

gloried in the Alger books glories in the rise of this adult Alger hero.

Mr. Deeping's claims as a novelist, however, are obviously founded on the more significant problem of the book, the relations between father and son. Again if one does not look too deep, they are satisfying and even beautiful relations. The pair are human because of the warmth and intimacy of their association, because of its frankness and love, because of the spirit of sacrifice in the father and the spirit of devotion in the boy. It is true that the relationship is more real than the individuals who form it; when Kit is portrayed by himself in London, he hardly holds together. But the association has a certain charm and pathos, though Mr. Deeping is weak enough to imply for it a moral also: this comradeship, he comes often within an inch of saying outright, is the fruit of confidence, tolerance, and wisdom. And to the moral he juxtaposes what the sceptical always regard with suspicion: the British emphasis on sportsmanship and breeding. In this matter all Americans who are not Anglophiles are inclined to be cynics, but I think that the fair-minded among us will gladly admire the British ideal when it appears, in fiction, as an excellence of deed and character in unison save through itself. But Mr. Deeping cannot refrain from letting his Sorrells prate times without number of what is or is not cricket, so that he cannot refrain from turning his Sorrells into prigs. In doing so, possibly he holds the mirror up to Nature, but I have my doubts that his intention was so objective.

The book covers twenty years with ease and naturalness; it takes Kit from childhood to a responsible place in medicine, and Sorrell from poverty to rather complacent comfort. The end, representing the father's slow death from cancer, is effective and moving, but it has an air of predetermination about it. It is done lovingly enough to be touching, but a little too lovingly to be quite artistic. In the letter it steers clear of sentimentality, but not in the spirit. One finds it human, engrossing, and cordial: but like subtly sugared water, a little too sweet to be pure.



To a Young Girl

(Indicted for Murder)

ALL night the summer thunder that crashed,
but never cracked
The prison of the smothered town,
Resounded, where I lay, about your prison bed,
To which one furious and drunken act
Had suddenly borne down
The spirit fierce, the stubborn copper head.
And all night, from the dull distended air,
The still unwetted empty street,
That company I kept oppressed me there:
Those praisers of the past, acceptors of defeat,
The ghosts of poets—violent against God
No longer in my day; with those of thirty-odd
Fierce with the first resentments of their teens;
And those robusters captains of the age,
From brooding on some boorish heritage
Grown loud with sullen spleens.
I thought, those have foregone the use of arms;
And if these others, if a few
Have struck, it was but drunkenly like you,
In desperate alarms—
Like you who for the butcher of your heart
Struck down your worshipper. And when have they—
So rash to shatter pain, with such harsh passion wild,
Breaking the house of life—sustained a bitter part
With braver lies than you I saw today—
Pale, slender and a child,
Enduring without tears
The prison, the barbed pen, the prosecutor's sneers?
And all night long the summer thunder flaps
Above the town, above my bed, above
Your cramped repose of fear and festered love,
Repeating impotent claps.

EDMUND WILSON

*Dorothy Perkins, a seventeen-year-old girl, was tried in New York last June for the shooting of Thomas Templeton. The jury brought in a verdict of manslaughter in the first degree. These lines were written at the time of her trial, which the writer attended.

