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28<sup>1</sup>  
Vol. XXV, No. 1

November, 1928

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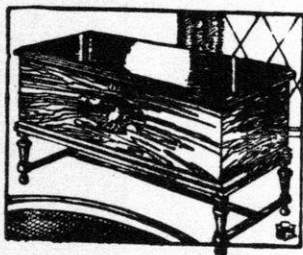
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## CONTRIBUTORS

NAOMI RABE needs no introduction for she has written constantly for this magazine during the past few years.

MONTAGUE CANTOR is writing *Melody*, a critical essay which we shall soon publish.

CARROLL BLAIR, Red Granite, Wisconsin, is a Zona Gale scholar, two sweater track man, author of *The Woman-Lake* and generally distinguished.

WALTER BONIME is from New York, plays the piccolo and minds his own business.

RAYMOND HATHAWAY is mysterious.

J. GUNNAR BACK says his tale is true. More from him anon.

ANNE CHAMBERLAINE HODGES has just arrived.

EMILY IGLEHART writes for *Poetry* and (we hope) more often herein.

MOLNAR GYULA who decorated the cover designed sets for *R. U. R.* and *The Devil's Deciple*.

THE BOOK REVIEWERS are a lot of gay folks, some of whom you may know and some not know by their names.

MAXINE STILES returns to these pages with an understanding bit of verse.

This is the twenty-fifth birthday of the WISCONSIN LITERARY MAGAZINE.

# Wisconsin Literary Magazine

Vol. XXV, No. 1

MADISON, WISCONSIN

November, 1928

## *Editorial*

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## Aldous Huxley

ANY generalization about contemporary literature is as good as any other. In looking back on other eras we can pick out certain trends; the things which have lasted express tendencies we therefore accept as characteristic of a trend or a state of mind, whether they are really expressions of the age or not. We read Pope's "Rape of the Lock", point a finger at the eighteenth century and say "Age of Reason." We use the word Victorianism as a kind of synonym for prudery, despite the wholesome frankness of Meredith and Hardy. The writers who do not fall in with our definitions we dispose of by calling them either survivals of the past or presages of the future. Whether these generalizations are correct or not, they have a certain authority both because we can see epochs in relation to what went before and what followed and because we are citing literary classics.

When it comes to the living, changing present, however, everyone has a right to his own opinion. No one can say what tendency, what mode of thought will develop and grow so that future generations will look back on us and say "That was the age of thus and thus, and so and so exemplified it." That is what makes a

study of contemporary literature so tremendously exciting. We formulate opinions and then find examples to support them. And because contemporary literature is so abundant and so varied, we can prove almost any generalization we can make. Who is to say that the pointers Coblenz, in his attack on modern letters, points out are not the significant ones? All of us who do not agree with him; but that does not invalidate his generalizations.

This, I think can be said with a certain degree of truth: contemporary literature is a literature of personalities. This is very largely because of the increasing belief in individualism, the progressive loss of a point of view toward life as a whole—the objective point of view. Modern writers are concerned with expressing themselves. In doing so they have developed a splendid technique; they have succeeded in putting into words all the fine shades of subjective impression which never preoccupied the older—and perhaps greater—writers because they were busy expressing larger, more objective truths. As a direct outcome of this preoccupation with the inner man we have such new forms as the stream of consciousness novel, used by Joyce, Proust, and Virginia Woolf,

which may or may not have a value proportionate to the time and effort required to read it. This extreme individualism allows those whose talent lies in expressing subtleties of impression rather than expression—intraverts Aldous Huxley would call them—to follow their star. At the same time it influences extraverts like Huxley himself; he pays as much attention to the intricacies of his thought as Virginia Woolf spends on complexities of her characters.

At any rate, when every writer is engaged in painting his own corner of life, the effect is a mosaic composed of pieces of personality. We are not far away enough to look at the thing as a whole, to see its color and design, or at least the color and design myopic eyes will give it from a distance; we can only look closely at the little pieces and try to relate them to our understanding of what went before and what is likely to come after. We cannot tell even which pieces are outstanding; there are some that strike our fancy and others which have admiring crowds before them. And there the figure of speech becomes inept, because a mosaic is a static, fixed thing, whereas modern literature changes in color and arrangement so constantly that it seems impossible to fix any one writer even in relation to his contemporaries.

In this literature of personalities, Aldous Huxley seems to occupy a certain stable position. He has been one of the darlings of the so-called Intelligentsia ever since his first book of short stories, *Limbo*, appeared; even his books of essays and travel have had a large sale—in England and in America. Critics have ascribed his popularity to various factors—his facile cleverness, his embodiment of the less desirable qualities of the age, and so on. The thing which strikes me most forcibly about the popularity of Aldous Huxley is that there are so many people who not only read him, but like him thoroughly. He seems to be regarded by the intelligent as a kind of intellectual amusement; and he is not one of the writers who, like Cabel and Dreiser, are read by those of the herd who have ambitions to seem "high-brow." A great many people are well acquainted with Huxley's work; the rest have never heard his name. He may be so well liked because, as Edwin Muir says, he embodies the

*Zeit Geist*, the qualities and tone of the age, so that we recognize kinship at a glance and hug him to our bosoms, without, at the same time, taking him too seriously. It seems to me it is due sheerly to the likeableness of his personality. Aldous Huxley is one of the few writers I like whom I would not be anxious to meet. His charm could never shine in his features so completely as it does in his style. And that likeableness is more a matter of the way he says things than what he says. We like him as we like a person we know; a very interesting and intelligent person who has a great deal to offer in the way of ideas and who puts them charmingly and stimulatingly. He seems a kindred spirit, somehow; and we do not like to analyze him to other people; we are modest about praising his virtues and reluctant to point out his faults. That, I think, is the reason Aldous Huxley is read mainly by people who like him. We think of him as a friend rather than a public benefactor, and they do not urge other people to read his books.

This personal charm, it seems to me, is found in its most attractive form in one of Huxley's earlier novels, *Crome Yellow*. This book has a sparkling quality, a felicity of expression quite characteristic of all of Huxley's work; but here it is the tone of the book, and it is achieved with a lightness and seeming effortlessness I find nowhere else. It is not a pretentious novel; I don't think it tries to interpret Life in any large sense, though Huxley's ideas on people and things run through it as they do through all his work. *Crome Yellow* is merely an account of a house party during the time that Denis, the most appealing of Huxley's characters, is there. There is plenty of fun-making at the expense of the people in the book; but it is a genial, merry kind of irony, without bitterness; the result is that we like the people, we are interested in their exploits even to the extent of feeling that the intellectual conversations between Denis and Mr. Scogan are more than little essays by Aldous Huxley with labels of characters' names attached. What story there is—the love affairs of Mary, Ivor, Gombauld, Denis, and Anne—progresses very leisurely, with frequent halts for conversation and little anecdotes such as the story about the

dwarf Mr. Wimbush tells, which some critics consider the best thing in Huxley. This fanciful tale fits into *Crome Yellow* perfectly; you feel it *is* the kind of story which would amuse these people. The charm of this book is one partly of atmosphere and mood; Huxley seems here to play with ideas and people in precisely the most felicitous tone for his point of view. His cleverness never seem labored. "Mr. Scogan's eye glittered like the eye of the American Mariner." "Did one ever establish contact with anyone? We are all parallel straight lines. Jenny was only a little more parallel than most." The best thing about these quotations is that they lose their charm away from the context; Huxley's epigrams often have a clever quotableness which seems a little too intentional, though it is never labored.

But to dismiss Aldous Huxley as a likeable, charming writer whose books are amusing is unfair—to him and to his public. And yet there is no one more difficult to place—because he *is* read for amusement, because his achievement is so uneven. That charm of his runs through all his books and makes it difficult to analyze his merits or demerits on any other basis. And yet he takes himself quite seriously, as one who has a knack, as he puts it, for observation rather than participation. In his latest book, *Proper Studies*, he undertakes to fill a large order—to classify all mankind: intellect, achievement, everything. He does it seriously, conscientiously, with little of the playfulness one finds in his other books. And I think the coherent point of view he maintains here is typical of his serious thought. For his thought *is* serious; it is a mistake to think he has been merely playing with ideas to amuse himself and his public, merely formulating paradoxical theories to see what they sound like. One of his books is called "Jesting Pilate"; and some critic has said that the title is terribly apt. It seems to me Huxley is perfectly willing to stay for an answer, to find out what truth is; he thrashes out the same ideas in book after book. And he believes in his ideas, in his capacity to formulate them, with a kind of faith profoundly characteristic of the individualist in a faithless age.

Ideas play a major part in Aldous Huxley's

books. Some of them are social, some psychological; all are repeated from book to book. It is one of the greatest faults of his novels that the intellectual conversation tends to become a series of short essays, so that in *Those Barren Leaves* one has to turn back a page now and then to see who the speaker is. And yet these monologues contain the best of Huxley's essays; the fact that he is writing dialogue seems to make him use a turn of phrase, a mode of expression which one does not find in his essays proper. This way of putting ideas is more Huxleyan than it is characteristic of the way people talk; but it is intellectually stimulating. In *Those Barren Leaves*, for instance, there is the long passage where Mr. Cardan defines the class of parasites. "All the really successful parasites I have come across recently belong to the same species. They appeal to the protective maternal instincts. They generally have some charming talent—never appreciated by the gross world, but recognized by the patron, vastly to his credit of course (that flattery's most delicate). . . . The protection of them satisfies the love of dominion and the altruistic parental instinct that prompts us to befriend the weak." All this is given point by the fact that Mr. Cardan is himself one of the species. There is Mr. Cardan's little disquisition on the word "love" in different languages—"Amour, for example—that long ou sound with the rolled r at the end of it, how significant it is! Ou—you have to push your lips into a snout-like formation, as though you were going to kiss. Then, briskly, rrr—you growl like a dog. Could anything be more perfectly expressive of the matter-of-fact lasciviousness which passes for love in nine-tenths of French fiction and drama?" Another amusing lecture is Mr. Boldero's exposition of the psychology of advertising in *Antic Hay*.

