

Points of View

A Serious Question

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:
Sir:

Surely the letter of John M. Kline, in your issue of December 19th, speaks for a large number of increasingly restless novel-readers.

Without wishing to underrate the painstaking sincerity of those fiction-writers, domestic and imported, who have created a school of modern realism, I would like to ask: must one, in order to be naturalistic, be necessarily dull?

William Lyon Phelps once said a mouthful when in a literary lecture, he referred to the School of Nothing Doing. The modernists' beloved "cross-section of life," were it canvassed among my friends who have dutifully persevered in reading outstanding examples of Freudianized or photographically naturalistic fiction, would reveal a group of people who are fed up with the School of Nothing Doing.

Let me pose the query as to why in this, the youngest of all countries, hardly emerged from the pioneering era, should there flourish such a highly self-conscious, faithfully drab, event-excluding method of portraying life through fiction? Why are many of our outstanding novels so sickly o'er with the pale cast of thought as to lose the name of action? Why so very old before we have hardly ceased being so very young?

After all, realism is merely the process of realizing something; yet how much would a Nothing Doing novelist make his reader realize about, say, a prize-fight? We would be treated to the champ's recollections of how, twelve years ago, his woman said to him, "I'm gonna call you Punch." We would pursue his imaginings as he pictured himself delivering the knock-out punch in the forthcoming battle. There would be a psycho-analysis of Spike McGee, the trainer, and of that old jingle, "Punch, brothers, punch, punch with care!" which, oddly, kept running through his mind. Vague references to cigars, blinding lights, and the smell of liquor, would be interspersed. But with all this, the story would be as flat as the solar-plexus stuff, and presently the reader would say, "Oh hell!" and slam the book, and go off to a real prize-fight.

There is also the Celluloid School, whose followers would write: "Battered, blood-blinded, dazed, Biff struggled at his knees, then fell prone, while a girl's scream from amid the spectators told that Stella, in her male attire, had witnessed the fadeout of her hopes." And there is the Marshmallow School, which bars fictional prize-fights and contents itself with sentiments surrounding Milly and her once-pugilistic adorer, and his uplift through womanly influence. And there are others. But for some years the School of Nothing Doing has had 'em all up against the ropes and a bit groggy, so to speak.

Are we moving forwards or backwards? Presently will color-novels be thrown on a screen, with a pale blue shimmer representing the heroine's virtue, and a sinister scarlet streak representing the villain's vice, and a blob of deep purple symbolizing her unfortunate lapse? Or, on the other hand, will some courageous group inaugurate an honest-to-goodness School of Something Doing.

Latterly fiction has thrust its camera into the heroine's face; we have come to apperceive her through a microscope, a stethoscope and Binet tests. Why not, for a change, the old-fashioned telescope? Perhaps by aiming it at far horizons the novelist might even rediscover the bird whose wings are earth-brown underneath and sky-blue above. I mean the elusive spirit of—dear me, how unmodish the word sounds!—of Romance.

MELVILLE CHATER

New York City.

Hobo Type

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:
Sir:

I wish to quarrel with the Hobo type which is extensively used in your advertising columns. My quarrel must be with the aesthetic taste of the man who uses it, and to disparage a man's taste is an act second in audacity only to the belittling of his sense of humor.

Yet I cannot help feeling, with Cabell, that the lily is a more applaudable bulb than the onion; going beyond Cabell, I fail to recall a single bulb less applaudable than the onion.

To put my statement as mildly as poss-

ible, Hobo, the onion of type fonts, may not be so bad—may indeed have its good features—but what excuse is there for choosing it when so many better things are offered? For the sake of tolerance I am willing to admit that there is a worse font than Hobo in use, although I have not seen it; but there are a wealth of original and re-cut faces, suited to all advertising purposes, that hold preference. Goudy, Bodoni Swash, Florentine Old Face No. 2, Renner, MacFarland, Troy and Chaucer, Borussia—all these are fonts practically free from defects, no two at all similar. They range from the distinctive to the ornate. Yet they are all in good taste. In addition, they represent a mere fraction of the faces available.

