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Some Of The Later Books

ALARMED

Review by Thomas Boyd

Lothrop Stoddard: Scientific Humanism. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

LOTHROP STODDARD always has something to worry his readers about. First there was his "Rising Tide of Color Against White World Supremacy" which essayed to show that the race problem is greater and more universal than you would be led to suspect by the ordinary reports of lynchings, Chicago race riots, Washington race riots and so forth; that there are a great many Negroes in Africa and that some day they might all unite to challenge the leadership and power of the whites. Mr. Stoddard's next book was "The New World of Islam," in which he showed the white race the danger which confronted it by the awakening of the Mahommedans. And the third book aimed to present a few shivers over the fact that civilization as it exists today and is practised by the whites may be overthrown by the unintelligent, hybrid white stock which is itself a part of this civilization. Even such a good worrier on public matters as the late Lord Northcliffe gave Mr. Stoddard the palm and advised all wide-awake people to read his books.

Thomas Boyd

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NOW Mr. Stoddard comes forth with another candle for viewing with alarm. His latest work is entitled "Scientific Humanism," and in it he rouses the reader to the dangers of the present age, the great scientific age which may overwhelm civilization, the great clash between religious fundamentalists and men of science.

"A new age is at hand," announces Mr. Stoddard on page 151, repeating the assertion for the fifth time. "Its dawning lights the sky. What is that new age to be? Will it witness a fresh flowering of the human spirit?—a great advance along the path of progress? Or will the rose tints of dawn be overcast by clouds heralding a day of storm and stress and closing in the night of another Dark Age?"

That is what, at present, is worrying Mr. Stoddard. He wants to know whether we will be able to adjust our selves to the new world which modern science has disclosed, whether our present transition time with all its unparalleled possibilities for good and ill will culminate in a great civilization or in a great catastrophe.

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WE are in a "perilous present," Mr. Stoddard thinks, because we are unable to grasp the miracles of science, because the human brain cannot keep up with the long strides which modern research is making. The fundamentalists, he thinks, take a false view of the Bible and a false view of science. To Mr. Stoddard science and religion go hand in hand, and he sees the attacks of Rev. John Roach Stratton as a menace to our advancement. But just why Mr. Stoddard should be so concerned does not fully appear in his book.

The Shanty Sled

Robert Pastore: The Ronald Press. New York: George H. Doran Company.

ALL was excitement in the trading settlement at Bear Coulee in the wilderness country for the boys, led by Hugh Bell, a simple, strong and direct young giant, were starting on the long winter journey to Miwaan Landing, Athabasca, for supplies. "And Old Woman" Hambert was sending a letter to her daughter, whom she had not seen since infancy. Meanwhile Miss Selina Hambert was assaying art on West Eighth street, New York city, and wishing that she knew "a man, simple, strong, and direct in his nature." Mr. Footner cannot resist the temptation to send Selina scooting up to the north, where naturally she meets Hugh, who conveys her to Bear Coulee in a wonderful sled with all modern improvements. On the way there is an attack by Indians, and those who believe that Selina is going to marry the despicable Macrubin after she gets there are at liberty to do so. A pleasing feature of this virile yarn is a map showing the position of rivers, muskeg and everything, not to mention a very wild animal leaping over a range of mountains and a dotted line enabling one to keep track of the shanty sled on its exciting travels.

A Man's Man

Roman P. Day: When the Fight Begins. Boston: Small, Maynard & Company.

HOLMAN DAY'S novelistic muse is not serious, not to say sober, this season. Instead of the hearty fun of "Clothes Make the Pirate," of fond memory, Mr. Day treats his followers to a somewhat awfish yarn about John Lang, an squidgetty lawyer and politician of singularly obtuse spirit and generally unhumorous proclivities. "Before God, I swear that you shall not marry Shiddy Trask," declaims the hero to Reba Dunworth, who prefers Shiddy's silly gayetine to Lang's ponderous ruthlessness. Nevertheless, what with life's little complications, Lang soon transfers his affections to Mavis Duncan, and when, after a period of contemplation in the north woods, she bears him tell her, "I want my mate," she may rest assured that love or its equivalent will find a way. The sudden death of Shiddy, a murder trial, a realistic scene of political activity, provide filler for what is at most times a matching story.

