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

A Bookman's Day Book

By Burton Rascoe

MONDAY, OCTOBER 30

THE English reviews of **Sinclair Lewis's** "Babbitt," which have just reached me, are full of praise for the novel. "Only an American could have written it," says "The Westminster Gazette." "Only an American with something for which it is difficult to find any other word than genius." "The London Chronicle" says: "'Babbitt,' in short, whether you admire him or not, is a veritable human being, and Mr. Sinclair Lewis has once more given us a novel with the stuff of life in it, relieved by genuine humor and unspoilt by cynicism." . . . Like encomia enliven the other reviews. . . . American literature, for the first time, it seems, is being treated with seriousness and respect by English critics. The recent reviews of the novels of **Joseph Hergesheimer, Floyd Dell, Newton Fuessle, Scott Fitzgerald, Stephen Benet, Harry Leon Wilson** and others are peppered with the adjectives of praise. . . . Some few perhaps survive, however, among whom is E. B. Osborn, of "The London Times." At the conclusion of a long inaptitude about American poetry, wherein he speaks of **Masters** as the author of "Spern River" (probably the way he pronounces it) and of **Alfred Kreymborg** as the "trans-Atlantic equivalent of **Aldous Huxley**," Mr. Osborn writes of **Edwin Arlington Robinson**: "A considerable personage, no doubt, and I will see if his passport into immortality can be visèd next week." Imagine what would happen to a cocky American reviewer if he should write such a presumptuous sentence about, say, **W. B. Yeats**, or **John Masefield**! . . . Lunched to-day with **Mrs. Jewitt Henry Howland, Miss Peggy Wood** and **Jimmy Darenforth**. Miss Wood was in a rush to get back to rehearsals; Mrs. Howland was preoccupied with the details of a new syndicate scheme, and Jimmy and I could be nothing but solicitous. Miss Wood said she always suffers from stage fright on opening nights, because New York first nighters are so cruelly critical.

The October issue of the "BROOM" came and I read it to-night. It contains, among other interesting things, the first installment of the English translation of the hitherto unprinted fragment of **Dostoevsky's** "POSSESSED," called "Stravrogin's Confession." This interesting item was discovered in the archives of the Soviet government last February in a case filled with notebooks, letters, documents and fragments from the pen of Dostoevsky. The "Confession" serves in a vital way to clarify the plot of "Possessed," and it is difficult to conjecture why it was omitted. On that point, the translators say, Mme. Dostoevsky is silent. That it was withheld because of the censorship would be the obvious solution were it not that Dostoevsky's other novels contain passages equally frank. Mereshkovsky describes this confession as "surpassing the bounds of the possible in the concentrated expression of horror"; but that is rhetorical. Stavrogin's confession was Dostoevsky's method of exposing the depths into which Stravrogin had fallen in order to express his belief "that each personality and man's life on earth personally will not desert, nor can desert, the kingdom of the Grace of the Spirit so long as it preserves itself entire; that sin is not ontological by itself. . . . "Broom" is also running the first English translation of "The Lay of Maldoror," by Comte de Lautreamont, that mad man of genius of whom Remy de Gourmont once wrote: "Alienists would have classified the author among those suffering from a persecution mania—in which he sees only himself and God, and God thwarts him. But we might also inquire whether Lautreamont is not a supreme ironist, one forced by a precious scorn of mankind to play the madman, whose very incoherence is wiser and more beautiful than the average person."

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 31

Lunched to-day with Franklin Spier and Dr. Abraham Goldenweiser, author of "Early Civilization," and we talked about primitive beliefs, nature myths and the analogies in modern life to the habits and customs of the ancients. Dr. Goldenweiser told me that Westermarck had thoroughly revised and brought up to date his monumental "History of Morals" and that it again takes its place in the forefront of anthropological studies. Dr. Goldenweiser is giving a series of lectures on primitive art at the Social Center. "A mistake many art critics have made in writing about primitive art, particularly the carvings of the Polynesian savages," he said, "is in assuming that these artists worked by inspiration and expressed themselves without regard to rules. No art is more highly conventionalized than the art of the savages, because their art is connected with religious ritual and their idols had definite characteristics which had to be perpetuated." . . . **Madelaine Boyd**, who was lunching with **Mrs. Edwin Bjerkman**, called me over to ask me not to assume that the new edition of her husband's book on "The Irish Literary Renaissance" was only a reprint of an old work. But I knew that it was not, for Ernest had told me that, besides working over much of the material, he had included new essays on Joyce, Forrest Reid, Daniel Corkery and others. The book now looks imposing; but it is the only interesting and authoritative account of that fine, rich flowering of Irish genius. . . .

