

The Saturday Review

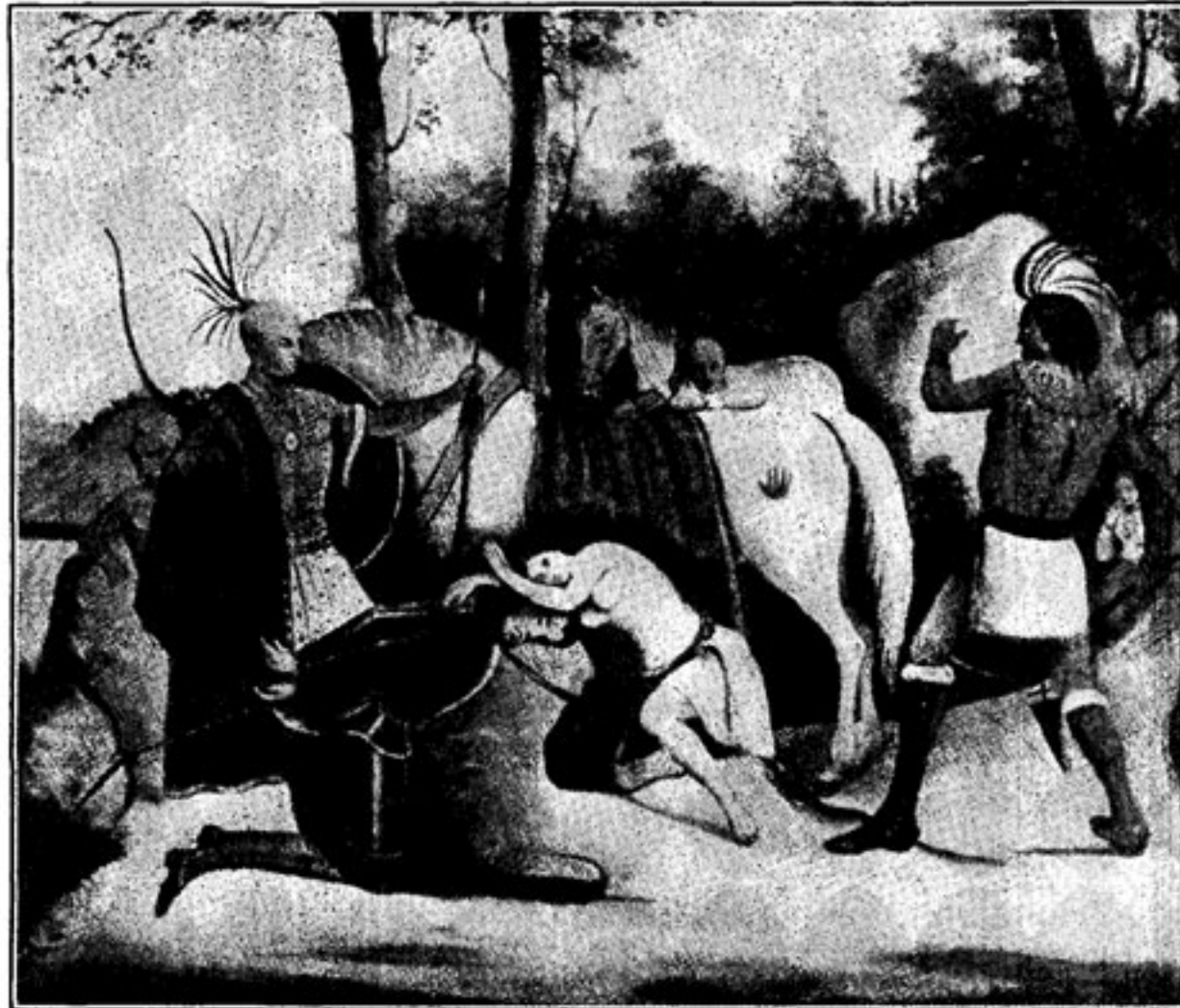
of LITERATURE

EDITED BY HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

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NUMBER 31



POCAHONTAS SAVING CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH.
From "American Folk Art" (Norton).

Magazines Are Human

MAGAZINES are like all those structures which man erects to shelter his sensitive body and his active wits. They are like houses, which so often acquire personalities of their own quite different from what their architects intended, and different, too, in a queer, half-human way, from the personalities of those who live and love in their cubby holes.

Books are born with all their traits and often die with, and of, them. Magazines acquire personality slowly, shaping themselves in a queer, uncontrollable fashion to fit the minds of their readers—not, to be sure the minds which readers would call their own, but some more essential psychologies made up of unconscious prejudices and unguessed wants mingled with conscious tastes and desires. Hence the finished magazine is a created being that may have no soul but certainly possesses a mind of its own and a personality. It steps out into society, seeking its place and responding to its environment, and a social historian could describe it as if it were animate.

