

THE GOSSIP SHOP

RECENTLY the Gossip Shop has been looking over book affairs in San Francisco. We were struck at once by the number of bookstores in this place for anything like a city of its size.

We wandered first by chance into the place of Paul Elder and Company—commonly called “Paul Elder’s” in San Francisco. It is a shop of the pleasant attractiveness of design which we would expect to find inhabited by the man who got up the format of the Paul Elder books—though we do not mean to at all imply that the atmosphere of æstheticism is here laid on with a trowel. In Mr. Elder’s guest-book we signed our name thus, “Murray Hill, New York City, In good health”, on a page already inscribed as follows:

Yone Noguchi. Nakano. Happy to return to California.

Hugh Walpole. Garrick Club, London. Delighted to be here *at last!*

Coningsby Dawson. New York.

Oliver Lodge, England. Full of admiration for this great State.

We referred to Mr. Elder’s place as a shop. He has the whole of a little building. One of the upper floors is constructed as a lecture room. Here have recently appeared, in Saturday afternoon talks: Peter Clark Macfarlane, Dr. Henry Frank, and Frederick O’Brien, among others. One afternoon during our stay in San Francisco Robert Cortes Holliday talked in the Paul Elder gallery (to a capacity house) on authors he has met, and

gave other gossip of the publishing offices.

Coningsby Dawson, by the way, we are informed, has just bought a place at San Diego, California.

Theodore Dreiser, we hear, is at the present writing in Los Angeles.

To continue about San Francisco bookstores: we found our way next to the place of A. M. Robertson, here commonly called “Robertson’s”, and the proprietor of which is popularly hailed as “Alec”. Good bookstore. Mr. Robertson is, to some extent, a publisher as well as a bookseller, and is particularly interested in issuing books about California.

The book division of the excellent department store here called The White House we pronounce upon in the most favorable way. And we also highly approve of the friendliness and good book-sense of its buyer.

The Emporium, another large department store, also has a book division of considerable size. The Methodist Book Concern has extensive quarters out in the neighborhood of the San Francisco Public Library. A startling feature of this place is a mammoth electric sign, mounted on the roof and extending across the length of the building, which reads: “House of Good Books”.

Across what in London would be called a little court from Paul Elder’s (and what in Indianapolis would be called a little alley) is the Old Book Shop. A place of really distinctive

character, dealing mainly in collectors' volumes. Then there is Newbegin's, new books and old books; then there is John Howell, rare books; Potter Brothers Company, wholesale and retail agency for several New York publishing houses; the Holmes Book Company, marked-down bookstore; the sizable French Book Store; and various smaller dealers in foreign books. In Berkeley a gentleman of the name of Mr. Somers runs a store several rooms in size, dealing in both new books and rare books. And in Oakland, we understand, are still other places.

We were much pleased to discover the popularity in San Francisco of several writers who are personal friends of ours; among them: Messrs. Walpole, Morley, McFee, and Holliday.

Amy Lowell has recently been made honorary member of the Phi Beta Kappa Chapter of Columbia University. On this interesting occasion she read before the chapter her new 8,000-word poem "Many Swans Sun Myth of the American Indians" (to be printed soon in "The North American Review"). This poem is based on an Indian legend in the original Kathlamet text, which it seems is very hard to get at in translation—for only three people in the world speak Kathlamet (the Gossip Shop has their addresses). While the symbolism of the poem is Indian, the framework and the incidents are the poet's. The work has the unique quality of Miss Lowell's other legends: it is the work of a sophisticated poet but at the same time has childlike naïveté and very real passion. When Miss Lowell was a "little girl", the Indians sweeping along the streets of a New Mexico town impressed her unforgettably. Also she had two sun-strokes

while in the town—and, altogether, she said she loved that sort of thing.

Miss Lowell has just attended by special invitation the Diamond Anniversary of Baylor University, Texas, and has been the recipient of its Lit.D. (her first degree). Moreover with her were Harriet Monroe, Edwin Markham, and Vachel Lindsay.

In a few months Miss Lowell's collected prose essays (of which "Casual Reflections on a Few of the Younger English Novelists" appeared in *THE BOOKMAN* for April, 1919) will be published; also a book of her collected legends. Her "Tendencies in Modern American Poetry" is out of print. An English publisher is bringing out "Salmagundi" with other poems to follow.