But all these things are, so to speak, side-lights on the world of ideas. Aldous Huxley's is a mind which takes delight in the bizarreries of the intellectual—intellectual caviar. He likes to pursue these amusing, sometimes paradoxical, always lucidly expressed ideas as far as they will go—and very often they seem to lead to something significant. He likes to trace the relation between things and ideas—things which



seem insignificant in themselves. The advertising passage is a good example of this. He traces intellectual and psychological subtleties through the association of ideas much as Calamy, in *Those Barren Leaves*, sees the secret of the universe in the different existences of his hand.

"'It's extraordinary,' Calamy went on, 'what a lot of different modes of existence a thing has, when you come to think about it. And the more you think, the more obscure and mysterious everything becomes. What seemed solid vanishes. . . . It gives one a strange sense of insecurity, of being in the dark. But I still believe that, if one went on thinking long enough and hard enough, one might somehow come through, get out on the other side of the obscurity.'"

But Huxley himself, like Miss Thriplow, is not apt to have that sense of the mystery of things for long; like her he says "I see" too soon, and makes clever comparisons about Neapolitan ices. His ideas are expounded a little too lucidly, a little too convincingly—one wonders if there isn't something more, something important he has overlooked in his process of thought. This is true especially in his more serious books, where he speaks in his own name—*Jesting Pilate*, a travel book, and *Proper Studies*. He never solves the secret of the universe, even to his own satisfaction; but he sets forth a number of ideas which stick surprisingly. It will be a long time before I forget, in discussions on the subject, that Aldous Huxley has proved the theory of democracy is false—though I probably will not remember just how he proved it.

The challenger of accepted standards is always valuable to society as such, although his criticism may be purely destructive; he either succeeds in destroying or causes those standards to be built into something stronger, better than they were before. Aldous Huxley certainly questions standards of morality, of politics, of things one has always taken for granted without formulating them. But his criticism is not wholly destructive by any means. He believes in a governing of the many by the few—an oligarchy of the intellect. What Mr. Scogan

proposes to Denis half in jest in *Crome Yellow*, Huxley himself repeats in *Proper Studies*. "We men of intelligence will learn to harness the insanities to the service of reason," says Mr. Scogan—"In the Rational state, human beings will be separated out into distinct species . . . according to the qualities of their mind and temperament. The three main species will be these: The Directing Intelligences, the Men of Faith, and the Herd." In *Proper Studies* Huxley says: "The aristocratic ideal—the ideal that the naturally best man should be at the top—is already extremely familiar." He shows that in business promotion depends on ability; he wants the vote to require intelligence. He then goes on to repeat, in logical terms, Mr. Scogan's idea of utilizing various forms of excellence—the executive and demagogical abilities, he calls them, instead of the sane and the insane. That is rather typical; ideas in the mouths of Huxley's characters take on a biased and amusing twist which sometimes disguises the author's serious intention.

In spite of his vitriolic criticisms of the social order and the average mind, Huxley is not entirely radical. He finds life puzzling enough, but he does not merely question it despairingly, as do so many modern writers; I should not say he suffered from an attack of that modern disease known as "chaotic standards." In one of his essays he talks about the "mal de siècle," or sense of disillusionment, and says that we moderns have a right to complete disillusionment; but I do not think that he himself suffers from it more than slightly. One reason is that he is too much interested in the things he observes and dissects. Another is that he has not really cast all the old standards overboard—and he realizes it. He says at the end of *Jesting Pilate*—he is back in London after having taken a trip around the world—"Of knowledge and experience the fruit is generally doubt. . . . When one is traveling, convictions are mislaid as easily as spectacles; but unlike spectacles, they are not easily replaced. . . . But in compensation for what I lost I acquired two important new convictions; that it takes all sorts to make a world and that the established spiritual values are fundamentally correct and should be maintained. . . . Goodness,

beauty, wisdom and knowledge, with the human possessors of these qualities, the human creators of things and thoughts endowed with them, have always and everywhere been honored." It seemed to me in reading *Jesting Pilate* that Aldous Huxley took with him wherever he went his point of view, his European standards; his criticisms of oriental art, music and politics bore the unmistakable stamp of the ideas—or prejudices—he started with. His is a definite and self-conscious point of view; he is the first to admit that he cannot transcend the limits of his own prejudices. He may at times question, but he is never bewildered by the world; he analyzes the knowable intelligently and interestingly, with all the cleverness he is capable of. He admits there is something beyond unknowable to him; the hero of *Antic Hay* feels it under all the noise of existence— ". . . But the quiet grows and grows. Beautifully and unbearably. And at last you are conscious of something approaching; it is almost a faint sound of footsteps. Something inexpressibly lovely and wonderful advances through the crystal, nearer, nearer. And, oh, inexpressibly terrifying. For if it were to touch you, if it were to seize and engulf you, you'd die; all the regular, habitual, daily part of you would die." ". . . There was quiet in her mind, he thought. She was native to that crystal world; for her, the steps came comfortingly through the silence and the lovely thing brought with it no terrors. It was all so easy for her and simple." It is that simplicity of the mystic that Huxley at times envies. He knows that mysticism is part of human experience; he makes it an important factor in Calamy's destiny in *Those Barren Leaves*; but he knows also that his part is a rationalizing one. And if he cannot feel intuitively the answer to the mystery it does not distress him. For neither has he felt the tragedy of the individual who does not understand in a world he has not made.

It is perhaps for this reason—the lack of a profound feeling—that it seems to us always that Aldous Huxley's ideas are not original. He is a capable thinker, but he thinks out for us what we would be quite capable of apprehending ourselves. They are well expressed;

he co-ordinates and arranges things for us; but he very seldom gives us an insight into the world which we did not have before. He always reminds us a little of someone else whose name we cannot at the moment remember. Of course one could tie him up with various literary movements—his intellectual conversations, his use of setting is very like Norman Douglas, for instance—but I do not think he is following any literary school; his ideas are not second-hand in that way. He seems to have assimilated the entire contemporary culture, literary and otherwise; he has had a good sound classical education and he can relate the present with the past; he has traveled. What he does for us is to present the results of this assimilation, make us follow the relation of the ideas in his mind; he does not claim for them any striking originality. But since the ideas he presents are the current ones we find them intellectually stimulating.

The one idea of his which is most fundamental in his point of view, which he has felt most deeply, is his profound respect for intelligence, his awe before genius. If he wants to arrange an intellectual hierarchy it is not so much because he wants people like Aldous Huxley to rule the world as that a world seems to him badly arranged where men who are to him as he is to a dog do not have the power. He is continually using that particular comparison; and I do not think it is accidental that his one really tragic story, *Young Archimedes*, is founded upon it. The reader feels with him the poignant tragedy of that little boy, a mathematical genius who kills himself because he is not suffered to live in peace. It is only here, in all of Huxley's books, that the tragedy of the individual is felt. And I think he feels it so keenly because he himself, a rationalist, is forced to realize constantly that it is impossible to superimpose his perfectly good theories upon the inadequate material of human nature.

So far I have been speaking of Aldous Huxley as a thinker. When one comes to consider him as a literary artist one notices even more strikingly that lack of emotion I have mentioned in connection with his ideas. The question of the world is not a burningly emotional one for him because he is predominantly intellectual.

But whereas it is possible and even desirable to think rationally and unemotionally, it is impossible to make the reader feel an emotion you are incapable of experiencing. Huxley does not often try to; he intimates the emotions of his characters when they must be emotional, he analyzes the intellectual effects of their emotions, he tells about them through the slightly ironical eyes of another character; but we are never swept away by the feelings of his characters. Nor does he mean that we should be. His attitude is always that of the cool observer who watches the antics of his fellow-beings with the greatest interest and analyzes them with neatness and dispatch without ever feeling their significance very profoundly. And yet his picture of life is neither false nor thin, because if he does not feel emotion he sees it and comments on it. His excessive tendency to rationalize, however, sometimes leads him into literary blunders. One of these is a long-short story, *Two or Three Graces*, where hundreds of pages are devoted by Huxley to telling us what the people are like, without his ever making us feel more than that these are his analyses of them. In this story is a woman really in love—most of Huxley's characters only think they are. We know it only because he tells us so in so many words.

It is not a coincidence that, in almost every one of Huxley's novels, there is a character who is an emotional hypocrite, who succeeds in deceiving himself usually more than the bystanders. They remind one of the little boy in *Jalna* who said "How terrible this is" and felt the tears come stinging to his eyes. Only these people are more complex. They have both an impotence for feeling and a desire to feel which make them tragic—or would make them tragic if they *could* feel. In *Antic Hay* there is Lypiatt, the painter, the most poignant perhaps of these figures because he realizes what he is; he all but commits suicide. In *These Barren Leaves* there is Miss Mary Thriplow, the clever young novelist, who wants the world to know what a good heart she has. She is treated with much more irony than pity. Even in *Crome Yellow* there is not a character whose emotions are more than mild and titillating, to use a favorite word of Huxley's; though here

they are at least sincere. In a short story, *The Gioconda Smile*, we find another emotionally impotent character, Mr. Hutton, who is ironically enough executed for a crime of passion. Whether Huxley selects this type of character because never having felt himself, he distrusts the feelings of others, whether this vice has a snake-like fascination for him because it is one of his own, I cannot say. But the fact remains that in Aldous Huxley's picture of life overpowering emotion does not play a leading role.

This has an effect, of course, on his handling of character. He is more interested in everyday life than in emotional crises. Edwin Muir says that he is continually tearing the masks from his characters to disclose the nothingness beneath. I do not think this is true. There is nothing either superficial or crude about Huxley's characters. Perhaps the least effective group of them is the one in *Antic Hay*, where there is the greatest attempt at emotional effect—in the affair between Gumbрил and Emily, which somehow does not quite come off—one of them remarks very aptly that happiness is dull from the outside. Even here there are redeeming features—and some people find this the most significant of Huxley's books, perhaps because it has more bitterness and less sparkle than the others. Lypiatt is real, Rosie is real, old Mr. Gumbрил is real. And the people in *Crome Yellow* are neither simple or unreal. One likes the people in the first and dislikes those in the second. The fact that these people do not suffer deeply does not seem to affect their reality; after all, Huxley seems to tell us coolly enough, there are plenty of people like that. And they are the people he chooses to write about—because he understands them best.