The *New Yorker*, for example. The *New Yorker* is like one of those perky little maisonnettes set in the façade of a vast apartment house, and grinning up at pretentiousness and absurdity. It stands on its own threshold watching the doorman handing incredible women out of limousines, rolling under its tongue what may be happening in the pent house, winking at the children sliding on the asphalt, and batting an eye at the super-tenement across the street in whose windows New York is living its private life in public. It is bourgeois itself or it could not enjoy these delightful absurdities, and it has the bourgeois qualities of good sense and belly laughter, but refined by a quick-moving intellect and ripened into that best of all provincialism which sees itself against a backdrop of the world. No aristocratic magazine can be published in America, —and carry advertising. *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair* are proof. The mixture of snobism and familiarity which distinguishes expensive advertising, and the shameless display of would-be aristocrats selling

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Lady Into Facts

POCAHONTAS. By DAVID GARNETT. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company. 1933. \$2.50.

Reviewed by BRANCH CABELL

THE author of "Lady into Fox" is not the first Englishman to be beguiled by King Powhatan's best known daughter. As all good Thackerayans will remember, Sir George Esmond Warrington also (shortly after his runaway marriage with Miss Theo Lambert, and no great while after his well merited success with "Carpezan") attempted a tragedy upon the same theme. Such Thackerayans will recall likewise that, in its opening and only performance, at Drury Lane Theatre, with the bewitching Pritchard in the title role, Sir George's "Pocahontas" failed flatly—here one quotes the playwright's own rueful admission—on account of its "actual fidelity to history."

I note in this fashion these facts because, in the first place, Mr. Garnett has followed Sir George Warrington both in theme and in historical excess; and because, in the second place, I really do wonder why the involved bit of my own family's history should have been thought worthy of such careful adhesion, by either author.

Through no apparent fault of hers, my cousin Pocahontas has been made, if not the first, at least the first feminine member, of that tinsel and flimsy line of humbugs which keep gaudy, and which render ever popular, the approved history of a republic peculiarly partial to humbugs. All the great-grandchildren of Macaulay's every schoolboy know the circumstances of my cousin's romantic rescue of Captain John Smith from the bludgeons of my uncle Powhatan. And that is quite as it should be, inasmuch as, upon this ever memorable occasion, the conduct of Pocahontas was of a cast so noble as to evoke one's honest regret that Pocahontas should never have heard about it—any more, of course, than did Columbus ever hear about the discovery of America, or George Washington about his cherry tree, or Barbara Fritchie about her flag waving.

I speak here, as becomes a Virginian, with marked reluctance. Not willingly

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Message and Middlebrow

By MARGARET WIDDEMER.

EVERY year after the Pulitzer Awards are given a low voice or two murmurs, usually with a certain meekness, that it's a little odd about the book and play prizes. Mr. Pulitzer, it seems, made certain rules having to do with ideals in American life, or what have you. And while the awards are made with all due effort to crown literary merit, the clause about the American ideals has been lost somewhere along the road. I took my own personal doubts in all humility to the best critic I knew.

"Each award," he pronounced, "must be based on artistic merit, not passing moralities."

The end of his sentence interested me in itself.

"You mean that morality," said I, pinning him, "is out?"

"Today," said the critic austerly, "there is only left us the biologic viewpoint. . . . Joyce, Lawrence, Hemingway. . . ."

I interrupted the litany so swiftly that he had scarcely time to unfold his hands.

"But if they have taken morality out of literature, why have they left so much immorality in?" I asked, conscious as I spoke that I sounded like a common or garden-club reader, or—worse—was being flippant.

"You cannot discuss art in terms of morality or immorality," he said.

Logically, of course, he was right.

"But actually, the reading public does discuss art—or at least its literary end—in those terms," I said apologetically.

"I suppose by the reading public you mean the sort of clubwoman who comes up and asks you for your Message before the lecture," said he with no note of apology at all.

Of course that clubwoman does exist—how many of her! She informs the club, beaming above the massed orchids on her violet velvet bosom, "Our lecturer has come to bring you a Message. . . ." But in one point my scornful friend was right. The club audience and its husbands, taking it by and large, is pretty much the reading public.

For unless we take the tabloid addict class as the norm, or the tiny group of intellectuals, what is the reading public but the public that reads; the men and women, fairly civilized, fairly literate, who support the critics and lecturers and publishers by purchasing their wares? And they are not highbrow or lowbrow; they are middlebrow. They are the group whose mores were to be found in the excellent secondary novels of that shameless Victorian time which was so sure of itself that it betrayed what it really thought and felt about books and life and steam engines and everything in the world.

Now the middlebrow novel, where minor and sometimes major if unacknowledged popular mores are kept, flies in amber, is always with us. It is not written, like the work of the giants, *sub specie aeternitatis*. I have learned more of the actual conventions and ideas of the Victorians from such as Amelia B. Edwards, Dinah Maria Mulock, Miss Braddon, and Wilkie Collins than from everything George Eliot ever wrote.

