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A PROFESSIONAL SON

Herbert Gladstone. A Memoir. By SIR CHARLES MALLET. Hutchinson. 18s.

Sir Charles Mallet has written a delightful account of a delightful man, who was himself content to be thought of as a professional son, and who succeeded in getting other people to take him at his own over-modest valuation. Those who said that nobody would have ever heard of Herbert Gladstone had he not been the son of his father probably argued correctly, as he was completely lacking in ambition and the desire to trample on his fellow-men. He could have passed a very happy life between the golf-course and the music room. On the other hand, the fact of his sonship, when it had once driven him into public life, gave him an ideal of conduct up to which he strove to live and a sense of responsibility for public decency. There was always something of the high-spirited and generous boy about Herbert.

Brought up under the shadow of a benevolent Upas-tree, Herbert certainly never withered, but perhaps he did not quite grow to his full height. Space was always rather cramped in Hawarden Park. Not that Mr. Gladstone was a severe parent. On the contrary, the children grew up as savages. "Papa must not be worried," was the family slogan. And when the great man emerged from the Temple of Peace, it was only to play pick-a-back for ten minutes before retiring again into forbidden territory. On only one great moral precept was much insistence laid—the all-importance of truthfulness, and Herbert was to grow up the most straightforward of men. A very unfortunate private school was chosen for the boy, where, in an atmosphere of anarchy tempered by thrashing, he turned into a "little fiend." It must have been a truly shocking school to turn Herbert, even temporarily, into a "fiend."

Eton did not fulfil the hopes of Hawarden. Herbert was as lazy a youngster as ever whiled away six years in those too luscious meadows, and he only got into Sixth Form by prolonged residence. At Oxford, however, he turned over a new leaf and read history for seven hours a day. Characteristically he succeeded in persuading himself and everybody else, that he had probably failed in his tripos altogether; so that when he actually got a first, astonishment was almost indecently expressed. The examiners said, and we can well believe them, that they had never read more "pleasant" papers. Strange to say, this most undonnish man became a don. Deserting University for Keble, he tried without much success to induce the rising clerical generation to get thirds instead of fourths. He was universally liked. But he could never have been permanently happy as a don. It was as well that when Mr. Gladstone, on becoming member for Midlothian, vacated his seat for Leeds, Herbert unexpectedly found himself member for the city. He was never to lose his seat between 1880 and 1911, when he went to South Africa.

Those who search for small details about Mr. Gladstone will not be disappointed in this book. "His ten points on household economy," drawn up for his Eton son, is a model of what may be termed idealistic worldly wisdom, and it comes as a slight shock to remark that all this pother is being made about 10s. a term, rising terminally by 1s. Tips from elder brothers, however, mitigated the severity of Herbert's lot, while Mrs. Gladstone appears to suggest that the whole affair was great nonsense. "Never," she writes, "be afraid of asking me for money. There is nothing I have such a horror of as not having any." Who would not be economist on these terms? It is to be feared that Mrs. Gladstone was a confirmed inflationist.

Sir Charles Mallet takes us again through the last thirty years of the Liberal Party. As usual "C.B.'s" stock rises a few points more, and Mr. Lloyd George's slumps a little further. Historians will read some interesting pages devoted to Labouchere, as intermediary between Mr. Gladstone and the Irish during the 'eighties, while a remark of Mr. Gladstone's in 1895 shows us how different he was from all other men.

The death-blow was at the General Election. It was a dreadful time at Dalmeny. Somebody asked me before what majority I thought was necessary. I did not know, but said certainly three figures. I came to London with 40 majority and I warned Dillon that this meant that I should not be in at the death. Dillon replied that that was like a knife thrust in his heart. But I said I had already received the thrust.