It is almost impossible to assign to each one of these novels a definite degree of literary merit. I have tried to indicate the ways in which they are amusing and stimulating; I believe firmly that they have merit. Perhaps it would be more adequate to say that they have their merits. As novels they fall short of the great novels in English literature, I suppose; Huxley is simply not a novelist. But as a new kind of literary form, wherein Huxley is able to present a number of people, a number of

ideas, a certain point of view, they are excellent. Of the three *Crome Yellow* is the one I like best, because it is so charming; but *Those Barren Leaves* is the most serious attempt at something pretentious. In all of these novels, however, Huxley's talent for the bizarre seems to be more effective than the ordinary parts of the narrative. The interpolated short stories in *Crome Yellow*, the whole story of Carden and the moron in *Those Barren Leaves*, are cases in point. This would seem to indicate that Huxley's talent is for fantasy rather than for straight fiction; he has been accused of selecting the wrong form.

A reading of his short stories will, I think, counteract this impression. There are five or six of them which I consider the best things Aldous Huxley has yet done. And almost all of them take for their theme a quite ordinary character or setting, or one which is given an air of usualness in the telling. One of these is *Young Archimedes*, which I have mentioned; it is a beautiful piece of work, as well as being a profoundly tragic story; tragic without any of the irony of the bizarre. Another is *Uncle Spencer*, in the same volume; this presents a real and, for Huxley, a singularly lovable character. In *Two or Three Graces* there is a short ironic story called *Fairy Godmother* which reminds me a great deal of Katherine Mansfield; it is one of the few Huxley stories which is told without any direct analysis or comment on the part of the author. *Nuns at Breakfast* and *Permutations* are good stories, though they have more of the characteristic Huxley cleverness. It is hard to read any of these stories and to accuse Aldous Huxley of failing to *feel* the significance of life. In the short-story form, I think, he has achieved a perfection excelled by no one. He tells them simply, with the seeming effortlessness which is his style at its best; and his style, even at its worst, as it is in *Two or Three Graces*, is something any writer may envy. It is a supple, extremely facile prose style which at times rises to heights of poetry—though not, usually, in the descriptive passages. And he has a faculty of saying things wittily and pointedly; there is no doubt about that. It is when that faculty coincides with some-

thing worth saying that his work approaches greatness most nearly.

"The world is a tragedy to those who feel, a comedy to those who think." It is perhaps because Huxley is primarily a thinker, a detached observer of life, that he has the gift of comedy. It is more than a cleverness of words, though he has that; more than a biting irony, though he has that too. It is a kind of spontaneous amusement with things and people which bubbles to the surface irresistibly every now and then. It relieves the emotional barrenness of *Those Barren Leaves*. There is the place where Lord Hovendon has been driving Irene around and around the lake, in a finally successful attempt to get her to promise to marry him. The moronic Grace is in the tonneau of the car, Lord Hovendon's handkerchief tied around her wrist for purposes of waving. They come back. " 'Such a lot of lakes,' Miss Elver was telling Mrs. Chelifer. 'Such a lot!' 'Only one, surely, my dear,' Mrs. Chelifer mildly insisted. But Miss Elver wouldn't hear of it. 'Lots and lots.' Mrs. Chelifer sighed compassionately.' " There is the passage where Mrs. Chelifer is discovered feeding the cats, having at last found an occupation in Rome. This playful humor permeates *Crome Yellow*, mixed with something deeper. In *Antic Hay* it is missing almost entirely, in spite of Gumbriel's Patent Small Clothes and the flaxen bear he wears as The Complete Man. In general, however, Huxley's faculty for seeing the comic as well as the grotesquely ironic in things is not the least of his charms.

What does he represent? Nothing more or less, I think, than himself, in all his complex, attractive, varied personality. He is not a participant in any new literary movements; he says in one of his Essays that a classic restraint is necessary to make passion effective; he hates baroque as he hates emotional pose. His technique is the result of his personality and his experimentation; it is remarkably objective for a contemporary style. That is because Aldous Huxley is, fundamentally, an observer with opera glasses, who always maintains a certain detachment even when he tells us what his characters are thinking. He is try-

ing, always, to rearrange his impressions into a form which will give them significance, if only the significance of the arrangement itself; he has the classic instinct, perhaps, for bringing order out of chaos. And he succeeds in giving us, classified and ticketed, a cross-section of contemporary thought, founded, for him personally, on his own investigations into the problems he formulates. He gives us much more than that; how much more seems to depend on the individual reader. To me he seems one of the most amusing and stimulating writers I know; and it seems to me quite enough to commend him for the merits he has without censuring him for lacking those he could not possibly possess and remain the per-

sonality he is. He may not be the outstanding genius of contemporary literature; he may not be a genius at all; and yet it seems a shame that such valuable personalities must sink in the race for immortality simply because they do not possess the identical qualities which makes all the other masterpieces last. I should think posterity would like a change occasionally. If so, even it may make Aldous Huxley's acquaintance with profit. For if his thinking is not particularly original, the combination of his various talents and qualities of style certainly is like no one else. And for the rest—I am quite willing to enjoy Aldous Huxley and let posterity do its own deciding.

—NAOMI RABE.

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#### RIPPLE MARKS

Here was the sea. It breaks today  
 A thousand lonely miles away,  
 And yet, ere life had come to be,  
 Here surged the many-sounding sea.  
 On ancient rock the breakers hurled  
 The sands of that strange elder world;  
 Above these cliffs that top the wold  
 The immemorial waters rolled.  
 Still in the marks the boulders save  
 We trace the long-subsided wave,  
 And sense, in awe that renders mute,  
 Beauty remote and absolute.

—ANNE CHAMBERLAIN HODGES.

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#### THE BATTLE OF CRECY

You say that the battle of Crecy was fought in  
 1346?  
 And what is that to me whose heart is aching?  
 And the Truce of Bretigny caused a short ces-  
 sation of the war?  
 Tell me, why do you prattle of wars instead of  
 hearts?  
 It seems that centuries have passed  
 Since that dull day you left—  
 And Agincourt was a decisive victory for the  
 English?  
 Do not these living defeats  
 Cut deeper than those long dead?  
 Hereafter I shall know pity,  
 I, who have known defeat—

—MAXINE STILES.

## AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A TREE

Spring, I thrill  
 To the new life growing,  
 New leaves pushing,  
 New sap flowing.

Summer, I watch  
 Gold days go by,  
 And silver nights  
 Drift down the sky.

Autumn, I see  
 My leaves, set free,  
 Die at the foot  
 Of another tree.

Winter, I stand  
 And wait and know,  
 And cut blue shadows  
 In white snow.

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 EXPERIENCE

Oh, all the world was old, was old  
 And I alone was new  
 I told my answers to the Earth  
 As Youth is wont to do.

"There is no God," I boldly said,  
 And paused, that he should strike me dead  
 Whom I denied; but nothing stirred—  
 It was as if He had not heard.

No steady planet swerved to see  
 Who played Earth's latest-born buffoon,  
 But a sly, old star, unmannerly,  
 Winked at the wrinkled moon.

Oh, all the world is old, is old,  
 And I am not so new  
 I take my questions to the Earth  
 As Time has taught me to.

—EMILY POWERS IGLEHART.

# Campus Sketches

## THE FOOTBALL STAR

He was a football star. Two years ago  
 His name was everywhere; just to have seen  
 His mighty presence was, in one's home town  
 A certain road to immortality.  
 The other night we saw him at a show—  
 Forlorn and lonesome-looking, with a girl,  
 Faded and plain, beside him. On his face  
 There was a hang-dog look. But one old lady  
 Remembered him and spoke to him. A moment  
 He brightened into his heroic self;  
 But she went on, and once again his face  
 Took on that hang-dog look; and when his girl  
 Spoke to him timidly, he answered sadly.

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## THE ORNAMENTAL CO-ED

She's just as pretty as a girl can be  
 And not become The Absolute. She wears  
 Her clothes with fine facility. She moves  
 With fragile swiftness through the corridors  
 And leaves a trail of misery behind;  
 For every other girl who sees her envies  
 Her loveliness; and every man is lost  
 Once he beholds those sweet, half-parted lips.  
 Philosophy and other abstruse things  
 Are easy for her; since her male professors  
 Are human, even though they speak of Plato.  
 She'll never die—when she's a few years older,  
 They'll set her under glass, to be a model  
 For future girls to try to equal—vainly.

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## THE BIG MAN ON THE CAMPUS

Urbane and polished, trousers primly pressed,  
 His tie just so—I'm sure he must have fallen  
 Out of a window somewhere on the Square.  
 But he's no clothing dummy merely—when he walks,  
 "There's majesty in motion," you declare,  
 "As well as poetry!" There's not a girl  
 Who would not give her highest prized possession  
 (Her mirror) just to have him kiss her once.  
 There's not a man, down to the Great Professors,  
 Who is not flattered by his Jovian nod.  
 And we poor others—our sole comfort is:  
 "The worms will eat him, just as they'll eat us!"

## THE EQUESTRIENNE

She looks untidy in her breeches which  
 Swell out ungracefully upon each side  
 Of her, below her hips. One may secure  
 The finest view of that expanse of cloth  
 When one stays just behind her. When one comes  
 Within a yard of her, one sees that riding  
 Has quite affected her complexion, for  
 Her rouge and powder look quite shaken. She  
 Is nicest looking at a distance when  
 The beauty of the horse shows up quite well,  
 And one can't see the rider's haggard look.

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## THE FRATERNITY COLLEGIAN

College for him is one small social group  
 Which designates itself by Grecian letters  
 That are well mispronounced. You chance to mention  
 A famous person; "Oh, *he* was a So-so!"  
 The lad will tell you with much nonchalance.  
 Mention a famous woman, and he'll say:  
 "Her father and her brothers all were So-sos!"  
 Somebody mentioned someone's Holstein bull  
 The other day. The name was fancy—fine—  
 Like any Lord's. "A So-so too?" we asked.  
 He answered, "By his name I'm sure he is!"

