

overhears and puts the worst construction upon Adèle's expressions of concern; she gives her own version of the interview to Monteverso, insistently demanding Cosmo's return and as presently accusing Adèle. Monteverso, himself involved in the Napoleonic conspiracy on the firm side, connects Cosmo's disappearance with Adèle's departure and suspects Cosmo of playing the spy. He gets certain information from the authorities with the result that Cosmo is intercepted on his return to Genoa and is secretly confined in order to avoid awkward interference by the English representative. Angered by his treatment, Cosmo confirms himself in his loyalty to Attilio and maintains a stubborn silence.

Napoleon lands at Cannes and advances in triumph to Paris. Spire, in desperation, sends for Sir Charles, and Adèle, overwrought by her anxiety for Cosmo and her father's continued illness, is driven to accusing Monteverso and passionately demanding Cosmo's release or Monteverso's confession of his murder. Monteverso, in ungovernable rage, turns on Adèle with the hoarded story of her illegitimate birth, repudiates her, and drives her and the Marquis from the palazzo. Dr. Martel removes them to Cantelucci's inn.

Monteverso gives up the palazzo and follows Napoleon to France. Cosmo is released by his captors, after some weeks of detention, and reaches Genoa to be overwhelmed by the turn affairs have taken in his absence and by the charge brought against his father; to find the Marquis sinking from his illness and from shock; and to be dismayed by the reports of the increasing autocracy of Napoleon's conduct and the inevitability of renewed war. Outbreaks grow serious in Genoa and Cosmo finds his attention taken up by his obligations to the Marquis and Adèle. In this strained uncertainty, both personal and political, matters continue until Sir Charles arrives, by sea, denies and disproves the charge of Monteverso and confesses his disappointment that Austerlitz and Adèle's hasty marriage had frustrated his original hope of a union between the families. Adèle and the dying Marquis, Sir Charles, and Cosmo await together the final outcome of Napoleon's last adventure, with intense and conflicting emotions. The Marquis dies; the débâcle of Waterloo takes place; and Monteverso, beggared by the outcome, returns to Piedmont. Martel, with the help of Father Paul, discovers that Clelia's mother, Monteverso's legal wife, had been alive at the time of his marriage to Adèle. Monteverso's intrigues against the King of Sardinia being disclosed, Monteverso disappears.

Cosmo's admiration for Adèle becomes a passionate love, but Adèle's tragic experience, an old hunger for her own spiritual integrity, and her conviction that the marriage with Monteverso still constitutes a spiritual bond, force her to stifle any feeling warmer than the old friendship. She returns to France, with the little income left her, to reconstruct life in her own way. Cosmo goes back to England with his father, carrying with him a somewhat keener sense of the exactions of life but also a heightened sense of its force and color.

"To compel men . . . to glance for a moment at the surrounding vision of form and color, of sunshine and shadows; to make them pause for a look, for a sigh, for a smile—such is the aim. And when it is accomplished—behold—all the truth of life is there."

Mixed Elements

SKIN FOR SKIN. By LEWELYN POWYS. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1925. \$2.

