The Sunday Tribune's News and Reviews of Books and Authors

A Bookman's Day Book

By Burton Rascoe

JULY 13

AFTER a sweltering day at the office I dined with H. L. Mencken and T. R. Smith. T. R. is an epicure, proficient in the harmony and counterpoint of foods. Mencken and I are mere amateurs in this art and we let T. R. orchestrate the dinner. Mencken said it was as inspired a job as Beethoven's Fifth. I shouldn't go that far—I found the arpeggio in string beans a bit hackneyed and little to my taste—but the rest of the composition showed genius. I was able to go back to the office, even against my will, and write a column in less than an hour. Having engaged his annual passage to Europe and having dragged Mencken to the custom house for Mencken's annual help in getting his passports, **George Jean Nathan** has taken his annual trip to the Bermudas, and T. R. was in a huff over it. It seems that T. R. has sent five boxes of expensive cigars to the boats Nathan has variously engaged passage on, and Nathan has canceled always on the last day and T. R. has never got back the cigars. Mencken says it is because Nathan suffers tortures in all means of conveyance except a wheelchair; that he nearly dies the first day out at sea; that he has to get paralyzed before he can endure riding in a train, and that he makes taxi drivers drive at the rate of four miles an hour. Mencken has just sent off to the printer the corrected proofs on his "Prejudices: Third Series," and is sailing for Europe in August to be gone several months. . . . In a small brochure about Mencken published some years ago, to which I contributed the opening essay, there is published a drawing of the subconscious Mencken by **McKee Barclay** which makes all that has been written about Mencken superfluous. It is at once a criticism and an interpretation; it reveals all and explains all. It accounts for his limitations and his best points. It is a portrait of a beetle-browed, wrathful-countenanced, challenging-eyed German pedant, his white hair brushed vigorously back from a bald, high forehead in the manner of Henrik Ibsen. It is the face of a man who wants things done well, whether it be a dinner, a concerto, a lesson in Greek syntax or a day's plowing. It is the face, too, of a man with tough opinions and prejudices, a flaming passion for truth and honesty (as he sees it), impatient with mediocrity and stupidity, utterly lacking in petty flattery or malice, insatiably athirst for exact knowledge (even if he later makes inexact generalizations from it), a naturalist in his philosophy, looking upon mysticism, philosophic idealism, psychic matters, utopias here or hereafter, the perfectibility of the human race and most poetry as either balmy or nonsensical. It is the portrait of a good man and an earnest and rather humorous one; a man of honor, fine scruples and a heavy touch of sentiment; a man who loves babies and loses respect for most of them when they grow up; a man, indeed, whose bark is louder than his bite and who annoys and exasperates only petty-minded, humorless, warped and tedious people. He is magnificent in a verbal rage. His words swash the buckle and dispatches whole troops of rich Jews, sovietists, radicals, liberals, politicians, professors, spiritualists, critics, Presbyterians, poets, rotarians and vice crusaders. This phantom crew of varlets disposed of to the war-shouts, "Idiots," "Imbeciles," "Boobs" and "Blatherskites," he subsides, wets his whistle and puts in a good word for Dreiser, Cabell, Anderson, Hergesheimer, Sandburg, Hecht, Willa Sibert Cather, Thomas Beer, Thyra Samter Winslow, Ruth Suckow, Harvey Ferguson, Steve Benet and dozens of youngsters who are just beginning.

JULY 14

Lunched with John J. A. Murphy, the wood-cut artist, and his wife, and Murphy showed me some magnificent impressions from his latest blocks. Gauguin's woodcuts are the only ones I have ever seen which satisfy and impress me as much as Murphy's. By the way, when the Post-Impressionist exhibit was on at the Metropolitan last year I do not recall that any one made special mention of the exhibit of black and whites—etchings, linoleum and wood cuts, pen and ink drawings, pencil and charcoal sketches—by the same men whose color work attracted so much attention. Had people taken the trouble to examine Gauguin's line drawings, woodcuts and linoleum cuts they would not have given currency to the silly opinion: "Gauguin is a remarkable colorist and a marvelous decorative artist, but he can't draw; he has no sense of proportion." Gauguin, when he wanted to, could etch as delicately as Whistler and draw with the classical perfection of a Holbein. . . . Murphy told me about a new committee being organized through the Author's League for the protection of American art and letters, a committee which will fight a tyrannical and unintelligent censorship and which contemplates vast co-operative work in behalf of American artists and literary men.

