . . . My requests, which

were often not too modest, did not meet with a single refusal from any European country or any institution in the United States. This is one more proof of the rapid restoration of international scientific relations, which the war seemed at one time to have shattered irrevocably. . . . I dedicate the book to the University of Wisconsin. In the darkest hour of my life the University of Wisconsin made it possible for me to resume my learned studies and carry them on without interruption.

Another Oxford Bible has appeared; this one is called "The Dormitory Bible," and is advertised as "The Largest Type Hand Bible in the smallest compass made." It is printed in new black-faced type. Following the Gideon idea, it is hoped to have a copy in every dormitory room in every school and college.

We are all familiar with Dutch New York; but how many Americans are familiar with Dutch *York*? Well, if you read J. S. Fletcher's latest novel, "The Harvest Moon," you will acquire much interesting information about the Dutch descendants with Dutch names, characteristics, and furniture, in the southeastern parts of Yorkshire. You will also read an excellent story with a heroine somewhat like Eugénie Grandet. Mr. Fletcher is so accurate in terrestrial descriptions it seems unfortunate that he should blunder so egregiously in things celestial, especially when one remembers the title of his novel; but the same thing happens in a novel called "The Crescent Moon," by the accomplished and able writer, Francis Brett Young. On page 31 of Mr. Fletcher's new story, occurs this insult to astronomy:

"And away to the eastward he saw the first pale crescent of a new moon, cut clear against the sky."

As Eden Phillpotts amuses himself occasionally by writing a detective story, so Mr. Fletcher occasionally takes a vacation and writes a realistic novel of modern life. All he needs is an almanac.

Another Englishman, Mr. H. C. Bailey, who writes excellent detective novels and historical romances—whose "Knight at Arms" I especially enjoyed, has not done so well, in reprinting one of his earlier

romances, "The Fool." It is a story of the time of Henry II, and it should take first prize for tosh.

I had just finished writing the above paragraphs when a letter came from William E. Breazeale, of Rutgers University, giving an instance of astronomical impossibility in a poem in SCRIBNER'S for July, "When the Dusk Comes Down."

"A little crescent moon glides up the sky,
Above a line of brooding trees."

Archibald Marshall has taken a few months off, and written a diverting tale, quite out of his ordinary line, called "That Island," giving the adventures of a shipwrecked party among rather agreeable savages. The events are improbable, but the people are probable. The chief skill shown in this narrative is, as might be expected, in the portrayal of character. There are no heroes, no heroines, and no real villains; the persons are a mixture of good and evil, of wisdom and folly, of cleverness and stupidity, as is the way of all flesh. Some things in this book, notably the use of the wrecked ship as a base of supplies, will remind the reader of "Robinson Crusoe"; other events and characters will remind him of that marvellous masterpiece of humor, Frank Stockton's "The Casting Away of Mrs. Lecks and Mrs. Aleshrine." A short time ago I reread that novel, to see if it still retained for me its freshness, whimsicality, originality, fun, and charm; it did. All those who used to enjoy it should read it again; and to those who never heard of it, let me say that you have awaiting you, within the covers of that book, some hours of undiluted delight.

No history of American literature should omit the name of Frank Stockton.

Some thrillers of high voltage: "Rainbow Island," by Mark Caywood. Here the author presents the perfect hero, athletic, intelligent, resourceful, who has unaccountably remained a bachelor. A seafaring man, he is technically a mate, but finds the perfect one in the neat and lovely heroine, who, although young and ravishingly beautiful, is a capable woman. The devilish villain finds that he is mated by the mate and his mate.

I have just read in book form "The 'Canary' Murder Case," by S. S. Van

Dine, which many Scribnerians have been enjoying serially. It is a complicated and ingenious tale, filled with surprises. I salute the author. I did not correctly guess the murderer until the poker game; I feel sure that Mr. Van Dine intended every one to spot the right man at that moment, for I have never before guessed correctly the solution of a murder mystery. My stupidity in this respect arises, I suppose, from my lack of ability in mathematics.

Another thrilling murder case is found in the novel "Greymarsh," by Arthur Rees, a Norfolk tale of the shore of the North Sea. Incidentally there are fine landscapes and seascapes in this well-written book, but the chief interest, of course, is in the solution of the mystery. For a time it seems as if it must involve a member of the house-party, as in Ben Ames Williams's snowed-in company; but—well, find out for yourself.