Already news comes from Paris of much ado over the sixth Dante centennial which falls on September 14, 1921. Church and state bestir themselves to honor "Noster Dantes". It is said that Ravenna, the city of the poet's death, will be the centre of the religious ceremony, and that Catholics throughout the world will observe the day. In a recent number of the "Revue Universelle" is a study of Dante by Cardinal Mercier, and other publications are reported to be forthcoming—notably "L'edizione critica della Divinia Commedia" which Giuseppe Vandelli was working on in 1907. A new translation of the "Divine Comedy" by the scholar and poet André Pératé has also been announced. The Librairie de l'Art Catholique expects to issue shortly a bulletin of unpublished works on Dante; and the Willard Fiske Dante collection at Cornell University (said by a French expert to be the finest in the world), is already preparing to issue a supplement to its first Dante catalogue of

1900, anticipating the coming anniversary.

It is said that Johan Bojer's two weeks' visit in New York is to result in a novel of American life, and in the early Broadway production of "The Power of a Lie", "The Eyes of Love", and "Sigurd Braa".

In the current number of "The Dublin Review" (and reprinted in "The Living Age") is an article on Herman Melville in general and "Moby Dick" in particular, by Viola Meynell (daughter of Wilfrid and Alice Meynell and author of "Second Marriage" recently published in America). After quoting freely from the text of "Moby Dick", Miss Meynell comments:

What is quoted here is but a hint of the Shakespearean grandeur of Ahab.... If these quotations did not make the reader tremble with what is given to him, it is because in the book alone and not to be pulled out by finger-falls, that revelation awaits him.... Readers of the book will see that this is the greatest of the sea writers, whom even Conrad must own as master. Barrie confessedly owes him his Captain Cook. Great isolated fame Herman Melville must have in many an individual mind which, having once known him, is then partly made of him forever. But how little "Moby Dick" is known, is exemplified by a writer in the "Times" Literary Supplement who, in a clever article on Herman Melville, did not even mention this book, as if his fame rested on that better-known and comparatively how insignificant alone, "Typee" and "Omoo". Though "Moby Dick" has been published in England and has been included in Everyman series, it is at present out of print.

Even a Melville fan must smile a little at such fever-heat of enthusiasm.

The first edition of the much-discussed "Poems of a Little Girl", by the eight-year-old daughter of Grace Hazard Conkling, is for grownups. The portrait on the jacket of the book is that of a thoroughly normal little girl; but the frontispiece by James Chapin (who we recall did the Robert Frost and other frontispieces) is an

attempt to follow the old masters, and metamorphoses Hilda into a pathological child. On looking at the two pictures, one thinks: if this is the effect of writing, don't write! It is surmised that a second edition, for children, minus the frontispiece and special introduction, and with line drawings, would be welcome. It would make a charming book for Christmas and birthdays. Children love "Little Snail" and "Velvets" and some of the others, we are told.

Two German novels written before the war and at that time suppressed by the imperial censor, have now been brought out. "Der Untertan" and "Die Armen" deal, respectively, with the middle class and the lower classes of Germany. They are the work of Heinrich Mann, a delineator of German character, whose novels have a widespread sale in his own country.

Readers of Georges Duhamel's war books will be surprised to learn that his latest work is a satirical comedy. "L'Œuvre des Athlètes", recently launched with success in Paris, has provoked comparison of the author with Molière.

The play portrays the havoc wrought in a placid middle-class family by the arrival of a cousin who proceeds to establish in their midst a salon of "serious thinkers". One by one the family succumb to the dictator, the only member preserving a sane balance being the son of the house. That luckless soul, unable to endure the snobbish atmosphere engendered, is forced to flee to Patagonia.

Announcement has been made of the Pulitzer prizes in letters, of \$1,000 each (awarded by the School

of Journalism of Columbia University), for the year past. Albert Beveridge's "Life of John Marshall" is considered "the best American biography teaching patriotic and unselfish services to the people". "The War with Mexico" by Justin H. Smith ranks as "the best book upon the history of the United States". And the award for "the original play, performed in New York, which best represents the educational value and power of the stage in raising the standard of good morals, good taste and good manners" goes to Eugene O'Neill's "Beyond the Horizon", which was brought out in book form closely following its production. The prize for the best novel is this year omitted, since in the opinion of the judges none of the volumes under consideration merits this distinction.