Heywood Broun came up to me in the lobby and said, "I am glad to see that Van de Water is going to be honest," and I answered, "Yes, we all start out that way," and, added **Harriette Underhill**, "then we get to going to the Algonquin." Van der Water began his department this morning by announcing that he didn't know where the Algonquin is, had never read "Jurgen," thought **George Barr McCutcheon** is better than **Conrad**, didn't know **Neysa McMein** and hadn't a **Heywood** to press-agent, meaning to imply thereby that his record is clean and that he had no logs to roll. I have seen the copy for his piece to-morrow and in it he is press-agenting his youngster already and Harriette Underhill has a date to take him to the Algonquin this week. That is not to imply that the honesty of his opinions will be altered any more than to assent to his implication that he is the only honest one among us. The Round Table Club is so deeply under public suspicion for alleged log-rolling that now, in their efforts to seem straight, they turn a double back flip-flap every time one of their fellow members writes a book or produces a play. So acid have been their strictures upon the literary and dramatic ventures of one another that the table has been practically vacant for weeks. Carl Van Vechten said of them, "The boys grow colder." John Peter Toohey's heart, I understand, is broken, so great was the abuse heaped upon him by his brothers when his little play was produced. . . . Only one of them has escaped, **Brock Pemberton**, hitherto the gloomiest of the brethren, who now sits grinning in the seventh heaven of delight over the reviews of his play. It's a good play.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4

Charley MacArthur, Guy Holt, Ben Ray Redman, my wife and I lunched to-day at **Frank Case's** salon. All the literary, theatrical and cinema world seemed to be there: Hugh Walpole, Joseph Hergesheimer, Douglas Fairbanks, Richard Barthelmess, Irvin S. Cobb, George Barr McCutcheon, Konrad Bercovici, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Peggy Wood, Margola Gilmore, Mary Blair, Iallulah Bankhead, Louis Untermeyer, T. R. Smith, Horace Liveright, Earle Balsch, Robert C. Benchley, Samuel Merwin and, as they say, others too numerous to mention. Louis Untermyer told me how, rivalling Melba and Napoleon, I got onto the menu for two days running, but that Frank Case had despaired of my coming to see myself so honored and had discontinued it. It seems that Mr. Case never reads the papers, but that Tallulah Bankhead had read my review of his food and had thought the word "execrable" meant something awfully complimentary, and had so reported. Mr. Case wanted to show his appreciation for the ad, and put my name to two of the best dishes. The review perked him and the chef up, and to-day I enjoyed not only the most excellent service, but quite as good food as I ever ate.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 6

