BOOKS OF THE WEEK SEEN IN REVIEW AND COMMENT

CRITICAL REVIEWS OF THE SEASON'S LATEST BOOKS

Anne Shannon Monro's Story of Lifelike People—Demoralizing Effect of the Movie Business.

New Fiction by Arthur Stringer, John Palmer, Louis Tracy, Everett MacDonald and Others.

H. G. Wells as a Prophet—The British in Belgium, German Atrocities, and Other War Subjects.

Pioneers.

A boy's fight against drunkenness will interest the reader at the outset in Anne Shannon Monro's *Happy Valley* (A. C. McClurg and Company, Chicago) for the author avoids exaggeration, though she does ascribe the fault to heredity. The hero is stranded in a frontier town in the arid lands of Oregon, has been cheated by a rascally promoter, who tries to get him drunk at critical moments, and in despair stakes a claim in the new land. He falls in with a queer altruistic prospector with a firm faith in the future of the country and a large family. With other settlers of various nationalities they make a hard fight to hold and to reclaim the land, a story which is stirring and exciting. Then comes a fight against the mischievous interference of the Government and the machinations of corporate interests, about which the author seems bitter. She then becomes rather didactic. She also discusses the question whether people with hereditary taints have the right to marry. There are fine, lifelike and natural people in her story, whom the reader will like; there is a swing and a directness, too, in the manner of telling that is very attractive. The subjects about which the author feels earnestly, however, are too many to be crowded into one book.

Moving Pictures in the Wilds.

The demoralizing effect of the moving picture business is demonstrated in Francis William Sullivan's *Star of the North* (G. P. Putnam's Sons), in which a company with its outfit is planted close to a Hudson's Bay Company's trading post. This is tenanted by an old factor and his daughter, a beautiful and innocent girl ignorant of the ways of the world. The picture people and the New York life they speak of are a revelation to her. She is attracted by the leading man, an unprincipled scoundrel, but he reveals his true character in time. She is protected by another actor, who loves her but is married to a selfish and hateful wife. She, too, is in the North with a rival photoplay outfit. She runs across the girl, and in order to spite her husband, whom she detests, forces herself on her party, which is making a dangerous sledge journey through the woods. After nearly bringing destruction on the others through her ignorance of the woods and her recklessness she collapses herself and thus enables the lovers to marry. We regret that the girl is drawn into the photoplay business herself. The wife is an unkind portrait of a type not uncommon in New York nowadays. The author has made his story a romance of the people engaged in the moving picture business; he has not tried to mix up the photoplays with the older kind of wilderness stories.

Hunting for Spies.

The heroine of Arthur Stringer's *The Door of Dread* (The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Indianapolis) is a charming young woman with an amazing vocabulary of slang, who is engaged with two male secret service agents in the Federal employ in hunting down a gang of Germans that is stealing important Government secrets. We infer that she has appeared before in other books of the author. As he hurries over her periods of rest and as her colleagues do little more than put in an occasional appearance, she seems to have a pretty strenuous time. No sooner has she rescued one set of papers from the Germans at the risk of her life, and often with acrobatic escapes from elaborate prisons, than the criminals are allowed to escape and she must begin all over again. She keeps it up to the final catastrophe, when the author allows the Germans to be captured. One thrilling incident follows on another with the incoherence and the spectacular effects of the photoplay, which the author doubtless had in mind as he spun his yarn.

Posing in the Face of War.

A far from pleasing picture of British decadence is drawn with great artistic virtuosity by John Palmer in *The King's Men* (G. P. Putnam's Sons), a book which may be intended as a satire but which seems remarkably inappropriate at the present time. The author describes with some vigor the upsetting of former ideas and standards of conduct by the questions brought up by the war. He then tells how this affects a group of young men, the aesthetic dabblers in the novelties and eccentricities of literature, art and morals. Several of them act like ordinary men and volunteer at once; one finds that he can serve his country better at home than in the field; the author, however, dallies over two who stick to their individual theories of life. He relates the subtle hairsplitting in their reasoning, their objections to serving because it is their duty and to being subjected to the stigma of cowardice for staying at home. It would seem that such creatures are too insignificant at this time for any one to trouble himself as to what they think or do. The rest of the story deals with a more serious matter; the author describes the unwillingness of business men to give up their profits on Government contracts and the necessity for the Government to take into its own hands the industrial and commercial enterprises.

