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**The Mitre**

Vol. 57 No. 3

Trinity 1950

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A tradition seems to be growing up, with the Mitre, that in the present dire need of literary material, the graduates are coming to our assistance, and this is especially appreciated because the need for a literary standard in the University exists, we feel, as never before. We feel, in short, that people need to be shown that almost anything will serve as subject-matter for something which may be called literary — did not the essayist Leacock write about Algebra in his article about A, B, and C? And who will deny that the essay is literary? Are there any misuses of the king’s English therein? Is there any bad syntax? The word literary was not meant to terrify little boys and girls in the fashion of stories about 'the Black Douglas', nor was it intended to shield what lies beneath the border-line between literature and journalese.

In this issue we have tried to bring the Mitre into the closer contact with the current world which seems to be the principal hope of the magazine. We feel, in short, that the Mitre must have a reason for its existence. We hope, therefore, that it will not seem too presumptuous in us to have included in this issue certain matters of more than passing contemporary interest.

In this issue, we could almost feel that Mr. Brian Kelley was revelling in his subject like the hippo in his mudhole — no reflections on Mr. Kelley. He graduated in June '49 from this University. We trust that further revellings will provide as much enjoyment for the literary board as this one did.

The reviews of recent fiction are up to the standard which our (alas) departing Librarian has set for herself, and are rather sensitive and enjoyable.

The poetry section has been strengthened by the addition of the two poems of the Reverend Leon Adams, B.A., graduate of this University, giving apparent evidence that there once was a literary tradition in the University which may, for all we know, still exist hereabout.

We received several more contributions than we felt we should publish, and in the opinion of the judges of the Photography contest which we held recently, most of the submissions fall into that category.
Our judges were Miss Hebert, President of the Sherbrooke Photographers' Association and a professional photographer besides, Mr. J. H. White-law, esq., M.A., Assistant Housemaster at Smith House, Bishop's College School, and Mr. G. H. Moffatt, B.A., Housemaster of Chapman House, B.C.S., and master in charge of the photography club at the School. Perhaps the contest may become an annual event, and if that is what the subscribers want, let us hope that it is continued.

The Alumni Notes section has been revived, since it was evidently felt that the need for it was still present. We feel that there is also a definite need for some letters showing the reaction to editorial policy, and if any letters do turn up, which might be of interest to the readers of the magazine, they will certainly be passed along to our subscribers, whose numbers could safely be increased without undue harm. There seems to be nothing much left to say, so herewith we present our Trinity issue of the Mitre.

D. M. K.

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**THE MITRE**

**DR. RAYMOND**

Professor and Head of the English Department at Bishop's for twenty-two years, Dr. William O. Raymond is retiring this June. It is natural that, among the many students who have been awed by his scholarship and inspired by his love of literature, legends should have gathered round his figure and position. Such legends usually have to do with the extraordinary number of cigarettes he allegedly smokes at once, and suggest a professorial unawareness of the practical details of life. One wonders if those who retail such myths as truth ever played tennis in the opposite court, with Dr. Raymond against them at the net. The satisfied glint in his eye as he leaps upon your return and smashes it neatly into some impossible corner suggests an ability to deal efficiently with practical details, and a complete awareness of what is going on around him.

Between these two impressions, perhaps, one can come to understand something of the work of those twenty-two years, work which was partly on the high plane of scholarship, partly on the ground—"lending his mind out." He came to Bishop's with a brilliant record as a scholar—B.A. with First Class Honours at the University of New Brunswick and Douglas Gold Medalist, L.Th. from the Montreal Diocesan College, and Gault Gold Medalist, M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Michigan, and Instructor and, later, Professor of English there for fourteen years, during which time he published an anthology of Swinburne and several articles on Browning. At Bishop's he constantly added fresh chapters to that University's contribution to knowledge. Through books and through articles in the learned journals of the United States and Canada he established himself as an outstanding authority on the work of Browning, and his contributions to the study of that poet are quoted in many standard texts. While we are inclined to regard him as a specialist in matters connected with Browning, he has also published articles on other poets and periods, notably his study of "Othello"; while his paper on "The Forgeries of Thomas J. Wise and their Aftermath" aroused much interest on both sides of the Atlantic, and drew letters from Bernard Shaw, Sir Edmund Gosse and Edmund Blunden. During his years at Bishop's he was elected Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and appointed member of The Humanities Research Council. A new book, "The Infinite Moment and Other Studies in Browning", is soon...
to appear. Briefly as his work is outlined here, one cannot fail to recognize a great scholar who must indeed have lived on heights unknown to most of us who never rise above "the C Major of this life".