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## THE BLUFFING CO-ED

She need not be good looking; all she needs  
 Is nerve a-plenty and a male instructor.  
 She'll listen with an understanding smile  
 No matter how jejune the lecture is,  
 And make you feel quite humble in her presence;  
 Because you'll think she's wise. She fires questions  
 Which, in her shrewdness, she can so contrive  
 That they'll fit anywheres. She hangs around  
 The bright ones of the class, hoping that she  
 May catch the prized Pythagorean ailment.  
 And, when you know her well, you must admire  
 The pure, unsullied whiteness of her mind  
 Which has escaped all thought—for twenty years.

—CARROLL BLAIR.



# Three Prose Sketches

## POSSESSION

HE LOOKED at it, triumphantly; he turned it over; he pressed the spring that opened it and looked inside; he fingered it, lovingly; it was his. He had won it at one of the sideshows at a circus. He had been more—far more lucky than his sister. Why, she had won only a cheap bar of chocolate, while he,—he looked at it again—a cigarette case! Of course, he couldn't use it—he wouldn't dream of using it—not for many years. He would have to wait until he was sixteen, a matter of some six or seven years, before he would be able to use it.

He showed it to his mother, giving her, at the same time, a vividly picturesque account of how he had won it, for the same price as his sister had won her thing for, but she had won only a little bar of chocolate, while he had got this. It was nice, wasn't it?

"What do you want with a cigarette case?" his mother asked him in a tone so disinterested that it almost destroyed his happiness. "Go upstairs," the mother then added, in a troubled voice, "and give it to your father. It may ease him a bit."

She turned away, a worried expression on her face, leaving her son gazing down at his prize somewhat rebelliously. All the joy of having, for his very own, so mature a thing as a cigarette case was rapidly vanishing. He looked at it; he turned it over; he pressed the spring that opened it and looked inside; he fingered it, lovingly; then he turned and went to where his father lay inertly on his bed, his head turned to the wall.

As the door slowly creaked itself open, the man turned his head towards his son, who stood in the doorway, swaying to and fro by the light of the candle which alone performed the task of lighting the room. The small boy, awed by the look on his father's face—a look which seemed strangely unreal, remote, unworldly—tiptoed up to the bed. In his hand was the precious cigarette case. He fingered it, lovingly—a last mad embrace before the cruel

separation—then he thrust out his hand and offered it to the sick man.

"I won it," he explained gruffly, "at the circus."

Followed then a recapitulation of how he had come to win the prize, and then the boy left hurriedly, relieved to be out of a room where sickness, aided by a single candle's light, effected so uncannily gruesome an atmosphere.

That night, the boy could not sleep. He lay on his bed, tossing from side to side until far into the night. Suddenly he heard a stir. It seemed as though the house had shuddered. Then followed, faintly, the sound of far-off wailing. Intuitively he knew what had happened. A sensation passed up and down his spine. He felt no sorrow, no remorse; merely a feeling akin to self-pity. He sighed, and fell asleep.

During the course of the next few days, many relatives came to visit his bereaved mother. A few of them asked for small articles that had belonged to the dead man, for remembrances. The boy was struck with a brilliant idea.

He went to his mother and carefully chose his words.

"Ma, may I have that cigarette case that you told me to give pop the other day, when I went to the circus? Huh, may I? For a remembrance?"

He looked up at his mother, solemnly, appealingly. The poor woman, too much engrossed in her loss, nodded her head sadly, and went on speaking of her departed husband's goodness to the sorrowing relations and sympathetic neighbors.

Her son, meanwhile, had gone to his father's bureau, had opened the drawer, and had quickly snatched up the cigarette case, with a sigh that was half sob. He looked at it, triumphantly; he turned it over; he pressed the spring that opened it and looked inside; he fingered it, lovingly; it was his.

—MONTAGUE CANTOR.

## THE CURTAIN

WHEN Ernest Moore first came to the university he was fortunate—after a fashion. Although coming from a small town, he was relieved of many problems which beset freshmen. Friends had smoothed the path which he was to travel. However, nothing which they could do to remove the rustic stamp penetrated more than two very external inches. At heart Ernest remained an exceedingly usual person.

Early in his collegiate career he was exposed to an influence which was to dog him for three years. Innocent but inquisitive, he was ushered into one of the more pretentious fraternity houses on the campus, there to learn more about the mysteries of his future life.

Sitting after dinner in one of the upstairs rooms, it could scarcely be called a study, his hungry eyes scanned the room. The frayed rugs, the desks scarred with the burns of countless cigarettes, the row of mysterious bottles with exciting labels, all empty to be sure, but subtly hinting at the use to which their contents had been put; all these were met and discarded. Suddenly Ernest realized for the first time that he was at college. The stories he had read of glamorous college life all came surging back to him. His chest slightly expanded and he thrilled to the thought of being a part of this great whole.

His restless eye glanced from one object to another and then came to rest upon a book case curtain, hung ostentatiously for the purpose of concealing books, only there were no books to be concealed. It was intricately made of many handkerchiefs of delicate lace, sewn into a riot of color and design. For years it had hung there, like the empty bottles, waiting for this momentary adoration.

Ernest became interested, intrigued,—nay, even obsessed—with the idea that he must have a similar curtain. With this as a definite goal, Ernest began to collect; quite timidly at first, and then ardently with the true and admirable zeal of the genuine collector.

At first only small soiled muslin squares came to his hands. He consoled himself with the notion that these were to be the basic designs in his pattern, but that the inner work was to

be filled with exquisite lavenders and mauves . . . later.

The years trudge by and Ernest becomes a senior. By this time the cigar box had become quite filled with trophies. Then one morning, freshly laundered and ironed, a heap of neat squares lay on his bed. Laboriously, aided by experience in a sail maker's loft a few summers before, Ernest stitched them together.

At last it was completed and he proudly hung it on the glistening brass rods. "Now," he thought, "If they could only see me now."

Fortune favored Ernest and the familiar "Letter for you!" sent him scurrying down the hall. There on the table lay a white oblong with the marking

John Moore  
Saddles & Harness

stamped neatly with purple ink in one corner.

"Dear son:" the letter read, "I am writing in hopes that you will not be too busy to look up your cousin Billy who is beginning at the university this year. He has been at an eastern prep school for the last three years and I think you will find him older than the usual run of freshmen. I am sure that you two will get along nicely."

Ernest smiled. This was too good. The very day that his curtain was completed a guest was expected to admire it. His smile broadened when he thought of how impressed he had been at seeing its counterpart. Hastening to the phone he located his cousin. He explained who he was and added,

"Drive around this evening, can't you old man? I'd really like to see you." He could scarcely restrain himself to keep the aloof tone which he felt to be desirable.

Donning his new fall suit and the tie he had bought at the suggestion of a prom chairman, he awaited his guest.

"Hullo, old boy. Glad to see you." The usual remarks about the weather and getting adjusted.

"But what is this?" remarks his guest, indicating the curtain.

"Oh!" said Ernest carelessly, "Nothing but a few relics that I collected from friends. Rather a novel idea, isn't it?"

"Rather juvenile for a university senior, don't

you think?" replied the cousin blandly. He blew little mounting rings into the air. "Really, I must be getting on. Date with a Kappa at eight-thirty. How about giving me a ring sometime?" He left.

Dazed, Ernest turned to the open window and stared out at the lake. The moon shone, brightly as ever; but the moon, for Ernest, had gone violently out.

—RAYMOND HATHAWAY.

### KENTUCKY TALE

ON ONE occasion only do I remember having felt any surge of sympathy within me for Peter Bertels. This occasion came when I visited him as he lay in a white bed, dying from three knife thrusts which had pierced his lungs. The hard, brown face of the Belgian farmer had turned an ashen white, with new, deep lines telling me, who knew the man, the whole story of the suffering Pete must have undergone since the episode on the hillside.

In the hospital room our eyes met instantly, and meeting, they clashed again as they had often done before on winter nights when I watched the brown face at the end of a kitchen table, blinking at me in the flickering light of an oil lamp. He cursed silently as throes of pain racked his emaciated frame and caused a feverish wildness to come into his eyes. He had expected me to laugh at him. I saw surprise in his eyes because I did not do so. I knew that he would rather have taken another knife thrust, opening afresh his wounds, than to accept for a moment the sympathy I felt for him. And yet, try as I would, I could not feel otherwise, and especially when his wife, Mary, who should have been laughing too, was weeping silently by the bedside.

Early that same morning she had knocked on the door of my home. It seemed that a chill stilled my heart when I heard her sob out the story of how Pete had been stabbed on the hillside the evening before. It was the old familiar hillside that I remember having climbed time and time again at the close of a hard day. Often I had walked up this same hill in the full, mellow glow of a setting sun, turning to see below the last of my pupils, swinging their

tin dinner pails as they went homeward into the dusk.

So they had killed Peter Bertels. Two months had passed since my departure from the Bertels' home where I lived the year I taught school at Northland, Kentucky, but years would pass before I could ever forget the man who had ruled the miserable Bertels family with a hand that had brought the very curse of God upon the household.

Here was a man dying who two months ago had sputtered and shouted forth in a warm kitchen, filled with the odors of warm dish-water and boiled vegetables, the philosophy of a man who had failed in life. Twenty years ago he had destroyed his youth tearing loose the copper from the bowels of the earth. Ten years ago he had taken this piece of land at Northland, cursing from the very first day the men who had sold him the stone-infested soil and who were now robbing him of the few acres of timber he cut down and hauled to the landing each winter. An anarchist, he sat in the kitchen with me and cried down the institutions of this land, giving vent to his fury upon me who dared to argue with him—a fury which he rained down upon me in a combination of English sounds and Belgian gutturals.

He hated politics because he had failed twice in his efforts to become township clerk. He hated me (although he was glad to receive the thirty dollars I paid him each month for my pitiful room and board) because I often wore white shirts and received one hundred and fifty dollars a month for teaching the ragged Kentuckians in the little white schoolhouse at the foot of the hill.

