

and wholly delightful old Teutons whom one can love and laugh at. *Ernestine Sophie*, the book and the person may live to acquire, much as did Benson's "Dodo," a following of affectionate devotees, lovers of a vivacious personality and of a piquant literary flavor.

The Lost Years

FABER. By JACOB WASSERMANN. New York: Harcourt Brace & Co. 1925. \$2.50.

JACOB WASSERMAN is unquestionably one of the greatest literary craftsmen of the age. Equally a master of swift narrative, dramatic incident, sharp but rich characterization, and veracious dialogue, his work is a delight from the standpoint of sheer technique. Such creations as Daniel, Gertrude, and Eleanore in "The Goose Man," Christian, Crammon, Ruth Hoffmann, and Eva Sorel in "The World's Illusion" occupy a permanent place, and no mean place, among those fictitious characters who are more real than we who write about them. One remembers Arnold Bennett's women and forgets his men; one remembers Conrad's men and forgets his women; one remembers both men and women with Wassermann. But more than a creator of character, Wassermann is also one of the greatest living analysts of the soul. Comparison with Dostoevsky is inevitable because both writers deal with similarly tortured spirits in a similar manner of sympathy and profound understanding; in the works of each there is the same tremendous momentum of significance, gaining in power page by page, until it crashes out of literature into reality; but while Dostoevsky's characters appear luridly through a kind of glowing murkiness, Wassermann's move in an atmosphere that is crystal-clear. We come to see his people vividly and know their gestures and the inflections of their voices long before we are suffered to obtain much knowledge of their motives. Then gradually behind the outward man we begin to recognize the inner phantom, wavering or steady, that directs or misdirects his life. No writer more than Wassermann gives due importance to the flesh but nonetheless his final attention is directed to problems born of the spirit and to be solved, if at all, by the spirit.

The present volume is narrower in scope, with fewer characters and brilliant incidents than either "The World's Illusion" or "The Goose Man." On the other hand, the characters and problems are treated not more adequately, but more simply and completely. The sub-title, "The Lost Years," derives from but hardly suggests the central plot. After the close of the war Eugene Faber returns from a four years' imprisonment to find that his wife, Martina, formerly tied most closely to him in bonds of affection and dependence, has become self-sufficient and, as he thinks, forgetful of him through her interest in a vast charitable enterprise, a Children's City, carried on by an enigmatic Princess who somewhat resembles Christian Wahnschaffe. Faber, impatient, egocentric, an undisciplined child of an undisciplined mother, has himself hitherto depended upon the flattery of his wife's dependence; now, irritated by long abstinence and hungry for sensual love, jealous of the influence of the Princess, he cannot, without the desperate struggle which makes up the book, either understand or accept his situation.

It will be seen that this is no banal story of post-war infidelities or maladjustments; "the lost years" might have been lost at home and in peace as well as in war; the real theme is the necessity of spiritual independence even from, perhaps especially from, those one loves. Minor interests cluster about the main one; the disastrous household of Anna Faber, a flabby sentimental feminist who in the modern manner neglects her home for the platform; the strange man-boy, Christopher; the personality of the Princess who dominates the story yet does not actually appear until the three-hundred-and-twenty-second page; the sympathetic story of the pacifist leader, Kapruner, and his widow, Faith, and the influence of the latter upon Faber, and the very unsympathetic story of a group of reds. The mystical religious note and the Dostoevskian emphasis upon purification through suffering are present but much less marked than in "The World's Illusion."

For the Hay Chasers

FRIENDS OF MR. SWEENEY. By ELMER DAVIS. New York: Robert M. McBride & Co. 1925. \$2.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

ARE you a hay chaser? Probably. Most of us are. And what is a hay chaser? A hay chaser, as defined by Mr. Winthrop Rixey to Mr. Asaph Holliday, is as follows:

"Ace, why does a donkey pull a cart? Because there's a pole running over his head; and hung from the end of that pole, a foot in front of his nose, is a bundle of hay. Because that's just ahead of him, he pulls his cart all day long and doesn't care what they give him to eat while he's doing it. Why should he care? He has hopes. . . . But of course he's only an ass."

Mr. Asaph Holliday—once, in college, the wild-cat "Ace" Holliday—had become a hay chaser. He was associate editor of *The Balance*, a weekly of opinion—and, by the same token, absolutely under the thumb of one Folsom, the urbane gentleman of letters who was its editor, and of one Brumbaugh, who had inherited some sixty millions and owned and paid the yearly deficit of *The Balance*. And then, of course, Mr. Asaph Holliday, ceased, on one wild night, to become a hay chaser, and truly "sounded the note of authority."

