

Letters to the Editor: *At Home with the Hollenbecks*

Rural Book News

SIR:—It has been with interest that I have read Mr. Alan Devoe's letter on the lack of knowledge of current literature in the rural communities.

I have lived half of my life in a small country village in Vermont and have spent the last ten years as a member of the state library extension agency of one of our largest agricultural states. So I have long been aware of this situation and have wondered what can be done about it.

In spite of all a state library extension agency can afford to do to advertise its wares, it seems to be impossible to reach people like "Grandpa Hollenbeck." I have sometimes thought that one of the news syndicating companies ought to be able to sell mats containing literary news and gossip, book reviews, and the like to country newspapers as they sell those for household hints, fashions, etc. Especially, if these notes and reviews were written by someone familiar with the psychology of rural people and aware of their much more conventional attitude toward certain moralities.

The library book truck in many states is doing a great deal to bring books to the doors of these people. The county library system, with its depository station in the village stores and school houses, is helping also.

Librarians have long been aware of this situation but limited funds have prevented them from doing what they know should be done. We hope that the publishers will realize the possibility of this field and in some way stimulate the people in rural communities to demand library service, and thus force state dispensing agencies to help finance it.

GILBERT H. DOANE,
Librarian.

University of Nebraska,
Lincoln, Neb.

Reading in Ruralia

SIR:—As an ex-librarian who now lives on a farm in Ruralia, I was much interested in Mr. Alan Devoe's letter in the June 15th issue of the SRL. . . . I make my home with the "Hollenbecks," to adopt Mr. Devoe's type-name, and every winter evening I sit by a kerosene lamp in our kitchen and read aloud to this family; and the books we read are the worth while products of our own contemporaries. Last year we had "I, Claudius," "Drums," Wells's "Experiment in Autobiography," half a dozen others which I cannot now recall, several volumes of short stories, and the articles and stories in *Harpers* and the *SRL*. And my Hollenbecks are less educated than Mr. Devoe's for, though one of them is a Normal School graduate, the other two were not even lucky enough to finish grammar school. Novels by the ultra-moderns would not be a success in Ruralia. The Hollenbecks enjoy and appreciate Boyd's "Roll River" but damn Wolfe's "Of Time and the River" (and I agree with them!); but they savor with pleasure the sophistication that comes in smaller doses in short stories.



"SHE DATES FROM THE SCOTT FITZGERALD ERA."

What has become of the pestiferous book agent? Why does he not bury his Bibles and "Pilgrim's Progresses" and, putting the solid worth of the moderns in his rumble seat, drive forth into the mountains and valleys of the farming country? . . . The farmer's dog may bark at night but he rarely bites. Don't be cowards, for to the brave goes the battle of life.

DAWES MARKWELL.
New Albany, Pa.

It, Racket, Flapper

SIR:—Mr. Morley cites Mark Twain's use of *take it*, and Mr. Fitzroy's letter adduces Pepys's *not so hot*. In the same connection, I venture to remind you of the following:

"Tisn't beauty, so to speak, nor good talk necessarily. It's just It. Some women'll stay in a man's memory if they walk down a street."—"Mrs. Bathurst," Rudyard Kipling.

"I tell you, this racket of Mr. Atwater's takes the cake."—"The Ebb-Tide," R. L. Stevenson.

"You know by experience that I grudge no expense in your education, but I will positively not keep you a Flapper."—"Lord Chesterfield's Letters to his Son," XLIII.

J. BRYAN, III.
New York City.

All But Him

SIR:—I happened upon Mr. Morley's reference to *Casabianca* today while looking through the recent issues of the *Saturday Review*, and am a little perturbed at the intimation that I have been rewriting Mrs. Hemans.

If you will look up the history of the poem, you will find that in its first ap-

pearance in book form ("The League of the Alps . . . and Other Poems." Boston, 1826), the second line read:

Whence all but him had fled.

She presented a copy of this book to the Bishop of St. Asaph's in which, with her own hand, she changed "him" to "he," and she seems to have had many painful hesitations thereafter between the two words, but since "him" is not only the first reading, but also the grammatical one, I followed it both in "The Home Book of Verse" and "The Home Book of Quotations."

I assure you that I have never knowingly altered any author's words—though sometimes sorely tempted!

BURTON E. STEVENSON.
Chillicothe, Ohio.

Mademoiselle from Armentières

SIR:—Can any of your readers help me in my search for authentic war-time verses of a song known variously as "Mademoiselle from Armentières" and "Hinky Dinky Parlez-Vous"? This was sung by both British and American forces.

I have been engaged for over five years in collecting its stanzas, which were in serious danger of being lost, because apparently no one else has felt that they were worthy of preservation. These are being incorporated in a privately issued book for the edification of ex-service men only. Any authentic contributions will be most gratefully received.

If you could find space to print the above appeal, it would be very much appreciated.

M. B. CARY, JR.
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New York City.

Footnotes to Romans à Clef

BY EARLE WALBRIDGE

This is the second of a series of articles offering a key to the characters of some well-known novels.

Douglas, Norman. *South Wind*.

"Those who have met Veltheim in the flesh will find it, I think, a fairly good likeness, except that in my book he gets his deserts a little sooner and even more thoroughly than in real life."—Norman Douglas, "Looking Back; an Autobiographical Excursion." The character to whom Douglas refers is Muhlen *alias* Retlow, who is drawn from Baron Franz von Veltheim.