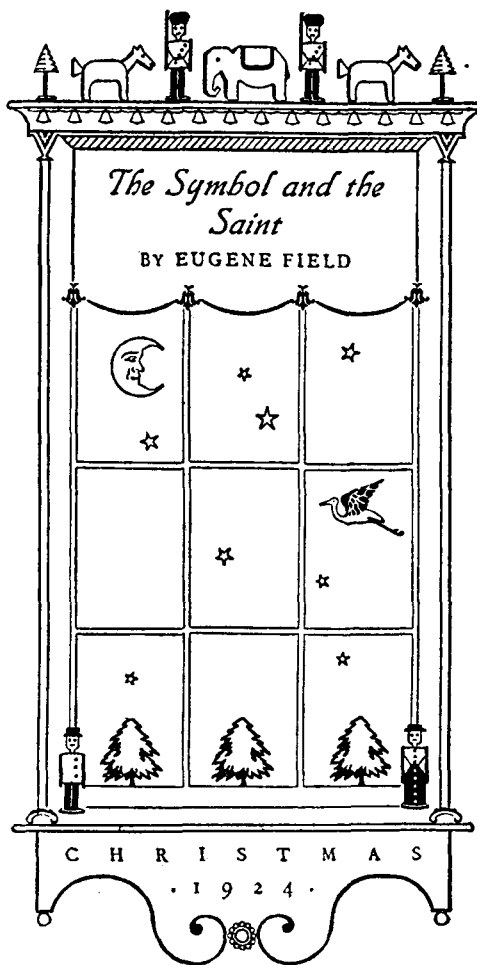
Reviewed by LOUIS KRONENBERGER

IN my opinion this is one of the minor literary achievements of the year. It is a very personal book, and for some tastes it may be too personal; but it is filled with personality that is vivid and undisguised, and it is written with sonorous splendor. If there are many differences, there are certain likenesses between this book and Barbellion's "The Journal of a Disappointed Man"; and I doubt whether any Englishman since Barbellion has revealed phases of himself with so much deliberate honesty. Upon the consciousness of both books lies always the knowledge that the author is gravely ill; both writers are egoists, and both are egoists of unusual intelli-

gence; both are agnostics; both, again, are naturalists of sorts; and both at times have impulses and moods bordering on the pathological. "Skin for Skin" is largely the record of Powys's fight against consumption, a circumstance to be remembered, at least, in the face of Powys's occasional abnormalities of feeling. Taking him to high Swiss altitudes and then back to the fresh outdoors of the West of England, this record combines a healthy sense of nature and beauty with an unhealthy body and mind. Undoubtedly this unhealthy body and mind sometimes stains the book in an egregious manner; and one might be justified for thinking of it as a curiosity of literature rather than as literature itself, just as one must often regard its revelations as those of an exceptional human being rather than of humanity. I have called Mr. Powys's honesty "deliberate," which I think in distinction to being natural or unconscious, it is; and it leads to a few passages exposing morbid egoism, and even sadism, which are disagreeable.



But "Skin for Skin" has its finer and more charming side. It has excellent pictures of the author's family, particularly of his clergyman father and of his two literary brothers, T. F. and John Cowper Powys. It has its touches of humor, anyway of verbal humor, as in his father's phrase for calling the old servants to prayers, "I think we might ring now for the maidens," and in Theodore's comment, "I was sorry Jack had a



Titlepage composed entirely of rules and type ornaments
By Bruce Rogers
From *The Fleuron*, No. IV

bad toe, but if he had had a well toe he might have fallen into a mire or evil place." Among the sustained beauty of its writing, it has scores of delightful images and bits of color: "sea-green icicles"; "a peasant leading a mouse-colored cow, stopped for a drink of red wine"; and the sun at daybreak, seen under the belly of a horse, "like a pumpkin". Above all there is the writing itself, not easily dismembered, but worthy of unstinted praise. However one may react to its contents—and so personal a book compels a personal reaction—it is this writing, and the vividness at least of Powys's personality, that I think every one must surely grant.

Erratum

For the picture which appears above another was substituted last week by a mistake of the Composing Room. Beneath this Japanese scene appeared the caption which properly belonged with Mr. Rogers's title-page and which is here repeated.

The "Nymph's" Precursor

THE LADIES OF LYNDON. By MARGARET KENNEDY. New York: Doubleday, Page & Co. 1925. \$2.

Reviewed By LEE WILSON DODD

THIS is Margaret Kennedy's first novel. It made little stir in the world when published, and its appearance now in America is of course due to the great popular success of her second novel, "The Constant Nymph." All of which seems to me to prove that the great popular success of "The Constant Nymph" was very little due to its higher qualities, for there are literary virtues in "The Constant Nymph" which, to my mind, remove it entirely from the ranks of ephemeral best-sellerdom. And these virtues, though here a little clouded perhaps, are almost equally apparent in "The Ladies of Lyndon."

What the special virtues of Miss Kennedy as a writer are, may be briefly suggested by saying that they are also the literary virtues of Jane Austen. If Jane Austen had lived a hundred years later, in a freer environment, she might quite well have given us Sanger's Circus, or Mrs. Varden Cocks of the present novel, or her lovely daughter Agatha, who did want so to be a woman of something more than charm but could never quite conveniently manage it. Miss Kennedy knows her characters as few of us know our friends or ourselves; she brings them before us without fuss or difficulty or tedious parade of psycho-analysis; and she is just to them—she neither caricatures nor sentimentalizes the human scene. And finally, like glorious Jane, she has a pervading humor and also a dangerous wit which she holds severely in check. She escapes wonderfully from the snares set for her by her own exuberant liveliness of mind. It would be easy for her to be merely a satirist; but she is something better than that already—and may yet, if she will, become a novelist of distinctive rank.