That is the whole story, the recrudescence, spiritual regeneration, and material rehabilitation of Asaph Holliday. Due to it, even his wife showed a flash of "the tiger woman." Mr. Davis has taken one of the most popular themes in the world, the turning of the worm, and played his own hilarious variations upon it. He has mixed well an elaborately concocted Manhattan comedy. His style is like a fresh stiff breeze; and his narrative races.

Mr. Davis's dialogue and his humorous treatment of his characters are clean-cut. His New York is a real New York. His fantasy is not far from plain truth. Probabilities are strained but not outraged. The construction of the book is satisfying.

The reviewer blushing admits that this is his first acquaintance with the undeniable narrative gift of Mr. Davis. But if "Times Have Changed," "I'll Show the Town," and "The Keys of the City" are as good in their way as "Friends of Mr. Sweeney" is in its way, he looks forward to at least three other "long winter evenings" that will not seem so long this quarter.

We see a crisp, amusing play latent in the pages of this light novel. And it would seem to us a best bet for reading on the train. They say there is only a very limited number of fundamental themes for fiction. Well, Mr. Davis's story just goes to show that there is a lot of life in the old themes yet, particularly in the old turning-worm theme. To all sub-editors, of course, Mr. Davis's treatment of it will particularly appeal. But all sub-editors may not have the luck or the essential wild-catness of Mr. Asaph Holliday. He "came through," even though he wore his muffler and his rubbers to the last. And he made a fortunate choice in his author. He might have fallen into the clutches of the younger realists!

An Alien World

SAID THE FISHERMAN. By MARMADUKE PICKTHALL. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. (The Blue Jade Library). 1925. \$3.

Reviewed by LLOYD MORRIS

MR. PICKTHALL'S novel, narrowly celebrated but widely unread since its first publication in England, deserves its present opportunity for a career among American readers. A beautiful book, it is made memorable by an uncommon authority, an inexorable convincingness. Mr. Pickthall has been praised for his intimate understanding of the nearer Orient; he should, perhaps, be praised rather for his art than for his knowledge. Other writers have portrayed the native life of Asia Minor; in their books a picturesquely disguised and protectively guided reader embarks upon expeditions more or less perilous, to emerge with the casual rewards of an observant tourist. It is Mr. Pickthall's distinction to have made the reader's perception of that life the perception of those who live it. This novel immerses the reader in an alien world

which possesses him so completely that, when natives of his own world wander through it, he regards them as inscrutable strangers, menacing, defiling, and barbarous. So absolute in its effect is this immersion that when, with Said, the reader visits London, he submits inevitably to the cruel, hideous nightmare that London is for Said. Mr. Pickthall's magic is consistent, unrelenting, and complete.

In its outline, its formal design, the fable of "Said the Fisherman" has all the romantic extravagance of the Arabian Nights; it is such a tale as might be told by an itinerant fabulist in some bazaar—the legend of a miraculous rise from penury to power, and of the stalking vengeance of Allah; in the telling of the fabulist, there would arise an allegory of moral powers in the guise of fantastic adventures. Mr. Pickthall retains the design together with its allegorical implications, but the values which he exploits are more compact and more moving. They are the values of individual character in its weakness and its strength; in his treatment of the story Said and Hasneh, Ferideh and Selim and Mustapha are vitally actual, and their fortunes compel us, not as an abstract reading of human life, but as an intimate revelation of human beings in contact and conflict. Taking as his subject the most conventional of Oriental fables, and denying himself none of the resources of rhetoric which an Oriental fabulist might employ for its expression, Mr. Pickthall has conceived it in the terms of an occidental art. This fusion explains the strange power of his narrative. His preoccupation with individual character, the traditional preoccupation of western fiction, emphasizes the dramatic salience of his subject. But the realism of his presentation of an unfamiliar world derives from his masterly use of the rhetoric wherewith that world has traditionally achieved expression in literature.

The competence of Mr. Pickthall's art of narrative is apparent from the fact that he has made what in substance is a picaresque romance seem credible, actual, profoundly rooted in reality. The effect of his novel is by no means romantic; the dramatic change of fortune which, beginning with the theft of a Frankish dressing-gown, brings Said from misery to affluence, only to send him to his death by Frankish muskets, bereft of wealth and reason and clad in the fatal dressing-gown, is made to seem not extraordinary but inevitable. The adventures which befall him in the interval, the cupidity that enriches and the love that destroys him, the friendship that requites his careless munificence, the devotion that compensates his cruelty—all these spring from the sources of his character rather than from the invention of the novelist. Mr. Pickthall has firmly situated Said in his natural world; a world of faith and chicanery, of humor and tragedy, of misery and dirt and opulent beauty; he has, for the duration of his tale, made it our world as well. To yield to the spell of his narrative is to submit to an experience compact of these elements.

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A Modern Knight-Errant

THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF W. T. STEAD. Edited by FREDERICK M. WATSON. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston. \$12.