A successful career on the heights of scholarship, however, tells less than half the story of Dr. Raymond at Bishop's. As a teacher he has helped hundreds of students to climb beyond "the cloudy borders of the base" of literature, and he has imbued many with his own love of poetry and drama. While, as a scholar, he scorns the 'popular' approach in his own writings, as a teacher, his lectures have been nicely calculated to appeal to the various grades of students with whom he has had to deal, and he has kept this "common touch" by his genuine and constant interest in graduates and undergraduates and in all their activities, academic and athletic.

Bishop's will miss Dr. Raymond in the lecture room; we will miss the sight of his gowned figure plodding sturdily through the halls, slightly bowed down by the weight of an overstuffed briefcase, or tramping across one of the bridges on his afternoon walk in any kind of weather; Bishop's will miss Mrs. Raymond, her kindly interest and her generous hospitality; but we can bid them farewell in the warming knowledge that they will continue to live in Lennoxville and to take a vital interest in the students, past and present, of the University to which they have contributed so much.

"Through such souls alone
God stooping shows sufficient of his light
For us i' the dark to rise by."

Lewis Evans.
Fortunate is the hockey team that carries a "General utility" player who is equally proficient at any position on the ice, who can be rushed in to play defence or forward, wing or centre, according to the needs of the moment. For the past fifteen years the rôle of "General Utility" man of Bishop's Faculty has been filled by Professor Childs with a versatility which would delight any coach or Principal.

He came to us first in 1935 as Acting Dean of Divinity, taking over the responsibilities of the position at short notice on the elevation of Dr. Carrington to the Episcopate. His task of organization was rendered more heavy by the fact that the other two members of the Divinity Faculty were also new appointments. Though Professor Scott was a Bishop's graduate and Canon Moffatt had lectured here some years previously, a complete change of personnel was involved.

Professor Childs' success in directing the work of the Faculty in this difficult year was such that, on the appointment of the Rev. Basil Jones as Dean in 1936, our then Principal, Rev. Dr. McGreer, urged Professor Childs to remain with us as a member of the Arts Faculty. Now his versatility became apparent. He lectured in Divinity to Arts students; he took over various Philosophy courses to lighten Professor Burt's load; he lectured on Church History; he acted as Chaplain at B.C.S.; during Professor Boothroyd's illness he took over his courses in Medieval History. Wherever help was needed, he was ready and prepared to render it.

In 1942 he succeeded to Professor Burt's chair, giving all courses in Philosophy, Psychology, and Economics; this enormous burden of lectures he carried single-handed for six years. Then the appointment of a part-time lecturer in Economics was made to relieve him, but another emergency arose, and he was thrust into the breach once more as Acting Dean of Divinity, while still carrying several of the senior Philosophy courses.

In these days of narrowly specialized scholarship, it is rare indeed

* Our retiring Mr. Childs' picture was taken several years ago, and in the slight rush at the time of going to press, it was the best available.
to find an individual teacher whose competence covers so wide a range. There are few areas of knowledge in which Professor Childs has not the right to pronounce an opinion; there are many in which he can speak with a depth of reading to support his pronouncements.

Elsewhere than in the strictly academic field Professor Childs has done much for Bishop's. From his book-lined study in Old Arts he has controlled the resident students in that building with a sympathetic understanding drawn from his long experience in residence in his beloved Trinity College, Toronto. For the past six years he has been Senior Dean of Residence, a position of major responsibility in the life of such a college as ours.

Student activities have received his constant support. For many years he has acted on the literary board of the Mitre; among other positions he has recently served as Honorary President of the Debating Society. Alike at games and plays, at dances and debates, he has been the most regular of spectators, ever ready in his praise for all that was good in our performances.

Yet among all his manifold employments, it has been in St Mark's Chapel, I am sure, that he has found his happiest moments. As a priest, and as worshipper, constant in his attendance, he has put to shame those of us who think of "five chapels a week" as rather a burden. His sermons have been rich in learning and sound in doctrine; his life among us has preached by example better than by words.

His retirement will leave a gap in our midst that the future may find hard to fill. Yet we cannot grudge him the leisure which his services have so richly deserved. As he sits with his pipe and his book, may his recollections of Bishop's be as warm as the remembrance of him will be among all those who, as colleagues or as students, have known him here.

