

Though they did not begin to write for Shakespeare's Company until 1609 they must certainly have met him before that time; and they were certainly familiar with his poetry and his methods. Beaumont had often parodied him either in roguery or in censure, but always humorously; and laughed at his exaggeration. Their great trio of plays was written for and produced by Shakespeare's actors. Unlike some other researchers imbued with the German spirit of scholarship, he does not feel that *Cymbeline* and the subsequent romantic dramas of Shakespeare betray any consciousness of the Beaumont and Fletcher *Philaster*—in fact, there is a closer relationship between them and a half dozen of his own earlier plays. It is a sufficient marvel that Beaumont should have written such plays between the ages of twenty-five and twenty-eight, without going to the extent of saying that he diverted from his natural course the dramatic technique of a master twenty years his senior and intimately acquainted for that length of time before Beaumont began to write, with the condition of the stage. The book is not at all convincing here, for if Beaumont in *Philaster* was accepting the new method of the seasoned playwright Shakespeare in *Pericles*, one wants to know how it happened that he went so far ahead of that trivial and chaotic work. In disposing of the baseless statement continuously parroted by critics that Beaumont's famous burlesque, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, derives from Don Quixote, Professor Gayley does better service.

Beaumont at his best, he says, has the unadorned poetry of the human heart-break; is Nature sobbing into verse. Yet a Shakespearean grandeur of phrase may be his also, with a similar complexity and balanced crowding of illustration and fresh insistent thought. The dramatic methods of his heroic plays, lending themselves easily to imitation, lent themselves to debasement also; but next to Shakespeare he was the most essentially poetic dramatist of the early Jacobean period. Properly staged and cut,

his three greatest plays would all yield delight to-day.

A. de Vivier.

#### IV

#### ROBERT DUNN'S "THE YOUNGEST WORLD"\*

There are some books, just as there are some scenes of nature, which it is essential to see for the first time from just the right vantage ground, if we wish to get the correct estimate of their inherent bigness. Robert Dunn's newly published novel of Alaska, *The Youngest World*, is one of these books. Let us not misunderstand one another. In making this comparison, the present reviewer is not attempting to claim that Mr. Dunn's book is one of the great natural phenomena of the world, that it has the pent-up energy of a Niagara Falls or the soaring majesty of the Matterhorn. On the contrary, it has very distinct human limitations and very obvious faults. But it does have a rather unusual bigness, in spite of these faults, indeed, in a measure because of them, and in order to understand this we must recognise that Mr. Dunn's methods are those of nature rather than of art, and that his work is far more akin to a rugged pinnacle of storm-scourged granite than to the chiseled stone of a cathedral.

Accordingly, if you start with the wrong view-point, you get the impression of something very large, to be sure, but rather formless, over-crowded, chaotic. Mr. Dunn evidently suffers from the proverbial embarrassment of riches in the form of material, and he has not yet learned the finer economies of artistic creation. Words and phrases, scenes and episodes, are flung before us with spendthrift lavishness, as the flashing memories crowd and jostle one another in his brain. And the whole effect is somewhat like watching a great mass of storm-clouds piling up and rolling and shifting and amassing again, until you suddenly see to your astonishment that they have

\*The Youngest World. By Robert Dunn. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company.

grouped themselves into a huge and impressive picture, a trifle distorted and exaggerated perhaps, yet bearing quite unmistakably the forms and outlines of terrestrial objects.

So, in *The Youngest World*, we suddenly discover that all the crowded incidents, the jostling tide of human beings, have united to form a picture, not of man or woman, but of Alaska itself, a personified and transfigured Alaska, like a beneficent spirit of hope. This is the point of view, and the only one, from which to see *The Youngest World*, if we wish to grasp its rugged symmetry of form and unity of purpose.

From the foregoing statement, it may be rightly inferred that this is a book which does not lend itself to a brief epitome of plot. Indeed, the luckless reviewer who should start out to trace, even in the most condensed sort of verbal shorthand, the career of Gabriel Thain from the hour that he broke away from the wretched bondage of his mistaken marriage to Arlene, would soon find himself floundering hopelessly along a wilderness of unbroken trails. The only way to do the book even elemental justice is to attack it from the other side, the side of its big, underlying motive. It is a fundamental instinct of life, says Mr. Dunn, an instinct shared in a measure even by the animals, to wish to leave behind something of themselves, something in which to survive. Some men hand down their name through a son, some through a book, some through a deed of valour, a desert traversed or a mountain scaled. These are all merely different forms of a striving after an earthly immortality; and if we read Mr. Dunn correctly, he believes that it is not only a natural instinct, but an inalienable right thus to perpetuate one's memory; and all his sympathies go out to those who, through some blighting disappointment, or stifling environment, a loveless marriage, a financial disaster, a failure to reach the goal, lose that heaven-sent gift, ambition. To such he does not offer Alaska as the universal panacea; but he does proclaim boldly that it is a

younger, cleaner world, where big things and little things readjust themselves in their true proportions, and where many a human derelict, man and woman alike, has recovered a lost faith, a lost energy, and has found the courage to rebuild a new and finer and nobler life on the ruins of the old one.