Thus Mr. Gladstone introduced the second Home Rule Bill at the age of 83, without any delusions as to the result of his efforts. As an administrator Herbert Gladstone was a success. His tenure of the Home Office was rich in useful measures, his en-

thusiasm for Prison Reform being particularly marked. On going to South Africa as first Governor-General, he quickly brought a wasp's nest about his ears by reprimanding a native condemned for a sexual offence. All parties in the newly united South Africa united against Gladstone and the flames were fanned by the English press in the best American style. But Herbert emerged as a true Gladstone. The son of the man who made peace after Majuba would not truckle to the Boers on a point of justice.

Always Herbert was as "pleasant" as his tripos papers. Happy, healthy, modest and truthful, he led a busy useful life. On retirement from politics, he wrote his admirable book *After Thirty Years*, which revealed an unexpected literary power and had an unexpected success. The Wright case, though it stirred up some mud, further revived interest in Mr. Gladstone. Thus, though the death of Lord Gladstone coincided with the death of the Liberal Party, he did not entirely die in his enemy's day. For the great leader of the Liberal Party was again as lively as ever. Herbert sighed as a politician, but triumphed as a son.

FRANCIS BIRRELL

FAERY SEAS

Nonsuch: Land of Water. By WILLIAM BEEBE. Putnam. 21s.

Perhaps the man whose acquaintance with the waters of the earth goes no further than his bath or the cement pond in his garden, or the Channel as seen from the promenade at Brighton, had better be warned against Mr. Beebe, whose book is a dangerously fascinating account of oceans that seem to have come out of fairy tales. Nor is it recommended to the man who catches his pike and perch in quiet English meadows, for the fresh-water fisherman never believes anything he is told about another man's fish, and it might very well seem to him as if Mr. Beebe, being not only a zoologist but an imaginative writer, had invented the fairy butterfly fish, the blue sturgeons, the angel-fish, the peacock flounders with periscope eyes, the sea-horses, the striped grunts and silversides of which he sometimes speaks as casually as if they were all so many minnows or sticklebacks. But apart from this his book can be recommended to all kinds of readers, because *Nonsuch* is that rare type of book, the narrative of an expert who still has a boy's freshness of mind and excitement at new discoveries—qualities which make it easy for one to swallow its mass of erudition eagerly, as a boy might swallow a sugar-coated pill. It is as the adventurer, the seeker, that one visualises Mr. Beebe, hardly ever as the zoologist.

These chapters, he says, wrote themselves "in the intervals of diving, fishing, naming, dissecting—the serious study of fish in Bermuda," off the coast of which Nonsuch Island lies. Elsewhere he speaks of the importance of writing on the spot: "I was asked what I had seen, and at once the perfection of my inarticulate visions began to be dissected and distorted by being forced into the pitifully inadequate vehicle of human speech." So his writing has the smack and colour of quick-captured reality about it: he distrusts, evidently, zoological emotions remembered in tranquillity, knowing that in nature things are not even always what they look to be, let alone what they are remembered as having been. But "sea-lavender, seaside golden-rod, tassel plant, sea rocket, star-of-the-earth, mallow, rosy primrose, oleander, poor-man's-weatherglass, match-me-if-you-can—these are a delight to tell over, euphonious or meaningful, or both." And in Spring:

Nonsuch is ablaze with thousands of pink stars as the oleanders burst forth: later comes the rose red of hibiscus, and gradually, in the autumn months, a background of golden spires sets the island again on fire. It is a pleasant alarm when a half-grown great blue heron rises with a sudden raucous outburst from the beach, or a young tropic bird squawks beneath your very feet, but to be surprised by a flower is an even keener joy. I recall a waste of grey and silver rocks, from which a tiny brilliant face looked up at me, and I saw my first scarlet pimpernel.

Pitifully inadequate vehicle of human speech! But he is, perhaps, right: for Nonsuch can offer, from its rocks and seashore and ocean-bed, wonders before which speech seems really pitiful. There are not only fish and flowers—fish that fly and flower-like fish—and birds and butterflies, with their passionate miracle of migration, and animals and trees (the chapters on lemmings and cedars are a delight), but wonders like the *Halicystis*, "no whit less wonderful than would be a living six-foot ant, or a fifty-

foot dog, or a hundred-foot man." This *Halicystis*, or sea-grape, is probably the largest cell in the world:

The Bermudans call them sea-bottles, and after storms they are sometimes found in dozens washed ashore along the south beach of Nonsuch Island. They have great resilience, and when fresh and alive will bounce five or six feet from a smooth surface. When the sun shines brightly upon a group on the sand, just as they have been left by the waves, their beauty is that of polished emeralds—the sunlight passing through their translucent green substance and deeply staining their thin shadow.