That serious-minded person who writes page 36 in "Land and Water" each week, has been of late reading the fashion magazines. He devotes his attention in a recent issue to a burlesque of caption writing for fashion-plates, presenting a party of refugees from bolshevist Odessa, all wearing Messrs. Orange's spring fashions. "The little blocks of affected prose underneath disgusting pictures of incredibly ugly women with no noses, only one eye, attitudinizing, and all scratching" are bad enough, he concludes, if they stick to prose. But lately they have blossomed into vers libre, like this:

On one side, the tulle whisks and flares,
Licked by little plumes of flame.
And everywhere groups of bead petals
Shower their fringes of flame, frosted dull.

The writer is afraid males may catch the plague, and reflects that it would be dreadful if one had to read pagefuls of poetry before one bought one's trousers. Like this:

Brown, brown are the dainty trousers
With a little stripe
A stripe of Green,
Green, because of the spring,
Green, because it is the time of Youth.
The bottoms of course are turned up.
And like a necklet of lovers' eyes
The braces' buttons
Circle the top
In a Wistful ring.
Messrs. Thompson and Smith
Have done this thing.
The price is ten guineas
And they are cheap at that.
Who could resist their lure?
Sing hey, for Spring, Ting-a-ling.

This page "More Atrocities" elbows J. C. Squire on one side, and Hilaire Belloc on the other.

Though heralded two months ago by a reviewer, the anthology of "The Great Modern American Stories" edited with a "reminiscent introduction" by William Dean Howells has just put in a belated appearance—due to the printing plates being sidetracked between Albany and New York (doubtless to the chagrin of the enterprising publishers). This volume is the third to appear in the Great Modern Story Series of French, English, American, German, and Russian collections.

Of freshest interest in the volume is Mr. Howells's chapter of introduction in which he recalls the days, more or less distant, when he first made acquaintance with one and another of the two dozen tales he has now brought together. Hale's "My Double and How He Undid Me", read at twenty, caused him, sick, to laugh himself back into health. H. J.'s "A Passionate Pilgrim" was a "young" work proffered to the "Atlantic" undereditor. Mary Wilkins's "The Revolt of Mother", Sarah Orne Jewett's "The Courting of Sister Wisby", and Alice Brown's "Told in the Poorhouse" he groups together as the work of "the unrivalled sisters three...great ar-

tists working always in simple and native stuff". Edith Wharton's "The Mission of Jane" he presents to "such elect as could rejoice in the portrayal of the perfect and entire dullness of Jane and her equally dull admirer". Cable's "Jean-ah Poquelin" he recalls in a dramatic reading by Mark Twain, —the best reader he ever heard, but of "transcendent bashfulness". Aldrich's "Mlle. Olympe Zabriski" is second choice after that author's "Marjorie Daw"; Mr. Howells confesses that he is not immune to the trials of the anthologist to whom the publisher refuses open sesame in the use of copyrighted material.

Opinions, of course, differ as to the choice of stories in the anthology. Brander Matthews looks in vain for something by Irvin Cobb in the selection. "Surely", he says, "the tale of Judge Priest's officiating at the funeral of the fallen woman is not inferior in beauty to 'Aunt Sanna Terry' or to 'Mlle. Olympe Zabriski', clever as that is and brilliant as it is in its metallic lustre."

A letter from Joseph I. C. Clarke has just drifted into the Gossip Shop, in which he tells of a literary adventure of his in what he calls "Conradese" or "volcanoes and cigar ends". Mr. Clark has filled the shoes of both editor and author:

Dwelling temporarily in midland Cuba, one solaces a hot afternoon with a turning over of the books in the airy parlor of the *casa de vivienda*. Here I came upon "Lord Jim" by Conrad, and then "Victory" by the same exalted spinner of deliberate yarns. So, a pleasant time with two old friends. The next day arrived with the mail a pile of magazines. I opened "Harper's" for March and lighted on a phrase: "*marooning himself on that infernal island and seemingly content to spend his days there.*" Well, well, I thought, the school has loosed itself upon the world. Conrad out of Stevenson with Kipling trimmings. But no: it read on like pure Conrad of the later type,—not quite so deliberate perhaps. Who knows?