I recommend "The Ladies of Lyndon" as a test for readers of "The Constant Nymph." It lacks the sensational qualities inherent in the subject matter of the second novel, and there are passages in it which Miss Kennedy, I feel certain, would handle otherwise today. But the native virtues of Miss Kennedy are there on almost every page; the opening chapters are perfect, and the conclusion (which is Agatha's conclusion) seems to me masterly. If you were "keen about" Sanger's Circus and now should find "The Ladies of Lyndon" disappointing, I beg you to suspect at least that your judgment of literary values is still susceptible of a gratifying change.

A Tale of New York

THE MARRIAGE GUEST. By KONRAD BERCOVICI. New York: Boni & Liveright. 1925. \$2.

ABOVE everything else "The Marriage Guest" is what its subtitle calls it, a novel of New York. Its beginning, recalling in atmosphere the beginning of Alfred Kreyborg's "Troubadour," pictures a German quarter in the 'nineties. But this compact quarter, peopled by shopkeepers who make the bread and cigars they sell, and who have their singing-society and their favorite saloon, is doomed by the new age of machines. It is this contrast between the old order, with its comfortable traditions, and the new order, with its breathless enterprise, that forms a background for the personal contrasts of the story. There is the same contrast between the violin-mender Anton Zwenge, faithful to the old standards, and his bustling wife, forging onwards with the new; and between their daughter Greta's two suitors, an idealistic young German musician and an aggressive young American contractor. Torn between the two modes of life, Greta marries George Gewurtz the contractor, though she loves the musician. But she finds she can give herself to her husband only by imagining that he is Karl, and her married life is unhappy and unreal. Her daughter, in the next generation, is presented with the same choice of suitors, with a young musician she loves and with Karl, now successful, whose prestige she admires; but Greta prevents her marriage with Karl by confessing the false state of her own married life, and by revealing

how the same unhappiness and the same vicarious love-making would exist for Karoline.

In the unusualness of its complications, this love story is original, just as it is frequently poignant and intense; and it closes on a note which, superficially at least, has great power. But we do not think the love story equals Mr. Bercovici's story of the city in which it takes place. Perhaps we are preferring the factual and historical to the dramatic and artistic side of the book; but it should at least be pointed out that this picture of New York which is so much more than just a background, which is an implicit satire of the city's growth throughout an age of machinery and capitalism, is equally a creative achievement.

"The Marriage Guest" is not a great novel, and quite often is not even an accurate or well-written one. Mr. Bercovici can write cheap and slipshod prose and his facts can be faulty. But he can tell a story with the most extraordinary vigor and movement, so that as a piece of story-telling it is a pleasure to read it. And in "The Marriage Guest" there is more to admire than the telling. There is a pertinent significance to the tale.

A Comedy of Conduct

PIANO QUINTET. By EDWARD SACKVILLE-WEST. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1925. \$2.50.

Reviewed by LLOYD MORRIS

IN many ways an exceptional performance, Mr. Sackville-West's first novel introduces a talent disciplined to the exact accomplishment of its intention. His talent is served by a responsible technique and fortified by discriminating intelligence. And his novel completely expresses the values of its material. A comedy in the ancient sense, "Piano Quintet" has the final effect of irony, civilized and sophisticated and a little wistful.

Mr. Sackville-West has submitted his talent to the new doctrines which are currently modifying the practice of fiction, with results that are at least instructive. In the hands of resolutely experimental contemporary novelists the traditional mold of the novel has been broken, perhaps decisively. Instead of rigorous architecture, they offer us casual continuity. Instead of conventional pattern, they offer us an indeterminate sequence which superficially resembles the actual flow of experience. The problem of bridging the gulf between reality and the expression of it has always been a serious one for the novelist, and these new attempts to solve it have often involved the renunciation of ancient pieties. "Piano Quintet" adheres to the majority of these pieties with a strenuous orthodoxy. Its architecture is formal and arbitrary; its structure is harmonized with the utmost strictness; it exhibits experience in the medium of pattern, and the conventional elements of that pattern are deliberately emphasized. None the less it achieves the effect of extreme verisimilitude to which the more advanced fiction of our time aspires.