"The Tragedy at Freyne," by Anthony Gilbert, is again the story of a pleasant house-party in England, where the host is murdered. Disappointed love, jealousies, golf-games, and morphia-addicts constitute the well-mixed ingredients. No wonder the detective is puzzled; only the coroner is certain, and he is mistaken.

The American humorist, Ring W. Lardner, has amused himself and the public by writing a portentously horrid autobiography, "The Story of a Wonder Man," with exceedingly appropriate illustrations. Those who solemnly disapprove of puns should read this volume. What such wiseacres need is to be shocked out of their five wits; this work will do the trick. Not the least amusing part of the strange, eventful history is in the footnotes by editor and by author. They are often discordant notes, but not to be discounted. In fact, it may sincerely be called a note-worthy book.

To lovers of Dante I recommend a small and attractive volume published by Heath Cranton, 6 Fleet Lane, London. It is called "The Beauties of the Divine Comedy," chosen and translated by Thomas Watson Duncan. For the benefit of that "interesting class of persons who prefer statistics to poetry" (A. Birrell), I read that there are 14,234 lines in the

"Divine Comedy"; Mr. Duncan has selected 5,866. The Italian is given on the left-hand pages, the English prose version on the right. This is a good book.

Another excellent Dante book is "The Minor Poems of Dante," translated into English verse by Lorna de' Lucchi.

To that vast number of people who read with joy H. W. Fowler's "Modern English Usage" let me emphatically recommend Ernest Weekley's "Words Ancient and Modern." Professor Weekley has no end of fun with words. I open this little book at random and find:

WRETCH

That *beef* and *cow* are ultimately the same word is one of those facts that delight the student of etymology and provoke the incredulous bray of the ignorant. Similarly *wretch* and *gossoon* have not a sound or a letter in common, but it is not difficult to establish their ultimate identity. (He then establishes it.)

I have been wondering who, in these anti-Victorian days, would cast the first stone at Addison. For Addison, though he lived in the time of Anne, had the Victorian virtues of decency, restraint, piety, and respectability. Of course Pope wrote a brilliant and poisonous satire against his dignified contemporary; but that work of genius is a better portrait of the writer than of his victim. Well, Addison has at last received his long-awaited tribute of scorn. In a highly interesting and diverting book, written from the Restoration point of view, by Bonamy Dobrée, and called "Essays in Biography, 1680-1726," containing fifty pages on Etherege and over a hundred on Vanbrugh, there are 140 pages on Addison, who is called "The First Victorian." I do not know where one can find a clearer statement of the view of life, character, and morality held to-day by many, than in Mr. Dobrée's remark on page 335:

To us, in rebellion against the Victorian view, with more faith in the human being, and much less in his ideals, approaching as we do indeed a nihilism in values, a character such as Addison's must seem unsatisfactory. We cannot but regard some of his moral operations much as we look upon the crushing of the feet of Chinese girls. We

care little for a virtue that is not spontaneous, for a charitable action that is the result of thought rather than of impulse.

Such a statement is worth serious consideration; and how true it would be if only unselfishness were instinctive rather than selfishness! Carried to its logical conclusion, Mr. Dobrée would have more admiration for the man who was naturally fearless than for the man who was instinctively afraid yet controlled his fear and played the part of a hero. Now it is not the instincts of men that I admire, but rather man's ability to control them. Hamlet was right when he said:

Give me that man

That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him

In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,
As I do thee.

Some like one kind of book, some another; but all those who read anything except trash will enjoy "The Surgeon's Log," by J. Johnston Abraham. This is a new edition, with illustrations, of a book first published in 1911. Doctor Abraham is a distinguished surgeon, with a long list of medals and degrees, and an office on Harley Street. Warned by another specialist that he must go away and rest, he went in a manner that should be recommended to all physicians who need a year's vacation. He took the post of surgeon on a ship bound from Liverpool for the Far East; thus he travelled in *otium cum dignitate*, had all his expenses paid, earned a modest stipend, and gave that ship the finest medical services it could ever hope to have. The voyage not only cured him of whatever the matter with him, it made him a successful author, for this book has had immense popularity. It is one of the most entertaining travel-chronicles I have seen.

An excellent series of Lay Sermons is "Case and Comment: Meditations of a Layman on the Christian Year," by the accomplished journalist Louis Howland. These meditations are both religious and practical, being the aspiring thoughts of a common-sensible man.