The Invasion of Belgium.

Making capital of the prejudices against the Germans and drawing on the reports of atrocities, Louis Tracy in *The Day of Wrath* (Edward J. Clode, New York) undertakes to paint the picture of the beginning of the invasion of Belgium. His Germans, officers and soldiers, are libertines and drunkards, besides being brutal. His hero and heroine are an English officer and a strange young woman who fastens on him as he leaves Berlin. They manage to escape at the frontier and join their fortunes to a Belgian peasant family. The things they do in self-defence would seem to justify pretty arbitrary treatment of civilians on the part of a hostile army. They finally get away and are married, though the author does not waste much time on love making. His chief object is to show how detestable the Germans are.

Kentucky Mountaineers.

Though he chooses to use a very florid vocabulary and somewhat pomonous style Everett MacDonald has written an interesting tale of Kentucky mountaineers in *The Red Debt* (G. W. Dillingham Company). Of course there are two clans which have a feud, but most of the trouble is caused by the persecution of a revenue collector, who acts throughout with little regard to the law. After killing two important persons he comes to a highly dramatic end. There is a charming young girl, who acquires an education with wonderful speed; a fine young fellow, who is badly used and has to overcome his desire for revenge; a small boy eager to keep up the feud; the picturesque head of the clan and a lot of other interesting people.

A Tangled Mystery.

Embarrassing complications arise when an amiable married woman dies suddenly in a London hotel, just as she was starting on a short trip with the man she loves, in J. W. Brodie-Innes's *The Tragedy of an Indiscretion* (John Lane Company). He is called away just before, and the friend who offers to explain matters to the lady finds that she is dead, and also that she is his divorced wife. He carries her off to a quiet place and buries her under her former name. Not knowing her present husband's name he is unable to notify him, so he goes off to the Amazon with his friend and tells him what has happened on the voyage. The husband thinks his wife has gone off on a visit and does not worry. A malicious and inquisitive woman, however, thinks the wife's absence suspicious, makes up her mind that the husband has murdered her and spreads stories about him. Meanwhile the wife's dressmaker is fished out of the Thames; she is wearing clothes belonging to her late customer and her body is mistaken for that of the other woman. The husband is tried and found guilty, but the case is appealed; the two other men get back from South America in the nick of time and the man is saved. There are other complications and more altruistic self-sacrifice on the part of the first husband, so that the reader will be kept in suspense. Nobody seems to think that there is anything out of the way in the conduct of the woman whose death causes all the trouble.

A Woman's Ordeal.

The heroine of Helen S. Wright's *The Valley of Lebanon* (Robert J. Shores, New York,) receives very little consideration from the men about her. She lives in a farmhouse in the Berkshire Hills with her paralyzed father; he has dragged her about Europe for years, avoiding everybody who might know him, because his wife ran away from him. With him helpless on her hands she is despondent, but a young doctor from a sanitarium near by bids her cheer up and urges her to work hard at her painting, for which she has talent. The cure is effective. The doctor falls in love with her, but he is engaged to another girl. She loves him, but makes no move to interfere with his plans; she keeps cheerful after his marriage. The wife dies in childbirth, the father also dies, so there is nothing to prevent the lovers coming together. There are very pleasant people in his simple story, and charming descriptions of the country and the hills.

Deficient Legal Ethics.

The proceedings of the hero of E. S. and J. F. Dorrance's *His Robe of Honor* (Moffat, Yard and Company) should have led to his disbarment and removal to prison. He commits felony in every case that is described and even after his forced appointment to the Supreme bench he is guilty of blackmail in securing his nomination as a candidate for the full term. His relations with the young woman who commits perjury for him are discreditable and he accepts a bribe from a corporation. As soon as he knows that he has a long term before him he decides that he will be an upright judge. That course naturally makes him turn down the men who have advanced him. It is no flattering picture of New York politics or New York lawyers that the authors have drawn; still less do they provide any excuse for their high minded young woman to take up with this despicable criminal. They seem to favor a five cent fare to Coney Island.