Under the sea, on an ocean floor lit by constellations of fish, sun-jellies and great moon jelly-fish, other wonders stir the emotions and dazzle the intelligence terrifically. There is no end to it all. The range of Mr. Beebe's erudition is immense and his thirst for fresh and more miraculous knowledge is insatiable. It is excellent to know that he is planning three other books.

H. E. BATES

THE LADY REBECCA ROLFE

Pocahontas. By DAVID GARNETT. Chatto and Windus. 8s. 6d.

In the rather turgid and occasionally muddled pages of Captain John Smith's *Discovery of Virginia* there are a few passages in which there is a clearing of bright light: whether John Smith knew it or not in the midst of his bloody, practical, empire-building career, suddenly romance, lyric romance, shone on him. The light is Pocahontas: and those who would properly appreciate Mr. Garnett's fine imaginative piece of historic fiction should look at Smith's own record of the "Nonparell of Virginia," and see how lovingly, and how truthfully he has made out of obscure hints and scarcely understood incidents and speeches this splendid portrait of a girl who, when she was baptised, should have been given the name of Ruth rather than of Rebecca.

The tradition of Pocahontas, and the fame of her loving-kindness, has persisted in Virginia, where people still boast of descent from her. In England she is almost forgotten, except when some inquisitive Cockney asks the reason of *La Belle Sauvage*, as a name of a London house. She was the daughter of Powhatan, the chief of a small tribe of American Indians, a chief, whom the English adventurers exalted to the position of Emperor of Virginia. It would have been easy to idealise or sentimentalise her and her legend. Mr. Garnett has preferred the far harder work of giving us, with exquisite detail and noble intention, the portrait of a young woman who slowly moves away from her customary world of savagery; yet moves from it with an acute remembrance of the fine things in her tribal life, and an acute sense of the ridiculous, debased or cruel things in the life of the English. Mr. Garnett has done nothing better than this reconstruction of the Indian life; its swift and alarming passage from idyllic, childish happiness to bestial, childish cruelty; its grave ceremony, and wild abandonment; its simple candours and cunning deceptions; its recklessness, its generosity, its meaningless unkindness. Rarely, and then only in a humorous aside, as in the suggestion that American oratory, and its generous profusion, owe something to the Red Indians' interminable speeches, does Mr. Garnett comment or draw any moral. We are left to see, through Pocahontas' eyes and in her meditations, that the remarkable thing about the difference between civilised and savage, English and Indian, is that there is so little difference. Only likeness, indeed, would make people so mistrust and misunderstand each other. Yet a difference remains. Pocahontas finds it when, believing Smith to be dead, she marries John Rolfe, and he works all the time. He is never done working. She finds the reason when, in England, they visit his home, and in the settled order of the English country she sees what this work would accomplish. Life is not only to be permanent—some Indians must have felt that—it is to display its permanence by its setting. The little girl—she was only twelve or thirteen years old when she saved John Smith's life—finds in him and in his talk something that explains to her inexplicable things in her own heart. Her Indian life often delights her, sometimes bores her, sometimes revolts her. This life in England, and by European standards, of which Smith speaks, this life excites, provokes, puzzles, entrances her. So, when she has been entrapped as a prisoner (after Smith has left the country) she falls in love with John Rolfe, marries him, and goes to the country of her dreams.

No more El Dorado for her than was Virginia for Raleigh. (One of the best scenes in the story is her meeting with that spangled eagle). She enjoys London, but she falls ill. Rolfe

is jealous of the courtiers who would treat his wife as a show in a booth. The number of people and the pressure of buildings crowd on her. Then she and Rolfe decide to return; she sets off, and dies on ship-board at Gravesend.