J. D. Jefferis

---

A VISIT FROM ARMINIUS

'Were the minds of Lord Lumpington and Mr. Hittall much braced by their mental gymnastics?' inquired Arminius. 'Well,' I answered, 'during their three years at Oxford they were so much occupied with Bullingdon and hunting, that there was no great opportunity to judge. But for my part I have always thought that their both getting their degree at last with flying colours, after three weeks of a famous coach for fast men, four nights without going to bed, and an incredible consumption of wet towels, strong cigars, and brandy-and-water, was one of the most astonishing feats of mental gymnastics I ever heard of.'

To the Editor of The Mitre.

Dear Sir:

You will recall that this is a portion of the conversation between Matthew Arnold and his imaginary friend, Arminius Von Thunder-Ten-Tronckh, a Prussian who had many misgivings about the cultural state of England. It is of interest to us because of its attack on the examination system at even so highly regarded an institution as Oxford, because it lays a finger on some of the weaknesses of a college life, and finally, because it is such good fun. I heartily recommend to your readers a glance at the letter from which this is taken — "Arminius and the J.P.'s" in Friendship's Garland.

You will be surprised, sir, to learn that during the past year I became well acquainted with the same Arminius, and that we spent many interesting hours together. He was much interested in our life at Bishop's, though to his Prussian mind many of our habits seemed strange indeed. You will see something of what I mean as I go on. First, perhaps I should explain that our counterpart of "Bullingdon and hunting" might be tentatively set at 'the 'G' and activities.' As I report on some of our conversations, you will see that, though Arminius' ideas have changed little since 1871, his years of interment have done his once-scintillating style no good.

One evening Arminius asked my conception of a university. I ventured to say that I thought a university a place where the cream of a nation's youth might live together, work together, and play together, perfecting their character against a cultural and intellectual background. 'And what,' he said, 'do you mean by "the cream of a nation's youth"?'
'Good,' he said, 'I was afraid you might have meant the most favoured economically, for such a section of your youth might fairly be supposed to comprise a good portion of your students. But I admit that my observations have been very superficial and fleeting, and the fact that I have seen much more Bullingdon and driving about in cars than serious reading and study might easily have misled me. But how, then, do you account for the astonishing proportion of low results at the examinations, if these are the cream of your intellectual crop?' 'Examinations,' I quickly assured him, and as we all know, 'mean nothing. They are no indication of a man's intelligence at all.' 'That is odd,' he mused; 'in my country they mean much, though, I admit, in a different way. There our students are free to study on their own with the advice and guidance of their professors, and then they come up for the examinations when they think they are ready.' 'Of course, I said, 'many of our failures are the men who have had little time for study because of their athletic activities. Our system is not perfectly fair to them.' 'But,' went on Arminius, 'I had always imagined the prime business of a university was the training of the mind through study, and that all other — ' 'There you go,' I broke in, 'with your purely Prussian ideas. On this continent we prefer a balanced life in our universities, we have come to see that extra-curricular activities are just as important as studies. A man will remember this part of his university life long after he has forgotten the content of the lessons he studied.' 'Well, certainly that is true of your university, judging from what I have seen,' he said, somewhat tartly, 'in fact it will not take him long to forget what his studies have given him, and then he will be glad to have the other at least.' 'There was much to the same effect. The general run of his remarks was that he did not think our students lived up to my definition of them. Neither did he think too highly of our system of lectures and examinations. He admitted, however, that we are quite up to the mental gymnastics of Lumpington and Hi-tall in swallowing enough information in the closing days of the term to enable us, by successful regurgitation, to get through nine three-hour examinations in seven days, five of which were written on successive half-days. He thought it a tribute also to our physical strength. I trouble you with this summary, sir, to show you that Arminius' impressions of our university and students were not entirely unfavourable.

In one respect, however, he was most arrogantly unreasonable.

He had witnessed several of our athletic contests with little comment. I, of course, was so excited at these times that I must admit I had not been too careful to mask my companion's feelings. One evening, therefore, I brought the conversation around to athletics and asked if he did not admire the way we developed manliness and sportsmanship in our athletes, particularly in football and hockey. He seemed to think we over-emphasized this aspect of our life to the detriment of other activities. You will be much surprised at this, sir, and I assure you I was able to put forward all sorts of arguments in favour of our view, but he persisted. I shall pick up the thread of his remarks where we had been discussing the financial side of the question.