Mr. Sackville-West's affair is primarily with character; events concern him only to the degree that they elicit the specific distinction of the individuals whom they involve. His preoccupation is not with what befalls his characters, but with what they are. And although his novel is composed as a succession of scenes, it relies very little upon incident, which is the material of drama. A simple fable sustains his narrative. Four men and a woman leave England for a brief concert tour on the Continent and, the tour completed, return to England. Their situation isolates them and constitutes them, as one observes, a "pattern of life that is exclusive of the outside world." Circumstance and situation elicit characteristic responses from all of them. Their interrelation, largely an affair of tangential friction, is exhibited with delicate precision. In life, sensitive temperaments habitually protect themselves from hostile scrutiny by equivocal reticence or factitious candor; these are stripped away, layer after layer, until the five stand revealed in an intimate impudence which, in life, might prove somewhat trying, but in art is both intelligible and profoundly moving. It is all accomplished

with an admirable economy. The rapidly shifting scene is conveyed as a series of effects rather than as a series of concrete entities. A casual society, external to the group and quite as eccentric, is implied by the casual guests of a mediocre hotel. Scene and society contribute effectively to the central comedy by intensifying the relationships which form its substance.

Mr. Sackville-West contemplates his microcosmic world with equanimity but without illusion. His mind is subtle and sophisticated. He extracts enjoyment from what, for many people, is a disquieting perception; the common discrepancy between intellectual convictions and emotional demands. The mind finds congenial a world in which the only absolute principle is a universal relativity. But, since such a world offers no hostages to permanent attachments, the emotions find it chilly and alien. Convinced as we may be that life affords no permanent certainties, we are reluctant to assert, as our only certitude, the impossibility of ever being certain. Like the majority of contemporary sceptics, and unlike the sceptics of the eighteenth century, Mr. Sackville-West does not profess that doubt itself may constitute an affirmative belief. As a contemporary, he is sensitive to this dilemma, and his novel, which dispassionately projects it as a comedy of conduct, is a wistful and ironic memorial to contemporary indecision.

A Literary Panorama

TEN LITERATURES. By ERNEST BOYD. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1925. \$3.

Reviewed by ARTHUR W. COLTON

MR. BOYD ranges as widely as Signor Crece in his "Poesia e Non Poesia" and is more informative if less stirring and controversial. He is as sane a critic with as definite judgments. But these judgments do not seem to penetrate or illumine. From the essays here on men of whom I knew something already, such as Flaubert and France, Unamuno and Benavente, Pirandello and Papini, Brandes and Bojer, I do not seem to have gained much that is new or valuable; but from the essays on men of whom I knew before very little, such as the two Tharaud's, Martinez Sierra, Concha Espina, Gomez de la Serna, Carl Spitteler, and Gustav Wied, he has left me impressions that at least are clear and definite. If none carries very far, yet each essay leaves some kind of a dent in the memory: André Gide, the emancipated Huguenot; the brothers Tharaud whose identities are more completely merged than those of any other similar collaborators; Proust, not, as enthusiasts assert, the greatest French prose writer of the age, but a fascinating chronicler and psychologist, repetitious and careless, the values of whose long chronicle decline notably in the later volumes; Pio Baroja, something like Bernard Shaw, but minus any mission, a pungent satirist who divides his enthusiasm between Dickens and Dostoevsky; Ramon del Valle-Inclan, as picturesque as Byron and eccentric as De l'Isle Adam; Concha Espina, the foremost woman of letters in Spain, a romantic novelist somewhat of the school of George Sand; Gomez de la Serna, the whimsical, the admired of a coterie, but not greatly admired by Mr. Boyd; Eca de Queiroz, Portuguese realists, the only example of whose vast collection of novels, short stories, and essays that have appeared in English are three important little pot boilers, his most extraordinary novel, perhaps, "A Reliquia"; Carl Spitteler, the Swiss poet, whose "Prometheus" and "Epimetheus" anticipated the idea of "Also Sprach Zarathustra."