It followed that it could still be done. I began with young women, requesting to be led to their favorite writers. The first book I was given had the following plot:

Laura, the usual heroine of fiction—that is, one with courage, beauty, charm, edu-

cation, feeling, sincerity, and humor—came to New York and surveyed Love and Marriage. The book was done with vividness and honesty, but I found that from the beginning of the story all the characters imposed on themselves an unfair burden. They felt constrained to keep the pose of adolescent nonchalance stiffly still in the years when they were fighting actual life. Of course, as they were emotionally inexperienced, their intellectual attitudes got them no comfort. Instead of thinking in youth's normal way that there was a glorious meaning to life and they were God's little pet lambs they either denied life any meaning with disproportionate bitterness, or tried with the agony of lost puppies to discover it in the intervals of affairs and speakeasies.

Now trying to discover the Meaning of Life is a job which should be left to quiet, elderly gentlemen. The young bring to the gamble too much real money and too little skill. The only contribution to the Meaning of Life in this particular book was Laura's shocked discovery that hard, selfish people get on better than sensitive, unselfish ones.

The characters suffered as much as every young generation; but they had lost all armor against pain beyond the casual speakeasy. Something had indeed made them believe they must be biologic; but with as much romantic love to give, they found nowhere to spend it except the casual bed. They were bound by the terms of some unspoken contract with their kind and the world to suppress all natural silly *joie de vivre* in favor of a wry satire which gave them no emotional release; they tried for a tremendous, unfettered drive at life, but they denied themselves any target. They had no resources, in short, beyond

This Week

IN MEMORIAM—RICHARD WATSON GILDER.

By ROBERT UNDERWOOD JOHNSON.

"NAPOLEON."

Reviewed by CHARLES DAVID ABBOTT.

"THE GERMAN PHOENIX."

Reviewed by WILLIAM HARLAN HALE.

JAN WELZL.

"LOG OF THE SEA."

Reviewed by ROBERT KEITH LEAVITT.

"GOD'S LITTLE ACRE."

Reviewed by JONATHAN DANIELS.

"ERIE WATER."

Reviewed by CHRISTOPHER WARD.

"IN TRAGIC LIFE."

Reviewed by ALLAN NEVINS.

"THE ESKIMOS."

Reviewed by VILHJALMUR STEFANSSON.

"MASTERS OF THE CHESSBOARD."

Reviewed by JONATHAN DOOLITTLE.

"BIOGRAPHY."

Reviewed by WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

THE FOLDER.

By CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

Next Week, or Later

"THE COMING STRUGGLE FOR POWER."

Reviewed by FABIAN FRANKLIN.

New Napoleons

NAPOLEON. By HILAIRE BELLOC. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co. 1932. \$4.

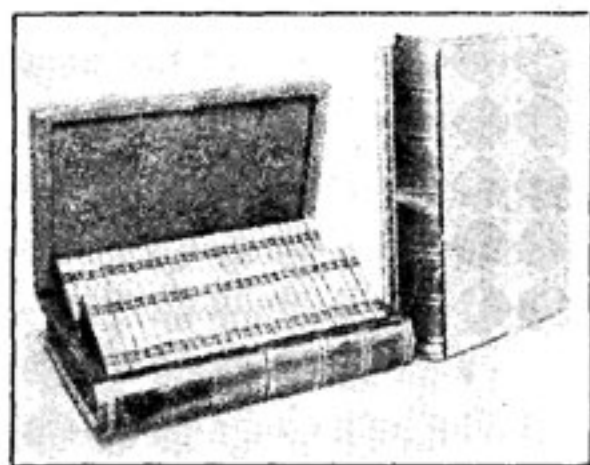
NAPOLEON. By JACQUES BAINVILLE. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1933. \$3.75.

Reviewed by CHARLES DAVID ABBOTT

NO year is complete without a study or two of Napoleon. This season has already seen two, and neither of them without merit. That one of the new biographies should come from the indefatigable Mr. Belloc can hardly be termed a surprise in itself, nor are there many surprises within it to startle the admirers either of Napoleon or of the author. It is a new length from the old cloth; the warp and the woof are as strong as ever. It is fortunate that Mr. Belloc's talent for vigorous narrative gives a racy vitality to all his books. Otherwise, his ubiquitous argument, his thundering paradoxes, and his partisan belligerence might grow wearisome. He scolds and he flatters; he distorts and he dogmatizes, until the reader is almost driven to give up any interest he may have in the facts and to devote himself solely to an understanding of Mr. Belloc's whims and caprices. But with all these stormings the burly narrative usually triumphs.