'But you yourself have told me,' he said, 'that your teams spent over $1,800 this year in travelling, while the total budget of such a society as Literary and Debating, whose activities might be considered to be more in harmony with the specific purpose of a university, was only $195. The result of this was that you had to request a gift of $80 from your Alumni to send four debaters to a contest where they placed second.' 'Yes,' I said, 'but the debaters are few in number, while there are many on the teams.' 'I may be wrong,' Arminius added, before I could go on to show him how wrong, 'and I admit that I don't understand your system of values, but it seems to me that your debaters have brought you more return for your money than your athletes. To begin with, they were successful, and you seem to place such importance in such success; and in the second place they created good will and friendly feeling between your university and the others. Finally, the whole contest was conducted along the most gentlemanly lines. That such an activity involves individuals or small teams, rather than large numbers, is nothing against it. Your university would benefit infinitely more from a greater number of such small delegations than from the large ones you now send out. I advise you to concentrate more on such single contests and less on mass encounters. Your most successful athletic endeavour seems to be badminton, a game for small teams or individuals, and a game which can be enjoyed equally well whether won or lost, and which is played in good spirit throughout.'

'But consider,' I protested, 'the great lessons of team-spirit of group-consciousness, of manly deportment, and sportsmanship which are inculcated by participation in such games as our football and hockey. Consider the thrill of physical exertion and violent bodily contact.'
shall consider them,' he replied, 'and have done. Yes, there does seem
to be a tremendous spiritual exaltation for your athletes in this violent game
of football, but the spiritual let-down after a defeat seems to be in direct
proportion to the energy expended. Your teams and your supporters
never seen victory to be so essential except in warfare. Your athletes,
your coaches, your supporters, are all utterly crest-fallen and dis-spirited
as they trudge off the field after losing. When you say that athletics
build spirit, you should qualify it to read "victorious" athletics. Such
spirit is poor. And as for your claim that it develops sportsmanship, you
seem to have progressed a long way from the meaning of that term as
the English understood it eighty years ago. Did not your team rejoice
when one of their best opponents was injured and removed from the
game? Did we not hear them exhorted to "go out there and kill those
guys"? Was not one of your players deliberately kicked in the ribs and
another painfully hurt when his hand was stepped on intentionally, as he
thought? And your supporters seemed to think the injuries of their
opponents a hilarious matter. If that is what you mean by sportsmanship,
than I would say yes, you are most successful in developing it.'

You can imagine, sir, how I had smouldered through this im-
pertinent harangue. I found these remarks insufferable, as the asperity
of my tone must have told Arminius when I retorted: 'This is very
strange, coming from a man of your background. Are you not the same
Arminius Von T. who has watched breathlessly while two students at
Heidelberg carved each other up with bare sabres against bare breasts?
And can you find our rugged, hard-fought athletic contest something to
turn your stomach? I can think of nothing so monstrous and barbarous
as this practice of yours at Heidelberg, and it is not to be compared with
ours for sportsmanship.'

'If you will restrain yourself, my friend,' came back Arminius
in his annoyingly calm manner 'I will remind you that it was you, not I,
that made the comparison, which I agree is ridiculous. But since you
make it, let me point out that our duelling matches are entered into in a
spirit of bravery and as demonstrations of courage; your games, on the
other hand, not only do not build spirit and foster sportsmanship and
friendly feeling between universities, as you say they do, but encourage
enmity and run the risk of leaving scars on the minds as well as the bodies
of your players. I am thinking particularly of your hockey match with
McGill. If that athletic contest, as you euphemistically call it, did not
do more harm to your relations with McGill than any single thing else,
I miss my guess. Our fencing bouts are undertaken in full consciousness
of the great danger, but yours under the pretense of sportsmanship and
tain play. Do you mean to tell me that those men who were hacking at
each other and trying to cleave one another's skulls with their sticks were
indulging in sport or demonstrating sportsmanship? Fiddlesticks!'

Arminius is still a stubborn Junker.

Yours sincerely,

M. H. STANLEY.

Editor's note

The above article was submitted by the author at our request,
in the belief that in such a matter as the present expansion in the field
of athletics, it was imperative that all views of the matter be heard. A
frank estimation of the question must be made, by the students who
contribute part of the funds, by the faculty who arrange mailers beyond
our ken, and by the former students of Bishop's who take an interest in
the doings of the college. The views herein presented represent neither
the views of the Editorial Board of the Mitre, nor of the Students'
Executive Council or the Association which it represents — they are the
author's own. All correspondence on this or any other topic should be
sent to the Mitre, Lennoxville, P. Q. D. M. K.)