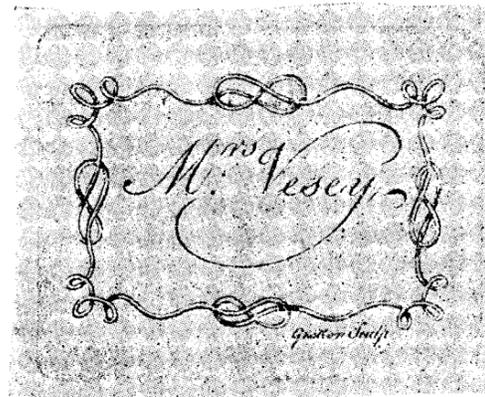
The BOWLING GREEN

Spring Cleaning

IT has been remarked by sagacious observers that the city of Newcastle-on-Tyne is famous not merely for coal, but also for excellent book-sellers. The most interesting catalogue I've seen lately comes (by the kindness of a client in Rochester, N. Y.) from the bookshop of William H. Robinson, 4 Nelson Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne. It is a list of the library of Mrs. Elizabeth Vesey (1715-91). Her name has always been charming to me, as I used to imagine (though wrongly, I fear) that the street that in some ways means more to me than any other in New York, was named for her. I even meditated, while I was working there by St. Paul's graveyard, collecting a little book of sketches under the title, "Vesey Street Papers," and dedicating it to her. Who was she? I hear you asking. Well, she was the first blue-stocking.

The first lady blue-stocking we should say, for Mr. Ross Balfour, in his prefatory note to Robinson's catalogue of her books, reminds us that the stockings themselves belonged to Mr. Stillingfleet. But it was Mrs. Vesey's drawing-room parties that were the first blue-stocking gatherings, when she used to entertain Dr. Johnson and his colleagues of "The Club." To quote Mr. Ross Balfour:

There is reason to believe that the following is the true account. At Bath Mrs. Vesey met Benjamin Stillingfleet, the disinherited grandson of the illustrious Bishop of Worcester. He had renounced Society, and was compelled to decline an invitation on the grounds that he did not possess clothes suitable for an evening gathering. Mrs. Vesey, with a swift glance at his everyday attire, which included small clothes and worsted stockings, exclaimed, "Don't mind dress, come in your blue stockings." Stillingfleet obeyed; and sub-



sequently he became so popular at the 'conversations' that 'blue stockings,' as he was called, was in great request. "Such was the excellence of his conversation," wrote Boswell, "that it came to be said, we can do nothing without the blue stockings, and thus by degrees the title was established."

Even casual frequenters of eighteenth century literature have always wondered that a woman of Mrs. Vesey's charm and talent has remained so little known. Perhaps some student of the period will some day give us a biography of "The Sylph," as she was known. Mr. Balfour tells us that the *Edinburgh Review* of last October printed an "admirable essay" about her, by Mr. Reginald Blunt. After looking over the list of her library, which has, by good fortune, been kept intact until now, I am sure she was worthy of the good company that used to gather in her house. She had a copy of the poems of John Donne, for instance. A spirited hostess, too: at her country home in Ireland she evidently held excellent routs. "When you come to sup with us the grotto shall be illuminated with yr coloured lamps, or if it is a time most encouraging to all sorts of madness you shall see the moon rising upon a gap of the River." And a manuscript bill for a ball she gave to the corporation of the town of Kinsale, November 21, 1785, shows the dimensions of her hospitality.

Mrs. Vesey was a great letter-writer. Her flirtation with Laurence Sterne, who admired her vastly, somewhat scandalized the more rigorous of her friends. I think I shall lift out her bookplate from Mr. Robinson's catalogue and reproduce it here, just because I often thought of her on crowded afternoons on Vesey Street.

In the course of some spring cleaning in this

desk, I contemplate three letters. It is, of course, unpardonable to reprint what was written with no faintest thought of print; but that, after all, is what we all most relish. So here goes, without any hint of identity. The first was from British Columbia, the second from England, the third from 44th Street.

I

We have just got up from gripe. We were both laid down together, she ahead of me by three days. I thought I was not going to succumb, could nurse her, do the whole thing, and go on with work. Then, one morning at the store, I heard a voice say, "You'd better go along after him." What on earth for? The store-keeper came into the house after me and took my temperature, 102—and I had been sawing wood in the bush that morning at seven. But it was almost worth being both ill to discover what people could be. They came and left jellies, custards, fruit, soups on the dresser. We had just to get up and grab something and then flop again. They came to chop wood. They opened the door and came in and stoked up the kitchen stove and walked into the living room and had a look at the stove there, and when we tried to thank them they said: "O, we've to look after you when you're sick." And now it is spring, the sun on the beach and we crawling back to health very happy with all the birds that are arriving.