ELEANOR MARVIN
Author of "MARY ALLEN"
(Doubleday, Page)

GARDNER L. HARDING,
Author of "PRESENT DAY CHINA" (Century).

IAN HAY BEITH, WHOSE WAR BOOK IS ISSUED BY HOUGHTON MIFFLIN.

WAR BOOKS.

A War Correspondent's Story.

Enough time has passed for Wythe Williams, who was in Paris as correspondent for a New York newspaper when the war broke out, to put in order his recollections of those days of confusion and to tell a connected story of what he observed in *Passed by the Censor* (E. P. Dutton and Company). He gives a vivid picture of what went on in Paris and other places he visited, with humorous descriptions of the trials undergone by the men who sought to transmit news, and never betrays anything that a rigid censorship might object to. The brilliant picture he draws of Ambassador Myron T. Herrick and the wholly competent manner in which he handled the difficult problems that confronted him makes the book one that every American should read.

What British Soldiers Have Done.

Those who have been waiting patiently for a definite account of what the English troops have been doing on the Continent will be gratified by Capt. Ernest Hamilton's account of the fighting in Belgium in *The First Seven Divisions* (E. P. Dutton and Company). He ends with the battle of Ypres, and that is sufficiently ancient history for him to be allowed to give details of the military movements, to tell what regiments were engaged and the losses they sustained and to give not only the names of officers and men who fell in action, but to say where and when it happened. This is all information that military necessity kept from the public at the time; it now allows the people to learn from concrete examples the heroism the soldiers have shown.

A Daily Mail Exploit.

Modesty is no characteristic of the anonymous employee of the London *Daily Mail* who writes *My Secret Service* (George H. Doran Company), so that the reader may feel inclined to take his impressions and even his definite statements with a good deal of salt. He was in the Balkans and had obtained an interview with Enver Pasha when the Kaiser turned up in Nish and met King Ferdinand of Bulgaria at a public banquet. The author was admitted with other representatives of the press, which makes him call himself "the man who dined with the Kaiser"; he took down the speeches, found he could not transmit them owing to the censorship and so made his way to Paris in order to communicate with his newspaper. His account of his trip is the substantial part of his book.

War Atrocities.

A summary of the various official investigations into atrocities committed during the war has been made by Prof. J. H. Morgan in *German Atrocities* (E. P Dutton and Company). The author is prejudiced enough to apply different tests of credibility to German and to British testimony. He seems to have made investigations of his own, which impressed him more than the Government reports. The most valuable portion of the book is the set of condensed statements of individuals as to what they saw or what happened to them. Even with these the line should be drawn between instances of abnormal brutality and the common, regrettable incidents of war. An article by Lord Bryce is appended.

H. G. Wells Looks Ahead.

The articles which H. G. Wells has gathered under the title *What Is Coming?* (Macmillans) may be taken as the talk of a sane and sensible man about some of the consequences of the war, a subject that many people are pondering over. Mr. Wells is fair enough to appreciate and admire all of the good qualities of the German people, which he believes will be patent again after it has freed itself from what he calls "the Hohenzollern delusion." He indulges neither in the bold speculations that characterize his scientific tales nor in the expression of his own fanciful ideas about things in general, but looks on things as they are in a matter of fact way. Apparently he does not expect either side to win an overwhelming victory that will wholly wipe out existing boundaries or institutions. There is much that every thoughtful man must agree with in his views, for while he is optimistic enough about the future, he is not carried away by wild aspirations.

A Polemical Retort.

Some time ago a small book, professedly written by a German, "J'accuse," categorically put the blame for beginning the war on Germany, and brought out replies from German authors. In another little book, *Because I am a German* (E. P. Dutton and Company), Hermann Fernau, who apparently has been accused of being the author of the first book, refutes the attacks. He assumes that his readers take as deep an interest as he does in these pamphlets. The main question, as to the blame, rather drops out of sight.

A War Symposium.