The features that I consider defective in Hobo follow:

Too little variation in line thickness. An unbalanced line of set type, lower case, due to the retention of "ascenders" and the elimination of "descenders." That is, the tops of l, h, t, etc. project above the average height, while the tails of g, y, p, etc. do not project below to balance. The general inspiration for the type is manuscript uncial; yet several of the best uncial letters have been changed to an extent that makes them unrecognizable as derivations of the original. These are a, g, p, y. Others have less important, but still unfortunate, variations. The bizarre shape of certain characters attracts the eye away from the meaning of the word to the contemplation of the individual letter, the most unforgivable fault in any font. a, g, p, y, are again the worst offenders. Many of the letters are entirely lacking in grace, notably the lower case l and the upper case I. The f and t are almost indistinguishable. The upper and lower case o's are very dissimilar, a cause of some confusion. The u, c, n attempts unsuccessfully to combine Roman and uncial.

It would be quite possible to fill another page with specific criticisms of the letters and the effect they make. It is almost needless to point out that Hobo has the standard faults of bad fonts, such as lack of harmony under all possible combinations of letters.

But I will close my case with a comparison of two modern fonts, Hobo and Goudy, one very bad, one excellent. The latter, like most of the good modern fonts, is available in a variety of cuts for various purposes.

A. C. LAING

Pelham Manor, N. Y.

The Art Spirit

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:
Sir:

Among the books not known to the general bookish public, that should be read and re-read is "The Art Spirit," by Robert Henri (Lippincotts) which has gone into two editions but which should be a steady best seller all the time. It is one of the great text-books on real Americanism.

It is also, incidentally, the best comment possible on the total work of George Bellows, for Henri by these teachings made Bellows, as much as a teacher can make any man.

VACHEL LINDSAY.

New Books Philosophy

(Continued from preceding page)

what the leader of American eugenics really believes and teaches; it is high time that critics ceased to attack positions assumed in papers written nearly fifteen years ago and to quote and heroically demolish, as Davenport's current opinions, select anachronisms from "Heredity in Relation to Eugenics," published in 1911. A similar preoccupation with the past seems to underlie the extended attack on the field worker as diagnostician. Whatever may have been the case, the field agent no longer makes diagnoses, he simply collects information to be evaluated and employed according to circumstances.

In the second part of his work Myerson presents his data, his pedigree charts, even such conclusions as "dementia praecox breeds true" and "the moron . . . is likely to come from defective stock"; and then passes on to what seems to the reviewer a rather biased criticism of the various students who find evidence of Mendelian inheritance of mental disease. Myerson appears to be unaware of some recent developments, for he quotes without remark Daven-

port's early view of recessive traits as due to the absence of a factor; and indeed the footnote on page 283 leads one to doubt whether he understands modern Mendelism at all. But he is chiefly concerned in showing that the data cannot support Mendelian formulation, a concern which becomes quite intelligible in the light of a later section devoted to support of the doctrine of the inheritance of acquired characteristics. Even the discredited work of Tower is brought in, along with the uncorroborated and variously interpreted experiments of Guyer and Smith and of Little. The author adopts "blastophoria," i.e., germplasm injury, as his working hypothesis. He believes that "civilization is syphilitization" and that unfavorable conditions of living do more harm by injuring hereditary material than they do good through their selective effects.

All this is highly controversial; there seems to be something in the general question of hereditary traits in the human animal that arouses deep-seated emotional bias that may be traced back, perhaps, to racial sources. It is a good thing to insist, as Myerson does, on the precise differentiation of mental states that have often been too crudely lumped together; but it is impossible to argue away the evidence that mental traits, like all others, are subject to the Mendelian rules, insofar as they are inherited and however they may arise. The conditions are extremely complex, but Mendelian analysis cannot for that reason be abandoned.