He hated his children because they were failures like himself. Their brains were clouded with the ignorance and prejudice of his powerful hate and the blows that he had given them with his body. Small wonder then that his son wandered about with the wastrels of the village and that his daughters had been drawn into the black woods early in their youth.

He was too weak in this white hospital room to argue with me again with words. His eyes defied me to laugh because I knew that he had accepted, from the same government he had cried down, a fire warden's appointment. It

had been for money, the same gold for which he had accused me of selling my soul by teaching the falsehoods of textbooks in the white schoolhouse. For three dollars and fifty cents a day he had become a fire warden. The Kentuckians, hating law, had stabbed him.

He called upon me to laugh at him. If it had been in the kitchen, where the oil lamp burned dimly, I would have done so. Not now, for was it not enough that the Kentuckians were laughing while Mary wept by the failure's bedside?

—J. GUNNAR BACK.

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#### PETER PAN

Peter Pan,  
I flirted with your favorite fairy  
Late last night—  
Aren't you jealous, Peter Pan. . .

She kissed me lightly, very chastely  
On my forehead.  
What wonder now I understand  
Your laughter and your singing eyes.

#### THE EMPTY URN

I am an empty urn since you are gone,  
Empty and useless.  
The golden liquor which I held  
Safely within strong arms  
Has been poured forth unto the hungry ground.

And I shall be placed  
Lonelily  
Upon a shelf  
And dust shall sift down upon me—  
An empty useless thing  
Since you are gone.

—MAXINE STILES.

# Mori

## *The Characters*

MORI TARON, a blind youth.

ELLA TARON, his mother.

STEPHEN, a friend.

*The setting is constructivist. At the spectator's left is an entrance of upright-and-lintel construction facing at an angle of about thirty degrees to the back of the right. To the right is a platform about four and one-half feet high and about six feet long, sloping slightly back and slightly to the right, from which slopes an approach down around toward the left. Back, and between the entrance and platform is a square box for a seat. All the construction is in a very light-brown stain—hardly more than a varnish. A black drop hangs across the back and an intermediate black curtain hangs at the side, a little behind and reaching within a few feet of the entrance. There is a corresponding curtain on the left. A yellow, reddish light fairly illuminates the scene.*

*ELLA TARON is seated on the box arranging a theatrical wig. She is Russian by birth, now middle-aged, and retains above her work a certain dark beauty of black hair and eyes. Within this beauty she has the warmth, a bearing of the ordinary continental culture and of a theatrical education. At the death of her husband a dozen years previous, she left the stage and entered the work of theatrical ac-countering in order to support herself and her blind son MORI. MORI is now about nineteen, a fellow of average height, a little shorter than his mother, of good physique, and holding erect a head of rich chestnut hair and a strong face with deep, hollow eyes that occasionally open and nervously roll. He is lying full length at the foot of his platform, supporting himself on his right arm while he fingers the raised type of his Braille volume with the nimble fingers of his left hand. As*

*the curtain rises, and for a few moments following, ELLA TARON sings as she works.*

ELLA (*interrupting her singing*): Mori, is Stephen coming over to read to you tonight?

MORI: Yes.

ELLA: That's good. What are you going to study?

MORI: History. We're studying the French Revolution. It makes it much easier when Stephen and I take the same course. He gets his own work done when he reads to me.

ELLA: Stephen reads well, doesn't he?

MORI: Yes. I wish he came more. I like his reading much more than Ralph's. It doesn't fall into a monotonous tone when he gets tired. It's awfully hard to concentrate on the work sometimes when Ralph gets going blankly. It becomes a sort of chant. But Stephen can keep his clear expression all evening. I think he'd make a good actor.

ELLA: Well, surely an actor doesn't peter in the last act.

MORI: He can't seem to come over as much as he used to. He just can't seem to get here as often, I wonder what's the reason.

ELLA: Don't you know?

MORI: Why, no. What is it? Do you know?

ELLA: Stephen's in love.

MORI: Stephen?

ELLA: Yes, he's in love, and very much in love.

MORI: Why do you—how do you know?

ELLA: He told me. He was wondering what to get her for her birthday and I think he also wanted to talk to someone of his love. The gift was a good excuse. He was too bashful to speak about it in his family, and he came to me.

MORI: But why didn't he say something—

ELLA: He wanted it to be a secret. Then later he said that if you should ask about him, I might tell you.

- MORI: Stephen's in love.
- ELLA: He's happy, too.
- MORI: Yes.
- ELLA (*after a pause*): When will he be here, about eight?
- MORI: He said about that time.
- ELLA: I shall have to go down town a little later.
- MORI: What are you going to do?
- ELLA: We're making the costumes for an English play that's opening early next week. The fools are hurrying the piece together to produce it within the season. I'll have to do a little extra work at the shop this evening.
- MORI: Please don't work too much, mother. I want you to stay beautiful.
- ELLA: I shall, Mori. This is just tonight.
- MORI: You know, when people work too long, lines come into their faces. They always describe tired characters as unlovely, with lines in their faces. Are many of the people you see in the streets like that?
- ELLA (*meditatively*): Yes, many. The women put powders and creams and colors of flesh to disguise—but they can't. There are lines in their faces. So many are tired.
- MORI: But some? Aren't there some beautiful?
- ELLA (*changing*): Why, yes, Mori. There are beautiful ones, too. You see them in the crowds, in the lights . . . the ones that dance, and the ones that love—oh Mori, those are beautiful.
- MORI: You must never become tired, mother. When I kiss you, I am going to caress you and read in your cheeks for the lines, as I read for the words in my books. I want you always to be beautiful.
- ELLA: Always, my boy!
- (*She resumes her work more attentively and soon continues again to sing. MORI does not return to his book. ELLA finishes the wig and starts to play with it.*)
- ELLA (*holding up the wig before her on her hand and looking at it coyly*): There, you lover! Let me smooth your yellow curls. How soft, how soft, flowing waves! Ah, and how soon Broadway's love must pant before them! All the sighs that shall drift upon you! My wig! My dear dummy!
- MORI: Who is it tonight, mother?
- ELLA: Tonight it is Monsieur du Pêche—my little wrist, his handsome throat! Monsieur du Pêche comes next week as a most violent lover, arrived from Paris, carrying a collapsible Bridge of Sighs which he opens in each city for the tread of doomed ladies. Come, Mori; you had better catch the throat of this alluring beast before he captures your mother!
- MORI: Oh, mother . . . (*suddenly getting up and walking to his mother with his arm stretched before him*) Damn it, I will!—where is he? (*He finds his mother's puppeting arm, tears off the wig and hurls it to the floor, and taking the wrist violently with both his hands, he heaves it from side to side, pitching his own body tensely.*)
- ELLA: Mori! Mori!
- MORI (*letting go*): There, Monsieur du Pêche!
- ELLA: Mori, Mori, what's the trouble? You've hurt me. Mori, you've hurt me.
- MORI (*kisses her wrist and then her head*): Oh, mother . . .
- ELLA: That's better. I forgive you. Quiet, quiet, Mori.
- MORI: But, mother, don't talk like that again—I mean your damn curly-headed lovers! I don't know what's happened. I couldn't listen to it tonight.
- ELLA: But you've always been glad when I brought home our people. Evenings and evenings we've played with them.
- MORI: I know, I know, but leave your play people on Broadway, in the shop, outside, anywhere. Please don't carry them home. I don't want them any more. Don't ask me—I just don't want them.
- ELLA: Mori, our friends?
- MORI: Our friends! . . . Our friends! (*as he goes over and mounts the platform on which he stretches forward, rising on his elbows, and at first resting his eyes on his palms.*)

ELLA: The Punchinello from Italy, Juliet, Prunella, and Cyrano?

MORI: Yes . . . Yes . . . but they're not real; I don't see them. . . . You don't either—don't see them and feel them. Why do you make believe; you don't have to?

ELLA: But I do, I want to; these are the reallest and kindest people. I love them and nothing can take them away. Why do you want to chase them?

MORI: Because they are only dreams; leave me no more. Dreams, dreams! They skip in symbolled wigs and suits. Somewhere away from me—Broadway, somewhere—true people, men and women, take their places. The real ones usurp. There's warmth—hearts, and bodies, and voices, and eyes. They live . . . I'm tired of just dreaming. Where is Pierrette? where is Pierrette? . . . the living Pierrette to love? She danced with Pierrot on Broadway . . . But, mother, I hold nothing. Leave my ghost to dreams—I want to love people!

ELLA: Well, Mori, I at least am real. Come, boy, sit by me.

MORI (*rising*): That's right, that's right, mother—you're real. (*going to her*) You are real!

ELLA: Come, my boy.

MORI (*holding her head against him and kissing her hair*): Yes! Yes! (*kneeling and feeling her face*) and you are beautiful, too; oh, mother, how beautiful you are!

ELLA (*catching his hand and kissing it*): Yes, Mori; yes, good boy; aren't you happy now?

MORI (*hugging her about the waist and pressing his head into her bosom*): Oh, so happy, mother! Why have you not made me as happy before?

ELLA: Haven't I? Haven't I, boy?

MORI: No, no.

ELLA (*quietly*): Dear, dear boy, you are hugging me too tightly.

MORI: Oh, you are real; you are warm. Mother, mother . . .

ELLA (*trying to disengage herself*): Please, please, Mori!

MORI (*commencing to rock her from side to side, still holding his head close upon her breasts*): Oh, mother, hold me; I want you, I want you!

ELLA (*as her hands rhythmically slip forward across his head in a vain, breathless attempt to thrust it from her*): Oh, oh, my boy, let me go . . . you hurt me . . . I love you, I love you . . .

MORI (*rests with his mother in his arms, swaying her yet, stumbling astride. She screams. MORI drops her and stands exhausted, with arms hanging limply, face turned upward, above her, as she sinks prostrate upon the floor. MORI after a few moments, turns and moves to the platform at which he supports himself. On this turn from ELLA, STEPHEN, his friend, appears at the entrance carrying a book. STEPHEN is about twenty, a very light complexioned fellow, and seemingly not very strong. He looks from ELLA to her son. ELLA hears him, but does not move.*)

ELLA (*weakly*): Stephen, Stephen.