Went to lunch at the residence of **Charles Buchanan**, the music critic, and found there **Dr. Henry K. Marks**, author of "Peter Middleton," and **Harrison Smith**, of Harcourt, Brace & Co. Conversation opened with a discussion of my review of Countess Tolstoy's autobiography, and Dr. Marks said that Tolstoy's confessions, his conversion to fanatical doctrines and his break with his wife after the wild life he had led in his youth was but the natural consequence of the diminution of vital energy. "It is all a matter of chemical action and reaction," said Dr. Marks, "and the state of our vitality is the principal factor in determining our ideas and opinions." That, I think, is true, knowing how my own point of view has undergone radical changes under special conditions at various periods of my life. To this I would, and no doubt would Dr. Marks also, add environmental influences. That is why I can see truth as a relative thing only, and that is why I could not agree with Mr. Buchanan in the argument he began later on. He started out by saying that he thought that art and criticism had never been in such a parlous state since the history of the world as the state it is in now. I agreed that contemporary art and contemporary criticism had definite characteristics which may be described as bad mannered, exhibitionistic, undisciplined, and even, from a certain point of view, vulgar; but that they also have the characteristics of vigor, warmth, curiosity, frankness and enthusiasm, which are the concomitants of the other qualities. This art and this criticism are natural products of the socio-economic conditions, plus our cultural inheritance and our reaction to it, and the tendency in art toward the "continual slight novelty." To protest against them is not only futile, but, as I see it, to protest against life itself. With this Mr. Buchanan violently disagrees. He says the age is cursed by cleverness and superficiality and a flouting of standards; he believes in absolute standards of culture (which I think are a myth, and stultifying myths at that); and he told me that although he loathed and abominated and couldn't sit through a certain symphony (which I refrain from mentioning because it would pain him) but that he would not say so because many great appreciators of music had agreed that it is a masterpiece, and he would not flout his idosyncracy in the face of that opinion. This is, I think, to take one's self far too seriously, and as Mr. Smith pointed out, it is to aid in imposing upon succeeding generations as inviolable and sacrosanct something which is merely a product of human skill and imagination. It is the way we have of so embalming classics in the oils of unction that one is never tempted to find out what they are really like. Hazlitt was, I think, the greatest critic of his century, because he was the most personal (every life of Hazlitt is made up almost entirely of quotations from his work), and certainly he was as fallible as any. No more fallible than Lemaitre or Sainte-Beuve (who misjudged every one of importance of his own time) and other critics who are afflicted with the Jehovah complex and seek to be objective and remain unread. Who actually reads Sainte-Beuve nowadays? Mr. Buchanan knows and enjoys music. He is, or was, a critic. If he should say emphatically that he does not like that symphony the heavens would not fall, and perhaps he would give joy and reassurance to hundreds of other music lovers who loathe the symphony as much as he does, but endure it in pained silence and clap their hands and declare it is wonderful—because it is a classic.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8

Louis Kantor brought **Kenneth Burke** to lunch to-day. Burke and **Edmund Wilson Jr.** have stood out in my mind among all the younger critics as being the best informed, the most sensitive and most interesting. Something curious has happened to Burke. He, who in his efforts at story writing has been most bizarre and expressionistic and even downright incoherent, amazed me to-day by a vague discourse on the function of criticism, wherein he had the highest praise for Paul Elmer More, Irving Babbitt, and Matthew Arnold. He has definitely turned against "modernism" in arts and letters, and seems to have swung around entirely to didacticism and regimentation. He inclines to the More-Babbitt theory that Rousseau is the root of all romantic evil. "We must get away," he said "from that individualism by which a sick man imposes upon the world his vicarious fulfillment of desires. Literature is now at a point where blind men write about the beauties of things they cannot see, and the halt and the lame write of the glories and exultation of walking. Such writing must inevitably be untrue to life, and seem silly to the sound and healthy. Remy de Gourmont and Nietzsche were sick men whose writings were but compensations for what they missed in life. We must recognize that literature and the other arts, to be the best, must be true to the life and aspirations of the healthy majority of a race. If 'Ulysses' were read entirely as a joke, as one should read Rabelais, and for the fun of the joke, it would not have a pernicious influence. But by most people it seemed to be taken seriously, as an accurate representation of life. It is as false on one side as Pollyanna is on the other." . . . I quote all this as being intrinsically interesting and significant—significant in that it represents, as I see it, Burke's own reaction after a modernist debauch. I thought I could see, in a riotous, expressionistic, and ugly story he had in the "Little Review," the seed of a reaction which would flower into a defense of the sterile didacticism of Paul Elmer More. That is the trouble with a great number of the romantic moderns of this and every other generation. They push a tendency, and the mode of expression which arises from a great individual, to an imitative absurdity; and then, by the old biological law which impels the son to turn upon his father, they slay the progenitor of their own extravagances. It is unfortunate that they cannot keep their heads, not oscillate them between two extremes. The Greeks, whom both romantics and classicists never tire of praising, made a platitude of the Golden Mean; and I think that it is a maxim to be contemplated with a sacred meditation by all the young secessionists, futurists, expressionists, etc., who are about ready to denigrate that which they were only a moment ago proclaiming to be the only good, true, and beautiful. It may be that a reaction is already under way, and that shortly we shall have an era of formalism and didacticism such as obtains in all really decadent periods of literature. I hope not.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9.