Djuna Barnes and Edmund Wilson jr. came to dinner to-night and we went to the "Chauve-Souris," which, on a second encounter, rather bored me, except for the music. The price they demand for seats, I think, is outrageous; the genuine artistic merit of the show is below that of a good average vaudeville bill and it seems to me mere snobbery to pretend that it isn't. Djuna tells me that the publication of "Ulysses" has driven her to literary suicide. "I shall never write another line," she said, with a graceful gesture of despair. "Who has the nerve to after that? And poor Joyce, what is he getting out of it, poor devil? Living in wretchedness and poverty, half blind and tormented day and night by migraine." If I am to believe them "Ulysses" has proved to be a contemporary "Werther" to numerous writing young persons; they all speak of ending their scribbling careers in despair over the perfection of "Ulysses." But they will get over it. I hope so. Djuna, for instance, has an unusual talent, a curious way of looking at things, a gift for imagery, an unschooled and undisciplined, precious facility of expression. Djuna said that Joyce, is frightfully superstitious. Just before "Ulysses" came out she was walking with him and his wife in the Bois de Bologne, when a man brushed by and mumbled something she did not understand. Joyce blanched and trembled. Djuna asked what was the matter. "That man, whom I have never seen before," he said, "said to me as he passed, in Latin, 'You are an abominable writer!' That is a dreadful omen the day before the publication of my novel." She also told an amusing story about how **Margaret Anderson**, on a visit to the aquarium, had upbraided the attendant for cruelty, because in one of the tanks nothing had been provided for the fish to sit down on.