STEPHEN (*running to her and dropping the book*): Yes, Mrs. Taron.

ELLA: Help me up.

STEPHEN (*lifts Ella to her feet and wipes her face with his handkerchief*): What can I do? Here, are you better now? What happened?

ELLA (*pulling herself suddenly together*): Nothing. (*She indicates for STEPHEN to get the wig and rapidly tidies herself as he goes for it*): Thank you, Stephen. I'm all right. I must go out. Stay with Mori. (*She goes out.*)

STEPHEN (*watches her out—then, turning to MORI*): Mori.

MORI (*moving for the first time*): Go away

. . .

STEPHEN: Mori!

MORI: Stephen? . . . go away, Stephen . . . I must . . . I want . . . mother! mother! . . . I want . . . I want . . . (*he collapses*).

STEPHEN (*runs to him, slaps his cheeks and chafes his hands, trying to rouse him. He raises him under the arms and walks*

him a few steps, then stops and tries to make him stand erect. MORI lifts his head, but it falls over backwards. STEPHEN turns him and walks him slowly up the slope to the platform on which he stretches him out on his stomach and stands over him. MORI lies quiet a moment and then drags himself forward, raises his chin upon his hands, rests on his elbows, and opening his eyes and rolling them about, he calls softly.)

MORI: Stephen?

STEPHEN (walks down the platform and at the bottom answers): Yes, Mori.

MORI: Stephen, what . . . what . . . oh . . . oh . . . oh . . . oh . . . oh here, Stephen, read to me.

STEPHEN: Are you all right now, Mori? (getting the book from the floor): Yes, I'll read. Let's see; where were we yesterday, Mori?

MORI (a little impatiently): Read to me, Stephen.

STEPHEN: Yes, here, here. You remember, we were at the Reign of Terror. The people had stormed the Bastille and were drunk with their new power. Anyone under slightest suspicion of Royalist or any anti-revolutionist tendencies was peremptorily put to the guillotine. Danton, the guiding spirit—

MORI: Stephen, I can hear your voice. Whenever I am in this room, unless it is mother's, I wonder if I really hear a voice. But I hear yours. I've just been thinking of the others—mother's people—they've been trying to talk. No, no I don't hear them. Your voice touches my ear. Theirs is nothing. Don't you hear me too, Stephen?

STEPHEN: Yes, but—

MORI: You do hear me! I sometimes almost wonder whether I am a real person. I sometimes feel a little different and apart this side. There isn't love and light.

STEPHEN (standing at MORI's head, but facing forward. His shoulders are about level with the top of the platform): Doesn't your mother love you?

MORI: Can she?

STEPHEN: Mori, your mother—what could make you think—why, your mother, Mori—Your mother loves you!

MORI (vaguely): I didn't know . . . Yes, mother loves me. Everybody's mother—Listen, Stephen, somebody else loves you.

STEPHEN (starting a little): What do you mean?

MORI: You know, Stephen: I mean you're in love.

STEPHEN: Then, Mori, your mother said something? I do love someone, yes.

MORI: Talk, talk; Stephen, what's her voice?

STEPHEN: Oh, it is sweet, Mori. We walked all Sunday afternoon. I let her talk. I listened to her voice all the time. Sometimes she would ask, "Why are you so quiet, Stephen?" I could be quiet all my life to hear her ask me.

MORI: What is her name?

STEPHEN: Annette.

MORI: Annette—Pierrette.

STEPHEN: She has the happiest smile. I wish I could describe her to you, Mori. But I am helpless. Everything about her has no name. The only thing I can say wherever I start is, Beautiful. She is all beautiful. Oh, Mori, Beautiful.

MORI: Have you loved her very long?

STEPHEN: A month.

MORI: What do you do? What do you talk about?

STEPHEN: Oh, anything. Sometimes a book—sometimes people—poems—traveling—ourselves—anything; we don't care. Sometimes we're just silent—just because we want to be. It doesn't matter. We love each other.

MORI: Do you kiss her?

STEPHEN: Yes. When people love they kiss.

MORI: What is it like?

STEPHEN: Oh, I don't know, Mori. It's beautiful. Don't ask me that.

MORI: Why not?

STEPHEN: It's something—it's too beautiful. You don't care to go and talk about a kiss. It seems to be made out of a precious moment that you don't like to mingle with other moments.



MORI (*taking STEPHEN'S left shoulder under his right hand*): Why did you come here tonight, Stephen?

STEPHEN: To read. We were going to read. We were going to study history.

MORI: But you're talking about Annette all the time, and you tell me you love her.

STEPHEN: You asked me to talk about her, Mori. I didn't start it myself. I know, perhaps I've been a little eager and said too much, but—

MORI: But?

STEPHEN: Oh, well we can start our history now. We haven't lost so much time. I'm sorry (*He is about to go for the book, but MORI holds him by the shoulder.*)

MORI: No, not the history.

STEPHEN: What do you want, Mori? Tell me what it is. We must get the work done sometime. But, Mori, if you're tired tonight, perhaps I'd better go home.

MORI: Annette . . .

STEPHEN: I'll go home, Mori. I don't think we can work this evening. You seem upset about something. When I came in—

MORI (*starting violently*): Yes? What? What?

STEPHEN: Oh, nothing . . .

MORI (*loudly*): What? (*His grip tightens on STEPHEN'S shoulder.*)

STEPHEN: Your mother—she didn't seem well.

MORI: Where was she?

STEPHEN: She was on the floor. She was lying there when I came in. I helped her up, and she went out.

MORI: Where was I? Why didn't I help her? She never said good-bye.

STEPHEN: You were standing here, Mori. You didn't seem well. I wanted to help your mother first.

MORI: You didn't have to help *me!*

STEPHEN: Mori, don't get so excited. What is the matter? Please let me go.

MORI (*holding on*): Why was mother on the floor?

STEPHEN: Mori, I don't know. Please let go of me.

MORI: Do you want to know?

STEPHEN: Mori, hadn't you better sleep? Let me go home.

MORI (*drags himself forward over the edge of the platform by STEPHEN'S shoulder and now holds him on both sides, his head stretching across STEPHEN'S left shoulder close to his face*): I'll tell you!

STEPHEN (*struggling*): Mori!

MORI: I'll tell you! I'll tell you! I'll tell you why she was there. I threw her there! She frightened me and I dropped her out of my arms. She shouldn't have frightened me. I loved her, I loved her so much. (*He is hugging STEPHEN'S head against his.*) I wanted her to love me. Why did she scream? . . . Mori, Mori . . . pushing me from her . . . Hug me, mother. Don't push me away . . . I love, too . . . Stephen's not the only one . . . Look how I hug you, mother . . . Tighter, tighter . . . It hurts. It is love! It is love!

STEPHEN (*struggling with all his might, drags himself from the platform, but MORI, holding on ferociously, brings the two to the floor. MORI, on his knees, begins hurling his arms apart and together about STEPHEN in spasmodic hugs, making at the same time savage kissing noises.*) Don't! Don't! Don't, Mori! Mori! Don't! Don't!

(*Then with all his power he gives MORI a shove away with both arms and flies out wildly.*)

MORI (*clutching toward the portal*): Stephen! Stephen! (*His eyes rolling, he gets up and staggers about the room, clutching at the air and calling*): Annette! (*with surprise*) Pierrette! Annette!—Pierrette! Love, mother! Juliet, Juliet, stop, Juliet—I touched you there. Don't scream! (*holding his ears*): Mori, Mori (*releasing them*) please, don't scream! Love, mother! Mother, Ella, love, mother!

(Curtain)

—WALTER BONIME.

# BOOKS

GOODBYE WISCONSIN. By GLENWAY WESCOTT. New York: Harper & Brothers. 362 pp. \$2.50.

*Good-Bye Wisconsin* by GLENWAY WESCOTT consists of a forty-five page impression of modern Wisconsin, and of ten short stories.

It would seem that the author had been living, for a time, in the south of France and in New York; he has come to spend Christmas at home in Claron, Wisconsin. He tells us what, definitely, about the station at Milwaukee attracts his attention; what are the most striking qualities of the crowds awaiting trains. He sketches vividly his fellow-travellers in general, his actual arrival in his parents' home, and the town in which this home is. This last subject affords him an opportunity to write of life, as a whole, in the Wisconsin of this particular decade of the twentieth century; he reveals with fascinating vividness the transformation, in this state, of the rustic into the provincial.

This section of the book is well done; the style is, for the most part, sincere and forceful with an unaffected simplicity. Occasionally a strained metaphor appears; a romantic but far-flung and weak image.

But the quality of this part of the book which most impresses a reader interested in modern America is the success with which the author has revealed to us his psychology and its results. He is a young man of intelligence who has lived much abroad. When he returns to the home of his youth his opinions concerning this home, this Wisconsin, are definitely crystallized and easily available. Here is Wisconsin taking its proper place in the mind of an intelligently travelled native. The value of such a native's well-expressed comment is obvious.

The short stories in the book, however, are not good. The style is bad. We find such sentences as: "The sky rolled from side to side like an animal in pain, outstretched on the

soft, saturated trees." "The grass is like a sponge dipped in vinegar and perfume." Side by side with such extreme examples of bad romantic imagery we find equally extreme examples of tiring and outmoded "realism".

The structure of the stories is bad. They are not wholes; they are combinations of unrelated or incongruous elements. The situations are often absurd without point, or sentimental without force, or wearily "realistic" without beauty or effect.

"For another book," says the author, "I should like to learn to write . . . without slang, with precise equivalents instead of idioms, a style of rapid grace for the eye rather than sonority for the ear, in accordance with the ebb and flow of sensation rather than with intellectual habits, and out of which myself, with my origins and my prejudices and my Wisconsin, will seem to have disappeared."