MIRRORS OF TURKEY

Review of Halide Edib's Memoirs

By MARY MILLS PATRICK
President of Constantinople Woman's College

MEMOIRS of Halide Edib really stands as one of the most remarkable biographies of the day. The writer, although she has a background of disciplined activity, as novelist, educator, editor and statesman, writes with psychological simplicity. It is almost as if her soul were placed before a mirror and she were reproducing the memory pictures which appeared there. Every word bears the impress of truth.

As a member of the aristocracy, Halide Edib is able to give us an inside view of the romantic and epoch-making periods covering the decline and fall of the Turkish empire and the birth of the new republic. As her father was secretary to the sultan, she is well qualified to furnish a vivid description of the wonders of Turkish life when affluence abounded. The spacious halls, the turbaned slaves, the delicious food, to which no other cuisine can compare, the many-roomed palaces, gliding up and down the blue Bosphorus, the revues with their velvet and dresses and brilliant uniforms, the Turkish ladies in their gauzy veils and robes and white veiled faces were distinct recollections of her childhood.

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THERE can be no commentary on polygamy as drastic as the sufferings of this sensitive child in a polygamous entourage, when she, herself, was too young to understand the cause of her unhappiness. Now that polygamy is illegal in Turkey, such a vivid picture of life in the seclusion of the harem as is given by Halide Edib is an invaluable contribution to the history of that time. Shining through all the unhappiness in the family life was the wonderful relation between her and her father. In the recounting of her childhood experiences there are many illuminating touches revealing the customs of the time, such as allusions to the "bed on the floor," "the chief of the coffee makers," "the women behind the lattice," and the men in Yildiz palace carrying trays of food on their heads destined for the royal ladies and officials of the palace. She mentions a man who married to get a good cook, but had to take three wives before he succeeded; and also a man with two wives, one white and one black, and the embarrassment that followed. There is a charming description of her sister's wedding when the whole household had silk costumes to celebrate the event. About this time her father bought two little Abyssinian slave girls for her and her stepmother. A thread of music runs through the first part of this book, in snatches of the Turkish folksongs, which she used to chant in her childhood.

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AS a small child, she attended a Greek kindergarten, and was unconscious that she was speaking two languages, Greek at school, and Turkish at home. Education in an American college transformed to a certain extent the deep impressions of her childhood, and opened new vistas which developed an open-minded attitude toward different kinds of life. It was during the latter part of the reign of the tyrannical Hamid II, that a little girl, with shining dark eyes and wearing a red silk dress, came with her father to be enrolled in the preparatory department of Constantinople Woman's College. Although obliged to leave the college for a time on account of the strict law that no Turkish children could attend foreign schools, she afterward returned and completed her course with honor, being the first Turkish woman to receive the degree of Bachelor of Arts.

THE book is very valuable historically. The second part treats of important political changes and their causes, as seen by one on the inside. The futile and hypocritical efforts to return made by Sultan Hamid, toward the end of his reign, are well described. Then she introduces us to the party called "The Young Turks," and gives an account of the constitutional revolution in 1908, with all its high ideals and emotional excitement, an attempt to establish "Equality, Liberty, Justice and Fraternity." In the midst of the joy and enthusiasm of these days came the counter revolution, with a momentary blast of the old tyranny of Sultan Hamid's regime. Many of the reformers lost their lives. Halide herself took refuge in Constantinople Woman's College, a haven of safety which she reached with difficulty. After four days of concealment in the college she fled to Egypt. The reign of Sultan Reshad, under Mahmoud Shefket Pasha, arrived shortly after, in time to save Constantinople from general disaster.