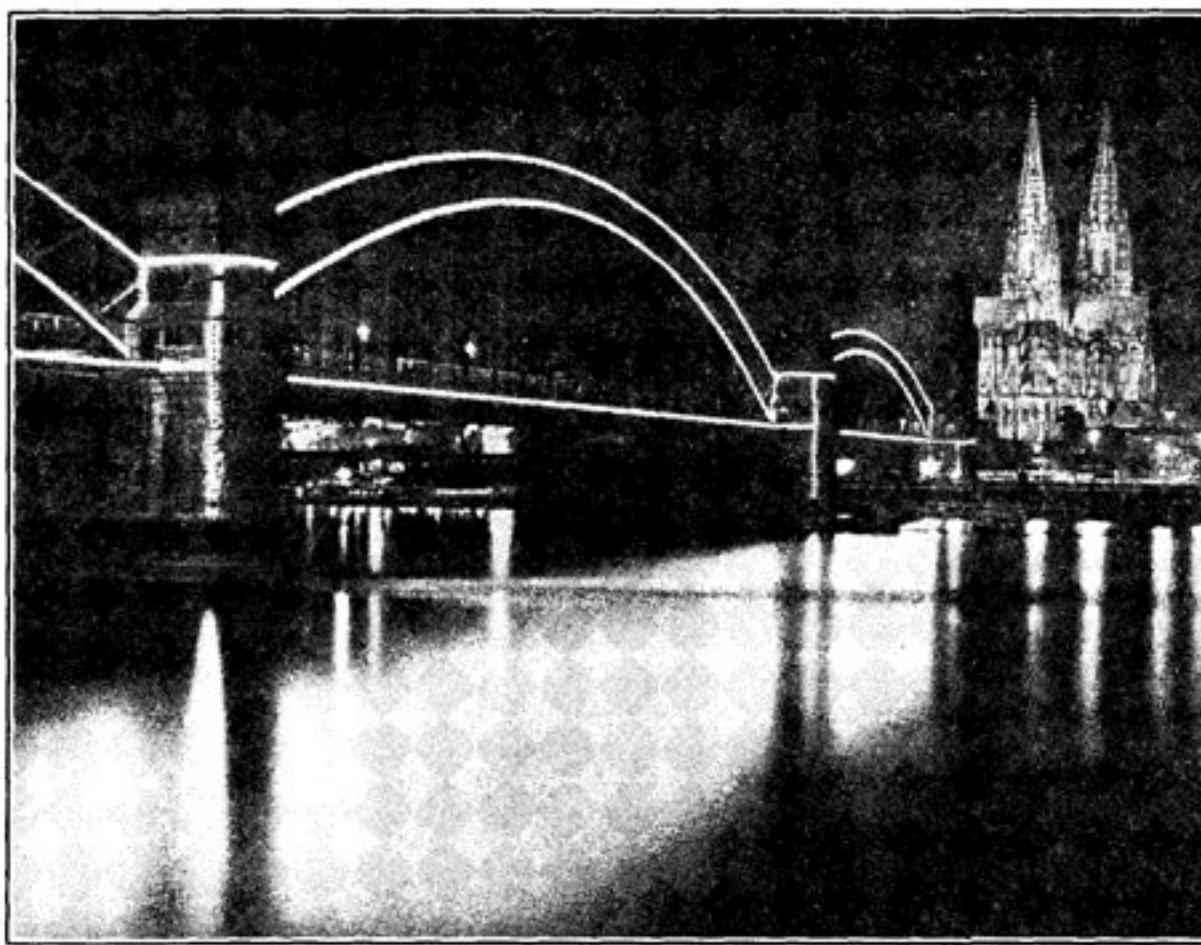
This is peculiarly true in this book. All the chips on the shoulder are paraded and defended in a long introductory essay on the career of Napoleon in general, its importance and its tragic significance. If only he had been in the end successful, how much a later Europe would have been spared. The Federation of the World might indeed have been a reality. But Napoleon's great defect lay in his incapacity for just dealing with the church, and thereby came, not precisely his fall (other factors aided that), but his failure to weld together a new civilization out of the variable states of a disorganized Europe. When once these opinions have been aired and debated with the Bellocian gusto, then the book settles down to a semi-discreet presentation of the facts. There is no effort to achieve completeness; instead, the rise and fall of the Emperor are treated in a series of episodes, each very explicit and dramatic, the full effect of which is to give the reader a rapid, vivid, cinematic spectacle of a staggering epic struggle.

M. Bainville's book is a more pedestrian piece of work, less tense, less prejudiced, less blustering, and much more minutely informative. It is a calm, rational examination of Napoleon the man, who was a human being before and while he was a hero, and whose deeds and the motives behind them were not, except perhaps in scope, unlike those of other men. M. Bainville is never lured into worship. He is too critical for that, too much the judge. His curiosity explores all the pertinent facts; his aloofness presents them in the right proportions. Without being iconoclastic, he is never unconscious of the feet of clay. If he dwells most impressively upon the earthy littlenesses, it is because he believes them necessary to the truth. Unlike Mr. Belloc he has no thesis to prove. He merely desires to present, as accurately and completely as diligence and scholarship will permit, not the Napoleon of romantic legend, but the Napoleon of very mundane flesh and blood.