JULY 15

Read a pretty vicious attack upon me in "The Freeman" by **Albert Jay Nock**, occasioned by a report in this column of a conversation **Gilbert Seldes, John Dos Passos, Bunny Wilson** and I had over an article Mr. Nock had written some weeks ago. I had not read the article at the time we talked about it and did not read it until the Day Book for that week had gone to press. My impression of it was gained largely from Seldes, who was disparagingly mentioned by name in Mr. Nock's article. I concluded from what they had to say about it that Mr. Nock had been applying his bellows to the current stage winds of doctrine about the younger generation and made light of him to Seldes, Wilson and Dos Passos and reported in my journal pretty much what I said. I read the article, after it was too late to change it, and discovered that it was an attack upon the older rather than the younger generation. Moreover, I explained this to Mr. Nock, with some show of contrition, before the piece came out—in the presence of witnesses at the Algonquin Hotel. The whole point of his attack upon me was that "Mr. Rascoe has shown himself grossly and preposterously unable to read a page and a half of plain English prose and get correctly or even approximately one single idea that he found expressed there. One asks one's self at once, Of what possible value would be any literary judgment of such a person?" Assuming that he understood the plain English of my explanation to him, it seems rather a snide trick to base an entire article on a pretense that I had read it and failed to understand it. And, assuming that he did not deliberately misrepresent me, then Mr. Nock has shown himself grossly and preposterously unable to listen to a few words of plain English prose and get correctly or even approximately one single idea expressed therein. One asks one's self at once, Of what possible value would be any judgment whatever of such a person? I do not qualify the noun by the adjective "literary." As a commentator on literature Mr. Nock excites only my risibilities, for his notions about the creative arts are, frankly, simple-minded. As a socio-political irritant he is one of our best minor entertainers in the field of journalism; but as a literary critic he has yet to write a complete article which is not in many ways nonsensical. He once wrote that the trouble with American writers such as Sherwood Anderson and Sinclair Lewis was that they didn't write like Gogol, and, a little later, having just read "Maria Chapdelaine" (a good enough, third rate novel, such as is turned out by dozens of writers every year in France and England), he said the trouble with them was that they did not write like Louis Hémon. No one sought to disturb this harmless drooling by pointing out that these American writers had entirely different stories to tell from those written by Gogol in Russia a century ago, because when he set these stray notions to paper Mr. Nock naïvely admitted that he had read almost nothing by the American writers he objected to. Mr. Nock concludes his attack with: "I wish that Mr. Rascoe could be induced to join me in this desire (for 'a criticism which shall stand in the classical tradition')." Just why he should want me to join him in anything after spending a whole article in an attempt to prove that I am irresponsible and incompetent I am curious to know. And certainly until he begins to show some evidence that he knows what a criticism which stands in the classical tradition is and begins to practice it instead of giving silly advice to American authors he has not taken the trouble to read, I haven't the slightest wish to join him. Guy Holt puts the point very pithily in a letter I just received from him: "I liked what Seldes wrote on the younger generation. It is nonsensical, I think, to attempt to classify as a separate species men who are grouped together only by a chronological accident. The trouble is, in part, that the prematurely and self-electedly elderly gentlemen who have been attacking their immediate juniors have in their minds a composite photograph of Amory Blaine, Three Soldiers, and John V. A. Weaver. There is no such creature. Meantime, it would be interesting to discover what contribution to the recognition, not of beauty but of the creators of beauty, these elderly gentlemen have made. Spingarn has Croce to his credit, but what else? He has paid tribute to a theory, but has he said a word of original praise of any of its practitioners. And Nock, what has he done beyond recommending Gogol to Sherwood Anderson and Hal Lewis? I ask for information, but I have in mind a suspicion that both these gentlemen have shown greater diligence in indorsing the accepted than in applauding the unrecognized." Mr. Spingarn has done rather more than Mr. Holt suspects: as an editor for the publishing house of Harcourt, Brace & Howe, Mr. Spingarn has, doubtless, had much to do with the publication of Croce, Piccoli, Gourmont, Wassermann, Strachey, Sinclair Lewis, Elinor Wylie and Dorothy Canfield, to mention only a few. Mr. Nock, too, has done much to bring to our attention the merits of the essays of Johann Wolfgang von Goeth, the poems of Don Marquis, and the jokes of Artemus Ward.

My copy of "Ulysses" came to-day and I went home early to begin reading it. I read the great apochryphal portion before beginning to read the book straight through, a job that will take me weeks, so huge a tome is it. There is nothing in all literature like that section of the book I read; nothing like its vast, Olympian, sardonic humor, its searing psychological insight, its bitter, racy, earthy comedy.

JULY 16

Read most of the day and took my daughter to the Metropolitan Museum in the afternoon. I don't think it meant anything to her; she was impatient to go from one room to the other and elected to admire only two things, a large blue vase and a very brightly tinted water color by John

Continued on next page

Aldous Huxley, the author of "Crome Yellow," "Mortal Coils," "Leda" and "Limbo," caricatured by Reginald Marsh.

London Letter

By Douglas Goldring

THE Hawthornden Prize, founded four years ago by Miss Alice Warrender for the "best book of the year, by an author who has not yet attained the age of forty-one," has once again been awarded to a poet, and, as usual, the poet happens to be a contributor to Mr. J. C. Squire's organ, "The London Mercury." The member of the distinguished band of literary journals known as "the "Squirearchy" who has been chosen, this year for decoration is Mr. Edmund Blunden, author of "The Shepherd and Other Poems of Peace and War." The committee that decided the award consisted of Miss Alice Warrender, Mr. Lawrence Bunyon, Mr. Robert Lynd, Mr. Edward Marsh (editor of "Georgian Poetry") and Mr. J. C. Squire. The prize is a silver medal and a check for £100.