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OTHER subjects taken up in the second part of the book are the Balkan war, the causes of Nationalism and Pan-Turanism in Turkey, and her educational activities in Syria during the early part of the World war.

Halide Thanum devotes an interesting chapter to the society called the Turk Ojak. This is a national club, non-political, and devoted purely to culture. Turk Ojak means "Turkish Hearth." It was first founded in 1912 and included many young students, and leading Turkish writers. The club provided free lectures for the public and its membership included men of all political creeds. Halide Edib was prominent in drawing up the constitution of this club. In 1912 she was elected, the only woman member, and in 1918 she was chosen one of a council of 11 to modify the constitution. A new clause was introduced making women eligible to membership. Since that time many Ojaks have risen up in different parts of Turkey and have increased the love of education among the people.

* * *

THIS versatile woman included the drama among her other interests. She translated several of Shakespeare's plays for the Turkish stage. In addition, she dramatized the story of Joseph, under the title of "The Shepherds of Canaan," which was produced most effectively in the schools. The dim silhouettes of the desert, the tall young Turkish girls, heavily draped in long robes, standing and walking with the dignity that is the inheritance of the east, produced a true picture of the story.

Perhaps the most striking part of the life of Halide Edib is connected with her constructive work at the time of the formation of the new Republic of Turkey, of which Mustapha Kemal is president.

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The large hairy spiders known as tarantulas are bred in Australia for the sake of their webs, the filaments of which are made into thread for balloons. Each tarantula yields from 20 to 40 yards of filament, of which eight pieces twisted together form a single thread of sufficient stoutness for strength and durability, and it is lighter than silk.

Tight Rope

Marjorie Carleton: The Reynolds Golden Series. Small, Maynard & Company.

VENUS PETERSEN. Even her name explains something. She is one of the "Five Daring Petersens" who are famous for their circus feats of physical prowess. Venus, with her perfect physique, appeared on eloquent posters when she was only 13 because of her famous tightrope stunts between the 60-foot mast of a ship. Her father is no less than "Pied Piper Petersen," world famous for his rainmaking stunt. Ed, her brother, is a human fly and her twin, Phoenix, and Xiphi will have each their little fame. Even her mammoth mother was the "greatest trapeze performer of her time, but she kind of put on weight after you children came along." But Venus' temperament and her college education made her less suited to the adequacy of their particular kind of fame, and it is that desire to escape from notoriety which leads her to accept a position which is actually novel, even in fiction.

The nephew of an old Boston family of wealth and position is in a critical mental condition. He was gassed in the war and is subject to frequent spells of amnesia and mental varsomnes. His wife, to whom he was devoted, was killed in an automobile accident soon after his return, and it is very possible that the shock of this was partly responsible for his condition. It is evident that he is grieving for some memory which he can never quite capture. His uncle, Miles Gellert, finds that no masculine attendant can be the right kind of companion, and therefore wants a woman to take care of him who will be willing to become his second wife, so she can be with him at all times. Venus accepts this role, provided her family and past remain uninvestigated, and gives in return the required assurance of health and respectability.

Venus resumes her real name, Helga, and marries Drake Gellert with a full understanding on both sides as to the nature of the arrangement. Her only mission is to try to restore him to his old vigor and to help him forget his unhappiness at the loss of his wife Helga, as they all realize, is very different from the type of girl who would naturally consent to such a position. She has a beauty which is truly splendid and which is hardly the result of the rigid training her body has always been given. She has a charm and intelligence that make her doubly attractive and she slips into her place in Boston aristocracy with admirable poise. It was what she had bargained for, she had always had respect and prominence, but always also notoriety. Now she has escaped the fame of "Five Daring Petersens" and in this impregnable stronghold has made a place by virtue of her own personality.