What a damn good number of the *Saturday Review*. That means that it's bang full of confirmation of lots of my own beliefs . . . the things that I say to my wife when I suddenly shoot off my own inmost heart about what, to me, is good and what not good in books, despite what others say has been decided. I like Priestley mentioning that some good judges put the "Sentimental Journey" as high as "Tristram Shandy." I like lots he says. I like the repudiation of the Ass of Chartres. I like "In Bed." That's what made me grab paper and take the cap from the stylo.

II

This is a great life. Touchstone was all wrong about the country. As I dig, I look across the 3-mile wide valley of the Windrush to a big down on the other side, where there's a different sort of weather. Half way up the down there's a wood that was a forest till the Great War devoured it for trench-props, etc., and just below it is a quarry from which Old St. Paul's is locally believed to have been digged, as the new S. P. was (in very small part) digged from our little disused quarry here, where my hens scratch. A goodly place, a goodly time. . . . Visitors are driven from the station (5 miles off, *deo gratias ago*) like Mr. Br American friend in Wells's first chapter, by a ho still has adventures with his gears. I have no my car up yet, but she has been almost gunwales once, with the two wheels on t'other side eminent on a high bank of primroses by the road. Besides such delights we have Saxon and Norman churches at a great variety of distances from the door, a powder-closet for you to see to your wig, and such a granary—I believe Marie Corelli must have had one like it at Stratford and that it was only the joy of using it all that made her a flour hoardress during the war.

III

. . . I am delighted at your reference to Montaigne. You give yourself away. Hardly anyone under thirty-five can appreciate Montaigne. You appreciate him: ergo, you are over thirty-five and quite grown-up.

Well, I still have six weeks or so before we leave 35 behind. But this comment reminds me that a couple of years ago, for practice in French, I began a translation of Montaigne. It didn't get far. But some people's versions of Montaigne (e. g. the beautiful Bruce Rogers edition) are in huge volumes of vast weight. My translation, as much as I ever did, can be published very briefly. Here it is:

In true friendship, of which I have had experience, I give myself to my friend more than I draw him towards me. Not only is it more agreeable to do him a good turn than to have him do me one; but further, I prefer that he do well for himself rather than for me. He aids me most when he aids his own interest; and if absence happens to be amusing or profitable for him, it pleases me better than his company. Besides it is not really absence when there are means for us to communicate. In times past I have found value and convenience in our separations: we enlarged our lives and made them fuller, for he was living, enjoying, and using his eyes on my behalf; and I also on his, as completely as if he had been here. There was a part of us that remained ineffective when we were together: we were too well mingled: division enriched the union of our wills. An insatiable appetite for bodily presence suggests some flaw in congeniality.

What we commonly call friends and friendships are only acquaintances and familiarities (knotted by hazard or convenience) by means of which our souls have conversation. But in the friendship whereof I speak, souls are so mixed and blended one with another that they are indistinct; you could not mark the stitches where they were joined. If one urged me to say why I loved him I could only say "Because it was he, because it was I."

Such were the randoms of a desk spring-cleaning.
CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

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Books of Special Interest

Three Women Poets

HONEY OUT OF THE ROCK. By BABBETTE DEUTSCH. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1925. \$1.50.

BALLADS AND LYRICS. By MARGARET WIDDEMER. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1925.

THE DIFFERENCE. By HARRIET MONROE. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1952. \$1.50.