At Clark University in Worcester, Mass., last December a meeting was held of college professors and others to say what they thought about the war; some who could not attend sent papers instead. It was particularly desired that all sides should be heard, so that the papers now edited and published by Prof. George H. Blakeslee, *The Problems and Lessons of the War* (G. P. Putnam's Sons), are arranged so as to present the two sides of the debate. Among the twenty-five participants are President G. Stanley Hall, Prof. Kuno Francke, Dr. Stanton Coit, Normann Angell, Dr. George Haven Putnam, Admiral Chadwick, W. E. Walling and Dr. Morton Prince.

Two Ministers Against War.

An exposition of strong pacifist views is made by the Rev. Dr. John Haynes Holmes in *New Wars for Old* (Dodd, Mead and Company), with a review of the instances in the past where war might have been avoided if the dictates of religion had been followed.

A similar denunciation of war in general and the present war in particular is made by the Rev. Dr. Charles E. Jefferson in the Merrick lectures delivered before Ohio Wesleyan University, *What the War Is Teaching* (Fleming H. Revell Company).

VARIED INFORMATION.

The Real Northwest.

While some of the stream of pleasure travel that has been diverted from its customary European haunts to seeing America may profit greatly by using Ruth Kedzie Wood's *The Tourist's Northwest* (Dodd, Mead and Company), we imagine that a larger and more serious public will derive most benefit from her careful descriptions. The book is designed as a travel guide book, like previous meritorious guides by the author. It opens up a new country, for the author describes not only Oregon and Washington but the Canadian provinces beyond the border, British Columbia and Alberta. She cannot make up for the lack of art and historical associations by nature alone, so she tells in detail what the nature and the products of the country are, what are the industries and activities of the towns, though she never neglects the sights that will attract the traveller, the great parks, the mountains, and so on. She has written an extremely useful and attractive handbook to a region which is drawing to it many people.

South American Railroads.

Many persons will be startled when perusing Frederic M. Halsey's *Railway Expansion in Latin America* (The Moody Magazine and Book Company, New York) to discover how extensive are the railroad systems already built in South America and how near realization is the dream of a road running north and south through the continent. The author gives a clear description of the roads in existence and projected in each of the countries of South America, especially the Argentine, Brazil, Chile and Bolivia. He adds also what is to be known about the railroads in the Central American States. Mexico he omits. He includes much information of importance to those studying the problem of enlarging the commerce of the United States with the Latin American countries.

Good Letters.

The æsthetic and artistic side of one of the very minor arts is kept constantly in view in Thomas Wood Stevens's manual on *Lettering* (The Prang Company, New York). The meed of plates of the right size has made it a very handsome small quarto volume. The text is intended for beginners and all the explanations are fittingly clear. The plates with their many beautiful examples of letters will prove useful to all experts in every line of business that calls for lettering.

Country Houses.

An album of plans for houses of varying dimensions, accompanied by pictures of the completed structure, which embrace many styles of architecture, and with descriptive text, is issued by the Garden City Company of California, Los Angeles, with the title *Ideal Homes in Garden Communities* (Robert M. McBride and Company, New York). Several architects have combined in drawing these very attractive plans.

Diet Cures.

In *Eat and Be Well, Eat and Get Well* (Alfred A. Knopf, New York) Eugene Christian, starting with the idea that 90 per cent. of human disease originates in the stomach, gives out the bills of fare by the use of which many diseases may be averted or cured. The absence of meat is noticeable, though a number of the menus include chicken and fish. They are based on the scientific theories regarding the values of foods, and appeal to hygienic rather than gastronomical tastes.

H. G. WELLS IN HIS NEW BOOK AGAIN A PROPHET

H. G. Wells's attitude of mind in his new book, "What Is Coming," is interestingly revealed in the following passage from the first chapter of that volume:

"The present writer is a prophet by use and wont. He is more interested in to-morrow than he is in to-day, and the past is just material for future guessing. 'Think of the men who have walked here' said a tourist in the Roman coliseum. It was a Futurist mind that answered: 'Think of the men who will.' It is surely as interesting that presently some founder of the world republic, some obstinate opponent of militarism or legalism, or the man who will first release atomic energy for human use, will walk along the Via Sacra as that Cicero or Giordano Bruno or Shelley have walked there in the past. To the prophetic mind all history is and will continue to be a prelude. The prophetic type will steadfastly refuse to see the world as a museum; it will insist that here is a stage set for a drama that perpetually begins."