Mr. Boyd's years in the British Consular Service, at Barcelona and Copenhagen, have doubtless something to do with his more than ordinarily close knowledge of several European languages and consequent ability to "floor" other translators with circumstantial instances. Irish by birth, he is perhaps an American now, at any rate an international, a cosmopolitan, an intelligent interpreter for those of us whose interest in what is really going on in European literature is greater than our information. He tells what one wants to know, who the man is and what he has done, what is most worth while and why, how much has been translated into English, and what ought

to be but is not. He is not a doctrinaire, or champion of this theory or that school, but is alive to whatever is alive in literature and speaks from knowledge at first hand.

It is only occasionally that he allows himself the luxury of such indiscriminating pronouncements as that Anatole France's work "sums up the whole intellectual tradition of his country." Unless "intellectual" is intended to mark some restricting distinction that I do not make out, it would seem better to have said that France is more clearly in the tradition of Molière, Voltaire, St. Beuve, and Renan—the line of grace, clarity, a certain disillusioned urbanity—that in the tradition of Rabelais, Balzac, Hugo—the line of exuberance and force and gesture.

Speaking of modern realism, he remarks to the effect that Flaubert lives not by his realism but his perfection of workmanship. "Modern realists have emphasized only one element in the movement of which he was the leader, and their preoccupation with the mere details of actuality will as surely condemn them to neglect as it has condemned the voluminous literature of the naturalistic school." Flaubert was as much a romanticist as realist, and both terms have come to darken more council than they illuminate. But this quotation illustrates Mr. Boyd's good judgment and the phrase "details of actuality" points to the reasons why the realistic formula is not a perfect recipe for any creative art, either literary or plastic. Art is not merely a mirror held up to nature. It is also a vision of something that illumines and overshadows it. No matter how exhaustive the details, or how accurate, the sum of them is not therefore creative art. Mr. Joyce's "Ulysses" is an extraordinary "stunt" in the details of mentality, but it is a "stunt". The trouble with a "stunt" is that when amazement has died down, the whole thing is dry as a remainder biscuit.

The Fatal Ending

(Continued from page 289)

possibilities nor adds to its real achievement.

And at page 236, Mr. Williamson, who in his excellent narrative has been held to simplicity by the rough, simple talk of his characters (he was a herder once himself), suddenly breaks into emotional description and mars an otherwise perfect story with glub-glub about man "with his mate at his side," and the inevitable melodrama which begins when an honest writer imitates the desert island stories of the erotic magazines. An authentic canyon of the Sierras becomes movie scenery at the drop of a phrase.

American fiction constantly breaks like this. Tarkington has often done it, notably in his most considerable novel, "The Turmoil;" it happens in short stories time without end. Is it because the author hears the great sentimental public (or the editor) calling, forgets his story, forgets the enchantment of his theme, and gives what is wanted, or rather, what has been wanted, what he thinks is wanted? Or does it spring from a lack of that intellectual integrity which comes from a more rigorous mental training than we soft Americans will take? At all events, here are two good books, the first almost a great novel, the second a mountain idyll, lacking its deserved perfection.

*COUSIN JANE. By HARRY LEON WILSON. New York: The Cosmopolitan Book Corporation. 1925. \$2. RUN SHEEP RUN. By THAMES WILLIAMSON. Boston: Small, Maynard & Co. 1925. \$2.50.

The Saturday Review

of LITERATURE

HENRY SEIDEL CANBY Editor
WILLIAM ROSE BENET Associate Editor
AMY LOVEMAN Associate Editor
CHRISTOPHER MORLEY Contributing Editor

Published weekly by Time, Inc., Briton Hadden, President, Henry S. Canby, Vice-President, Henry R. Luce, Secretary-Treasurer, Penton Building, Cleveland, Ohio. Subscription rate, per year, postpaid: In the U. S. and Mexico, \$3.50; in Canada, \$4; in Great Britain, 18 shillings; elsewhere, \$4. Editorial offices, 25 West 45th Street, New York, N. Y. For advertising rates, address Noble A. Cathcart, Advertising Manager, 25 West 45th Street, New York. Circulation Manager, Roy E. Larsen, Penton Building, Cleveland, Ohio. Entered as second-class matter, at the Post Office at Cleveland, Ohio, under the Act of March 3, 1879. Vol. II. No. 16. Copyright, 1925, by The Saturday Review Co., Inc.