Conrad gone a step further backward toward Stevenson? I turned over the pages of "The Judgment of Vulcan" to the beginning; there I found another man's name.

That evening I was haunted by the thought that the "Vulcan" story was more than an echo of Conrad in the tropical seas, so I took it up and read it again. At its very beginning I found this:

"By day the Pacific is a vast stretch of blue, flat like a floor, with a blur of distant islands on the horizon—chief among them Muloa, with its single volcanic cone tapering off into the sky. At night this smithy of Vulcan becomes a glow of red, throbbing faintly against the darkness, a capricious and sullen beacon immeasurably removed from the path of men. Viewed from the veranda of the Marine Hotel, its vast flare on the horizon seems hardly more than an insignificant spark, like the glowing cigar-end of some guest strolling in the garden after dinner."

My mind turned back to that passage with an insistence that would have pleased Conrad. Taking up "Victory" before smoking my own last cigar for the evening, I came suddenly on this:

"His nearest neighbor—I am speaking now of things showing some sort of animation—was an indolent volcano which smoked faintly all day, and at night levelled at him, from amongst the clear stars, a dull red glow, expanding and collapsing spasmodically like the end of a gigantic cigar puffed at intermittently in the dark. Axel Heyst was also a smoker; and when he lounged out on his veranda with his cheroot, the last thing before going to bed, he made in the night the same sort of glow and of the same size as that other one so many miles away."

I slept more comfortably for finding this. How often does the same doubt, the same semi-certainty assail the readers of manuscripts nowadays. All varieties of style are pounced upon, and the excellence of the imitation is apt to be startling. It was one of my troubles years and years ago when I edited a literary paper; it was one of the great worries of the staff. Let an article or story appear with some streaks of new light in it, and in about three weeks to a month would come a flood of wonderful imitations. What must it be now? My sympathies to the editor of "Harper's". Let the author of the "Vulcan" story consider "Lord Jim".

A fable recounting the story of the war has recently appeared in France: "Le Responsable", by Léon M. O. Gurékian. Herein England is the elephant, France the bull, Italy the fox, Germany the wild-boar, Austria the wolf, Turkey the mule. Russia re-

mains the bear, but the United States becomes the pelican. Serbia and Austria are represented by the squirrel and the ermine.

G. B. S., it seems, has spoken on the ethics of the filming of plays, apropos of his own recent noble refusal of \$1,000,000 for the motion-picture rights of all his plays:

I am not yet convinced that a film version of a play does not seriously deprecate the value of the acting version. It has done so in several cases known to me and if I go into the filming business at all I shall possibly write specially for the screen.

What will a boy enjoy reading before his teens (not what do his parents and teachers think he should read)? An expert has made out the following list of twenty-five books, with the note that he has omitted "Robinson Crusoe" and other pedagogical favorites:

The Story of a Bad Boy Aldrich
The Young Trailers Altsheiler
For the Honor of the School Barbour
Track's End Carruth
Boys of '76 Coffin
Lincoln and the Sleeping Sentinel Chittenden
The Boy Scout, and Other Stories Davis
The Hoosier Schoolboy Eggleston
High Benton Heyliger
On the Trail of Washington ... Hill
A Boy's Town Howells
Boy Life on the Prairie Garland
Tom Brown's School Days Hughes
The Jungle Books Kipling
The Boy's King Arthur Lanier
Careers of Danger and Daring .. Moffett
The Land of Fair Play Parsons
Men of Iron Pyle
Theodore Roosevelt's Letters to His Children Bishop
Hero Tales from American History Roosevelt and Lodge
Paul Jones Seawell
Black Arrow Stevenson
Penrod Tarkington
The Adventures of Tom Sawyer . Twain
Being a Boy Warner

What the boy will like to read during his early teens is suggested in another list of twenty-five titles, with

the same skilful eluding of the academic:

The Perfect Tribute Andrews
The Sun of Saratoga Altsheiler
Guynemer, Knight of the Air ... Bordeaux
That Year at Lincoln High Gollomb
The Sign of Freedom Goodrich
Boys' Life of Theodore Roosevelt Hagedorn
The First Hundred Thousand ... Hay
Whirligigs Henry
The Varmint Johnson
The Border Legion Grey
The Long Roll Johnstone
Captains Courageous Kipling
George Washington Lodge
Boys' Life of Edison Meadowcroft
Wild Life on the Rockies Mills
The Story of My Boyhood and Youth Muir
Abraham Lincoln, Boy and Man Morgan
Campus Days Paine
The Oregon Trail Parkman
An American in the Making ... Ravage
The Making of an American ... Riis
Kidnapped Stevenson
Ramsay Millholland Tarkington
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn Twain
The Forest White

What the same boy will be required to read and discuss during the last two years of his college course (if he happens to be a candidate for general honors at Columbia University) is, experimentally, as follows:

Homer	Shakespeare
Herodotus	Cervantes
Thucydides	Bacon
Æschylus	Milton
Sophocles	Molière
Euripides	Hume
Aristophanes	Montesquieu
Plato	Voltaire
Aristotle	Rousseau
Lucretius	Adam Smith
Virgil	Lessing
Horace	Kant
Plutarch	Schiller
Marcus Aurelius	Goethe
St. Augustine	Macaulay
The Nibelungenlied	Victor Hugo
The Song of Roland	Hegel
St. Thomas Aquinas	Darwin
Dante	Lyell
Petrarch	Tolstoi
Montaigne	Nietzsche

News comes from England of a boom in the Tarzan novels. It seems that the ape-man went over very

quietly at first but that he soon caught on, and is now being shown around the country in films.

Much lively comment has been provoked in French literary circles by a discussion in "Le Figaro" of the nouveau-riche bibliophile, by Eugène Montfort. We quote a portion of M. Montfort's lament:

Nothing is so depressing nowadays as a glance at the catalogue of a rare book dealer. The prices are absurd, totally out of proportion to the value of the books (i. e., literary and commercial value). They produce in one a two-fold melancholy conviction: first, of the materialistic spirit of the dealer; second, of the ignorance and stupidity of the purchaser... Upon examining these booksellers' catalogues, one discovers the bibliophilic discredit into which have sunk the great authors of the nineteenth century. One can buy an original edition of the "Physiologie du Mariage" or of "Les Travailleurs de la Mer" for fifty francs. Our nouveaux-riches will have nothing to do with Balzac and Victor Hugo. These authors are too old-fashioned for them. What they want (and this taste is ingeniously fostered in them by the dealers, since it can more easily be satisfied, and to advantage) is the modern authors, the most modern, those of the day, even those of the morrow,—writers whom their wives or their daughters may hear discussed in the salons. Most amusing of all is their choice of authors, a proof of the degree to which the purchasers are exploited by the dealers.

A copy of the original edition of "Visage émerveillé" by Mme. de Noailles may be had for the trifling sum of thirty-five francs; "Les Déracinés" and "Colette Baudoche" by Barrès, for twenty-five francs; "La Terre" by Zola, for thirty francs, and "Le Journal d'une Femme de Chambre" by Mirbeau, for twenty francs... On the other hand, if you are an admirer of "Les Cahiers d'André Walter" by André Gide, you can secure a copy on Holland paper, but it will cost you six hundred francs... We do not for an instant suppose that an author or a group of authors has formed an alliance with a syndicate of booksellers... It is simply a matter of speculation among the dealers.

A story of how an editor got rich has been wafted to our ears, and we pass it on for the edification of that deserving profession:

He started poor as a proverbial church mouse twenty years ago. He has now retired with a comfortable fortune of \$50,000.

This money was acquired through industry, economy, conscientious effort to give full value, indomitable perseverance, and the death of an uncle, who left the editor \$49,999.50.

In Congress the other day a list was submitted showing the vocations of persons having the largest incomes in the United States prior to 1918. Authors were not at the top, but they made a fair showing. Out of fifteen authors, editors, and reporters, one earned \$500,000; one \$300,000; one, \$250,000; two, \$200,000; and eight, \$100,000.

These figures should interest political economists (like Mr. Keynes whose "The Economic Consequences of the Peace" is said to have broken all sales-records for serious books, and who is now writing a second volume dealing with the financial problems of the treaty).