Reviewed by EDWARD DAVISON

IN the development of every poet there comes a time when he has to cross the quicksands that lie between respectable mediocrity and distinction. Week by week in one or another new book of verse we may watch the attempted crossing. Twice or thrice in a year, perhaps, somebody makes the other side. And even then the poetic journey may be said only to have begun. Miss Babbette Deutsch, who has indisputable gifts, is still in the midst of that first crossing and, in spite of some striking lines and stanzas, her new book of verse cannot be said to have carried her to the enviable banks. As an artist in verse she flounders far too often. It is difficult to understand why a poet so patently ambitious should constantly appear in that superficial feminine mood which is content merely to dust some of the pretty bric-a-brac in the drawing rooms of minor verse.

*I would have pearls blacker than caviare,
Rubies such as a ripe pomegranate bleeds. . . .*

This is the easiest kind of womanly extravagance and it carries her, at the mercy of her rhymes, into such strained comparisons as

Gold pale as honey dripping from a star

(where the moon, or a score of other objects, would serve her purpose just as easily as a star, but for the need of rhyme),

Brought me by slaves like snow and apple-seeds.

If Miss Deutsch means that the slaves will be as white and as dark respectively as snow and apple-seeds, she does not say so. A comparison of dissimilar objects is not a comparison of like qualities in dissimilar objects. This kind of thing, which appears in many another of her poems, is an elementary offence against the poetic art and argues a thinness of the author's fancy. We get such images as appear in her first poem, where rain falling at night is described as an invisible net of music in whose scarcely-palpable, wavering mesh the thoughts of the listening lovers are entangled.

Miss Deutsch has yet to learn how to make her meaning clear instead of contenting herself and dissatisfying the reader by merely expressing the general "drift" of her mind. Occasionally she chisels the meaning of her work as well as its sound and appearance:

*Love would link the limbs to find
The secret texture of the bones;
Love will quarry till it owns
Half the mystery of the mind.*

Elsewhere her work is marred by a certain uncertainty of purpose. Nevertheless there are signs of real promise in the sometimes saccharine pages of "Honey Out of the Rock," and we may anticipate better things in the future. To apply any save high critical standards to Miss Deutsch's poetry would be to degrade it.

Miss Margaret Widdemer appears less ambitious, but her achievement is, at its best, more satisfactory. She tends rather to make a passionate fuss about nothing (from the reader's point of view, of course) in many of her love poems. Like most minor poets she cannot illustrate abstractions without concrete images and similes. Her horizons are misty when they should be clearly cut. To say that Peace is "like a white image against a velvet night," that "Reveret is like a slim girl shrouded and unbowed," is to say little or nothing. "Pageant" and some other half dozen poems in the volume are well felt and sufficiently wrought . . .

*Though I go by with banners
Oh never envy me
These flags of scarlet flying,
This purple that you see. . . .
This air of marching triumph
Was all that I could save
Of loves that had an ending
And hopes that had a grave.*

But her trick of borrowing these grandeurs to deck such moods is rather strained and often forces her theme higher than it can fly of its own volition. Miss Widdemer, however, brings to much of her verse an emotional honesty which is only lessened by this tendency to overstress what she has to say. Her book deserves a close reading.

Of Miss Harriet Monroe less need be said. Her familiar, picturesque style is always well employed, though sometimes one notes a thinness in the content of her work. She makes images for their own sakes and one admires them without necessarily admitting their significance in the context. Thus she describes in great detail the geysers in the Yellowstone (and the descriptions are interesting and well done) only to end the poem, lamely, with the question "How do you like it up here? why must you go back to the spirits of darkness? what do you tell them down there about your little glorious life in the sun?" Her work is characterized by a certain preciosity, a Parnassian clarity of language but not of metrical form, an obvious love of "art for art's sake." But Miss Monroe is a poet who wrongs her genius by preferring *vers-libre* to the more difficult kinds of poetic construction and there are dimensions of beauty in the reprinted "Columbian Ode" which do not appear in her later "freer" work. It is no mean thing to have achieved such a personable style as marks every page of her book. And yet something whispers that Miss Monroe might serve her Muse better if she thought of poetry more by its results and less by the theoretic hinted at in her preface.