Duke, Winifred. *Skin for Skin*.

Based on the William Henry Wallace case. He was accused of brutally murdering his wife. "The Perfect Murder," pp. 43-89 of "Six Trials."

Faulkner, William. *Mosquitoes*.

Contains a character obviously intended for Sherwood Anderson.

Ferber, Edna. *They Brought Their Women*.

"Like most very successful actresses, Miss Fayne was not beautiful. That is, she possessed few of the attributes which the adolescent taste of America usually demands of its beauties. She had a broad, free brow, eyes set well apart and slightly protuberant, high cheek bones, and a wide, scarlet mouth like a venomous flower. The effect of all this was arresting—even startling. So her great following, baffled by this mask which gave the effect of beauty without actually being beautiful, fell back on the trite word, glamorous, and clung to it." This sounds very like Katharine Cornell, and the actress in this short story, "Glamour," appeared in a play based on the life of George Eliot, as Miss Cornell has appeared as Elizabeth Barrett. But the parallel stops there. And one must remember, as Nunnally Johnson once remarked, that Miss Ferber apparently has used everybody for fictional purposes except Senator Smoot.

Hecht, Ben. *A Jew in Love*.

Based on the life of a former New York publisher, this novel is also the basis of Noel Coward's first picture, "The Scoundrel."

Housman, Laurence. *The Life of H.R.H. the Duke of Flamborough, by Benjamin Bunny; a Footnote to History*.

"A thinly disguised satirical life of the late Duke of Cambridge, who, if Queen Victoria had chanced to die in infancy or girlhood, would have become King of England, and who, having missed that fate, held the post of Commander-in-Chief of the British Army for about forty years."—*New Statesman*.

—*Les Incivilisés*.

Who wrote this I don't know. It is mentioned in Norman Douglas's "Looking Back" as containing satirical portraits of Muriel Draper and himself.

Jesse, F. Tennyson. *A Pin to See the Peepshow*.

Julia Starling is drawn from Edith Thompson (a decidedly sympathetic portrait) and Leonard Carr from Frederick Bywaters.

Kaye-Smith, Sheila. *The End of the House of Alard*.

Stella Alard is a portrait of Viola Meynell, daughter and biographer of Alice Meynell.

Lawrence, David Herbert. *Aaron's Rod*.

Douglas likewise gives an amusing account of the savage portraits in this novel of an old couple whose only offense was that they were rich and had entertained Lawrence at their house.

—*Women in Love*.

"Private as well as professional barriers were set up by the as yet unprinted novel. By February, 1917, it had turned the author's most powerful and enthusiastic patroness—Lady Ottoline Morrell—into a fury against him. Taking the character of Hermione as a picture of herself she felt outraged. Poor Pinker, who by this time must have wished he had never heard of 'Women in Love,' was invited to Garsington Manor just that he might see how unlike the lady of the Manor was to the lady in the book. But Pinker

sagaciously stayed at home."—Catherine Carswell, "The Savage Pilgrimage; a Narrative of D. H. Lawrence."

Lever, Charles. *Barrington*.

Barrington's son George is Lever's own son.

—*Davenport Dunn*.

"Dunn is John Sadlier, Junior Lord of the Treasury, who was the associate of Judge Keogh in 'The Pope's Brass Band' (so-called) and closed an extraordinary career by committing suicide on Hampstead Heath."—Brown, "Ireland in Fiction."

—*Roland Cashel*.

The Dean of Drumcondra is drawn from Archbishop Whately.

Lewis, Wyndham. *Apes of God*.

"Contains some of the best social satire of modern times and reveals an intellect like a razor blade, but its portraits of living people are often devastatingly cruel, and so far as its treatment of its human subject matter is concerned, it becomes a weariness of the flesh through being one long sneer."—Arthur Wellings, "Putting People Into Books," in the *English Bookman*, June 1932.

Lloyd, Charles. *Edmund Oliver*.

"The story is supposed to adumbrate a passage of Coleridge's early life."—Legouis, "William Wordsworth and Anette Vallon." I am indebted for this title, and for many other friendly suggestions, to Marshall Best of the Viking Press.

Lowndes, Marie Belloc. *Duchess Laura*.

"As a matter of fact, one of the peeresses who served as unconscious models for Duchess Laura was the author's own daughter, the Countess of Iddesleigh."—May Lamberton Becker.

Horse Swapping on Troublesome Creek

By JAMES STILL

S PLINTERY as legs of Spring foals the willows bend
Over Troublesome's sudden banks hemming drifts of sand
Against slow thin water, against the mare's stiff heels
Wheeling in the dry creek bed with casual step;
And the sun-pierced shade of willows settles unsteadily
Among the throng of stallions champing their bits
And straining new leather with arrogant heads.

High in their polished saddles the traders ride
With stinging lash and blunt spur deep against the side
Of goaded pony, of anxious filly swinging heavily,
Of spavined mare plucking heels with sharp precision
From bedding sand. Combed, curried and clipped
Their smooth breasts glisten and long muscular necks
Rise clean and springy into tight bridles.
The traders measure with keen practised glance
The height from withers to croup, feel trembling flesh,
Rub hard careless hands over quivering muscles
And peer coldly into moist sad eyes.
Only the foals toss unbound heads
With flash of hock and unshorn flowing manes,
Flexing clumsy legs in short unhindered quests
Down the aisles of sand to the hill's uplifted girth.
An untamed heart is swift upon the earth.