Lunched with **Maxwell Perkins** and we talked about **James Huneker, Dr. W. C. Brownell, Copeland of Harvard, Woodward Boyd**; and the disparity between the conception one forms of a writer from reading his work and what the writer is really like when one meets him. This terrifying sentence has been pronounced upon me literally by dozens of people when I have met them for the first time: "Why, I pictured you as an old man with long white whiskers." After this dubious characterization I have invariably reread some of my stuff with a critical eye, to see what in it suggested senescence. "But," said Perkins, "take **Alexander Woolcott**, he looks exactly the way you would expect him to look." Which reminds me of **Robert Nathan's** remark after meeting **Llewellyn Jones**, the Chicago critic: "It is curious how much Llewllyn Jones looks like Llewellyn Jones." . . . In discussing Huneker's letters, Perkins brought out the point that Huneker never seemed to have been made aware of his actual greatness and the influence he had had upon the present generation. Huneker consistently underestimated himself, setting down his work as mere potbolling journalism, and seeming always to regret that he had not devoted more of his time to novel writing, which he apparently thought was his special forte. "If some close friend, like **John Quinn**, had only told Huneker how important as an influence he was," said Perkins, "and had reassured him with generous and understanding praise, he might never have grown as careless with his work as he did at times in his later years." . . . I told Perkins that I thought Woodward Boyd, the author of "The Love Legend," had an interesting point of view and a great gift of observation, and that she undoubtedly had in her a number of novels even better than "The Love Legend." For all its faults in the writing, this is to me one of the meatiest and best novels written by the younger generation. She has packed into it too much material for one novel, telling four stories simultaneously; but she has done it very well indeed.