I wish to call to the particular attention of my 200,000 intelligent readers the fact

that the fourth volume of David Alec Wilson's exhaustive but never exhausting biography of Carlyle has just appeared—it is called "Carlyle at His Zenith." We are living in an age of biography, and this life of Carlyle is the most important and most valuable biographical work of our time. Despite its prodigious length and abundance of detail, I find every page and every foot-note interesting; I have read every word in the four volumes and am hungry for more. The three previous tomes are called "Carlyle till Marriage," "Carlyle till the French Revolution," "Carlyle on Cromwell and Others."

As there is, fortunately, no limit to the demand for Dickens, so there is no end to the new editions of his works. The latest is "The Handy Volume National Library Edition in Full Flexible Leather," with each work sold separately.

Besides the Grove edition of Galsworthy, there are a number of series of books that book-lovers should watch both for favorites and for the proper and adequate filling of gaps in their libraries and in their reading. In the Everyman's Library, Vasari's "Lives of the Painters" has recently appeared; in the new Murray Hill biographies, "Hawthorne" and "Upton Sinclair"; in the Modern Library, works by Ambrose Bierce and Herman Melville; in the Star Dollar Books, Fabre's "The Mason-Bees," Henry Ford's "Life and Work," Jim Corbett's "The Roar of the Crowd," "Life of Pasteur," and Thomas Beer's "Stephen Crane." In the admirable Black and Gold Series, "Tristram Shandy" and "A Sentimental Journey," both edited by the foremost authority on Sterne, Wilbur Cross; also a charming one-volume edition of "The Dialogues of Plato," in Jowett's matchless translation, edited by Professor W. C. Greene. This is a book to live and die with. And speaking of Plato, those who like solid thought luminously expressed will enjoy Mr. Santayana's little book, "Platonism and the Spiritual Life."

W. A. Henson, of Cartersville, Ga., sends me an extremely interesting note on birds:

Your story of the woodpecker who gave the owl a case of "shell-shock," told in the July number of SCRIBNER'S, reminds me of another story of bird intelligence.

Col. Hamilton Yancy of Rome, Ga. (who

by the way was a classmate of Henry W. Grady at the University of Georgia) told me this story:

He one day approached some crows in a wheat field from behind a fence, escaping both their notice and that of the sentinel crow which was sitting in the top of a pine nearby, and shot one of the ones on the ground. He says they flew off greatly excited and in going off all went right vigorously after this sentinel crow, pecking him and making his feathers fly as if to punish him for allowing a comrade to get killed.

THE IGNOBLE PRIZE

No article in this corner of culture has aroused more wide-spread or more animated comment than nominations for the Ignoble Prize. Many find that these nominations of things especially distasteful afford them much-needed relief; others think that some of the suggestions are trivial, and that the candidates for the Ignoble Prize should be only ideas or objects of serious magnitude. But such a suggestion is in itself a nomination for the Ignoble Prize.

J. Howard Taylor, of Suffolk, Va.: "There is a great deal to be said in its favor and it should be continued, but the invitation to complain is much too broad not to be jumped at by the easily vexed and captious, who take this opportunity to point to some petty mistake as an object of deep concern."

W. A. Watts, an American, writes from York, England: "I nominate British coppers, matches, cigars, Scotch weather, and generally speaking European coffee." I agree with all these except the matches. I particularly admire the wax vestas. They were originally invented for those who live on the fourth or fifth story of a building, and who return after the hall and corridor lights are out. A good wax vesta will point the way onward and upward over four flights of stairs. But I like them for many reasons, always provided they have a thick back-bone.

Walter Phelps Dodge, writing from Coronado Beach, Calif.: "Blonde" for fair woman; "God's Country" for United States; "Movies" for cinema.

Miss Mary Johnston, of Illinois Woman's College, Jacksonville, Ill. She writes from *S. S. Majestic*: "Even as bad as the cigar-girl who slides the stamps out

sticky-side down on the counter is the drug-clerk who takes the tooth-brush from its sealed package and tests the bristles before you with his thumb." She adds: "'Don't think' is at least good Latin idiom if not English, for the negative goes with the verb of thinking or saying rather than with the thing said. Cf. *nego*, = *dico* . . . *non*. As for 'dumb' for 'stupid,' isn't that the German *dumm* by way of Pennsylvania Dutch, etc., as well as from the old pun on the dumbbell and 'dumb belle' or pretty girl with nothing to say for herself?"