The three previous winners of the Hawthornden were Mr. Edward Shanks (assistant editor of "The London Mercury"), Mr. John Freeman, a frequent contributor to it, and Miss Romer Wilson. The award of the prize to Miss Wilson for her distinguished novel, "The Death of Society," was universally indorsed among literary people; but how on earth either Mr. Edward Shanks or Mr. John Freeman came to be singled out for "coronation" remains a mystery to those outside Mr. Squire's charmed circle.

Mr. Shanks is an industrious and fairly adequate literary journalist who has read much poetry and written some verses as the result of his reading. If he has a personality of his own and some original ideas he has yet to express them. They certainly did not find their way into "The Queen of China and Other Poems."

As for Mr. John Freeman, his various volumes are saharas of pure dullness, which only a Doughty could have the endurance to explore to the end. He has apparently no selective faculty and no capacity for self-criticism. Though he has written a number of lyrics which nearly succeed, he has not written one which succeeds quite.

Mr. Blunden is certainly a more instructive and pleasing versifier than either Mr. Shanks or Mr. Freeman. He prattles agreeably in meter about moons and trees and bees and hours and flowers, about hedges and ditches and waggoners and shepherds. Nobody could have a word to say against his spotless rural garland if Mr. Squire and his associates had not labeled it "the best book of the year by a writer under forty-one." This sort of thing does no good to Mr. Blunden, while it brings ridicule upon the prize, which I am sure was founded by Miss Warrender with the best intentions.

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To get Messrs. Shanks, Freeman and Blunden into perspective one has but to think of the fiery genius of Mr. D. H. Lawrence, the realistic ferocity of James Joyce, the subtle portraiture of Mr. Lytton Strachey, the originality and technical dexterity of Miss Edith Sitwell's poetry, the knowledge of the human heart displayed in Miss Margaret Larminie's admirable novel, "Search"; the wit and audacity of Mr. Aldous Huxley's "Crome Yellow" and "Mortal Coils." Names like these occur to one, and then one realizes that writers of this sort don't get silver medals and checks for £100. It just doesn't happen like that—in England, at all events. It would be better for us, perhaps, if it did. What they do get, though (which the silver-medaled poets have been unable as yet to obtain), is a discriminating and appreciative audience.

I wonder when that admirable novelist, Mr. Gerald O'Donovan, will be recognized at his real value. I see that his "Vocations" has moved Mr. George Moore to one of his rare outbursts of enthusiasm for a writer younger than himself, and I suppose that "Father Ralph" is not yet entirely forgotten. But Mr. O'Donovan's books have never yet had the wide sale which they deserve. In Ireland, where it is not usually the custom to underpraise Irish writers, I heard very much less about Mr. O'Donovan than I did about some wholly unimportant playwrights and third-rate versifiers.

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The Hogarth Press, a small publishing firm which is the joint enterprise of Mr. L. S. Woolf and of his wife, the well known novelist, Mrs. Virginia Woolf, has just earned the gratitude of all who care for good literature by issuing some of Ivan A. Bunin's short stories, in an admirable translation. Bunin's "The Gentleman From San Francisco" must surely rank as one of the greatest Russian short stories which have been made accessible to readers of English. The translation is the work of Mr. S. S. Koteliansky and Mr. D. H. Lawrence.

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Two engagements of literary interest have just been announced. Mr. Robert Nichols, the author of "Ardours and Endurances" and, more recently, of a four-act play called "Guilty Souls," is to Marry Miss Norah Denny on July 11 at the Church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, in Trafalgar Square. And on August 1 Mr. Hilaire Belloc's daughter, Miss Eleanor Belloc, is to be married to Mr. Richard Jebb at Westminster (Catholic) Cathedral.

The Good Queen Bess

By Esther Murphy

THE PRIVATE CHARACTER OF QUEEN ELIZABETH. By Frederic Chamberlin. Dodd, Mead & Co.

MR. FREDERIC CHAMBERLIN has conducted an inquest upon the supposedly murdered reputation of Queen Elizabeth, and made the amazing discovery that there is life in the corpse.