Reviewed by T. J. C. ALLEN

IN THE past hundred years of English journalism three men stand conspicuously out from the fellows: John Thaddeus Delane, W. T. Stead, and Lord Northcliffe. The effect of their united efforts has been to raise the English press to a power unequalled, probably, in any other country. By it Cabinet Ministers have been made and broken, Governments driven out of office, wars declared and prevented, laws made and repealed. Its power, to be sure, has mainly been indirect: for the English press, of all modern institutions, has alone brought home to politicians and statesmen that ever salutary truth embodied in a single word—democracy: the press has, in one way or another, been the means of raising the people's voice, to which no Government has long dared to remain deaf.

In a recent book, J. A. Spender, himself a famous Liberal editor, says: "W. T. Stead had raised a faint smile by suggesting that the editor of a London newspaper was on a par with a Cabinet Minister." No doubt the smile was faint in political circles; for Stead, as the editor of these books so admirably points out, had several times bent Governments to his will. He was a moral gossamer *par excellence*, with Herculean driving force and a Nonconformist conscience, all of which combined to make him one of the most formidable journalists that the world has ever seen or is ever likely to see.

But the days of the editor-publisher—the days of Harmsworth (later Lord Northcliffe) whose success, as he acknowledged, was in part due to Stead (Stead was the first man in England to urge the more extensive printing of American news and the modernization of the press on American lines)—those days were not far off and Stead, long before his startling career had run its full course, was to be restrained by his publisher-employer, the admirable but businesslike Yates Thompson. After this Stead's direct political power passes into comparative limbo. He had not, like Delane, the sanction of a divine right, although it must be confessed that his right was far more divine than Delane's.



It is apparent that the writing of this biography has not been an easy task; for Stead was a prodigious writer and seems to have corresponded with every contemporary statesman in the world; and, through the very force of his giant personality, he caused dissensions which at times assumed international proportions. Mr. Whyte has therefore been compelled not only to write and edit a continuous account of Stead's active life but to defend his character from the numerous assaults made upon it. A more judicial fairness in this respect is not possible. The editor, who fails, happily, to hide his brilliance as an author under that term, has created a biographical narrative of unusual power by allowing his subject and others, through a commendable selection of letters, printed papers, documents and books, to give their impressions and tell their own stories. His own genius is made evident not alone by the editing but by the skillful way in which he connects the material with explanatory and interpretive notes. Thus it is possible to judge Stead through his own writings and to weigh the impressions of others who were his friends or who knew him more or less intimately.



The detail in which Stead's career is unfolded is exhaustive. It took him, we are told, four minutes to dress "from the bath to the front door," which may account for the fact that he was as badly dressed as the late Lord Salisbury, who was once refused admittance to the Casino at Monte Carlo because his dress was not *en règle*. His friends were extraordinarily diverse: he knew Carlyle and Meredith, worked under Morley, held Annie Besant and the Pope in equal esteem, had Milner as a subordinate, corresponded with Fisher, the late Czar Nicholas II, and knew Josephine Butler, General Booth, Cardinal Manning, Canon

Stow, and the great Catholic and Civil Rights, to name a few. The more was that he maintained his reputation on good terms with all of them. Stead's life is a series of heroic deeds characteristically English. He had editorial experience he was the proprietor of a provincial newspaper and a member of the Fourth Earl Grey notes that "this provincial editor of an obscure paper was corresponding with kings and emperors all over the world and receiving long letters from statesmen of every nation." In London he became for three years the immediate subordinate of John Morley, then the editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. After Morley's resignation the sparks begin to fly. The influence he exerts is amazing and so well is this brought out that it is possible to feel one's self transported back into the respectable excitement of the late Victorian era.



Through the *Pall Mall Gazette* Stead compels an unwilling Government to send "Chinese Gordon" to the Sudan; his navy campaign directs public attention to the sad state of the sea defenses and causes Parliament to vote supplementary estimates with little delay and earns him a compliment which delights his patriotic heart: a naval officer refers to him as being "a man who has done more for the British Navy than any Englishman since Lord Nelson." But his culminating triumph is his "Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon," a campaign by which he exposes the horrors of child prostitution, and by the methods he uses, as well as the language, causes probably one of the fiercest controversies known to Fleet Street. In the end this campaign secures him three months honorable incarceration in Holloway Gaol, but results in the passage of "Stead's Act" (the Criminal Law Amendment Act) which raised the age of consent in such matters from thirteen to sixteen years, which apparently satisfies him.