We have had almost a surfeit of Alaskan stories since the first opening-up of the Klondike, and the mad and reckless rush to the new gold-fields. And necessarily there are certain stage-properties common to them all: hardship, brutality, hunger and want must always be close companions of frontier life the world over; and in the far North these are supplemented by darkness and unimaginable cold. It has pleased most writers hitherto to dwell chiefly upon the physical, not to say the animal side, of life in the far North. The very essence of what we have come to think of as Jack-Londonism is this insistence upon the thinness of the veneer of civilisation, the readiness of humanity to obey the call of the wild, and revert to the primordial savagery of the Stone Age. Mr. Dunn has not shut his eyes to the hatred and lust and violence that naturally have a freer hand in a primitive country. But he has not deliberately magnified them. He sees the divinity latent in man and woman, quite as clearly as he sees the mark of the beast. He has a strong, fine, youthful optimism, and an abiding faith in the ability of erring humanity to find eventually the trail that leads to those higher places of moral and physical well-being, if only they are provided with half a chance. And this faith, which he exemplifies in the individual lives of a score of characters which rather persistently refuse to be forgotten is one of the chief reasons for proclaiming *The Youngest World* one of the few novels of recent years which the lover of good fiction cannot afford to miss. It is many years since the present reviewer has felt such glad surprise on reading the first story of a new novelist, or experienced a similar thrill of elation, such a sense of having been swept

through and through by the tonic breath of high, clean altitudes.

*Frederic Taber Cooper.*

V

WILLIAM J. LOCKE'S "THE FORTUNATE YOUTH"\*

Ever since the dawn of realism, it has been the fashion to ridicule the type of story dear to a bygone generation, in which the hero, gutter-born and gutter-bred, miraculously works his way from poverty and obscurity into wealth, knowledge and fame, and ends by winning his heart's desire, the fairy princess, so to speak. But here comes Mr. William J. Locke, the great wizard of plausibility, and says to us indirectly if not in words, "Well, why not? It wasn't a half-bad type of story after all, and I am going to prove it to you." And he does. He takes his hero, his Fortunate Youth, not merely from the gutter, but from the foulest and most hopeless back alley in a second-rate English manufacturing town, a half-starved, over-worked little lad, kicked and beaten almost to death. But the boy has great physical beauty, which is destined to be a big asset, and he has another even greater, an invincible belief in his own ultimate destiny as a great man, a power in the world. And thanks to this belief, and to a treasured talisman, a little coral heart given him at a Sunday-school picnic by a pretty young woman who came before his dazzled young eyes like a glimpse of heaven, the boy does escape from his surroundings and does slowly but surely struggle up the rungs of the social ladder. He is by turn gypsy, artist's model, walking gentleman in third-rate London companies, and leading man on tour through the provinces. He knows poverty, illness and starvation; but his personal charm, his magnetism of voice and manner, and his unconquerable belief in himself always win him the timely aid of some man or woman,—usually a woman. And in the end we leave him a promising young member of the House of Com-

\*The Fortunate Youth. By William J. Locke. New York: The John Lane Company.

mons, a leader of the Young England party, and the happy possessor of the love of a princess, only a Balkan princess to be sure, but a real, genuine one, straight out of the *Almanac de Gotha*, which is more than most fairy tales can boast. Of course, it is all quite preposterous and fantastic, but then, fantasy and preposterousness are Mr. Locke's chief stock-in-trade; and so long as he can thus achieve the impossible, restore dethroned romance to her rightful heritage, and cheerfully and unblushingly convince us that white is black and blue is green in the full light of day, it would be ungrateful to do less than recognise him as the magician of words that he is and one of the princes of modern entertainers.

*Calvin Winter.*

VI

MISS DALRYMPLE'S "DIANE OF THE GREEN VAN"\*

One of the oldest axioms in the world is that there is simply no accounting for tastes. There are some people who may like *Diane of the Green Van*, in fact, just a few have put themselves on record to that effect in a sensational and widely heralded manner. But the only fair way is to judge for yourself. Do you really care to read about a young and beautiful American heiress, who has wearied of conventional society and chooses to go wandering across country in a big green van, fitted up as cozily as any boudoir? She is followed by her lover and self-appointed protector enthroned on top of a load of hay; and in this guise they make their slow way from Connecticut southward, until they finally arrive, after many incredibly narrow escapes, in the Everglades of Florida. You see, the heiress is beset with a host of frightful perils, of which she is blissfully unaware. She does not know that a certain principality in Europe has been thrown into consternation because in an earlier generation the heir to the throne ran away to America, and, as the result

\**Diane of the Green Van*. By Leona Dalrymple. Chicago: The Reilly and Britton Company.