NAPOLEON'S TRAVELING LIBRARY.

A large number of the volumes of Napoleon's travelling libraries which accompanied him on all his campaigns are now being exhibited in Berlin by the bookdealer, Martin Breslauer. Books which he had read but did not like were thrown out of the travelling coach by Napoleon and nicked up by his pages.



BRIDGE AND RAILROAD STATION AT COLOGNE AT NIGHT.

From a photograph by Heinz Sangermann reproduced from "Das Deutsche Lichtbild, 1932."

From the Ashes

THE GERMAN PHOENIX: The Story of the Republic. By OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD. New York: Harrison Smith & Robert Haas. 1933. \$2.50.

By WILLIAM HARLAN HALE

POLITICAL and social upsets in Germany follow each other so quickly that it seems almost futile to try to catch up with them in books. Yet the first month of 1933 has brought two volumes on the subject, both written by American journalists in a tone of high authority. They offer the calm of a dispassionate survey in the midst of chaotic events.

The first, Edgar A. Mowrer's "Germany Puts the Clock Back," dealt exclusively with German politics, and specifically with its personages; it was pointed up to the current reactionary movement and described what Mr. Mowrer sees as the collapse of the Republic. The second, Oswald Garrison Villard's "The German Phoenix," is a more general analysis of the state of the nation. Although concerned primarily with the crucial political changes that have taken place since the Revolution, the book gives a generous amount of space to German education, art, journalism, and private life.

Mr. Villard is, as one would expect, a passionate champion of the Socialist Germany that emerged from the ashes of the 1918 ruin. He regards the Revolution, with its overthrow of castes and privileges, as the common German's recovery of his rights. The Republic, which seemed destined to such a surety of existence until the nationalist wave of 1930 swept in, he regards as a blessing to the German peoples. Mr. Villard raises a great alarm as he sees the Republic now falling into an eclipse; but he does not believe, as Mr. Mowrer does, that it is definitely on the skids. With all that fervent pleading which one associates with his organ, the *Nation*, Mr. Villard hopes for a recovery of the embattled Social-Democracy.

Here lies the force of the book; and here also its fault. In his dismissal of the old monarchic rulers of Germany, and his indignation against the new nationalist rulers, the author has a tendency to divide all Germany into white sheep and black sheep. His first chapters, which describe the evolution of modern Germany, tend to make every Imperial office-holder into a bungler, every Hitlerite or militarist into a villain, and every Republican or Socialist into an enlightened reformer. Mr. Villard credits the half-baked revolutionaries of the Weimar Assembly with considerably more genius than they showed; he plays down the fact that these Eberts and Scheidemanns prepared their own eventual ruin by compromising at every turn with the old-fashioned order. Even Stresemann, the greatest man of the Republic, was thrilled to the core when he could associate himself with the Crown Prince. But Mr. Villard tends to overlook the vacillations and weaknesses

of the leaders of the Republic; above all, he does not recognize the tremendous hold which the past of Germany has exerted even on the most radical of its minds.

Mr. Villard always looks hopefully for a national life of reason; and he seems rather helplessly outraged when hard, inevitable reactions, such as the new militarist movement in Germany, carry the scene. His tendency is to stand aside and denounce: the Versailles Treaty is always "wicked," the stupidities of this monarchist or that nationalist are always "incredible." The argumentative force of the book is materially weakened when one comes across such captious dismissals as "our all but wholly reactionary United States" or the easy, brash conclusion that "the world economy of today is being conducted along insane lines." There are stronger forms of criticism than such vituperation.

But when some of the highly tendentious passages are discounted, the book appears as a first-rate inquiry into the government, the social institutions, and the specific problems of Germany. Mr. Villard's investigations, conducted over a period of many years, have been thorough and sympathetic; an exact scholarship buttresses his points. His answer to Garet Garrett's unscrupulous charges, in "Other People's Money," of German dishonesty and deception in the financial dealings with the Allies, is a masterpiece of refutation. He traces exactly the rising tax burden of the nation, the great budget economies which have been effected in the face of a mounting dole, and the courage and public-mindedness of the Reich's financial policy. Mr. Villard offers a thorough-going analysis of the agrarian situation and reveals the dangerous subventions which the government must dole out to its East-Prussian masters, the wealthy and perpetually "suffering" landlords.