Mr. Wells's literary career is marked by a number of prophecies, and many of them have been singularly successful. As he tells us somewhere in "What Is Coming," he has been writing for twenty years, and much of this writing has been in the way of forecasting the future. It is now possible to check a certain proportion of these anticipations by the things that have happened. Some of these shots have hit remarkably close to the bullseye of reality. Much, that he wrote about in anticipation is now established commonplace, as any one who takes occasion to examine "New Worlds for Old" or "The War in the Air," for example, will discover for himself.

It is not with the development of mechanical inventions, which have formed the subject of many of his previous volumes, that Mr. Wells is concerned in "What Is Coming," but with the trend of social events in the next decade or so. "Mechanical novelties," he writes, "will probably play a very small part in that coming history. The worldwide war means a general arrest of invention and enterprise except in the direction of the war business.

"The broad material facts before us are plain enough. It is the mental facts that have to be unravelled. It isn't now a question of what thing, what faculty, what added power, will come to hand and how will it affect our ways of living; it is a question of how are people going to take these obvious things—the waste of the world's resources, arrest of material progress, the killing of a large moiety of the males in nearly every European country and universal loss and unhappiness. We are going to deal with realities here, at once more intimate and less accessible than the effects of mechanism."

Pursuing this theme, the theme of the social conditions which shall follow the end of the war, Mr. Wells takes up such questions as the probability of the establishment of a long world peace, nations in liquidation, the future of the world, Europe and socialism, the war and the women, the relation of the United States, France, Britain and Russia and the outlook for the Germans.

THE NEED FOR WAR

By COSMO HAMILTON.

There is one aspect of the great European war with which, so far as I know, no one has had the courage to deal. Many pens have been busy in writing of its horrors—its extraordinary development of science and chemistry—the heroism of its units—the great beauty that has been brought out by it in the way of human sacrifice and the uncountable number of individual acts of exquisite kindness. It remains to deal with its need.

I am one of those who hold that this war was vitally necessary to all the nations engaged in it as well as to those who are standing aside and, it is to be hoped, learning lessons. The history of the world makes it very clear that at the moment when countries arrive at overcivilization something must happen—and that something is war.

As soon as nations become overcivilized degeneracy sets in. The first set of persons to be attacked is that which forms the government of the country. While it is true that governments are never representative and politicians are merely parasites, even under the best conditions, it is astonishing how quickly the example of their dishonest self-seeking and inefficiency runs through the nations which they do not represent. It is very natural for a man—let him be British, French, Russian, Italian or German—who watches the petty squabbles, the steady and growing pilferings of his government, to become affected and gradually grow out of the habit of straight thinking and honest dealing. A general carelessness sets in, like a blight. It spreads to the younger generation and a diseased country is very quickly brought to the condition when it must either die or be operated upon. It is the inevitable law, both of nature and nations. Then comes war—the final test. If a country has any health left in its constitution it revives, gathers itself together, makes the most tremendous sacrifices, puts forth an effort of the strength of which no man thought it capable—and rises like Phœnix from the flames. War places it upon the operating table and cuts out of its body the cancerous growths which are the result of overcivilization. The pendulum swings back again and the convalescent nation makes a new beginning.

Pacifism and the desire for pacifism show not only an utter ignorance of history and the psychology of nations but is itself a proof of the arrival of degeneracy and that curious form of brain anæmia which is one of the worst diseases that can affect a nation. The moment when a country has become overcivilized is shown by a sudden outbreak of twisted thought. Directly a country's press becomes full of articles putting forward anti-vivisectionism, woman suffrage, peace at any price, the criminality of corporal punishment and hysterical petitions against the taking of degenerate life it is time for the wise men to take stock. Anæmia has set in and a tonic is badly needed—iron being the best of them. With anæmia comes the disinclination to look facts in the face, and politicians, imitating the policy of the ostrich, commence to hide their heads so that they may not see the approach of trouble. Then inevitably the labor market becomes unsettled; demagogues seize every opportunity to show their strength and labor is organized against capital, and trade unions, finding weaklings against them, commence to bully. All the tendencies of effeteness, pervertism and national carelessness develop one after another. Politicians demand pay for work which should be given patriotically to the nation; men, women and children sneak out of conforming to the religious observances of a former generation; all men begin to live above their incomes; a grotesque extravagance in women's dress follows; schoolboys and undergraduates think it necessary to begin where their fathers left off. Finally political corruption becomes the smart thing—the nation has begun to live for the moment and refuses to look into the day after to-morrow.