In "La Poésie Scientifique, de 1750 à Nos Jours" M. Fusil traces the reaction of poets to scientific discoveries and hypotheses. The author defines "scientific poetry" as that which presents the "emotional side" of the facts of science.

John M. Siddall, the busy editor of that energetic periodical, "The American Magazine", was the other day waylaid by that dallier, the Gossip Shop, to sound his ideas on the moot question as to what opportunities the popular magazines offer to young writers today. Whereupon Mr. Siddall vouchsafed the following:

"The big thing, it seems to me, is that writers get through the popular magazines a great and inspiring audience. And in order to appeal to that audience they *must* write live human stuff, full of real interest. If they

don't—their contributions won't be printed. For that reason the popular magazines force writers to think about life, not about trivialities and the small subtleties that receive only academic interest from a few readers. There is no opportunity for a young writer to achieve a wide reputation, based on good workmanship and knowledge of the *real* drama of human life, equal to that offered by the magazine with a wide circulation.

"This whole thing comes right down to the question—what is the use of writing anyhow? It seems to me that there is little use of writing unless you make the effort to get your message to as many people as possible. Here is where some will differ with me. They think that certain ideas are so wonderful that the 'general run of people' won't 'get them'. I have absolutely no sympathy with that notion. I believe that the very best ideas in the world will reach the many if those ideas are clearly expressed. And when they *are* clearly expressed I believe that you have the greatest writing. This does not mean that all the widely read stuff in the world is good and worth while. Human beings read all sorts of things—just as they eat all sorts of things—some that are substantial, and some that are froth. But to say that only a few enjoy the substantial is bosh.

"In our egotism we continually exaggerate the superiority of our own intellects over those of our fellows. We think that we know it all—and particularly do we think that we comprehend things better than our neighbors. Yet the great experiences of life are common to all. And the great experiences of life are what give us such understanding as we have. Does anybody think he has a patent on love, hate, aspiration, struggle, courage,

cowardice, depression, exaltation—and all the rest? Yet these are the materials out of which the greatest writings are made.

"Normal, healthy human beings come nearer being equal in understanding than we realize. The great difference between people is in their ambition—not in their intelligence. I see people who are a thousand times as ambitious as others—people who achieve ten thousand times as much as others. When it comes down to understanding the essential things of life, however, I see variations, but I do not find them overwhelming.

"Getting back to the popular magazines—every new generation of writers reworks the same human materials in fresh terms suitable to its own day. Literature always has a timely flavor. Even Dante in 'The Divine Comedy' is journalistic; to understand him you have to learn by hard study about people and events familiar to the people of that time. The matter of preservation for future readers is always in the lap of the gods.

"The first test of a writer is to grip and hold the people of his own time—the more of them the better. The popular magazine now offers an opportunity for this initial test such as never existed before and with chances of returns in both money and esteem undreamed of in the past."

One of the recent articles on Mrs. Humphry Ward (and their name is legion) devoted its first several hundred words to the prestige of the Arnold family-tree in its various and sundry ramifications. The most youthful scion of that house to take up its famous tradition of letters is Aldous Huxley, grand-nephew of Matthew Arnold and, logically, nephew of Mrs. Ward. Mr. Huxley's first book to be

published in America, "Limbo", a collection of short stories just out, indicates that he may prove worthy of his forebears. It has this provocative comment in "The English Review":

The Varsity still lies across the pages of these stories—patent-leather erudition, that is; but there is more than this... he is poet as well as sociologist. He has perceptions. He is a reformer; plays curiously and effectively on man's dual personality.... Mr. Huxley is the new European. Like all these young war writers, he has no illusions. Will they create? This writer, at least, opens with definite promise.

That even the mildest of feminists, on reading Le Clerc Phillips's article in the May BOOKMAN, "Women of Mark and Their Education", feels moved to rise and speak out in meeting, is the declaration of Clara F. McIntyre of the University of Wyoming, who has jumped to the conclusion that the author is a man, and demands: "What of the men of mark?"

One may say (Miss McIntyre adds) that Mr. Phillips's main conclusion—that the higher education of women does not produce literary genius—is so sound as to be almost axiomatic. But what eludes me is his excuse for pouncing upon this obvious truth and serenely ignoring another equally obvious,—that the higher education of men, also, fails to produce literary genius.