Poetry

THE SOUL OF WIT. A Choice of English Verse Epigrams made by GEORGE ROSTREVOR HAMILTON. Putnam. 1925. \$1.75.

Mr. Hamilton has undertaken to winnow the English-speaking world's stock of verse-epigrams from the early Seventeenth Century onward. He contends that it is useless to attempt to establish "any precise definition of the epigram." In his selection he has proceeded, rightly, according to his own personal taste. He wishes his book to stand as a sort of challenge.

But we do not intend to thieve from Mr. Hamilton's provocative and informative introduction. His theories concerning particular epigrammatic verse, his inclusions and exclusions, will arouse certain objections. It remains that his choices are interesting and intelligent. They are parcelled out as "Mainly Humorous and Satirical," "Mainly Gallant," "Mainly Critical," "Mainly Romantic," and so on. They range from Raleigh's verses before death down to selections from Robert Graves and J. C. Squire. They contain such fine modern work as A. E. Housman's "Epitaph on an Army of Mercenaries" and such great elder verse as Landor's "Dirce." John Banister Tabb seems to be the only American included. The little book fits the pocket and is worth adding to any poetic library.

WINE, WOMEN, AND SONG. Mediaeval Latin Students' Songs. Translated with an Essay by J. A. SYMONDS. Oxford University Press. 1925. \$1.85.

This is Vol. XXVI of The Mediaeval Library, published under the general editorship of Sir Israel Gollancz. John Addington Symonds dedicated it to Robert Louis Stevenson in 1884. It is in reality a long essay interspersed with copious quotations from the finest poems and songs of the period. An excellent contribution to pure literature.

BORDER BALLADS. Selected and Decorated with Woodcuts by DOUGLAS PERCY BLISS. Oxford University Press. 1925. \$5.

Herbert J. C. Grierson furnishes a foreword to this book. The text of all of the poems included is taken from "The Oxford Book of Ballads." The interest of this otherwise rather supererogatory selection consists entirely in Mr. Bliss's decorations for the volume, which are striking and strange. To our mind they are pervaded by the true spirit of the old ballads. Mr. Grierson in his preface comments upon them and upon the old ballads intelligently. "Here," he says, "is just so much of illustration as I for one can tolerate beside a ballad—brief glimpses into that strange world of the popular imagination which the ballads evoke, not realistic, charged with atmosphere, dream-like, imaginative, almost symbolic, yet with touches of homely, even humorous detail."

LES FLEURS DU MAL OF CHARLES BAUDELAIRE. Translated by Lewis Piaget Shanks. Holt. \$3. LO STRUZZO. By Samuel Walter Kelley. Cleveland, Hauser. By Bhai Vir Singh. Translated by Parau Singh. Dutton. \$2. O JOURNEY AGAIN. By Helen Ward Thompson. Atlanta, Ga., Hubbard & Hancock. THE WEARY BLUES. By Langston Hughes. Knopf. \$2 net.

Religion

MY EDUCATION AND RELIGION. By GEORGE A. GORDON. Houghton Mifflin. 1925. \$4.

A childhood in Scotland, young manhood in New England, a pastorate of over forty years in a single Boston parish, Dr. Gordon's life has not been eventful, but it has been rich in the experiences that are of universal human interest. He selects two main factors, education and religion, construing each term somewhat broadly. The former includes for him the discipline of experience; the latter, insight into life's meaning. Throughout the book one finds not so much an intimate revelation of personal experiences as a dignified and mature discussion of life, essays for which incident and anecdote from Dr. Gordon's contacts with other men provide merely text and illustration. As essays on human life the book is most admirable—a compound of Scotch quaintness and humor, of the best of humanistic culture, and of the power to see life whole and to drink deeply of its joys and sorrows. The pictures of the rigors of a Scotch boyhood at the beginning, and of the amenities of life among religious and intellectual leaders of New England at the end, give Dr. Gordon's book considerable permanent historical value. Its beauty of diction and brightness of style should give it equally permanent value as *belles lettres*.

