

pervades them in general and (2) by the high degree of radicalism among the students. And I note that except for some incredible antics by the Vice-Chancellors at Oxford no barriers have been placed in the way of students who desire access to new ideas and to the persons who expound them. For me, at least, the symbol of the present temper is the fact that a socialist sits in Jowett's chair at Balliol.

That temper is, I think, the cause of the real renaissance in social speculation that has taken place in England in recent years. The work of men like Hobhouse, Tawney, Cole, Graham Wallas, Keynes, has been notable for its courage and its radicalism. Would Mr. Hobson say the same of America? If I try to assess the effort of American teachers of my own subject I find myself in doubt. I find much work in law infinitely bolder and better in quality than anything we do in England; but that, I think, lies in the inept system of teaching law with which we remain content. In political science there is an enormous body of careful and sober description; the government of the United States, for instance, must have been more frequently described than any other in history. But I think, also, that there is an absence of what, for want of a better term, I shall call radical inventiveness. The professor puts a curb on his speculative temper. He indicates that some people doubt this or that; he rarely reveals to us his view of the doubt. Is it insignificant that there should be this emphasis upon merely descriptive fact, this refusal to weigh values, at a time when heresy-hunting in the colleges is still a past-time of the elect? I open an American weekly to discover that in one state of the union a professor has to testify why he joined the committee of 48; and another has to reveal his voting record in presidential elections because he lectures on socialism. I cannot help doubting whether first-rate work can possibly be done under these conditions, and when I look at the average American text book it seems to me the not unnatural product of them. I have been impressed in these last five years by the fact that my graduate students from America have been more enthusiastic about political scientists who are not university teachers than by those who are. I remember the proud boast of an American visitor some months ago that not a single socialist taught economics in a major American university. I believe that to be untrue; but it stays with me as a curious boast to make. People like the Duke of Northumberland probably regret that Mr. Lindsay is master of Balliol and that a Liverpool professor is an ardent supporter of the Plebs League. But I do not believe it would occur even to him—the force of nature could go no further—to agitate for their removal. I admit that my American vision is now probably out-of-date, yet I cannot help the feeling that Mr. Hobson has made his conclusion a little easily. If I am wrong, then the knowledge that a race of thinkers as intellectually fearless and distinguished as Pound and Morris Cohen and John Dewey is making itself felt in the political literature of America is a comforting and grateful reflection. For that may well mean that in the next few years the United States will renew that tradition which, in the first generation of her independent history, made her the leader of the world in political philosophy.

### Stormy Lives

A BRAZILIAN MYSTIC. By R. B. CUNNINGHAME-GRAHAM. New York: Lincoln MacVeagh—The Dial Press. 1925. \$4.

DOUGHTY DEEDS. By R. B. CUNNINGHAME-GRAHAM. The same. \$3.75.

Reviewed by THEODORE PURDY, JR.

ANTONIO MACIEL, called Antonio Conselheiro, is the subject of one of the most successful biographies yet undertaken by that stormy chronicler of stormy lives, Cunninghame Graham, which *The Dial Press* has recently brought out in a new edition. Properly speaking, the story of the astonishing career and bloody death of this prophet and adventurer of the nineties, part John of Leyden and part Garibaldi, is less important as book news than the newer volume dealing with the author's ancestor, Robert "Doughty Deeds" Graham. But there is an unreasonable fascination in the earlier of the two.

Antonio "The Counselor" lived in the almost unknown interior region of Brazil, the Sertão, and founded one of those fanatic religious colonies which have flourished in North America at a more remote period. Fundamentally there is no difference between the impulse behind the many compar-

tively harmless utopias and kingdoms of heaven here, and that which rallied the bloodthirsty Jagunços in the city of Canudos to defeat four military expeditions sent against them by the government, and made them fall to the last man, inexplicably inspired, when the fifth proved overwhelmingly strong. Cunninghame-Graham does the theme justice, and the result is a book filled with strange fire. The author remarks in his preface that this is the type of biography that lies rotting in the rain upon a bargain stall. One trusts that the appearance of a new edition shows how many people have found it there, however damaged, and taken it home with them to read of the devotion of Maciel's followers, singing their litanies amid the destruction and blood and dust of Canudos, and the stark terror of the siege they underwent.

The strictly new volume is perhaps better written, and it is obvious that it was a labor of love for Mr. Graham thus to preserve the memory of his forebear. Evidently he understands and appreciates him. For many the flavor of the life in Scotland and the colonies during the eighteenth century will prove attractive, though the full significance of Robert Graham's career will not come to those unfamiliar with the family traditions. The author of a famous lyric—his only successful attempt at verse—a friend of Sheridan and a model for Hogarth, a politician in his latter days, and foremost a laird, whether at home or abroad, he is worth studying. There is a depressing element, it is impossible not to feel, in his success. The thousands of early pillars of Empire, brutal with an unmeaning brutality, writing their stiff letters home, and finally returning to rule over an undistinguished tribal organization at home, bursting once, just once, into romantic song to prove it possible, so solid and in the main so deadly to read about, appear throughout the book behind this exemplar of their ideals and negative virtues. The portrait is very true, and somehow rather sad. But at least those traditional virtues, with certain strange foreign infiltrations, are responsible for the vivid character and the strong prose of Mr. Robert Bon-tine Cunninghame-Graham.

### A Tragic Woman

CLARA BARRON. By HARVEY O'HIGGINS. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1926. \$2.