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To tea this afternoon with **Hugh Walpole**, who is giving a series of lectures in this country on the novel. He had just picked up in a second-hand bookshop a bound volume of the "Cornhill Magazine" for January-June, 1874, containing **Thomas Hardy's** "Far From the Madding Crowd" complete, and he showed me a privately printed edition of some poems by **John Drinkwater**, beautifully gotten out, with blue parchment covers. "They are very passionate poems," said Walpole. "What!" I asked, "Passionate poems by Drinkwater?" "Yes, for Drinkwater." We talked **James Joyce, D. H. Lawrence, Katherine Mansfield, Rebecca West, John Middleton Murry, J. C. Squire, Waldo Frank, Joseph Hergesheimer** and **Sinclair Lewis**. He said he had been particularly impressed by two men he had met recently—**Carl van Vechten** and **Thomas Beer**. "Van Vechten seemed to tolerate me easily enough, but Beer took an instantaneous and violent dislike for me. We were chatting and he said something about a book he was writing on Stephen Crane, and asked me if I could help him toward something he wanted to get about Conrad's association with Crane. Something I said must have offended him, for he turned abruptly away from me and didn't notice me all the rest of the evening." I told him that Beer was acutely sensitive, shy and even diffident; and when Walpole asked me what interesting new man had come up since he was last over here, I mentioned Beer as probably the artist most worth watching among the fictionists. "That is interesting," said Walpole, "for although he was at no pains to conceal his distaste for me he made strong impression upon me; his personality stays with me." He asked me about Beer as a person and I told him that although he is only thirty-three, he has the air, manner, speech and appearance of a middle-aged man; that he has numerous harmless affectations, such as a stage-English accent and histrionic gestures; that it is difficult to worm a decisive opinion out of him; but that he is one of the most likable, intelligent, well-informed and aware persons I know. I told him I would send him a copy of Beer's novel, "The Fair Rewards," and, if I could find them, copies of some of his distinctive and beautifully written short stories. Walpole chided me about my animadversions on J. C. Squire and astonished me by saying that Squire and Shanks no longer had any influence whatever in England. "He is a harmless enough chap," said Walpole, "and if he has an attitude of lofty condescension toward American writers, he has an equally condescending attitude toward modern English novelists. I once wrote to him complaining that a novel by Galsworthy had not been reviewed in "The Mercury" and he wrote back to say that Galsworthy was no more worthy of notice than Marie Corelli. Now that of course is merely silly. He is a very talented parodist, however." Walpole has the highest admiration for **D. H. Lawrence**. "He is," he said, "the only one among us in England who has contributed anything new to the novel, broken new ground. I don't think that he has written any well-rounded novels since 'The White Peacock' and 'Sons and Lovers,' and I don't like his repetitions; but he has treated of new material in an extraordinarily interesting and impressive manner. Rebecca West's new novel is a curious work; the first part is distinctive and original in treatment, psycnology and style and the second part is crammed with bad melodrama and all the faults she is always taking us to task for. I have wanted to write an article on the critics who have recently appeared in the role of novelist. Middleton Murry has written two new novels, both of them rather bad and containing all sorts of the very things he grows very vicious about in the work of other novelists." Murry, I think, has gone off as a critic during the last two years; he began with great promise. "His difficulty," said Walpole, "is that he lives his life entirely in books. When he is writing about the classics he is very good; when he touches upon contemporary literature he seems not to understand any of it." Walpole wanted to know why it was that Joseph Hergesheimer and Sinclair Lewis had aroused so much personal dislike among Americans, and I explained that it was because they had dared to be truthful and honest in saying what was in their minds at inauspicious moments. Hergesheimer, who is the most sensitive man alive to criticism, seems to take an almost sadistic pleasure in making people in his audience squirm, and when he does it he smiles mischievously like a schoolboy who has just stuck a pin in the boy in front of him, and that is maddening to many people. Both men ought to stop lecturing because most people cannot dissociate a man's personality from his work, and both of them are arousing personal dislike by their frankness, which people are beginning to carry over into a similar attitude toward their books. Walpole is the most generous-minded of all our European visitors; he is, practically, the only one who has ever taken the trouble to inform himself of the best literature that is being written over here; he has been, I think, largely responsible for the present interest in American books in England by his efforts in behalf of writers like **Cabell, Hergesheimer, Miss Cather, Sinclair Lewis, Sherwood Anderson, H. L. Mencken** and **Theodore Dreiser**; and, although he is about the only one who has been allowed to get into close touch with American life, he is also about the only one who has not written a book about us.

"My host may overlook the fact that I am using the salad fork for fish; not so his English butler"—One of the twenty-six drawings by Lauren Stout for "Bizarre," by Lawton Mackall. (Stewart, Kidd).

The Glamorous "Mrs. Pat"

By Isabel Paterson

MY LIFE AND SOME LETTERS. By Mrs. Patrick Campbell. Dodd, Mead & Co.

IF "beauty is its own excuse for being," it should also be reason enough for writing its memoirs. It is, anyhow, more than many of the autobiographical clan can offer. Mrs. Patrick Campbell does not offer it; she frankly falls back on Dr. Johnson's justification, and says she has given her life and letters to the public for a pecuniary consideration. Only the need of money persuaded her to think she might venture. But she dedicates her book to an unknown admirer—a schoolgirl of fifteen who once walked miles in the rain and waited hours at the stage door just to see the goddess emerge. And the book will probably be read for love rather than for its literary value.

It is a complete refutation of all literary dicta. It is ill-written in every sense of the word, short of being illiterate—though Bernard Shaw accused its author even of that. And yet it is extremely interesting, quite as much for its omissions as for what it contains; for its manifest imperfections as much as for its merits. The manner of its composition resembles a turning out of old trinket boxes and hold-alls forgotten in the attic, from which tumbles a disarray of useless but significant trifles—Cinderella slippers danced through, ribboned programs of grand balls, faded wreaths, old photographs, brief notes from dear friends; yes, and handkerchiefs still stained with bitter tears. The reader must guess from the fact of their preservation how much they once meant.

For Mrs. Campbell very evidently lived for and in the day; and when it was over she forgot as much as she could. Which was a great deal. She reveals herself an artist born; and artists put their memories into their work. They use and spend their talents, but do not hoard them.