THE PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

The Photography Contest, sponsored by the Mitre, has been held
and winners declared. Unfortunately, the cuts of the photos which were
to be published in this issue cannot be found as we go to press. The
authorities who know their whereabouts have dispersed for the summer.

We give our readers full assurance that the wayward photos will
be located as soon as the fall term opens and published in our next issue.

R.S.
A Study of the Metaphysicism and Canadianism in the Poetry of John St. Vincent Smith

Rarely has there been such a prolific Canadian poet as John St. Vincent Smith. His unmatched strides in the realms of genius has astounded even the most inured of his select coterie, as well as the intelligentsia. Thus, and so startlingly does St. Vincent begin his latest book of verse, *The Narrow Hall* with the clamant call of Canadianism.

**Strophe I**

“Zero ford approaching, rattling
tin mudguards, wire-patched, two
seal beam pupils (dimmed) over chromium
platitude of smile.

**Antistrophe I**

... and you would rip off his right
fender and slouch him over bakelite
wheel with his funeral-parlour smile
buried in Wenlockian soil......

**Strophe II**

... thus?

**Antistrophe II**

The children,
one
two
three
are residuary legati
... primus est puer
Absolam Asch K.C.
... secunda est puella
the summoned documentary
... tertius est puer.

Montreal 1943

We can note several distinct tendencies immediately in St. Vincent's poetry, combined with his brilliant (a though implicit) Canadian background. First, note his innate love of children and animals of all species. Also the harmony achieved between classical form and modern matter, which would seem to disprove all that the scholars have yet debated.

Then again regard his metaphysical candour with death, prevalent among many modern Canadians. Of St. Vincent it may truly be said, “he fears the pre-Cambrian grave, as little as his bed.” In this tender poem St. Vincent achieved pastoral intonings by use of the word “Wenlockian”, casting away all twentieth century ennui. Here is a book to cheer the Orwellian heart.

Perhaps the neophytes should be familiarized with St. Vincent's early life. Born February 7th, 1891 of Irish descent, he was brought up in the sweet-urchined hamlet of Wenlock in the bosom of the Eastern Townships. Then came his excursion into the world and his struggle with Montreal, which we will refer to as phase “b”, or the ennui phase. Later he returned to the plasticity of the University, which will be signified as phase “c”. Finally, his triumphant return to the alloy of the world, or phase “d”. His works published are the critic-impressing *Green Leaves*, the *Blades Of Leaves* (reviewed in the MITRE), and recently *The Narrow Hall*.

One must approach St. Vincent's cataclysmic poetry cautiously and from two discrepant moods. First, consider the dis-passionate Wenlockian poet and secondly, the arduous lover burning the inviolate sands of time with Grieg-like hauntingness. The twenty poems in *The Narrow Hall* reflect many tendencies, but we feel this a compliment to say, no one tendency. The influences perhaps most rampant are, of course the seventeenth century metaphysicals, the Georgians and the Pre-Raphaelites. Because this poem reflects and suffuses much of this, I shall quote it entire.

“To be is to labour is to live on moaning
wheel is to feel the ageless despair
creep white hair, (Thomas treatments already
tried) failing under Adam hat to hide
the pate growing wider, spread thinly, wipe off with
clean cloth two cars, (insured) supercilious
outside impeccable white house, way down
inside was a garden — (not this exterior
peony bed) where immeasurable tons of
loam dung dieosynctichlynicide obtainable, (pre-
war) money refunded in sixty days, this case dealt
admirably by Fulsom, Wyngett & Synthe M.A.
(Oxon.) his collar not sanforized, case

---22---

---23---
dismissed for shrinkage of the defendant —

But that inner garden where no vegetation is
not even ragweed enough to sneeze."

Here one sees how completely the melancholia of Montreal affected the
tree spirit of the pastoral poet. Notice to what effect St. Vincent
summons all his cultural and agricultural heritages and his agility in
handling them. Regard the inevitable turning in upon oneself so
characteristic of his poetry and lastly, the classic symbol of the wheel.

When St. Vincent returned to the University, being older than
other students, he became a leader of the iconoclas and a giant among
men. No cause, however worthless, did not feel the helpful brunt of
his shoulder. We are now entering upon phase "c" of St. Vincent's life.
In this poem note his poignant reply to the teachers who doubt the poet's
omniscience and dianoetic capability. Study the simple title.