It is very interesting to see the gradual change in Helga's attitude toward the same impregnable stronghold—how she progresses from a state of bewilderment, doubt, and finally contempt. For her story does not end with her conquest of the Gellert family. Before the cycle is completed it becomes necessary for them to prove to Helga that it is worth while for her to accept them. Especially notorious is one thing, but notorious respectability is quite another.

This is a very entertaining book. It is written not with polish but with forceful charm, and its characters have enough intelligence to make them completely interesting.

BOOTH TARKINGTON, who from "The Gentleman from Indiana" and "Monsieur Beaucaire" on through to "Alice Adams" and "Women" has worked in the materials of romance, has now set down a definition to cover all that romance is. "Romance," says Mr. Tarkington in "The First Story Ever Told" in June McClure Magazine, "is man's easiest way to think about himself."

BETTER WRITING

Review by Ruth Snyder

Harry Seidel Canby: Better Writing. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co.

WE HAVE had many books on the art of writing come to our desk, but none has been more satisfactory and more inspiring than "Better Writing," by Henry Seidel Canby. One reason may be traced to the fact that Dr. Canby practises what he preaches. Another reason for this complete satisfaction and inspiration lies in the buoyancy of his explanations. He tells his subject matter what to do—not what not to do. We believe that all students who read this book will want to keep it handy not only as a textbook but as a little book which to draw hope, guidance and wisdom.

"The purpose of this book," writes Dr. Canby, in his introduction, "is to describe what must happen in a writer's mind if, with something worth writing about, he is to write not badly but well."

To achieve this purpose the author has divided his work into a chapter on ideas. From the conception of the idea, he goes on to describe "How to Say It," "Style," "Mechanics," a chapter on grammar, rhetoric, punctuation, etc. Next comes "Disabilities and Diseases," including discussions on fluency, congestion, crossed pulls, poets, beauty rash, rickets, faulty brakes, etc. The eighth chapter deals with speculations—the essay, the article, the short story, etc. In conclusion, Dr. Canby furnishes some hints for practice and suggestions tests to guide in self analyses.

And now, since Dr. Canby has expressed himself so well on the subject of letter writing, we are going to quote quite freely from his book. He writes: "A dull mind with a clear idea is better than a facile brain with a muddled thought in it."

"Technique is shrewdness. It is not a question of logic; it is how you use logic. It is not a question of imagination; it is how you use imagination."

"... style is the measure of control over what is being written. The control itself comes from a firm handling of the idea and a mastery of expression, but when power over the order of thought and of words and over words themselves approaches complete, then the result is felt as a perfection and harmony of the whole. That mature of completeness is style."

"A good medicine is to condense, compress, reduce. Beware of the adverb and the adjective. Think less of modals and more of ideas. Remember that writing is first and always expression, and that a sense of elemental words upon a thought fully expressible by subject matter is as homogeneous as icing on a pie."

"Begin at the beginning and end when you are done."

In a chapter devoted to "who should and who should not write," Dr. Canby gives five ways in which the born writer may be diagnosed before he is successful. The first is desire; the second, determination; the third, words; the fourth, inventiveness; the fifth, rhythm. If you find you can live up to these five tests you will agree with Dr. Canby's assertion that "good writing is perhaps as difficult as good playing on the piano, more difficult than good cooking, less difficult than good living, but to know how to do it is no great merit."

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SYLVIA THOMPSON, author of "The Hounds of Spring," which has become one of the best-selling novels of the season, is a young lady of serious tastes—and others not so serious. Her hobbies include social work and politics. Also, she has a mascot, a small and very grubby teddy bear, bearing the name Peter Vesuvius Snaigrove. It accompanies her everywhere, and has thus visited the United States, Canada and Germany. After her marriage on June 1, to Peter Loding, she will successively visit, it is reported, the Riviera, Vienna, Budapest, California and Rome—and fortunate Peter Vesuvius will doubtless go with her.

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