Let him, rather, learn to write without over-worked and staccato attempts at "stark realism"; without absurdly affected romantic imagery. Let him present characters in a sincere language. Possibly these matters are included in the self-consciousness which he seems desirous of abandoning. If so, and if he succeeds, the improvement will be great; the result will be some genuinely fine writing.

—FRANCIS J. STEEGMÜLLER.

GOOD MORNING AMERICA. By CARL SANDBURG. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 251 pp. \$3.00.

## I

CARL SANDBURG loves the prairies of the middle west. He also admires the pioneers who scoured and scouted them some decades ago. There is a certain thrill for him in the rattling of rivet-hammers and the rush of big cities, but the progression from speed to more speed and more racket disquiets him. He draws back from it and regrets it. About facts he is less worried. In his vision of the twi-

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light of America he is wistful, and he turns moralist long enough to utter from time to time half-formulated warnings.

All these things one learns in *Good Morning, America*, the long poem which Mr. SANDBURG read as the Harvard Phi Beta Kappa poet in June and which appears in the new volume of the same name. The four-line introduction must be heard to be appreciated:

"In the evening there is a sunset sonata comes to the cities.

There is a march of little armies to the dwindling of drums.

The skyscrapers throw their tall lengths of walls into black bastions on the red west.

The skyscrapers fasten their perpendicular alphabets far across the changing silver triangles of stars and streets."

Then a picture of the modern city, and the story of the pioneers begins: "There's gold in them hills," soon to give place to a finely ironical discussion of facts and gods. The scene shifts to colonial days, to Mississippi riverboat days, to to-day.

Jazz comes into the picture and into the technique.

"A code arrives; language; lingo; slang; behold the proverbs of a people, a nation; Give 'em the works. Fix it, there's always a way. Be hard boiled. The good die young."

Catalogs occur, and one realizes the paradox that because the catalogs are better the effect is weaker than Walt Whitman's.

And so on through the twenty-seven pages. Pictures, music, perfumes, possibly tears, to the final equivocal

"Moonlight, come down—shine down, moonlight—meet every bird cry and every son calling to a hard old earth, a sweet young earth."

## II

Those who have heard Mr. SANDBURG from the lecture (or to put it more properly—the recital) platform will be pleased to recognize in the type of this new volume the thirty-nine definitions of poetry as he has been reading them during the past few years. If one has never heard SANDBURG the definitions, and in fact all the SANDBURG poetry, are apt to seem too far flung, too windy and sentimentalized, but having heard him one does not doubt his sincerity and genuineness. SANDBURG's own singing of the lines is enough to turn the balance on the judgment of his effects from one of empty sentimentality to a genuine lyric genius. And even so one may be pardoned, I think, for doubting the sincerity of some of the lines in the "Spring Grass" poems which make up the second part of the new book.

But when he wanders out into the country SANDBURG is hard to beat. He seems to "get" it better

than anyone. And to turn from prose to SANDBURG's country poems is like straying from the concrete sidewalk into the long grass of the byways. He knows the farm country and the farm people, and he writes about them in the "Corn Belt" section.

"Open the door, farm woman,  
It is time for the cows to be milked.  
Their udders are full from the sleep night."

It expresses perfectly the slow rhythm of newly-awakened life breaking the echoes of the fields.

SANDBURG is "poetic" in even his most reckless moments. He talks of "rose and gold mist", "white-mist lavender . . . a sweet moonlit lavender", and many other mists. In an ode "To the Ghost of John Milton" he says "I would write wild, foggy, smoky, wordy books." And he does. And I like him.

—EDWIN F. LESTER.

THE WAYS OF BEHAVIORISM. By JOHN B. WATSON. New York: Harper & Brothers. 138 pp. \$2.00.

Through the chapter on *How We Think* one may best strike into the ways of behaviorism. And when WATSON remarks in this same chapter that, "Most of our word organization is as inflexible as the grooves on a phonograph record. We turn the records on when we are alone and play them over and over again. There is no improvement in our thinking," he is describing the thinking that he does in this book.

Because WATSON has progressed so little beyond his original theories, one cannot help wishing that the famous behaviorist had not forsaken scientific research for business. He would have done well to heed his own adage: "We learn to think better as we learn to do better." WATSON has done little in psychological research lately and his thinking about psychology shows it.

This is not saying that the book is unprofitable; on the contrary, it challenges thinking and interest. The author frankly addresses his book to the public, and proceeds to discuss the more dramatic and controversial issues of psychology; namely, instinct, emotion, memory, thinking, the unconscious, and the problem of changing one's personality. In each of these discussions, he takes especial pains to answer with lucidity and plausibility the most common criticisms of his position. *The Ways of Behaviorism*, written originally in magazine article form, differs as greatly from an earlier book of his called *Behaviorism*, given originally in lecture form, as do essays from popular talks. Such is the general character of the book.

Concerning the scientific aspects of behavioristic theories, WATSON speaks well for his cause when he says:

"The behaviorist is the first one to admit that he has built up a terrific superstructure of theory

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upon a foundation of very meager experimental results. His position, however, is the only one that has even meager experimental support."

Psychology, he hopes, will some day attain control in the field of human behavior. But the problems as to why psychology should get control, or as to what ends it will use such control after it gets it—these questions WATSON does not answer, nor does he seem to realize the possible existence of such problems. These same questions occur in all sciences. In chemistry, for instance, are the results of chemical research to be used for waging war, or for maintaining peace? And is not some criticism of purposes ever so much more important in the science of human behavior than in other sciences where humanity is not so directly concerned? It is doubtful that the answers to these questions will naturally arise out of scientific research, or that these problems will be settled by the kind of thinking usually called scientific. Yet, on the one hand WATSON takes it for granted that science does its own evaluating or criticizing, while on the other hand he does his utmost to rid science of purposes or values.

Not least interesting are WATSON's suggestions for pedagogy. He advocates, instead of text books, workshops. "The truth is we learn to think by learning to do." (Contrary to his original definition of thinking as behavior, he seems here to distinguish between thinking and doing.

WATSON wants human beings to know about themselves. He suggests that every child, before he reaches the age of fourteen be grounded in anatomy, physiology, and mental hygiene. I imagine, though, that he would not be opposed to this training for college freshmen, especially, if they had not been exposed to it. What our educational leaders make of these and other pedagogical suggestions contained in *The Ways of Behaviorism*, I leave for them to state.

—RALPH M. CROWLEY.

A SON OF EARTH. By WILLIAM ELLERY LEONARD. New York: The Viking Press. 235 pp. \$3.00.

I must give what seems to me to be the truth about the *Son of Earth*. The book is autobiographical of course—it is hard to find a LEONARD work that is not. The poems are given in eighteen groups, ranged consecutively in subject-sequence, the subjects being phases in Mr. LEONARD's development. The idea is much like that of Wordsworth; to give the life of the poet in his own works; but, fortunately, Mr. LEONARD is not so long-winded as Mr. W.

The first thing that struck me as I read along through the book (beginning at the beginning), was the fine melody of the language, the easy—almost Byronic—quality of the lines. Soon I began to weary of this, for the subject was always the same;

i. e., WILLIAM ELLERY LEONARD. Soon I began to find fault with poems; there was an almost-juvenility of outlook in some; there was too much poetizing. There were too many sonnets. The sonnet, to me, is the most tedious verse form in English, even though Shakespeare and Keats have written well with it as a medium. There are so many damnably trivial sonnets that one develops a sonnet-complex. There is a certain affected way of looking at the world that people call "poetic", (I would call it mushily sentimental) and this outlook fits the sonnet like the jackrabbit fits the prairie. The rhyme and metre exigencies of the sonnet are so calculated as to make it very hard for a man to express his thoughts clearly by means of it. Most sonnets are only combinations of rhythmic tinkling noises; and too many of LEONARD's poems in the first parts of *A Son of Earth* are very little else.

Until one gets to the *Pied Piper* and *The Heretics*, one says: "Though I revere LEONARD for *Two Lives*, he begins to bore me. He is only another sonneteer. Under the impulse of a personal tragedy, he became temporarily exalted out of himself and strung together many sonnets into one real work of art; but he is too bound by the limitations of the sonnet-writer to do it again! His two strong points are the sonnet and himself. He gives himself in sonnets, and when one won't hold all his words, he makes a sequence. The *Son of Earth* is only an extension of the sonnet-sequence method of literary expression." But one is wrong. LEONARD is a great poet—when he gets away from himself. The *Two Lives* is unique—there he made himself interesting; even an entralling spectacle. But in many of his other works with himself as hero he grows tedious.

Let him, though, get away from the first person singular because of some emotional drive—preferably anger—as in the *Lynching Bee*, *The Old Agitator*, *Tom Mooney*, *The Mountain of the Skulls* and he is of Whitman stature. The *Lynching Bee* is a wonderful work.

Mr. LEONARD is a great scholar in very many fields; he has ability to express himself in poetic English. He expresses himself best when he keeps out of the scene his own private eccentricities which belong to a very narrow circle.

If only the readers of his works will consider the magnificent background of the poet and will not condemn him unduly for demanding that his sadly battered ego be taken to everybody's bosom, there is likelihood that LEONARD will be to future ages LEONARD and not merely W. E. LEONARD, the eccentric translator of *Lucretius* and *Beowulf*.

—CARROLL BLAIR.

#### THE ADVENTURES OF AN AFRICAN SLAVER.

By CAPTAIN CANOT. Illustrations by MIGUEL COVARRUBIAS. New York: Albert & Charles Boni. 371 pp. \$4.00.

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lightful reading. Captain CANOT affectionately termed "Mr. Gunpowder", has out-Horned *Trader Horn*. He records delightfully many murders, battles, arsons, hijackings and narrow escapes. I believe there are many more deaths than pages in the book.

The slave trade was outlawed in England and America in 1807, the year of THEODORE CANOT's birth. He did not board a ship until a dozen years after, and even at that late date chose to smuggle slaves. Like our own bootlegging, however, the slave trade had the sympathy and aid of many people who were in a position to thwart the several governments who were attempting to enforce the world-wide embargo on the blacks. An astonishing feature of the whole business is that among the slavers' staunchest allies were the negro tribes themselves! The slave trade functioned for them as an indispensable check to what they considered overpopulation, and when slave trading was formally abolished they were at a loss for means of criminal punishment. CANOT and his kind soon relieved them of their anxiety and excess population.