Scenes of the Past

SHADOWS ON THE PALATINE. By WILFRANC HUBBARD. New York: Minton, Balch & Co. 1925. \$2.50.

ORVIETO DUST. By WILFRANC HUBBARD. With an introduction by R. B. CUNNINGHAME-GRAHAM. The same.

Reviewed by LLEWELYN POWYS

TO be able to reconstruct with any semblance of reality the speech and manners of a past age is a task that requires not only erudite historic knowledge, but also the kind of inspired insight that suggests a spiritual kinship with the epoch described. Continually there have lived men who may be said to have been born out of due time, men whose innate temperaments would seem to fit them for ages quite other than those in which they happen to live. Walter Savage Landor is, of course, a supreme example of this and in his "Imaginary Conversations" he manages to recreate for the reader a most steadfast illusion of those times "out of which he came."

Although Mr. Hubbard's writings are sponsored by Mr. Cunninghame-Graham, who apparently—gallant and generous gentleman that he is—finds it impossible to refuse anybody an introduction, we do not feel that they really carry with them the living perfume of past days. "Orvieto Dust," writes Mr. Cunninghame-Graham, "could only have been written by a man into whose soul the dust of the old town had penetrated." The present reviewer finds that the dust that has penetrated into Mr. Hubbard's soul is dry dust, that is to say, it has remained unilluminated and has little or nothing to do with the golden notes that once, floating upon golden air, enhanced the beauty of the ancient town. Cunninghame-Graham assures us that Walter Pater could have written tales "more or less" in the style of Mr. Hubbard. "More or less, more or less!" Aha! there is the rub, for who could confuse a broody farmyard hen sitting stolidly upon eggs made of inert china with a secretary bird refined, tapering, exact, and complicated?

Mr. Wilfranc Hubbard very obviously has given a great deal of attention to the history of Rome and other Italian towns, but his imagination, alas, is of a chatty academic kind. The scenes he evokes are almost invariably commonplace scenes and what little vitality they possess would seem to be derived from the shock of envisaging ordinary everyday human reactions at work in some past period. Occasionally, however, we come upon a happy thought such as "The wise ruler permits all religions but believes in none," or a charming form of address as when the old woman Chrysis greets the young Christian girl and her friend with "You are two drops of honey, one as sweet as the other," or a platitude as comfortable as the following "Women are everywhere. But one woman is only to be found in one place."

Individualism
or Socialism?

A controlled individualism rather than either of these extremes is the new type of procedure most in favor today. In advocating this mean, Professor Clark concludes that industry is a matter of public concern and that the "stake which the public has in its processes is not adequately protected by the safeguards which individualism offers." But since society does not know what it wants, to let individualism—controlled as much as may be—hold the field is the lesser evil, and the one from which society suffers less on the whole.

In *The Social Control of Business* Professor Clark makes an experiment in the interpretation of one of the most all-embracing aspects of economic life. He discusses in some detail systems of control, past and present, and concentrates, in the last part of the book, on a related group of tangible and definite problems such as price control, public utilities, and trusts. *The Social Control of Business*. By John Maurice Clark. \$4.00, postpaid, \$4.15.

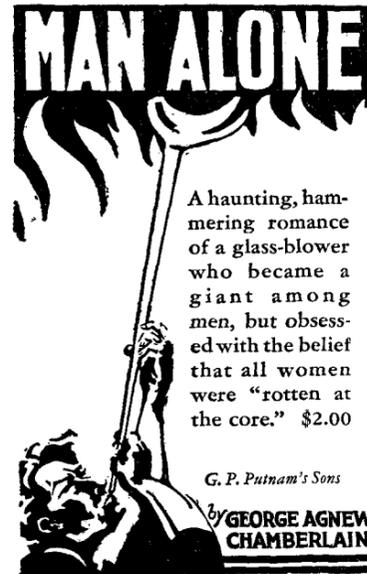
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