Perhaps best of all of Mr. Villard's descriptive chapters is the inquiry into the process of socialization since the Revolution. Few Americans know the enormous part which the German government plays, indirectly as shareholder, directly as manager, of the national industries. Of course, practically all transportation lines are government-owned; the *Reichsbahn* is leased by the State to a Presidential commission. Fifty-six percent of all power production comes from government plants. The State owns great shipbuilding works, controls a practical monopoly of aluminum, has taken over the Gelsenkirchen mines and thus has a major hand in the steel and iron industry; it operates private banks and building companies, and since the crisis of July, 1931, controls, through mergers and subventions, three-quarters of all German banking. The great home of cartels, monopolies, of price-fixing and wage-fixing groups. Germany has gone far more than half

way into socialism. Even the presence of a sharply reactionary government, such as the present, could never fully reverse the process and succeed in going back to capitalism.

Always a Socialist, and always interested chiefly in the cause of the working classes, Mr. Villard believes that in the end there will have to be an end of Junker and nationalist rule—although he does recognize the present dispersal of the labor unions and the impossibility of a general strike. With Hitler and his band of fanatics he has little patience; he regards them as creatures of the crisis and the depression, and trusts that the compromises which office responsibility entail will break down their bloody and chaotic program. When "The German Phoenix" was being written Chancellor von Schleicher was in office; Mr. Villard went so far as to state that Hitler was in his decline, and that in his defeat in the Presidential campaign he had "met his Waterloo." Well, it was not his Waterloo. But let us hope that it was his Battle of Leipzig, and that his present tenure of office is the Hundred Days which may lead to his real Waterloo. The ways of this Little Napoleon are devious, and his field generalship has grown more and more uncertain.

William Harlan Hale, whose lively article in a recent *Atlantic Monthly*, entitled "Grand Tour—New Style," recorded the young Yale graduate's impressions of Europe, spent several months in Germany during the past year. As the son of the late William Bayard Hale he had earlier acquaintance with that country.

Lady Into Facts

(Continued from first page)

would I impugn a legend so highly esteemed by my fellow taxpayers. Nevertheless am I forced to grant that all which we know about this legend is what that mundivagant soldier, Captain John Smith, is pleased to tell us, and, as was well ruled in *Bardell vs. Pickwick*, what the soldier said is no evidence.

So very contagious is the force of an ill example, that I, too, propose to become pedantic in this place, and to essay upon my own account a little "actual fidelity to history." . . . It is known, then, that in Smith's first account of his Virginian adventures, as published shortly after his capture by the Paumunkey Indians, he says nothing in particular about Pocahontas, beyond complimenting "her wit and spirit," nor does he suggest any special need of a rescue from Powhatan, who figures in the "True Relation" as a model of hospitality and kindness. Only when Smith's "General History" was printed, a good fifteen years later, some little while after "the daughter of the Emperor of Virginia" had appeared at the court of James the First, and had become in England a much talked about person—and when, above all, she was safely dead,—then only does Powhatan emerge from a relatively uninteresting level of benevolence as a fee-foh-fum ogre, then only does Pocahontas become the patron saint of Captain John Smith especially and of the Virginian colony in general; then only, for the first time, does anybody hear about the rescue legend.

Even in Virginia the contradiction should have weight. (It has, of course, none whatever in a state superior to logic.) For one, I find need to reflect that at this exact time Pocahontas was excellent "copy"; that Smith was a hard up publicist, a tried gambler at the conscienceless game; and that no person then living in England could dispute whatever he might say about either Powhatan or Pocahontas. And I deduce (howsoever unwillingly) that to believe what Smith tells us in the "General History" about my deceased relatives necessitates the forgetting of a great deal about human nature and virtually everything which is known about Smith. I infer, in brief, that the entire story of my unfortunate cousin—I forget just how many times "removed"—is plain balderdash.

Yet Mr. Garnett (in common, as we have observed, with Sir George Warington) has but too faithfully followed Smith's second account of Pocahontas, with the addition of all relevant, and a vast deal of less relevant, matter from

Strachey (the primal Strachey) and from Hamor and from yet other somewhat hap-hazard chroniclers. Through Mr. Garnett's admitted design, in itself praiseworthy, though perhaps a little beyond his endowments, "to draw an accurate historical picture and to make it a work of art," he has thus produced a book which has no dependable value as a record of fact, and does not rank enviably as literature.

With such ardor has Mr. Garnett multiplied Sir George Warrington's ancient error, of a too slavish fidelity to "historical sources," that Mr. Garnett contrives to lug in more or less everything which happened, or (an entirely different tale) which was officially reported to have happened, anywhere in the Colony of Virginia between 1607 and 1616. It follows that not much coheres. It follows that his narrative sprawls and staggers, and as reading matter collapses, under an unmanageable burden of promiscuous and hopelessly bemuddled affairs. The squabbles of the Jamestown settlers, or the local politics of the Indian tribes, for example, continually baffle, without ever engaging, the reader's attention. All such pages—and there are an intimidating number of them—can but present (in, as one should say, the teeth of a perplexed reader's enforced yawns) an inconsequential and blurred babble about wholly irrational bickerings, among unrealized persons, over the reader never finds out exactly what.