GREAT CANADIAN PREACHING. By W. Harold Young. Doran, \$2 net. CAMEOS FROM CALVARY. By Rev. J. W. G. Ward. Doran. \$2 net.

JEWISH INFLUENCE ON CHRISTIAN REFORM MOVEMENTS. By Louis Israel Newman. Columbia University Press. \$7.50. THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD. By Lewis Richard Farnell. Oxford University Press. \$4.25 net.

WHAT MY RELIGION MEANS TO ME. By Edgar A. Guest. Reilly & Lee. THE GLORY OF GOD. By T. Abrams. Oxford University Press.

Science

THE RIDDLE OF THE EARTH. By Appian Way. Brentanos. \$2.50. THE ORIGIN, NATURE AND INFLUENCE OF RELATIVITY. By George David Birkhoff. Macmillan.

Travel

MOTORING IN FRANCE. By R. R.

GORDON-BARRETT. Brentanos. 1925. \$3. Increasingly are the authors of travel books recommending the use of the automobile. The sceptic may attribute this to an unwholesome desire to cover the maximum amount of ground in the minimum amount of time, decrying the superficial attitude of the American tourist abroad. Yet one who carefully analyzes this type of travel book has little difficulty in discovering the motive of this comparatively new variety of courier. Automobiling enables the traveller to reach places off the beaten track and to discover for himself the half-forgotten spots which timetables and tourist agencies so consistently overlook.

This small book on France will convince the most apathetic motorist that the way to see the French country is to hire a car, on landing, from the R. A. C. or the A. A. or, better still, to take his own with him. R. R. Gordon-Barrett writes with freedom of the joys of the open road and makes the confirmed railroad traveller feel that his previous trips have been little more than a prosaic, stuffy ride from one well-known spot to another.

The book, however, is far more than a mere eulogy of automobile travel and a description of the out-of-the-way scenes that elude one who travels by train. Facts are skilfully woven together with fancies, and routes, itineraries, distances, costs, equipment, technicalities, and the climate and physical aspects of France are all discussed in detail, in the introductory section. The volume contains a good map (although not a road map), charts and diagrams, excellent photographs, and a complete index. There is in addition an invaluable alphabetically arranged list of three hundred French towns, with a brief description of each.

The body of the book is given up to the various French provinces which best lend themselves to an automobile tour. The Riviera section is fully covered and there are further chapters on Brittany, the Rhône valley, Provence, Savoie, the Basque country, châteaux land and the Loire. The one serious fault of the book is its failure to include a section on Normandy, the point of departure for most American tourists.

"Motoring in France" is not a volume to be read before sailing in an eleventh hour attempt to secure local color. It is rather a book to take on the trip and consult daily, even if the author's advice is disregarded and we fall back on the *chemin de fer*.

(Continued on page 536)

The World of Rare Books

By FREDERICK W. BROWN

FIRST EDITIONS SELL WELL.

RARE first editions of famous authors of the sixteenth to the twentieth century, English and American, together with inscribed copies, authors' manuscripts, publications of the Grolier Club, Bibliophile Society, Kelmescott, Nonesuch, and other presses, including the library of Sara and Alfred L. Bernheim, and selections from the library of Dr. Perceval M. Barker, were sold at the American Art Galleries, January 14 and 15, 835 lots bringing \$40,759. All three sessions were well attended, bidding was spirited, and prices generally high. Collectors interested in first editions of modern authors will find this one of the outstanding sales of the season.