The title of the book in which Mr. Chamberlin has set down the result of his investigation is in itself a challenge to the many historians, who have been at such pains to prove conclusively that Queen Elizabeth had no character at all. For Queen Elizabeth has been the cause of the utmost scandal and irritation to various eminent Christian gentlemen, who have undertaken the task of writing about her, and their outraged susceptibilities have reacted disastrously upon her fame.

Froude and Lingard have heretofore been regarded as the most important authorities upon the Virgin Queen, as Elizabeth is generally although by no means unanimously styled. And though Froude and Lingard were in complete accord upon one important particular, an intense abhorrence of Elizabeth, the nature of their grievances against her was different.

Lingard, a devout Roman Catholic, was occupied in demonstrating that Elizabeth's pretensions to the title of the Virgin Queen were entirely baseless. While Froude, a special pleader of genius, who discovered that writing history afforded unsurpassed opportunities for the indulgence of personal prejudices, was so bent upon proving that Elizabeth was a fool that he was willing to concede her right to be called the Virgin Queen; although he makes it plain that this was due solely to accident, and that she cannot claim any credit for it. It is the question of Queen Elizabeth's merits settled so completely and conclusively by Froude and Lingard, that Mr. Chamberlin has had the temerity to reopen. And his efforts have been rewarded by results that are as interesting as they are astonishing.

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VOLTAIRE said once that "history is only a pack of tricks which we play upon the dead." And we realize the full force of the statement after reading Mr. Chamberlin's book on Queen Elizabeth. Mr. Chamberlin traces back to its origin that hostile version of Queen Elizabeth's character that met with such widespread credence. He shows how a historian like Lingard, whose object was to prove that Elizabeth was disreputable, built up his case out of the unverifiable slanders that were circulated by her enemies. And how Froude, who wished to deny Elizabeth any sort of ability, did so by the simple expedient of ascribing all the triumphs of her reign to the talents of her ministers and making her solely responsible for all of its disasters.

Although Mr. Chamberlin has written a book, which regarded as a piece of historical research, is indisputably an admirable piece of work; he is somewhat over zealous in his efforts to disapprove the attacks that have been made upon Elizabeth's morals. He has been exceedingly successful in demonstrating that most of the charges brought against Elizabeth's private conduct rest upon nothing more substantial than the deliberate misrepresentations of her enemies and the gossip of malcontents. But he has given the question an amount of attention which is out of proportion to its importance. Queen Elizabeth's achievements as a ruler were so great, that they necessarily overshadow her personal characteristics. David Hume said of Queen Elizabth, "that the true method of estimating her merit is to lay aside all other considerations, and consider her merely as a rational being, placed in authority, and intrusted with the government of mankind." And it is only by judging her in this way that we can hope to arrive at a just appreciation of the extent of the influence she exerted upon the destiny of her own country and of Europe.

Mr. Chamberlin, however, is very far from ignoring this aspect of Elizabeth. He asserts "that she is not only the greatest monarch who has ever occupied the throne of England, but with the exception of Alexander, Napoleon and Cæsar, the greatest monarch who has ever occupied any throne." The claim may seem extravagant, and yet there is much to support it. Queen Elizabeth was very nearly the ideal of a woman of action. She had an unequaled power of dealing with any situation that confronted her, no matter how intractable or unforeseen; an ability to accommodate her interests to circumstances and yet never to abandon her interests. It would be as impossible to overestimate the difficulties which she encountered as it would be to overestimate the consummate talents which enabled her to overcome them. The supreme aim of her life was the advancement of England to the first place among the nations. And in the pursuit of it she displayed a genius that was in every way equal to the magnitude of the task to which it was dedicated.