Nor, I regret to add, does Mr. Garnett abstain from slipshod writing. Of one sample in particular I speak as the voice of a direct personal grievance, for on page 47 I detect my own grandfather, Opechancanough, described as "hissing, 'You leave my women out of it!'" I grieve not only over the implied moral aspersion: I grieve because the ability to "hiss" that special combination of words has died out of the family.

It is pleasing to end on a note more cheery. The inferior diction, the tediousness, and the all prevalent inanity of "Pocahontas" are not in the least likely to prevent its being read by a great many of us with joy and reverence. Howsoever faulty may be the book which an Englishman writes about American affairs, each fault is at once outweighed by our gratitude to him for having noticed us at all. I predict in consequence for "Pocahontas" a neat amount of popularity among our more serious-minded readers. It should sell nicely. My own copy, by the way, is in the market, now that I have enjoyed writing about this novel with British affability.

Magazines Are Human

(Continued from first page)

face cream and cigarettes, are impossible to combine with the aristocratic. The reading columns would hiss at the display and the display take the edge from the text. Even the urbanity of *The New Yorker* turns sour at some of its contacts, and the magazine, like a good bourgeois, tolerant and liberal, eases off into a rather amusing affectation of snobism all its own, as it wanders through the gift and corset ads toward the back cover.

Harper's is an intellectualist turned journalist, or one of the new type of college professors, aggressive, up-to-date, well-dressed, familiar with speak-easies where it gets some of its ideas and leaves others, not believing in anything very deeply, but determined to keep one intellectual sensation ahead of the next fellow. *The Atlantic Monthly* has become the perfect image of a cultivated New England woman, wise, rather witty, serious *au fond*, but so well accustomed to the polite world that life in the not too raw and simplicity and Englishmen from India or women longing to exhibit their emotions interest her much more than clever feature writers who tell you what not to think about anything. She carries a tract or two with her about Wall Street or Fascism, and every now and then has an emotional outburst of her own, which is fun. *The Mercury* is still Mencken, but getting a little uneasy lest exposing the dumbbells should prove to have been bad psychology. It is a hard and bitter talker, stopping (just now) to listen to

itself. *Scribner's* is a little out of breath. *The Yale Review* is college Gothic, solid, expensive, with a few too many literary ornaments perfunctorily reproducing an earlier century. *The Nation* has a sour stomach, but is recovering. *The New Republic* is a dyspeptic with the extraordinary fits of energy and relapses into dryness characteristic of all dyspeptics. But then fat and healthy magazines, like those that go to the millions, have no individuality, although expensive editors are employed and valuable pages set aside to provide them with personalities (very cooey often, or rough and red-blooded) every week or month. *The Forum* is two elderly gentlemen, very experienced and very knowledgeable, gripping each other's buttons while they debate in a corner. *Time* is a bright college boy, immensely and rapidly read, with a tongue in his cheek and his mouth open, while he pounds the news inside out in the attempt to make it exciting. *Fortune* is a gentleman of the last old school, sitting at an executive's desk (supplied by Danersk), with charts of rising production curves and plans of factories de luxe on the walls, in an atmosphere of nostalgia that makes strong millionaires weep. *The Saturday Review*—

But if no man can see himself unmoved, surely a like emotion should be granted to magazines. Besides we grow libelous, and this figure that weekly steps into our office is, with all his (or her?) faults, beloved.

Jan Welzl

WHEN Jan Welzl's "Thirty Years in the Golden North" was reviewed in this magazine, a lively controversy began, in which Mr. Stefansson, the Czech dramatist Čapek, and others took part. The question was, were these remarkable stories of adventure and exploration authentic, or a pack of lies, or a "spoo." At the end, how much of the narrative was yarn, how much fact, was left somewhat uncertain, but Čapek testified that the Bohemian wanderer was at least a real man and had lived in the Arctic regions, and that the book was not meant as a satire upon explorers' tall tales. Another book of Welzl's, "The Quest for Polar Treasures," is about to appear.

Jan Welzl is certainly alive. We learn from correspondents in Dawson on the Yukon that this author, whose book was sent out by the Book-of-the-Month Club, and must have sold from thirty to fifty



JAN WELZL.

thousand copies in America alone, is a "pathetic old man," living there in destitution, supported by the Poor Relief of the Yukon government. He is telling his friends that the only remuneration he received for the mass of material he turned over in writing and by dictation to two reporters in Czecho-Slovakia, was a small sum given him at the time. From this material three books were made of which two are now published in English.

The Editors of the Review have investigated this unfortunate situation in so far as it is possible to do so at this time and distance. They find that The Macmillan

Company of New York purchased their rights to publish from Allen, Unwin & Co., publishers of London, who in turn bought their permissions from the Czecho-Slovakian publisher. They are credibly informed that a contract exists, which seems to be genuine, by which Jan Welzl relinquished all rights to the books or articles which the two reporters were empowered to make from this material. For this he received the sum of 2,000 Czecho-Slovakian Crowns, amounting in 1929, to only about \$60.00. He also, they are informed, agreed that he would not take later action on the ground that this sum was inadequate, and stated that considerations of care and friendly intercourse entered into the agreement. Apparently there was an earlier payment which brought his total remuneration to about twice as much. What the ghost writers may have received for their labors and the Czecho-Slovakian publisher for his books and for his foreign rights, we do not know.