The highest price, \$3,525, was paid for the first issue of the first edition of Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe," 3 vols, 8vo, mottled calf by Pratt, London, 1719-1720. This is the well known Lord Amherst-Walter T. Wallace copy. Next comes the excessively rare first edition of Gray's "Elegy Wrote in a Country Churchyard," 4to, red levant by Reviere, London, 1751, which brought \$3,300. The E. K. Butler copy of the first edition of Edward Fitzgerald's translation of the "Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam," small 4to, in original wrappers, London, 1859, sold for \$1,700. The original manuscript of Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Wedding Knell," written in ink on seven quarto pages, comprising about 5,000 words, in morocco slip case, brought \$1,260.

Other representative lots and the prices realized were the following:

Burton (Richard F.). "Arabian Nights," 10 vols., also the "Supplemental Nights," 6 vols., together, 16 vols., royal 8vo, original gilt cloth, Benares, 1885-88. The genuine first issue of this famous translation. \$265.

Beaumont and Fletcher. "The Wild Goose Chase," folio, vellum, uncut, London, 1652. First issue of the first edition. \$160.

Blake (William). "For the Sexes, The Gates of Paradise," small folio in sheets, no date. First edition, large paper copy, third state. \$400.

Browning (Elizabeth Barrett). "Sonnets," 16mo, morocco by Reviere, Reading, 1847. First edition, fine copy, \$605.

Bryant (William Cullen). "Popular Considerations on Homoeopathy," 8vo, original wrappers, New York, 1841. Presentation copy, only two other copies known. \$380.

Bunyan (John). "The Holy War," 16mo, uncut, levant, London, 1682. The John L. Clawson copy of the rare first edition. \$750.

Burton (Robert F.). "The Kasidah,"

12mo, morocco, London, 1885. Rare copy, \$1,200. "The Works of John Bunyan," 12 vols., 8vo, morocco, London, 1703. Rare copy, \$1,200. "The Works of John Bunyan," 12 vols., 8vo, morocco, London, 1703. Fine set of the first edition. \$185.

Dickens (Charles). "Works," 18 vols., 8vo, morocco, London, 1921. Fine set of the first edition. \$185.

Docker and Webster's "North-Ward Hoe," small 4to, levant by Macdonald, London, 1711. First edition. \$360.

Defoe (Daniel). "Moll Flanders," 12mo, mottled calf, London, 1721. Fine copy of the first edition. \$875.

Goldsmith (John). Original manuscript of "Windows," 189 pp., 4to, Santa Barbara, Cal., 1920-21. \$800.

Goldsmith (Oliver). "The Vicar of Wakefield," 2 vols., 12mo, original calf, Salisbury, London, 1766. First edition. \$500.

Hugo (Victor). "Works," 30 vols., 8vo, morocco, Boston, 1892. Holland paper edition. \$425.

Keats (John). "Lamia," etc., 12mo, levant by David, London, 1820. First edition, the Hoe copy. \$460.

Kipling (Rudyard). "Works," 24 vols., royal 8vo, morocco, London, 1913-19. The Bombay edition. \$810.

Meredith (George). Collected set, including the rare volume of "Poems," 51 vols., 12mo and 16mo, polished calf, London and Westminster, 1851-1901. First editions. \$625.

Milton (John). "Paradise Lost," small 4to, morocco by Bedford, London, 1667. First edition with second title page. \$525.

Montaigne (Michel de). "Essays," translated by John Florio, folio, vellum, London, 1603. First edition printed in English. \$950.

Shakespeare. "The Two Noble Kinsmen," small 4to, levant by Bedford, London, 1634. Herschel V. Jones copy of the first edition. \$750.

Shelley (Percy Bysshe). "The Revolt of Islam," 8vo, morocco, London, 1817. First issue of the first edition. \$550.

Stevenson (Robert Louis). "New Arabian Nights," 2 vols., 12mo, cloth, London, 1882. First edition. \$490.

Stevenson. "A Martial Elegy for Dead Soldiers," 12mo, broadside, in case, Davos, 1882. \$220.

Stevenson. "Kidnapped," map, 12mo, original cloth, uncut, London, 1886. First edition. \$400.