Elmer McClain, of Lima, Ohio, naturally resents a slighting allusion to that town, which appeared in a letter from one of my correspondents:

Pray what warrant have you for referring as you did, or allowing some one else to do it, to "Lima, Ohio or Waterloo, Iowa"? Have you ever lived outside of New York City and its environs? Do you know that N. Y. C. is the most provincial city in America? Where else could this happen as it did in N. Y. C.: Landlady: "And where are you from?" "We're from Ohio." "Then you probably know the people who were in these rooms before; they were from the West too, Wisconsin, I believe." In what other city will a crowd instantly gather, as it will invariably in N. Y. C., sometimes blocking traffic, if a car owner lifts up the hood cover and peers at his engine or tinkers with it? What place would stop all its traffic, elevateds, street-cars, everything to observe a dirigible sailing about overhead? I happened to be in N. Y. C. just at the time when the Eighteenth Amendment was being made effective. The subject of it had been debated, voted upon, considered pro and con by the rest of the country for years, a full generation in some States, and we all knew about it and knew it was inevitable. New York did not catch on to the significance of it till it had gone into effect. It was just a vague harum-scarum idea like "Populism and Kansas" long ago, and as far off. There is no place on earth that beats a large city for provincialism that I know anything about, and N. Y. C. takes the palm—I have lived in it, in Chicago, in West Newton, Indiana (population 200) and in Lima. God bless you and let you live "Out West," or at least "Out Where the West Begins" sometime if only for a little while.

The Scorner is also attacked in this letter from Doctor Russell C. Doolittle, of Des Moines, Iowa:

There should be a Grand Ignoble Prize for such as Mr. Elcock of Princeton, . . . and Mr. Chubb . . . both in July SCRIBNER'S, who persist in using Iowa people and cities to personify the ultimate in boorishness and unsophistication. I was never bumped, elbowed or trod upon in any Iowa State Fair crowd as I was recently while trying to board a Long Island suburban train in the Penn. Station in New York City. . . . What should constitute . . . qualifications for culture, refinement and cosmopolitanism? Are they museums, churches, and world-travellers, or tenements, bootleggers and provincials? . . . I profess a kindly feeling for Mr. Elcock of Princeton, because I have a Wilson brand diploma from the college in his village, but my empathic index for Mr. Chubb is very low and I hope these words hurt him like everything.

S. S. Van Dine, the mystery expert, can hardly be accused of using shopworn phrases. In his novel "The 'Canary' Murder Case" are the following words: "euphoria," "pseudo-pyiform," "anadem," "wanghee," "bibative," "prognathous," "saponacious," "philogynist," "olla podrida," "tickled-up crime," "xanthous," "abecedarian," "thuggee," "perjurious," "efreets," besides an immense number of phrases in foreign languages. Amateur detective Vance is an allusive conversationist.

Jay C. Rosenfeld, the music critic of the *Berkshire Evening Eagle*, Pittsfield, Mass., coins a new and useful word in the issue for July 11.

The adagio is one of the type which only a man with the hyperacute clairaudition like Beethoven could write.

He writes: "Reading your monthly article in SCRIBNER'S gave me the courage to use clairaudition. Is it not as applicable in its own way as clairvoyance?" I hereby give clairaudition a hearty welcome into the English language.

Into the Faery Queene Club comes lightly tripping Mrs. Eugenia Johnston, who read the poem many years ago when a student at the Illinois Female College; along with her comes Professor William S. Ament, of Scripps College, Claremont, Calif. He has "faithfully followed Glory and Magnificence through the six books of that darke conceit, that immortal romance."

As an asymptote is to its neighbor, so is Professor Ament to the Fano Club.

In motoring down the double avenue, eucalyptus shaded, of Arcadia, Calif., I noted the curb sign in white against red, "Fano Street." Doesn't such good fortune deserve recognition? or is it a sufficient distinction just to cross Fano Street, Arcadia, on the morning side of the City of Our Lady Queen of the Angels?

I am swollen with pride to think that a street should have been named after this famous club.