Even at this time, when men have not yet recovered the habit of looking truth in the face, a howl of indignation will be raised from all sides when I have the temerity to assert that Germany is the Allies' best friend. But this is true because Germany has supplied the tonic which England, France and Russia urgently needed. By making war Germany has forced these countries out of degeneracy and has obliged them to set their houses in order. Germany has awakened the national spirit and the sense of patriotism which politicians had almost killed and which overcivilization had covered up with a thick veneer of laissez-faire. Germany has almost put some semblance of sense and strength into the governments of the Allies; and if she has not made every politician honest, at any rate she has forced many of them to withdraw their heads from the sand. It is this insensate Germany—with her lust for power, with her carefully constructed death machines, her fundamental incapability of fighting fair—which has brought back health to the nations arrayed against her in self-protection. With amazing unconsciousness Germany is at this moment performing a deed which will have its effect on the future of the world, and—paradoxical as it may seem—is rescuing her opponents from suicide.

Therefore I assert that this war was necessary—that it came at the right psychological moment—that it found the Allies unready and in demanding of them the most tremendous effort rescued them from the dire effects of self-indulgence and has brought out again every good instinct—every fine and simple element which first of all made these nations great.

History repeats itself with the most monotonous reiteration. The present is the past entered through another gate, and war is as inevitable as death. It is not and never was an accident. In every instance from the beginning of time it has been a well deserved punishment, worked up to and earned. It will come again with the swing of the pendulum. It is salutary, necessary, and is the only national tonic that can be prescribed.

A CHICAGO AUTHOR WHO KEEPS OFFICE HOURS

Henry Kitchell Webster has considered Evanston his home ever since he made his first wailing apologia pro vita sua there in 1875. He has friends everywhere, from traffic cops to the loftiest of the bulbous browed elect. He's one of the pillars of that Greek temple with a renaissance facade and a Frank Lloyd Wright pergola and the Stars and Stripes floating over it in the breeze, that is called culture in Chicago, and he lights logs in the Cliff Dwellers' fireplace. Being this, probably the reason why Chicago doesn't have a parade in Michigan avenue for him is because he's just an honest to goodness man who makes you want to talk to him instead of knocking your head three times before his shrine.

He sat slumped down in one of the nice shabby chairs in the Cliff Dwellers' aerie puffing away at a pipe that went out oftener than it went.

We talked about everything from American literature's going to the dogs, which he didn't think it was, to Chicago as a fiction treasure chest.

"I've been writing exclusively about Chicago for years," he said. "I suppose the reason why more writers choose New York for their stories is because you can write about New York and no one exists to paint the tale with local colors. You write about Chicago and your readers demand landmarks."

I dibbed that a person who wanted to know the town could never get acquainted through Chicago fiction and Mr. Webster said, "Yes, but what of 'Sister Carrie'? Was there ever anything more the real Chicago than the first half of that? Great stuff, 'Sister Carrie.' One of the few great American novels. Dreiser has never done anything since then that will compare with it. Henry Fuller wrote two lovely things about Chicago. But you're right, there's no literary Chicago as there is a literary New York."

Mr. Webster's new book, hight "The Real Adventure," is all about Chicago. The book, he explained, is much longer and somewhat better than the serial was.

I wanted to know how he works.

"I go to my office, a regular business office, at 9 o'clock every morning except Sunday," he said. "I have a stenographer and I dictate everything to her. Sometimes I will spend three or four hours thinking things over before I begin to dictate, but when I once get started I don't stop. I figure out the way my story is going before I say a word. I don't let conversation or my own incidental interest in the subject lure me from the main path. The story has to move, and when I feel that it isn't moving I can't go on with it. Writing is hard work for me, devilish hard work. It's a job that takes everything I have to put into it. I'm what you might call a painstaking writer, I suppose. I work with my story and work hard. After I once decide on how things ought to go, though, and after I've dictated it as I think it ought to be, I don't revise and I don't change anything. A first draft of a story would probably have no more than two or three corrections or revisions to a page.