Thoreau (Henry D.). "A Week on the Concord and Merrimac River," 12mo, cloth, unopened, Boston, 1849. First edition, very fine copy. \$425.

THE CLINTON PAPERS.

THE Clinton Papers have been acquired by William L. Clements and added to the William L. Clements Library at Michigan University. The announcement was made on December 29 that these papers would soon be available for research workers. These historical papers include the papers of George Clinton, father of General Sir Henry Clinton, who was governor of the Province of New York from 1741 to 1751, but the main bulk of the correspondence is in the papers of General Sir Henry Clinton written during his command in North America between 1775 and 1782; there are also many personal letters of subsequent date. Finally the collection includes the papers of William Henry Clinton, the son of Sir Henry Clinton. American history before the Revolution is recorded in the papers of the elder Clinton, for one of his earliest records is of a grant of the freedom of the City of New York issued in 1743. After he was appointed governor of the Province, his correspondence increased through the discussion of Indian affairs and the French and Indian War. One of the early documents is the original agreement of the commissioners of Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York touching mutual defence of the frontiers against the French and Indians in 1747. The first clause in this document agrees on an expedition against Crown Point. In the next year Governor Clinton sent home a fifteen page résumé of the conditions of the Province which is most enlightening. The three Indian documents, with signature marks of the Catawbas and Mohawks, signed in 1746 and 1753, would bring a thrill of imagination to even the young student. The French and Indian War is particularly well covered by the documents, which include letters to the secretary of the British treasury, to the governors of the provinces, and statements concerning the pay of officers and the presents given to the Indians. It is hard to conceive that the Indians wrote letters but the collection contains communications from the Indian chiefs with their signature marks. In this group of papers is a letter from General Shirley to Governor Clinton giving in full his plan for the attack upon Canada together with the comments of Clinton and Golden upon that plan. There are seventy papers relating chiefly to the expedition to Canada containing official instructions and among them is Stoddard's journal, containing information against Crown Point and Montreal. One of the most important and significant items in the Clinton collection is a hitherto un-

published history of the Revolutionary War prepared on his return by General Clinton to be submitted to the British Ministry. For some reason it was deemed inadvisable to publish the account as given in this draft and a revised and in many cases a markedly different account was eventually submitted to the British public by General Clinton.

NOTE AND COMMENT.

A MONUMENT to Edmond Rostand, the author-playwright of "Cyrano de Bergerac" fame, is to be erected in Paris instead of Marseilles, his native town. American subscriptions have already been made.

The Bible is said to have been translated into 827 languages and the end is by no means in sight yet. There have been 260 languages added since the beginning of the present century and more translations are now being made and under consideration.

The information comes from Berlin that the quaint cottage in which Martin Luther was born in 1483 at Eisleben has been transferred by the city to the Evangelical Church. The cottage is in a remarkably fine state of preservation. Though owned by the City of Eisleben, the Prussian government has been appropriating funds for its upkeep for more than a hundred years. The church now assumes the responsibility of the care of the property.

C. H. Brewitt-Taylor, formerly of the Chinese Maritime Customs, has translated, and a firm of English publishers in Shanghai has published, the "San Kuo," or "The Three Kingdoms," China's most famous book of historical romances. The work was written during the Tuan dynasty; each of its one hundred and twenty chapters presents the complete story of some famous historical personage of China.

The Salad Bowl

What is new to man is the growing realization that his emotional life is a region that is foreign to him—a region full of fear, superstition, personal interests, and old habits. And with it there slowly comes the intimation that, in the face of this undiscovered wilderness of his own emotions, his thinking is not thinking after all but rather the evasion of thought. —*Mental Health*, a leaflet published by The Mental Hygiene Society, Baltimore.

As I came home I went to see poor Charles Barnard's books, which are to be sold by auction, and I itch to lay out nine or ten pounds for some fine editions of fine authors. But I shall let it slip, as I usually do all such opportunities.

—Swift, *Journal to Stella*.

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