The "Maiden Tribute" campaign caused the *Pall Mall Gazette* great financial loss and Stead's relations with his employer are never again the same; soon after he leaves to found the *Review of Reviews*. This is the parting of the ways, and as far as journalism is concerned he sinks to the level of a pamphleteer and seems to be interested in everything, everybody, and everybody's business. He becomes deeply interested in spiritualism and so obsessed by it that he loses many of his friends but, as he callously remarks, he gains ten new ones for every one lost. He visits America and convulses Chicago with a social reform campaign and hardly less by his book, "If Christ Comes to Chicago." He becomes curiously enough the apologist of the Jameson Raid and later the unbending opponent of the South African War. His admiration for Russia is almost as sacred as his religion, in fact it is a minor religion with him. Almost in the same breath he can praise the Czar for his famous peace Rescript of 1898 and excuse Bloody Sunday. But these are only seeming eccentricities. His most discreditable undertakings are the campaigns against Parnell and Sir Charles Dilke and are not in line with his usual broad-mindedness. Whether this crusading power was effective or not, and it often was, it was of only indirect consequence; but certain it is that Fleet Street lost a remarkable journalist when the Titanic went down and the world was the poorer for the loss of a man whose aims were invariably altruistic and ennobling.



The impression which this biography gives of Stead is that of a man whose tremendous energy was put to the highest purposes with a determination that was reckless in its disregard of method and consequence. There is no evidence of his having been intellectually brilliant; his writings reveal a style devoid of art, sterile in originality, powerful in blunt directness, and full of grammatical inelegancies. He was deeply and latterly mystically religious and his life was undoubtedly spent in trying to live up to his exhortation: "Be a Christ!" It was not enough to be Christian.

It is safer to call him a Radical than to attach any other party label to him, despite the fact that he was nominally and for the most part a Liberal. Like many members of the Labor Party he was an Imperialist with a capital "I." For a time he was strongly in favor of an Anglo-Saxon Fed-

eration which would bind the British Empire and the United States together and so undo the work of the Revolution. Latterly, however, with superb egotism, he was willing to have the British Empire merged into the American Republic under the Stars and Stripes. "How our ideas grow!" gasps the astonished arch-imperialist, Rhodes, when Stead first tells him of it. "Dear me, how ideas expand!" And it is rather a mundane reflection, after soaring to such heights, to realize that the Rhodes scholarships are all that is left of this magnificent idea.



Mr. Whyte brings out in graphic relief an amazingly complex character. Such of his contemporaries as Garvin, Gardiner, Massingham, and Spender have paid him high tribute, but none has in essence erected a literary memorial to him such as this biography constitutes. Throughout these pages the magnetism of Stead is apparent and it is small wonder that he was able to make his mark on the world by the strength of his character alone. He had little charm, one feels, scarcely any talent, except, perhaps, in public speaking and conversation, but a self-assurance that stood superior to every other consideration. Normally a humble man, he seems always to have been on his dignity when conversing with royalty and if royalty offended him, as it did at Berlin and Brussels, it is evident from his writings that his *amour-propre* was wounded. On occasion, however, he could be very unpleasant, ill-mannered, and sometimes vulgar and ruthless in his methods. In the presence of the mighty he was not above being unctuous and could stoop on occasion to odious flattery, as when he vainly attempted to secure an audience of King Leopold. But more than anything his shortcomings were due, in words applied to Rhodes, to "fanatical hyperaesthesia of the Ego cuticle."

Yet, there can be no doubt that Stead was a very great man, even when his faults are frankly recognized; and it is due to the editor of these volumes that this estimate can be accepted. All English-speaking people will find this biography full of varied interest and constant enjoyment and as such it can be recommended to and even urged upon the general public; for it is a tale of a modern knight-errant who rode forth slaying evil dragons, tilting against impossible odds, and blazing his way through the world.

Battleground

PARNELL. By ST. JOHN ERVINE. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1925. \$4.

Reviewed by HENRY LONGAN STUART

MR. ST. JOHN ERVINE would be a better historian were he able to rid his mind of certain obsessions more in place in the servants' hall or in the columns of the London *Morning Post* than in a serious work of biography that is to find readers on two continents. One is an impressibility by rank and station seldom found in excess save among men themselves of proletarian strain. Another is a conviction that the Celt is a being of inferior order, racially preordained to be a hewer of wood and drawer of water for his Anglo-Saxon masters, whose only issue from servitude is into blood and rapine. These sentiments pervade Mr. Ervine's "Parnell" from cover to cover, and to multiply instances of their expression would be a thankless task. One or two will suffice to show with what a strange lack of humor and proportion they are used.

"Parnell," his latest biographer notes, "was of Anglo-Saxon blood, the blood of authority and leadership, while his followers were Celts in whose veins flowed only the blood of obedience and submission." As a sole instance of an effective leader issuing from "the cabins," O'Connell is offered us, whose family was one of the most ancient in the West of Ireland with scions in service in every European army, and who was born at Derrynane amid almost feudal pomp and circumstance. Henry O'Shea, a wealthy Limerick lawyer, whose son is sent into a cavalry regiment, is a "climbing father" who "would be a gentle-