In company with my Yale classmate, Judge John Henry Kirkham, of New Britain, with whom I made a memorable pilgrimage to New York forty years ago, I travelled by motor-car, during the last week in June, in the glorious State of Vermont, where the inhabitants, like the Romans of old, walk from the kitchen door to the barn on paths of marble. In the gloaming, we arrived at Manchester, and drew up before the pillared front of The Equinox; though I had never been there before, I had seen pictures of it so oft, and so oft talked about it with intimate friends, that I felt as if I were coming home. This feeling was strengthened by the hospitality we received, and by the homelike nature of the interior. In addition to the host, there were other friends, members of the Conversation Club in Augusta, Mr. and Mrs. Cabot Morse, George Gray, the Duke and Duchess of Lancaster, and Mr. Lamb, the Professor of Nicotine. He was discussing the virtues of a certain pipe-mixture; he spoke solemnly, with a holy look on his face. "Why," said I, "you ought to hold the chair of nicotine at Yale." "Yes," added Professor Edward B. Reed, "and then you could preach the tobaccolaureate sermon."

Well, we played golf for three days on the beautiful links; I only wish I could have remained to see the new links, laid out by Walter Travis, which were to be formally opened by Jesse Sweetser and Francis Ouimet. Walter Travis came while we were there, but I was heart-broken to see the King of the Links and of the Conversation Club so shattered by illness that he could not play. Yet, al-

though horizontal, I found all the old force and fire in his conversation. Apart from his prowess and knowledge in his outdoor specialty, he is one of the most interesting men, one of the most informing talkers, and one of the best friends I know.

[To-day I learn by telegram that Mr. Travis died yesterday (July 31) at Denver. I shall always be glad that in 1925 at Augusta, Ga., I had intimate talk with him every day for three months. I remember his saying that he did not wish to grow old; he hoped he would die before beset by physical infirmities. When I saw him July first, in Vermont, he said Manchester was the most beautiful place in America. By his request, his body will be taken thither for burial.]

While playing on the links, I frequently lifted up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh not my strength in golf. Their tops were shrouded in clouds, and I saw why the mountains last so long. They are wrapped in cotton wool. Fair as woman, and much more deceitful, are the Manchester putting-greens.

One afternoon Judge Kirkham and I motored some fourscore and more miles to Middlebury College, and thence vertically some twelve miles to Bread Loaf, the famous summer school of the institution, where I was to give the inaugural address. The president of the college is a former pupil of mine, Paul Moody, and we had the pleasure of his company in the steep ascent. It was a glorious evening—the air sparkled as palpably and almost as visibly as the firmament, and the majestic mountains made as fine a setting for a summer school as heart could wish. I was confronted with a slight sartorial difficulty; I was clad in golf jacket and knickerbockers, and had brought evening clothes. But when I saw the simplicity of nature and the sport clothes of the young men and women who were to be my audience, I felt that evening clothes were an insult to the air of heaven. So I made the public inaugural address in knickers, the first man to do that in America since Oscar Wilde. After the exercises and the pleasure of meeting the faculty and students, the Judge and I motored eighty-six miles to Manchester, arriving at midnight. As Robert Frost

has pointed out in one of the most charming of his poems, people in those regions go to bed early; we sped over the deserted roads and through the sleeping villages in a way that would have made Paul Revere think he was going backward.

While in Vermont, I met three of America's distinguished woman writers, whose works I devoutly admire—Dorothy Canfield, Sarah Cleghorn, and Zephine Humphrey; met them in their own blessed homes, and inhaled the surroundings from which they draw some of their inspiration. Dorothy Canfield is now in the heyday of her powers, "Her Son's Wife" being the best American novel of 1926. Zephine Humphrey's "Winterwise" is a beautiful book, and needed by all Americans; Sally Cleghorn's only sin is in not publishing more often, for she is an authentic poet. A pleasant characteristic of all three of these neighbors is that they are ardent Ailurians.

Zephine Humphrey took me from her home in Dorset to call on the mother of the late Stuart Sherman; she lives in the neighborhood. As might be expected, she is a charming and exceedingly interesting woman. Her facial likeness to her famous son is very striking.

J. Ranken Towse, the drama critic of the New York *Evening Post*, retires from active service after being on that paper for fifty-seven years. He signalized his retirement by writing an admirable editorial on the death of America's beloved First Gentleman of the Stage, John Drew. Mr. Towse's long experience, acute judgment, and inflexible adherence to the highest standards, made him a critic of the highest order. His book of reminiscences, published a few years ago, is exceedingly interesting.