It is difficult not to treat *Pocahontas* as a biography; but it is a novel, and one which should give Mr. Garnett a new and higher reputation. How much he has invented, apart from his characters' speeches (though some of these are from the records) and thoughts, does not matter, because he has made the book triumphantly of a piece. Here is Pocahontas as Smith knew her, but as Smith could never know her: for he did not understand the child's passionate love, and passionate longing. He appreciated her loyalty, but even thought that might be from a God-given liking for England. Mr. Garnett shows us Pocahontas as a girl—the whole treatment of her friendship with Tom Savage (it was *The Bell*, by T. Savage, which became *La Belle Sauvage*) is charming in its idyllic quality—but as a girl who swiftly grows up under the influence of Smith and the contact of her people with the English. The battles and treacheries are kept in proper subordination; but anyone who expects a tale of Indians to be rather nerve-shocking will not be disappointed, though there is a grave, practical air about Mr. Garnett's treatment of torture and cruelty. When Rolfe, the widower, arrives the book gains in depth and richness, as does Pocahontas' character; and in the chapters on their life in England Mr. Garnett is brilliant. The slight sketch of that debosched, silly court of James I is trenchantly done; and Mr. Garnett, thank goodness, does not find the men of the early seventeenth century impossible to understand. Here is Raleigh.

Melancholy brooded over him; he was restless; his questions about Virginia were abrupt and inconsecutive and gave the impression that he knew the answers to them already. Reality meant little to him. He was the greatest of prospectors; he hugged the shadow, for the substance was to him a shadow. Solid gold, broad acres of earth, jewels, ships, men, all these ran through his fingers and dissolved as though they never had existed; but the gold of dreams, the jewelled cities of imagination, the wide stretches of unknown lands, and El Dorado itself, were his forever, and remained through life his almost personal possessions. If he was a legend during his life, it was because once or twice this fool gold of imagination was unloaded at his feet in solid lumps and kept its reality when it passed into the hands of other men.

It is the dream which has possessed Mr. Garnett—Smith's dream, Rolfe's dream, but beyond all, the dream of Pocahontas. This is a stirring novel, an exciting story full of lively action, of humour and a careful observation of character; but it is first and last the history of that Princess Pocahontas, the Lady Rebecca, who forsook her forests and her rivers, her father's house and her people, who bare a son to her Norfolk husband, and journeyed from the other side of the globe to find, in her country of dreams, grave's end.

R. ELLIS ROBERTS

THE MAID

The Sword of God: Jeanne d'Arc. By GUY ENDORE. Grayson and Grayson. 18s.

Mr. Endore's book has the faults and virtues of the new popular school of biography. It is of unusual interest, for it takes us, indirectly, behind the scenes: it shows us, in fact, the mood from which picturesque history is derived. For Mr. Endore is an acute scholar, and in order to regain his own peace of mind he has found it necessary to display his preliminary difficulties and to justify his practice. Two-thirds of his book is a sympathetic, emotional study of Jeanne d'Arc in the story-book fashion of to-day: the last third is a brilliant, caustic study of the vast literature which has accumulated around the subject. He is as frank as Master George Washington caught with axe in hand:

In short, if you will have it baldly, I did what I listed, picked whatever pleased my taste for truth and beauty and thus formed my biography.

His defence of this method takes more than a hundred and twenty pages, and is, in fact, longer than Mr. G. B. Shaw's prefaces to his earlier plays. Briefly, his method is this: he points out the failure of the rationalist school of historians to explain the mystery of the Maid, the absurdities of the Celticists and diabolists, the obsessions of the psycho-analytic group which has tackled the problem of "the Voices." To quote the contradictory conclusions of modern scientists or thinkers, working from different angles, is a well-known and rather school-boyish device of religious apologists, who wish us to swallow, holus-bolus, their own wonders and signs. But Mr. Endore is not a religious apologist, nor is he,