Moreover, by his description of the "pale, earnest, and bespectacled young women from Girton and Newnham", the writer gives his paper the sound of something distinctly out of date. At least, it is so by American standards. If he had the pleasure of attending a "formal" at almost any college or university in the country, he would find there an array of charming—and reasonably plump—femininity which would do honor to a débutante ball. In fact, the danger in our institutions of learning no longer lies—if it ever did lie there—in the tendency of young women to become unattractive and neglectful of social duties in their strenuous devotion to study, but rather in the inclination to turn a college career into a season of social triumphs.

He says we have had no great woman novelist since George Eliot. Very true, but have we had any man novelist whom we could put side by side with Dickens and Thackeray? The great three of the mid-nineteenth century are still the great three, although many able writers, both men and women, have followed.

As for education George Eliot, probably, of the three, knew the most of books, though, it is true, she did not read her books in the shelter of university walls. Thackeray had the conventional university education, but we cannot help feeling that his books show more reflection of his life as a law student in the Middle Temple and as a student of art in Paris. And Dickens,—we all know the conditions from which he pulled himself up; his desultory reading, his hard schooling in the city streets.

Go back to the other "big three"—to Richardson, Fielding, and Smollett. Fielding was the only one who had a university education, and that was incomplete. Smollett was apprenticed to a medical practitioner and sailed as a surgeon's mate. Richardson claimed only a common-school education, and yet, though it is old-fashioned and almost forgotten today, "Clarissa Harlowe" is one of the great books of the world. To be sure Fielding gives a broader, sounder, saner view of the world than Richardson or Smollett; but we cannot tell how much his academic experience had to do with it.

The two most important of the later men, Meredith and Hardy, are not of university training. Meredith, we are told, was mainly self-educated; he attended for a while a German school near Coblenz, and was articled to a lawyer. Hardy had private tuition in Latin and Greek, and attended some evening classes at King's College, London. We know that Stevenson was his own best teacher; that Scott received only a small share of his rich equipment of historical and literary lore in university classes.

Among the men writing novels today, as among those of the past, we find diversity of training. Arnold Bennett's "higher education" consisted in the study of law, a study which he abandoned, however, to take up editorial work. Galsworthy was an Oxford man. Mr. Wells received a college education—but one which was scientific rather than literary—at the Royal College of Science.

Mr. Phillips quotes us many famous French women who reached literary distinction without education in its formal sense. We can quote him in turn at least two famous French men whose distinction owed nothing to regular university training: Dumas, who was apprenticed to a notary, and, like the poor apprentice of romance, went to Paris with twenty francs in his pocket; and Balzac, who studied law for three years.

The Poetry Society of America offers the William Lindsey Prize of \$500 for the best unproduced and unpublished full length poetic play (that is, a play that will occupy an evening) written by an American citizen. No

restrictions are placed upon the number of acts or scenes, or on the nature of the subject matter. The judges of the contest will be George Arliss, Professor George Pierce Baker of Harvard, Clayton Hamilton, Jessie B. Rittenhouse, and Stuart Walker. The contest closes July 1, 1921.

The prize of \$500 for the best volume of poems written by an American citizen, which the Poetry Society has for the past two seasons given through Columbia University, will this year be awarded directly by the Society. As the prize is not competitive but in the nature of an award, books need not be entered for it as in the ordinary prize competition. The judges for the present season are Professor John Livingston Lowes of Harvard, author of "Convention and Revolt in Poetry"; Edwin Arlington Robinson; and Alice Corbin Henderson, associate editor of "Poetry".

A sometime sophomore at the University of California, Hazel Havermale, in a letter to the Gossip Shop, gives her impressions on once seeing Rupert Brooke plain:

"It was during 1914 that Rupert Brooke came through California on his way home from the South Seas. I was a member of the small sophomore class in verse writing. We used to meet in a hideous, little room in rickety, old North Hall and used to have our 'efforts' read by a patient and enthusiastic young instructor who was always appearing abruptly with some newly-discovered poet under his arm. Not usually, however, was the appearance of the poet in more than octavo, and so when he walked in upon us one spring day with a tall young man under his arm, we knew he had brought us a live poet.

