

grew older, writing about their books to the many novelists he knew well, writing always with the most critical frankness, almost indeed destroying upon one occasion a new novel by Mrs. Humphry Ward, and yet never, one feels, offending any of his correspondents, except possibly, and in this context negligibly, Mr. Wells. How much courtesy gains in persuasiveness when it comes from a man like Henry James, who had nothing ungenerous in his makeup, no jealousy or pettiness anywhere, and whose friendships were means to no end except friendship itself! His later friends, one guesses, were mostly chosen because in the possession of these intrinsic qualities they resembled the earlier friends he never forgot in this country, Howells, Charles Eliot Norton and the rest.

But in one sense friendship, although his life was rich and happy in it, cannot be counted as an adventure by which Henry James's art obviously profited. That his books are not rich in pictures of friendship, though the fact be plain enough, is not of course what one means. While reading the letters one looks for hints and tips, for glimpses among his many friends of some few who might have suggested to him the kind of men and women and the kind of human relations that he spent his later years in imagining. One seeks and does not find. Perhaps the explanation is that such men, such women, such relations do not exist, that profoundly true though they are to his own "originator's law" they are not true to the law of any conceivable reporter of this world's appearances. The distinction between the two laws is his own. He never forgot it, he remembered only too well his faith that "the two laws can with no sort of harmony or congruity make, for the finer sense, a common household." To what lengths this faith was capable of leading him is revealed when he defends certain changes he had made in the text of some of William James's early letters, quoted in *Notes of a Son and Brother*. "I may mention however," he tells his nephew, "that your exception that particularly caught my eye—to 'poor old Abraham' for 'poor old Abe'—was a case for change that I remember feeling wholly irresistible. Never, never, under our Father's roof did we talk of Abe, either tout court or as 'Abe Lincoln'—it wasn't conceivable: Abraham Lincoln he was for us, when he wasn't either Lincoln or Mr. Lincoln (the Western note and the popularization of 'Abe' were quite away from us *then*:) and the form of the name in your Dad's letter made me reflect how off, how far off in his queer other company than ours I must at the time have felt him to be. You will say that this was just a reason for leaving it so—and so in a sense it was. But I could *hear* him say Abraham and couldn't hear him say Abe, and the former came back to me as sincere, also graver and tenderer and more like ourselves, among whom I couldn't imagine any 'Abe' ejaculation under the shock of his death as possible. . . ."

Such a light as this upon his method one gets very often from his letters, and oftener as he grew older. It is in 1912 that he says to Mr. Walpole: "Form is substance to that degree that there is absolutely no substance without it." One gets, besides, many a five and ten-line masterpiece of criticism, always of his contemporaries, almost always of novelists. References to older writers are few, about as few as the references to contemporary history in the letters written before the war. The lovely little landscape touches are not many. His "later manner" first appears in its maturity about 1898, according to my notion,

and the ease with which he adapts it to the saying of the simplest things tempts one, perversely enough, to revise one's opinion that this "later manner" gained upon him because the things he wished to say in his later novels became more and more intricate. His release from the stricter bondage of playwriting, that experiment which brought him so much discomfort, but which gave us the story called *Nona Vincent* and the essay on the younger Dumas—didn't this release perhaps aggravate his tendency, when he turned again to novels, to abound in his own sense rather exorbitantly?

Our explanation of the interest of these letters is the unexpected frequency with which they keep raising questions of just this kind. Yet this is not their main interest, which lies most of all in our sense of contact with an extraordinary human being, sincere, highminded, generous, humorous, affectionate. Mr. Percy Lubbock's introduction and prefaces do much to make this sense of contact still more vivid. Nobody's letters have had a more discerning editor.

Incidentally, and if his only object were to give information, and to correct here and there a false impression, he paints such a portrait of the letter-writer as no one is likely to better. We feel that we have been often in the same room with Henry James, have witnessed "his pondering hesitation as he talked, his search over the whole field of expression for the word that should do justice to the picture forming in his mind." In his letters, whether written or dictated, this hesitation gave place "to a flow unchecked, one sonorous phrase uncoiling itself after another without effort." Mr. Lubbock assures us that except for this difference the letters, especially some of the later ones, "exactly reflect the color and contour of his talk—his grandiose courtesy, his luxuriant phraseology, his relish for some extravagantly colloquial turn embedded in a Ciceronian period." Mr. Lubbock reminds us also that Henry James "knew very well that in all he most cared for, in what was to him the heart and essence of life, he remained solitary to the end." And here, I think, we come upon the most general impression that the letters leave—of a great loneliness in the midst of so much affection received and given.

P. L.

## Auction: Anderson Galleries

"Lot 65: John Keats to Fanny Brawne.  
A beauty, gentlemen, and in the best  
Condition. Four leaves, scarcely pressed.  
What am I bid? Five hundred . . . Five . . . Come on.  
Who'll make it Six? Six hundred. . . ." (*Pale and drawn,  
I dreamed forever in a sweet unrest  
Of your warm, lucent, million-pleasured breast*)  
"Six hundred . . . Now Six fifty . . . Are you done?"

"Seven . . . A half . . . Did I hear eight? . . . Eight . . .  
Eight . . .  
Who'll make it Nine?" (*Would that I could survive  
The horrors of a brutal world. I hate  
All men and women, saving one, alive.*)  
"Nine fifty . . . Going . . . Sorry, sir; too late.  
Sold to this party for Nine sixty five."

LOUIS UNTERMEYER.

## What the Workers Want

*What the Workers Want*, by Arthur Gleason. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Howe.