We print this statement both to protect the American publisher who has acted in good faith, and to present the case of a destitute author whose books, sold for a trifling amount, have made a considerable sum of money. The success of these books would not, it is true, have been possible without the editorial work of his ghost writers, but Welzl supplied the material without which they could never have existed.

If Mr. Welzl has more adventures in his apparently inexhaustible fund, perhaps another book, or a series of articles, may be got from him. We hope that some way may be found to relieve his necessities, and that he may get an adequate return for what he does in the future. His original contract was apparently legal, but has certainly not resulted in justice to an author who has seen gold, ivory, furs, ships, and now royalties slip through his fingers.

A Capacious Craft

LOG OF THE SEA. By FELIX RIESENBERG. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1933. \$3.

Reviewed by ROBERT KEITH LEAVETT

IF I were to go back to sea today," says Captain Riesenberg, "... it would be my choice to go out on a cargo carrier. Perhaps after a man reaches fifty he prefers cargo to passengers." Cargo and, the Captain might have added, sea-faring men. In a figurative sense the skipper has done just that in his latest book. For the moment, at least, Captain Riesenberg has given over the ferrying of squirming shiploads of strutting, scheming, gambling, ogling, quarrelsome, and amorous passengers that are the cargo of the novelist, and leaving that passenger-liner form of book tied up at its pier, has put out to sea in a good, honest, three-skys'-yarder of a book with a cargo of broken stowage.

She is a capacious craft (352 pages) and the Old Man, like the sound mariner he is, has had her stowed to her marks. She carries a little bit of everything—narrative, description, argument, anecdote, reminiscence, invective, history, biography, character sketch, and much else that defies classification. For her crew Captain Riesenberg has gone crimping through the longshore of his memories and shanghaiing as fine an assortment of sea-faring men as you will want to find.

Our skipper has laid out his cargo diagram in more or less chronological order. For'ard in the hold comes a group of sketches dealing with life aboard the old *St. Marys* schoolship, in which, during the late 90's, the youthful Riesenberg got his grounding in the twin arts of seamanship and navigation. Just abaft of this are half a dozen pieces connected with his life under sail in the square rigger *A. J. Fuller* in the Pacific and around the Horn. Next in order, handy to the fore hatch where the Captain can keep a jealous eye on it, is a shipment of which he is rather choice—a dozen items dealing with the *St. Louis*, sometime crack ship of the American Line. She was, one judges, the Captain's great love among ships. For all his repeated profession of admiration for sailing craft, and for all his obvious affection for the schoolship *Newport* which he later came to command, the Captain

can never quite think upon the glamor of the *St. Louis* without a quickening of the pulse and a catch in the throat. Next abaft in the book's hold are sections touching on life in the coastwise trade and on experiences as third officer of the big freighter *American*, plying through the straits of Magellan to Hawaii in the days before the Panama Canal was opened. Next is a group of pieces from the Arctic, where the skipper served as navigator of the futile Wellman Polar Expedition.



FELIX RIESENBERG.

Photo by Sam Kradit

Thence to the stern are several miscellaneous groups, described on the master's diagram as "Shipmates," "Flotsam," "Shipmasters," "Log Notes," and "The Old Sea." Many bits, especially of these latter groups, will be gratefully rediscovered by those who first read them on the pages of the *Nautical Gazette*.

It is not easy to characterize so miscellaneous a collection. Some, such as the narrative called "Ghosts," which was originally written for "Told at the Explorers Club," are elaborately done. The majority, however, are short and unpretentious. There are many brief, telling character sketches of the Captain's old shipmates, masters, watch officers, ships' doctors, stewards, bos'ns, and A. B's.

There are isolated chunks of narrative, serious or trivial; they all get the same swift, unadorned telling, whether they deal with close calls or convivial bowls.

The book is stuck full of nautical terms which the Captain, very properly, doesn't bother to explain. Bobstays and buntlines, topsail sheets and futtock shrouds may or may not be clearly intelligible to the reader, but they are fine, flavorsome words. They smack of the sea and the wind and well tarred rigging; they are salt as spindrift and stirring as the thunder of a chain-cable or the bellow of a great ship's whistle in the fog. From the moment the Captain, in his opening section breaks a long-forgotten hook out of the mud of New London Harbor on a fresh May morning half a lifetime ago, clear through to the last page on which his tidy dream ship rounds the Horn, scudding under bare poles before the howling westerlies, "Log of the Sea" is grand reading.

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