"The two men walked down the

small room to the low platform and Brooke was seated with his face to the light. I remember noting that his yellow-brown hair was overlong and was brushed back from a thin face burned brown by tropical sunshine, a face from which a pair of eyes—light eyes, looked out calmly. We were all a little superciliously conscious of his soft, blue collar and general air of comfort; I remember that at that time we were absorbed in the theory that a poet should never be distinguishable from the multitude by his dress. I remember, too, that almost none of us had ever heard his name, and when the instructor presented Rupert Brooke of England, it made little impression on our sensibilities.

"He sat down at the desk, an ugly, yellow-varnished affair, and opened his small volume and began to read. At first the English intonation struck strangely on our western ears, but soon the mellow tone became even and flowing and we listened. He read 'The Fish', 'The Great Lover', and a number of others; he read some lovely things written while he was in the South Seas, poems, full of *tiarés* and murmuring seas, that I have never seen published. And all the time his body slid lower and lower in the cane-bottomed chair and his arms came down and down on the desk until his chin was resting almost on his book and his head was scarcely visible above the rim of the desk.

"It is not within my knowledge whether or not Rupert Brooke was in the habit of reading his verse publicly, but certainly his manner that time was tinged either with a real embarrassment or diffidence. His voice flowed on and on, and sank to a lower and lower key, as we sat forward to hear him. He did not often raise his eyes from the pages, but occasionally

a flickering smile played over his face when he came to a line one could see he thought either good or humorous. When he read 'Menelaus and Helen' he frankly grinned. Certainly Brooke loved some of his verse, whether he loved to read it or not, and 'Grantchester' was the crowning and final performance. That he read with a gusto and feeling that had something of the homesick boy in it.

"The hour came sharply to a close; our instructor thanked him and he bowed in a half-offish and half-shy English manner. We walked out. I don't know why there was an awkward moment for us as we left. It seemed as if someone ought to say something; it seemed an abrupt ending and somehow ungracious. Only one of our number had the urbanity to wait and be presented as our instructor and Brooke came down the little room; the rest of us filed out and scattered to our various ways. I went to the library and thought I'd look up his book, but it was already gone. In fact, that small volume of his was worn and stamped many times before I got it several weeks later."

Frederick Niven has dropped into the ears of Simon Pure, who has passed the news on to the Gossip Shop, that he is off to Montreal and New York on his way to the western states, British Columbia, and Alaska. Mr. Niven, always original, is not lecturing. He is visiting old familiar haunts again. It is good to think that he does not get his material for his American books from the London movie shows or from a Pullman car window. As "Who's Who" says of him, he is a rolling stone, keen on all methods of travel, and his favorite recreation is seeing new places and revisiting remembered ones. His life up to this

time has spanned a goodly segment of the globe, for he was born in Valparaiso, Chile, and educated in Glasgow. The scene of his new novel "A Tale That Is Told" (to be published in America in the fall) is not, like "The Lady of the Crossing", laid in America; it is a story of Scotland.

A friend of the Gossip Shop (Mary Blair of Highlands, California) writes her idea of Mr. Noah Webster at the ouija board, thus addressing W. R. B., after reading page 484 of the January BOOKMAN:

Do the dwarves ride over the rooves?—

O no!

The *dwarfs* ride over the *roofs*!

But if Mr. Benét

Elect to say

Anything that he likes in his own good way,

We never shall ask for proofs:

So the dwarves in scarves may infest the wharves

(For they never, no, never, do things by ha(r)lves!)

Let 'em stamp their hoofs

And gnash their toofs

Who meticulously demand as toofs

That dwarfs ride over the roofs—

O no!

That dwarves ride over the rooves!

"William—An Englishman", which a year ago won the French Academy prize of 20,000 francs as the best novel of the year published in any language, comes from a New York house (a strike delay). The author, Cicely Hamilton, is a London actress, journalist, and feminist lecturer. The book is an exquisitely satirical account of a young nonentity on the way to being a socialist; of his marriage to another nonentity, a young suffragist; of their honeymoon into Belgium where they wake overnight to the cataclysm on their doorstep. The rest is war, and the story closes sans heroine, sans hero, sans everything. But nothing is painful. It is told with a beautiful heartlessness.