THIS book is the ablest piece of reporting I have seen in several years. It is vivid, singularly intimate in its knowledge, and with a frank recognition of the problems involved that gives it an objectivity rare in books of the kind. Mr. Gleason has had a preparation unparalleled among American students for this work. For the past five years he has lived in England; and four of them were spent in careful study of British trade-unionism. An Englishman may well envy the ease with which Mr. Gleason moves among men and ideas, judging here, casting a shrewd question there, inevitably sane and balanced. Every student of his problem has reason to be grateful for his analysis.

What, broadly speaking, Mr. Gleason has to record is the breakdown of capitalist economics. Shop-stewards, the Coal Commission, the rapid growth of guild socialism, all of them point in a single and inevitable direction. What they mean is that the old motives to production are no longer available. The possession of property without the performance of function has lost its magic influence. The workers have ceased to believe in what, at bottom, is the commodity-theory of labor. They have acquired a new sense of the inherent dignity of human personality; and they are insistent that new institutions are needed for its adequate recognition. That, as Mr. Gleason makes clear, is the motive underlying the movement for nationalization. The coal miner is interested in production not as a process of wage-making pure and simple but as a profession in which his personality secures a full response. He no longer believes that this is possible under private ownership. The evidence tendered to Mr. Justice Sankey was final in that regard. Public ownership and public management afford him, as he believes, a channel in which his special experience can be turned to genuine account. He wants the sense of self-government without which no man can attain to the full height of human stature. Nor is that true of the miners alone. Railwaymen, engineers, dockers, all of them in more or less degree respond to similar motives. They do not, Mr. Gleason insists, want nationalization in the old sense of state-management. Government by a public official is no more attractive to them than government by a private owner. And Mr. Gleason rightly urges that the problem of production hinges most largely upon an adequate response to this demand.

Fundamentally, that is to say, Mr. Gleason makes out a case for the primary creed of British labor. He yet recognizes that the problems they face are by no means easy. The frontier of control has still to be determined. The movement has to percolate down from a minority of brilliant leaders like Mr. Smithe and Mr. Hodges until it sways the thinking of the more slowly-moving masses. There must be a far greater eagerness for education. There must be a genuine revivification of the Parliamentary Labor party. The thinking of the movement must be done far more in the solid administrative terms of which men like Mr. Webb and Lord Haldane know the difficulty, and far less in the brilliant but sciolistic generalizing of the guild socialists. The latter is at once easier and more attractive; but I think Mr. Gleason would agree with me in the estimate that of those responsible for the propaganda of guild socialism only Mr. Cole has really thought through the essentials of the problem. The others are full of an eager simplicity about the phenomena they

confront that is at every point misleading. While, it is true, for example, to insist that the breastworks of capitalism in England have been stormed the citadel remains intact. The trade unions have to make up their minds about direct action. They have to develop a journalism of their own competing upon terms of equal capacity with the press of men like Lord Northcliffe. They have to develop a social context to their economic theory which makes impossible the educational backwardness of the cotton-operatives, on the one hand, and the moral blindness of men like Mr. Havelock Ellis upon the other. They have to turn the Parliament Committee into a general staff for labor, thinking out its tactics and its strategy with the same infinite care for detail as characterizes the work of the imperial General Staff. The relation of the shop-steward movement must be worked out. The tragic wastage of jurisdictional disputes must be eliminated. The proper cooperation between workers by hand and workers by brain must be considered; a movement which does not know how to make consistent use of men like Mr. Webb and Mr. Tawney condemns itself beforehand to failure. Nor is it less important, as Mr. Gleason makes clear, for a general *modus operandi* to be worked out with the Cooperative Movement. The great problem of most schemes of social organization which lay their emphasis upon the producer is that they tend to assume that the consumers' interest will be ipso facto safeguarded. But the truth surely is that in the play of actual forces the only safeguards which are acceptable are those of a definitely institutional kind. Mr. Gleason's enthusiasm for British labor does not for a moment mislead him as to the significance of these problems. He faces them with frankness; and they have an obvious influence upon the chronological estimates he is inclined to make.

Not the least fascinating portion of his book is his admirable portrayal of the leaders with whom he came into contact. Here, it may be suggested, is the greatest difference between American and British labor. The vision and tenacity of Robert Smithe, the finesse of J. H. Thomas, the idealism of George Lansbury, the shrewd sagacity of J. R. Clynes—a combination of such qualities makes the statesmanship of labor more than comparable with the statesmanship of capital. American labor has, of course, its outstanding figures; of men like John Walker among the miners and Sidney Hillman among the garment workers any movement has the right to be proud. But taken in the mass, the distinct impression left by Mr. Gleason's book is that the leadership of American labor has neither the imagination nor the broad experience of its British analogue. Not, indeed, as Mr. Gleason freely admits, that British labor is herein without its difficulties. Men like Mr. Havelock Wilson and Mr. J. B. Williams are as backward as even Mr. Gompers could desire in realizing the advent of a new world. They belong essentially to the type of glorified walking-delegate by whom the ranks of the American Federation of Labor is so largely infested. They greet the idealism of a new epoch with the same helpless wonder as the heads of the Railroad Brotherhoods greeted their own essential movement towards industrial unionism.

Yet, with all the immense difficulties ahead, the basic impression Mr. Gleason leaves is one of profound hope. He does not claim for British labor either a logic unity of purpose or a definite agreement upon method. What rather he depicts is a vast welter of enthusiastic movement, with here and there a widening eddy of distinct tendency