* * *

It is of her career as an actress she chiefly writes; but it is for her extraordinary personal beauty she is most apt to be remembered. This is not meant as a disparagement on her histrionic ability, which was authentic; but the triumphs of the stage are fleeting, while if a woman be lovely enough she may become a part of history and her name a poetical symbol for succeeding ages. Perhaps Mrs. Campbell will never achieve that immortality, but she might have. She had the equipment, the face to "launch a thousand ships and burn the topless towers of Ilium." But whatever misfortunes attend beauty came to her personally, not to her country or her adorers.

Reading these somehow pathetic reminiscences one finds in them a certain justification for the selfishness and arrogance of other fair women. It is almost a necessary defense; otherwise they become the prey of their ostensible worshippers. The moths would put out the candle if they did not get their wings singed off. And here is one candle too kind to singe. The result was she burnt herself out warming others. She does not say so—that is the pathos of it. In one passage she confesses hersif three parts a "fool," and on every page she forces the readers to agree. But such a dear and charming fool!

Just so, her beauty was three parts charm. One has heard her described by men amazed at themselves as not so much a woman as a "wonder and a wild delight" to look on. People went silly simply gazing on her. And she, too, was always a little amazed; one sees her naively offering all these letters and clippngs and souvenirs to prove as much to herself as to any one else that it was really so, that she did not imagine it all out of vanity.

Leaving out the reprints and letters and the list of parts she played and other purely theatrical memoranda which could be gleaned from a file of old dramatic pages, all her story that she has chosen to set down could be condensed in a single chapter.

* * *

Her ancestry had a glamour of its own. Her mother was Italian, her father an Anglo-Indian nabob. Her father lost several fortunes, so when Stella Beatrice Campbell was grown they were poor. Money was always shy of her. She married the son of another nabob, when she was seventeen and he twenty; and her father-in-law lost his fortune immediately thereafter. The history of her marriage, which to her contemporaries, excepting her near family and friends, was made into a mystery by idle rumor, is told here in full; a sad little story. Her husband, Patrick Campbell, being threatened with consumption, was ordered to a dry, warm climate. He went to South Africa in search of health and fortune; perforce leaving behind his young wife and two babies. Upon the poor young mother devolved the responsibility of supporting herself and the babies. So she went on the stage, cheered by the hearty disapproval of many dear old friends. And for five years she struggled along somehow on a salary of $10 a week or thereabouts, with whatever meager sums her invalid husband could remit from Africa. Her rise to a star's position had elements of the grotesque in it. It came within a month of her receiving notice that she was dismissed for incompetence!

After that, it might be supposed, it was "roses, roses all the way." On the contrary, it was a struggle always. She had poor health, many dependents—an unnecessary number indeed—and an improvident temperament to boot. Her husband was killed in the Boer War, her son in the World War. And she piled on the agony herself by a preposterous second marriage, of which she omits details but tells enough to show it was unhappy as it was unwise. Nevertheless she had many compensations: a life lived to the full, a great gift and the opportunity to use it: and one unique distinction: She reduced even Bernard Shaw to a state of gooey rapture, and labelled him in return with the nickname "Joey," which, if I am not misinformed, is the English traditional appellation of the clown in pantomime.

Our Government

INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN GOVERNMENT. By Frederick A. Ogg and P. Orman Ray. The Century Company.

WHILE this volume is designed primarily as a textbook for the college student, it will prove valuable for any reader equipped with an elementary knowledge of political science and desiring a fairly detailed but not exhaustive account of the workings of the American government. Unlike many works of its kind, it does not plunge directly into its subject, but devotes the opening chapters to a consideration of the fundamental problems of political science, of the origin and evolution of the state and the development of modern political ideas. Having established an adequate background, it applies the general results of its inquiry to the specific problems of the United States; it begins by discussing the Articles of Confederation, then turns to the United States Constitution, and examines with some minuteness the organization of the various departments of government, the work of the President and of Congress, of the judiciary and of the civil service. Moreover, it does not confine itself to an analysis of the national government, but contains valuable and instructive chapters on state constitutions, on the government of municipalities and on the party system in America. S. A. C.

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