Knowing this, it is impossible not to share the astonishment which Mr. Chamberlin expresses at the neglect and misrepresentation accorded to Elizabeths memory by the nation whose greatness she did so much to found. There is no more interesting example of it than is afforded by the contrast between the massive splendor of the memorial to Queen Victoria, standing in front of Buckingham Palace and the tomb of Queen Elizabeth in the solitude and dimness of Westminster Abbey. And yet the effigy upon the tomb might well express Elizabeth's attitude toward the verdict of posterity. The imperious features seem to wear a look of indifferent serenity, as though the Great Queen found the peace of oblivion welcome after the burden and the weariness of power, and lay at rest, unmindful of earthly homage, in the majesty of her eternal abdication.

H. G. Wells and His Age

By Ben Ray Redman

AN OUTLINE OF WELLS. By Sydney Dark. Putnams.

APPARENTLY Mr. Wells, like history and science, has now assumed such proportions that students of him require an outline. An impressive bulk forsooth! An extended periphery! We can no longer be put off with "An Introduction to Wells" or "H. G. Wells: the Man and His Work." No. Nothing less than "An Outline of Wells" will do; and, mark you well, it is "an" outline, not "the" outline. There is in this title an undeniable magnificence, an ineluctable grandeur. What a titanic, sprawling thing this Wells must be! Vast creature that lies athwart our age, we salute you.

Yes, there is a magnificence about this title, but within the book . . . none. For Mr. Sydney Dark, better known under the jolly name of John O'London, is an industrious English hack who combines the æsthetic perceptions of a Frank Crane with the critical acumen of a village librarian listing the World's Ten Greatest Books. Tempted by the title, I once purchased a pamphlet by Mr. Dark which was named "Books and the Man." This opuscule retailed for the modest sum of one shilling, a humble bob. It was not until I had read as far as possible into the shoddy little purchase that I realized the gross character of my extravagance. "An Outline of Wells" just falls short of the standard set by "Books and the Man."

Heywood Broun, in his introduction to this handsomely made volume, assures us ingratiatingly that Wells preaches from no higher level than a curbstone, and Mr. Dark's sub-title reads: "The Superman in the Street." Quite so; the superman in the street preaching from the height of a curbstone. Or, to change the measure from vertical to horizonal, let us say that Mr. Wells is just one step ahead of his pedestrian brother. But let us remember that it is one step only. And let's not make too great a row about this slight precedence of Mr. Wells. We must reserve some vocal volume with which to salute the men against the horizon.

H. G. Wells deserves ample praise as an imaginative story teller, a master journalist, a prodigious popularizer of ideas, a far-reaching force in secondary education, but there is no defensible reason for classing him, as Mr. Dark does, among the great creative thinkers. Mr. Wells makes his famous discoveries a shade too late for that. Mr. Dark is tremendously impressed with Wellsian thought, because Mr. Dark happens to stand just below the curbstone. He overestimates its height; he naturally lays too great emphasis on a phenomenon that he has witnessed at cost of a stiff neck. His volume has a certain value as the enthusiastic record of a disadvantageously placed eyewitness; it has no value as criticism. It is not even the "Outline" that it pretends to be, for one can draw an outline only when one is so located as to see all around one's subject.

But for sheer, unqualified dogmatic splendor, there is no line in this volume that can surpass its final sentence. Mr. Dark sought a note to end on, and he found it—a crashing fortissimo.

"When Mr. Wells found God, the age of materialism definitely came to an end."

There it is, simple and unadorned. "When Mr. Wells found God" . . . It is the sort of thing one likes to repeat over and over; finally it assumes the dignity of a chant, solemn and quite meaningless.

Irving Bacheller's new novel is "In the Days of Poor Richard."

Shop Talk

By Hilda Jackson

DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & CO. will bring out Max Beerbohm's series of cartoons of Rossetti and his circle of friends, Ruskin, Swinburne, Morris, Millais and others, this fall. The originals were exhibited in London and created a stir. The entire collection has been bought by Hugh Walpole.

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There has just been issued in Russian the hitherto unpublished Chapter IX of Dostoievsky's novel "The Possessed," containing Strawrogin's Confession, says Publisher's Weekly. This had remained unprinted "on moral grounds," until the Soviet press department discovered the original text of this suppressed portion in the course of its organized search of the Russian imperial press censorship office. Another new fragment by Dostoievsky has been issued at the same time in a sketch of an unwritten novel entitled "The Life of a Great Sinner." An English translation of these, together with some other portions of the Russian novelist's material, will shortly be published by the Hogarth Press.