"When I can't write I can't, and there's no good trying. I wrote on this serial from February till November, and I didn't do anything else. Sometimes for three days at a time I couldn't do anything on 'The Real Adventure.' I'd walk the floor, thinking, but things didn't seem to come right; then all of a sudden I'd start to getting down the result of those days of work. Normally I should do a thousand words a day, but with two or three days of silence I would have to dictate sometimes as much as 3,000 or 4,000 words a day. That doesn't seem like a great deal, but, as I told you, I am a slow and hard worker."

I knew that there was a time when he did "screamers," mystery romances, of 60,000 to 80,000 words in a month, and I asked him about them.

"That's a closed book in my life," he said. "Yes, I used to do them, but of course they're different. They did me good, though. I was in danger of getting too fine spun—we all are, you know—and I did those for a year or two and got back some of the commonness of life. Once I wrote an anonymous confession about writing the things and sent it to the *Saturday Evening Post*, and I think in less than a week everybody in the country knew about it. Of course I didn't sign the screamers."

If space permitted I'd tell you about the way he gets material, forgetting that he's an author with a capital A and getting acquainted with folks 'cause they're folks, not just good copy. And I'd like to tell you about some of his youthful experiences in getting interviews on the theory that if the reporter talked enough so that the person interviewed didn't have a chance to say anything, he, the person interviewed, wouldn't talk interview twaddle. And I'd like to have you hear him say that American literature isn't in such a bad way, really.

TOLSTOY'S PROOF CORRECTING AND HIS WIFE'S DEVOTION

In the intimate record "Reminiscences of Tolstoy" (Century) by his son, Count Ilya Tolstoy, the latter throws light on the famous definition of genius as the taking of infinite pains and at the same time exhibits the devotion of Tolstoy's wife. He says:

"My mother's work seemed much harder than my father's because we actually saw her at it, and she worked much longer hours than he did. She used to sit in the small drawing room off the zala, at her little writing table, and spend all her free time writing. Leaning over the manuscript and trying to decipher my father's scrawl with her short sighted eyes, she used to spend whole evenings at work, and often sat up late at night after everybody else had gone to bed. * * * My father * * * had a very bad handwriting and a terrible habit of inserting whole sentences between the lines, or in the corners of the page, or sometimes right across it. My mother often discovered gross grammatical errors, and pointed them out to my father and corrected them.

"When 'Anna Karenina' began to come out in the *Russki Viestnik* long galley proofs were posted to my father, and he looked them through and corrected them. At first, the margins would be marked with the ordinary typographical signs, letters omitted, marks of punctuation and so on; then individual words would be changed, and then whole sentences, erasures and additions began; till in the end the proof sheet was reduced to a mass of patches, perfectly black in places, and it was quite impossible to send it back as it stood, because no one but my mother could make head or tail of the tangle of conventional signs, transpositions and erasures.

"My mother would sit up all night copying the whole thing out afresh.

"In the morning there lay the pages on her table, neatly piled together, covered all over with her fine clear handwriting, and everything was ready so that when Lyovotchka came down he could send the proof sheets off by post.

"My father would carry them off to his study to have 'just one last look,' and by the evening it was just as bad again; the whole thing had been rewritten and messed up once more.

"'Sonya, my dear, I am very sorry, but I've spoilt all your work again; I promise I won't do it any more,' he would say, showing her the passages he had inked over with a guilty air. 'We'll send them off to-morrow without fail.' But this to-morrow was often put off day by day for weeks or months together.

"'There's just one bit I want to look through again,' my father would say, but he would get carried away and rewrite the whole thing afresh. There were even occasions when, after posting the proofs, my father remembered some particular words next day and corrected them by telegraph."

Books Received.

"Historic Indiana." Julia Henderson Levering. (G. P. Putnam's Sons.)

"The Magazine in America." Algernon Tassin. (Dodd, Mead and Company.)

"The Philosophy of Wang Yang Ming." Frederick Goodrich Henke. (Open Court Publishing Company, Chicago.)

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