Reviewed by ALLAN NEVINS

MR. O'HIGGINS gives us an intensive study of one woman from infancy to death, and with a psychological expertness which is none the less impressive for never being paraded, explains why she makes an inglorious failure of life. It is a good story, merely as a story. But it is a great deal more than that; it is an analysis of the emotional inhibitions, the temperamental defects, that can bring a strong character to grief—that can imprison the spirit as cement walls imprison and wither a green plant. Mr. O'Higgins does not make his case too simple. It does not do to say that Clara Barron was unhappy and futile because she was an egotist; or because she lacked humor and social adaptability; or because she was too ambitious in her strength; or because she was a man-hater. As a matter of fact, she was inherently none of these things. She had in her the elements of well-rounded womanhood, and a tragic combination of heredity and environment—chiefly the environment of her plastic years—accounted for her frustrate career.

To explain the temperamental defects of Clara Barron and the strange repressions which cut her off from happiness, the author begins with a remarkably incisive presentation of her unfortunate home and parentage. She appears in the early pages as a healthy, normal, affectionate little girl of four, the daughter of an English-born resident of Ontario who has married a wealthy woman, and who lives that life of a country gentleman to which he claims he was bred. She is a worshipper of her father. Then comes a series of catastrophes. Her father proves a coward before her very eyes, running away from danger in a boating accident. He reveals himself as a drunkard, who in a stupor one night burns their mansion down. He loses her mother's money in bad investments, and lies about it. He is exposed as a shabby fraud, who is not even of the gentle family of which he boasted, but the son of a tavern-keeper. The family sinks to the town slum.

Poor Clara grows up with the sham of all this, and of the town's gossip about it, burning steadily into her soul. She grows up to find that her father

does not pay his honest debts; that he carries on a tawdry love affair with a woman in a boarding-house; that she has to work in a combined grocery and grog-shop to win the family bread. When her love affair with a boy in the grocery seems about to end in marriage, the boy suddenly throws her over. Her poor weak mother dies and leaves her friendless. What effect does all this have on a girl of impressionable nature though unusual force of will?

The last 150 pages of the short, briskly told narrative are devoted to an exposition of the effect. She goes to New York, to put the humiliation and agony of the past behind her with one gesture. To make the gesture complete, she changes her name from Mary Ferrenden to Clara Barron, her mother's name. And she begins an existence from which she wilfully excludes all love of man, all close friendship with woman, all willingness to involve her personality with other human beings. The spectre of past betrayals rises up every time she is tempted to yield to her emotions.

Of course, this frigidity is a little too much for flesh and blood womanhood, for the fundamental traits that might have made Clara Barron a very different person. She is compelled against her resolves to make concessions to weakness. She adopts, in a semi-motherly fashion, a wayward, idealistic scare-crow of a writer, who helps her to become a competent journalist. She actually lives with him, in a completely platonic fashion, in two adjoining rooms of Greenwich village. Once in the delirium of a sudden fever he gropes his way to her bed to be held and soothed. For that one moment, in her sudden rush of emotional warmth, she thinks she will marry him. Then in the chill light of the following morning, when he treats the affair rather clumsily and blushing as a joke, she withdraws coldly into her cell again. Indeed, she sends him to a different floor to live. As the years pass she throws herself into sociological work and the suffrage movement, and for a time has no better object for her affections than a cat. Then her hungry craving for love leads her to adopt a girl from the stage, and to make a daughter of her for a few weeks; but when the girl suddenly displays too much affection, Clara Barron once more retreats into her shell. Once more, too, she takes steps to make sure that the incident will not be repeated, and the girl, like the journalist, drifts away from her.

Essentially, there is only one ending possible. Clara must press forward on a more and more lonely road until, cut off from everyone, she comes to a lonely death. The manner of it does not matter; as Mr. O'Higgins tells the story, it occurs during war service at the siege of Antwerp. But the real climax of the tragedy came at the moment when she tore herself away irrevocably from the girl and the journalist, her two sole links with personal humanity.

For the careful reader the novel is perhaps a little too much like a clinical analysis; for the careless reader it will lack breadth and color. But in the ease, expertness, and finish with which it achieves the author's intention it is excellent. There is not a psychological misstep visible, and however much a scientific object, Clara Barron is also a convincing human being.

### Father and Son

SORRELL AND SON. By WARWICK DEEPING. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1926. \$2.50.

Reviewed by LOUIS KRONENBERGER

STUDIES of father and son are not new to fiction, yet they are so much rarer than most other themes that with each recurrence they seem singularly fresh. "Sorrell and Son," though it obviously fails to reach the level of distinguished fiction, has the merit of its theme and of unflagging interest. For a book of four hundred pages it is remarkably free from dull stretches. To be quite honest, I must confess that I find it absorbing less for its principal theme than for something else: it has the rich readability of a convincing "success" story. Beggared by the war and deserted by his wife, Stephen Sorrell, in order to give his son a gentleman's opportunities, humbles his own pride and begins life over as a hotel porter. He climbs from one position to another and ends rich. Because he is so fine and yet, if one doesn't look too deep, so human, it warms the cockles of one's heart to see him get on. Some survival of the feeling which

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.

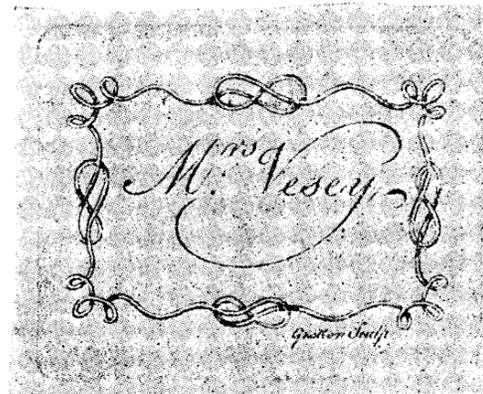
## The BOWLING GREEN

### 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.

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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.