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"The Sheik" is still going strong. It is now in its eightieth printing. Small, Maynard & Co., who will bring out Miss Hull's second novel in August, "The Shadow of the East," announce that three large advance printings have already been exhausted.

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Here's something to worry about during the dog days. Houghton, Mifflin & Co. write down from Boston that there is a controversy afoot to determine whether Priscilla actually rode to her wedding with John Alden on a white bull, as Longfellow reported in "The Courtship of Miles Standish." A historical statistician, it seems, got everyone all confused by firmly declaring that no cattle were imported until four years after their marriage. "There is much, no doubt, to be said on both sides," wisely decides the writer, "but in the edition of the poem published last year by the Houghton, Mifflin Co., N. C. Wyeth has painted such a magnificent white bull with Priscilla perched on his back that it is to be hoped the orthodox version will win out and Priscilla be allowed to ride like a queen—not plod along like a peasant, if only for the sake of the legend."

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A number of essays and reviews, written by Henry S. Canby, literary editor of "The Evening Post," have been gathered into a volume which Harcourt Brace will publish this fall. It is called "Definitions."

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"The Princeton Press" has ready a third book of undergraduate verse. Unlike the two "Books of Princeton Verse," it is not edited by any single poet of distinction, nor does it purport to include the greater part of the student verse produced in Prniceton during any particular period. It is called the "Book of the Tuesday Evening Club," and contains a selection from poems written by the members and read to one another at the club's scattered meetings.

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The novel "The Way of an Eagle," the first of Ethel M. Dell's successes, has been dramatized by Miss Dell herself and is to be produced on the London stage with Godfrey Tearle as leading man. Miss Dell's next novel, "Charles Rex," will be published by Putnam's this autumn.

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Some forty years ago Owen Wister, then a Harvard undergraduate, wrote the "New Swiss Family Robinson" for "The Harvard Lampoon." That masterpiece is now offered the world in a new edition by Duffield & Co. In its preface Mr. Wister, who confesses that it caused no sensation on its first appearance, compares it to a tile excavated from the remains of prehistoric Harvard. From its pages you can learn much of the undergraduate life of Harvard and of the Boston that Harvard students knew forty years ago.

Bryce's Last Words on Nations

By Robert Cresswell

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS. By James Bryce. Macmillan.

IT IS often the case that the last words of a seer have a fortuitous value that arises as much from sentiment as from intrinsic merit. It is not so with this volume of papers on "International Relations," the content of which was originally delivered by Viscount Bryce before the Institute of Politics that sat at Williamstown last summer. The distinguished author brought to his subject the same qualities of penetration and broad-mindedness, the same facility for summing up salient points, that gave him, through his earlier studies of applied politics, the reputation of being one of the foremost of all students of government. This book must be read, not because it was completed just before Bryce's death, but because it is in itself a most profound and interesting contribution to a subject now of the foremost importance.

The wide scope of this discussion of international relations is best indicated by the titles under which the papers are grouped. Beginning with "The Earlier Relations of Tribes and States to One Another," Bryce then takes up in turn "The Great War and Its Effects in the Old World," "Non-Political Influences Affecting International Relations," "The Causes of War," "Diplomacy and International Law," "Popular Control of Foreign Policy and the Morality of States," "Methods Proposed for Settling International Controversies" and, finally, "Other Possible Methods for Averting War." Necessarily, since these are all large subjects, they are all broadly treated, but with a characteristic absence of the felicitous phrase of indefinite content, purporting to be a panaces that has been such a bane to modern statesmanship.