Brantz Mayer, the fat and already obscure journalist to whom Captain CANOT told his story over steins of beer in Mencken's Baltimore cafes, very willingly undertook to write it down. He was interested in the work because it seemed to substantiate his belief that the American slavery problem could be solved by deporting all negroes back to Africa. His African descriptions are therefore colored rather than realistic. As a matter of fact there is no passage in *The African Slaver* for which one need blush before even a maiden aunt on one's mother's side. When a really horrible scene occurs, near the end, it is enough to make CANOT forsake his piracy forever, with only a few recorded lapses after the resolution. Even his nonchalant disregard for the law and its servants seems only mildly reprehensible, and as Mayer tells the story Mr. Gunpowder's own ready Christian clemency makes amends for many moral imperfections and deficiencies.

The COVARRUBIAS illustrations are excellent. They fit the book, and make it a work of beauty. It is enough to say of COVARRUBIAS that he is still master of the technique which made him famous.

—WORTLEY MONROE.

### THE STRANGE CASE OF MISS ANNIE SPRAGG. By LOUIS BROMFIELD. New York:

The Frederick A. Stokes Co. 314 pp. \$2.50.

With the discovery of the holy marks of the Stigmata upon the dead body of a drab, friendless old maid, Miss Annie Spragg, the lives of more than a dozen otherwise unrelated individuals are suddenly and fantastically linked together. Mrs. Weatherby, the prophetess, seems to know more than she will tell of Annie Spragg's history, while her suppressed companion Miss Fosdick knows more than she seems to about the case. To them come the bromidic Mr. Winnery, a bachelor of fifty-six, the naughty princess

D'Orbelli, and the reformed Father D'Astier. MR. BROMFIELD traces the pasts of each of the characters, and further develops their present lives, until there is a maze of stories beginning with the formation of a colony in America by the promiscuous Cyrus Spragg, prophet and father of Annie and many others. He relates the history of Miss Weatherby and her acquisition of poor Miss Fosdick; the tragedy of Uriah Spragg, Annie's brother, and of Leander Potts, her lover; the story of the drunkard shanty Irish-woman and her half-wit son; the drama of Father D'Astier, his affairs, and his stupid son Father Baldessaro; the unhappy tale of the ugly countess committed to a nunnery; the love affairs of a princess and of a Cockney drab. And as if this were not enough, BROMFIELD takes a piece of exhumed classical statuary as the basis for another thread of this rather involved novel.

In addition to the miraculous marks found upon Annie Spragg's body come strange whisperings of her power over animals, of her bewitching of children, and of weird Bacchanalian dances with black goats. The pagan supernatural note, which is nothing more than the "Bacchus reborn" (the *Eniautos daimon*) theme, links together all the stories except that of Bessie Cudlip, who "lived all her life without a moral", and who was dragged bodily into the book solely to die and leave a fortune to her nephew, Mr. Winnery.

Such intricate unwinding of plot requires a peculiar clearness and fertility of mind, and in this respect BROMFIELD reveals an artistry that is nothing short of marvelous. The characters are excellently drawn, and have a peculiar reality that displays an especial talent of the author's. There are moments of sustained emotion when we feel the sensation painted by the author with almost painful vividness. There are descriptions of peculiar beauty, such as that of the garden in Mrs. Weatherby's villa.

In spite of occasional insertions of philosophy, and soundings that touch the fundamentals of life, we do not believe that MR. BROMFIELD has produced a work of any lasting or intrinsic value. *The Strange Case of Miss Annie Spragg* is rather a playground in which he exercises his imagination and embellishes it with a deceiving sort of documental style. He enjoys himself a great deal, one can see. The book is of too conscious artistry—merely a clever arrangement of material in which to insert occasional bits of fine writing.

In *The Green Bay Tree* and the two companion books MR. BROMFIELD has shown a sympathetic grasp of reality; we are looking for the day when he will combine this virtue with the mastery of style and imaginativeness of the present volume.

—KATHERINE THEOBALD.

LESS THAN KIND. By SAMUEL ROGERS. New York: Payson & Clark Ltd. 314 pp. \$2.50.

Mr. ROGERS has chosen an "abnormal" subject for his second novel as he did for his first. It should

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not be supposed that by "abnormal" I mean a psychopathic case suitable for incarceration. Modern introspection and psychiatry have given us a new form of abnormality. The older one is overt, the newer intellectual, sublimated, and quite usual in "normal" human beings. There is no real distinction, and the dividing line between the two is placed in each case by individual taste. At any rate, Mr. ROGERS, in *Less Than Kind* deals with incestuous love, but he deals with so refined a type of it that it is inoffensive, however bitterly tragic.

Vincent Raymer, a young English Instructor at the University in Van Buren, is strongly attached to his older sister Suzanne, who has been his only refuge from an inimical world since his earliest memories. She is strikingly beautiful, and attracts Carter Deering, a dashing young bachelor. Marriage, a child, and Deering's physical infidelity follow. Vincent discovers Deering's affair, and his already complex behavior culminates in a frenzy from which he does not emerge until he has denounced the husband to the wife and murdered him. Vincent gives himself up to the police and leaves Suzanne to her memories.

Van Buren, the scene of the action, is clearly Madison. Most of the minor characters are suggestive of Madison friends of the author, and the university town atmosphere of course influences the actions of the principal characters as well. It is interesting to note that Mr. ROGERS uses the University Club as the center of Vincent Raymer's dissipatory activities. It is there that he learns to drown his sorrows in alcohol from a tin, and his friend there calls up the amateur prostitutes who make Vincent so disgusted with himself. But as the author remarks in his foreword, the characters might very easily have been transplanted to an office, a hospital, or any one of many other settings. His choice of the University-Madison setting is a happy one because he is so well acquainted with it. The recognition of many familiar Madison scenes from Mr. ROGERS' clear and incisive descriptions is one of the most pleasant features of reading the book.

The characterization of Vincent Raymer is very convincingly done, in a manner suggestive of the modern French novelists. The character study and the general theme of the novel put one in mind immediately of André Gide and Julian Green. The building-up process in Vincent's emotions, between the time Suzanne is prematurely delivered of Deering's child and when Vincent kills Deering is accomplished with a restraint quite remarkable in this type of story. I am inclined to find fault with the work, however, for just this restraint in the concluding pages. It fails, I think, to satisfy the appetite created for a grimly tragic denouement, and leaves the impression that it has ended too happily!

—WORTLEY MONROE.

THE MISANTHROPE OF MOLIERE. Translated by W. F. GIESE. New York: The Houghton Mifflin Company. 103 pp. \$1.75.

The publication of a Moliere masterpiece done into English is worthy of comment but especially is this true of the translation of *The Misanthrope* by Professor WILLIAM F. GIESE is one of the University's best teachers, and because this version was performed last May by his colleagues of the Curtain Club.

An attempt has been made to recreate the effect of the French verse by using rhymed couplets. Here lies one of the glories and the greatest defect. The constant repetition of rhyming words, especially, or anyway, to readers and audience not used to it, occupies attention, all of which is necessary to understand and appreciate the soul-plunging study of the mental conflict in the mind of Alceste, the principal character, who is in revolt against the hypocritical and overnice polished ease of a sycophantic society. The study is a serious one, it is not comedy in any light sense, and rhymed couplets, in English, give so much pleasure in themselves, in their regular repetition, that not even when handled with the mastery of the greatest poet is it best for serious and complex studies of character. To the great credit of Professor GIESE, never does the rhyme reach the ludicrous, not a slight possibility, as readers of even Pope and Dryden know. And he has captured some of the symmetrical regularity, the classic spirit, of the most correct of Moliere's comedies.

Professor GIESE, as he tells the reader in the preface, has made Moliere "more adorned and lyrical", and, as he says, lays himself open to the charge of having "drifted obliquely away from the inimitable naturalness and noble sobriety" of the original. To transfer the meaning of Moliere's terse and thought-stuffed lines into a vaguer, less definite English, more imaginative expression is necessary and the "little romantic finery" is not only excused but praised. Less serene simplicity is required by the nature of the two languages and the realization of this, as well as the application, show Professor GIESE as no mere translator but a poet.

Of more importance than the mere versifying especially in this actionless comedy is the understanding and interpreting of the complex mental states of the characters. Alceste does not alone furnish difficulties. Celimene, a coquette who conducts a school of scandal, loved against his reason by Alceste, Oronte, the sonneteer, Acaste and Clitandre, the fop-pish marquis, Arsinoe, who calls her lack of lovers virtue, and the two sympathetic friends who join their prayers for the distraught Alceste, a moment after Eliante promises herself to Philinte, all of these are complicated natures that must be thoroughly understood before they can immigrate into our literature. Here too, Professor GIESE shows he is a poet.

—JOHN D'AUBY BRISCOE.

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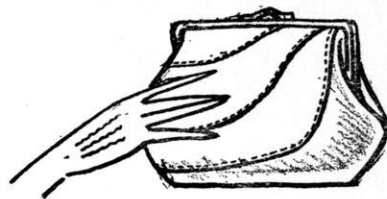
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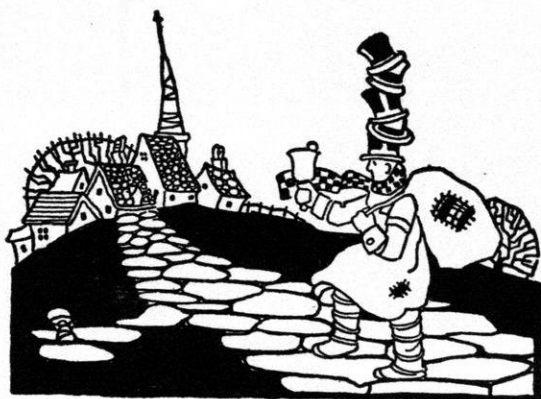


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