To those who profess to see no difference between the teachings of religion and

the code of civilized behavior, let me call attention to a remark of Mr. Vance in "The 'Canary' Murder Case":

"Pray don't give way to conventional moral indignation. However unethical—theoretically—it may be to take another's life, a man's own life is certainly his to do with as he chooses. Suicide is his inalienable right."

Of course I am not taking a detective story too seriously; but this jesting remark will do for a text. "A man's own life is certainly his to do with as he chooses" may be an accurate description of the way many men think and live; but it is flatly contrary to the teachings of Christianity. According to Detective Vance, the conventional standards of morality are too high for the average man; Christianity regards them as too low. Religion begins where morality leaves off.

Lady Oxford (Margot Asquith) says that an American journalist came to her in search of "low-down articles of an intimate kind." Well, he certainly knew where to search.

In addition to my two dogs, Rufus H. Phelps, and Lad H. Phelps, and my three cats, I have recently acquired a South American parrot, who speaks English and Portuguese fluently, and shakes hands like the chairman of a reception committee. His name is William L. Parrott; he spells it with two t's. I am fortunate in having for a neighbor the foremost American scholar in the Portuguese language, Professor Henry R. Lang. I shall secure his services as interpreter.

I am often called an omnivorous reader; therein I differ from those who read only modern novels which glorify the flesh. They are carnivorous readers.

For current announcements of the leading publishers see the front advertising section.



WRITING in this place a short time ago, about the Henry E.

Huntington collection at Pasadena, I pointed out its importance for the student of eighteenth-century British portraiture. It contains masterpieces lifting it above the public galleries of England in representative significance for the historian of Reynolds, Gainsborough, and their circle. It is unique in its illustration of a certain tradition. What of other traditions? How far has the American collector been swayed by taste and circumstance to cultivate this or that school? Mostly he has been an eclectic, yet there has been something like a definite sequence in our importation of old masters. Thirty years and more ago Rembrandt and Hals were peculiarly to the fore and somewhat later the old decorative portrait of almost any school, but especially of the French, had a marked vogue. It subsided as the drift of fashionable predilection came more under the influence of a growing connoisseurship. Then upon the horizon shone a pell-mell of illustrious names—Velasquez as well as Vermeer, Titian as well as Memling, the mystical El Greco as well as the blithe, mundane Frago, a host of “all the talents.” The eclectic motive still rules. But the Italian school would seem to have taken an exceptional hold upon the American imagination and a recent incident in the market brings the matter into sharp relief. I refer to the announcement that Sir Joseph Duveen had bought *en bloc*, for \$3,000,000, the collection of one hundred and twenty pictures formed by Mr. Robert H. Benson, the London banker, and would bring it for exhibition and dispersal to the United States.

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WHEN I heard of this sale and the promise of its repercussions over here, one famous picture particularly came back to my memory. I recalled the enchanting Hylas of Piero di Cosimo, mus-

ing on its beauty as an example of Renaissance imagination dealing with myth, and on its rarity, its high status as a “museum picture.” In that it is typical of a collection that has long had an international renown. Mr. Benson was as fortunate as he was discriminating. The most astounding prizes fell into his net. He went after the Italians and as a collector of them he brought off one brilliant *coup* after another. Among his Primitives the four Duccios would alone give a gallery distinction, and they have remarkable companions in works of other schools. In early and later phases the Florentines and the Venetians—notably the Venetians—impressively loom. Antonello da Messina, Luini, Ghirlandajo, Bellini, Del Sarto, Francia, Titian, and so on through a dazzling catalogue, are represented by paintings which have been widely recognized as among the major things of their respective categories. I might exhaust much of my space just in the enumeration of them. They figure with surprising frequency in the literature of Italian art. Mr. Benson was generous in loans to exhibitions over a long period, and criticism has taken appreciative account of his treasures. But I am concerned to-day not so much with their individual qualities as with the question involved in their inevitable transference to this country. It seems only yesterday that such conditions prevailed as wouldn’t have made their coming inevitable at all.

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WHEN James Jackson Jarves went to Italy in another generation and brought together the valuable collection that for years has been at Yale it was little enough appreciated. Who in that time had any idea of the distinction to be conferred upon the university by the presence there of, say, the Hercules and Dejanira of Pollaiuolo? All manner of developments had to ensue before Italian art took on anything like the status here which it