Why is it that while economic relations between nations have been growing closer, and personal communication between their citizens has become more frequent, political friendliness between states has not increased? Lord Bryce answers this question, which he propounds himself by pointing out that hostility has been, in the long run, the customary attitude of one nation to another, because it has always been the tendency for each community to recognize no law superior to its own wishes, whereas in non-political fields men have had the good sense to recognize that each must agree to abide by the rules as a pre-requisite to having any game at all.

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WHAT can be done so that the attitude of the various states shall no longer be customarily one of belligerency, actual or potential, and so that diplomacy's main object shall no longer be the preparation of successful war, questions the author. Something is to be expected, he believes, from the enactment of rules of international law that shall be for a commonwealth of mankind, what statues are within each state, and the establishment of satisfactory arbitral machinery, but the main thing, beside which all other steps assume the appearance of superficiality, is the formation and careful fostering of a public opinion, that, having behind it moral authority and the sense of general benefit, shall be capable of commanding a respect and exercising an influence before which all states shall bow.

But this will be a most difficult and tedious task, for first of all it will require the awakening of the apathetic masses to the fact that they must obtain more knowledge of, and give a more continuously active attention to, the affairs of the outer world, a subject at present to which they are in the main profoundly indifferent. Even with closer popular control, direct or indirect, of foreign relations, however, it need not be expected that absolute justice will obtain between state and state, says the veteran statesman, for the treaties have been framed since 1918, with the apparent acquiescence of some democratic peoples, lead one to doubt whether more foresight, or more fairness has been shown in these negotiations, in which more popular pressure was brought to bear than ever before, than belong to the "old diplomacy" of monarchs and oligarchs.

In his consideration of the immemorial influences that make for war Bryce is particularly interesting. Commercial rivalries and trade policies, to which so much blame for the last war is attached by the rather hysterical prophets of a certain school of thought, are assigned a supplementary, rather than a primary, place by the author, whose conclusion it is that wars are generally not made by financiers, but that the less an executive government has to do with business and with international finance the better it is for the people. Religion, family relationships between ruling dynasties, doctrinal influences, the lust for territory, the feelings of the professional military classes and fear are all assessed as to whether they make for peace or war.

On the whole, this last work of Lord Bryce's is worthy, by its breadth of view, its scope of subject and its freedom from cant, to take a commanding place in the literature of its subject.

Joanna Godden
By Sheila Kaye-Smith
"One of the 'big' novels of recent publication. . . .
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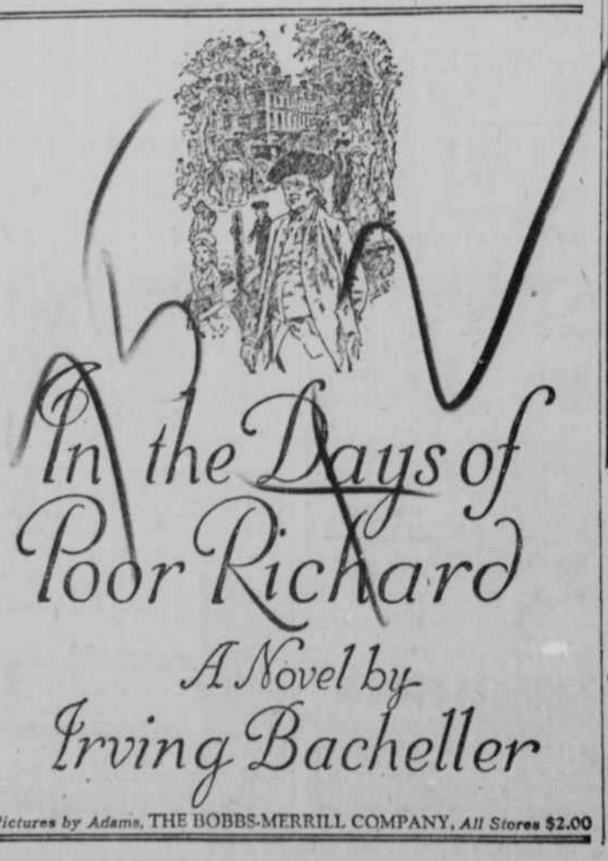

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