No. 311

"The tall dark heron
asks no latitudinal bearin',
neither do the dwellers of the sea
seek the water's hydromancy,
(nor the frogs its hydroxity).
Therefore, why ask you
these things of me?"

Again one is impressed with St. Vincent's Canadianism, using such classic
symbols as the heron and frog in his neo-humanitarian manner. That S.
Vincent could remain unshaken amidst the flux of the twentieth century
is in itself remarkable. Yet only a truly mature poet could effect such
diction and phraseology as "dwellers of the sea", meaning of course, the
fish. Note in these poems the earthy, warm, highly individual specimens
of Canadian character and their shrewd judgment of modern political
affairs. Perhaps this is best shown in *Infra Red compliments to a Mr.
Schultz*.

"Commies are red, beavers are blue,
how in the h--- did you escape
from our zoo,
with democratic "secrets"
sown in your shoe?"

Here is another lucid example of St. Vincent's humanitarianism and
neo-patriotism. Henri d'Ung paid this living tribute to these two qualities

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of St. Vincent's poetry in a recent Montreal editorial.

"Canada's greatest living unsentimental poet is now about to
enter his sixties. But his calendar age has little to do with the eager and
poignant workings of his mind, and his tense-tendoned reactions. Although St. Vincent could never abide college long enough to graduate,
he now has honorary degrees from six Canadian universities. He has
been small town editor, cobbler, gentleman of the land, scholar and savant.
A man to pursue the classics ruthlessly, he has won the Wurlitzer prize
for poetry in 1927, 1939, 1946, '47 '48, and '49, there having been
no awards made during the war years. His works would appear to carry
the Canadian seeds of survival, for he believes that a poem should express
an intuition."

From this we are to base our observations of St. Vincent's early
intuitionism and later Darwinianism. Before I deal with this and the
Belfordian tragedy, I should like to quote from the poem pastorally entitled *In society is there propriety*, from *The Narrow Hall*.

"There is no determining "Dice"
to say what is "nice",
or what is not —
or is too (how should one say, should one say at all
begt- all?)
ten was the Adam
in bee, ashamed not
of secularit.
For never by the bees was heard,
for with bees my dear, love is a virus.
Or on the stair
in evening wear,
these ladies legs may be crooked as sticks,
but the bee, my dear, has a choice of six,
(of which there are bound to be
two that'll never meet at infinity)."

The Belfordian tragedy must be classed between phases "c" and
"d". The incident, as the expression would imply, occurred near Bel-
ford, Quebec, when St. Vincent's fiance was hideously slain in a motor
accident two summers ago. St. Vincent had never revealed to his lover

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the art of his poesy, so that through these eighteen love poems, one receives a delightful, throbbing, yet restrained passion. These poems are now collected in an unpublished volume called merely, Sonnets, pastoral and urban. But Professor Guntermeyer who has opened the unpretentious cover of this tome has noted that "this was the zenith of Smith's life. And with what hesitant tenderness here, and still more in the Epilogue, does the poet's imagination dwell on her fragile, supple form." Then came the cruel turn of fate and one plainly sees a Promethean virility of emotion awakening in the dreamer. The horribleness of the world drove him back unwillingly to realism. So from such lines of lyric idealism as Don Juan: "Bin nicht zu fassen."

Julietta: "So Kusse mich!"
in which, unlike Quixote, he grapples his windmills realistically, we are turned to these lines quoted from his Tomorrow, Tomorrow, Tomorrow in The Narrow Hall.

"Existentialism has no meaning
When from a Cadillac window leaning . . . . ."

I shall sum up St. Vincent's sonnet-fever with a classic example of his love. Note the romanticism beautifully blended in St. Vincent's intuitional manner and the ultimate darwinian passion. This was an era when St. Vincent revisited his youth, for nowhere in his pastoral adolescence was there time for romance.

Don Juan: "Oh! thou wan swan dove of love.
Above thy throat I gloat confined
Within the narrow ships of thy lips.
When cast I anchor into the cresty
Frondiness sea seeking ME.
. . . . but I was washed up two days ago.
Woe! at Mylae am I, on the shore now a core
Punctured and unctured by grapple hooks.
Hooks? nooks cranies (alleys
Where fastened I your whalebone stay
In my cloak of nylon)?

WHY WHY on?

Oh! Beauty beauty, beautybeau

Ty."

Julietta: " . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . so Komm in meinem Arm."

Here the whole life of St. Vincent sums up as an orthodox pastoral

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dream. One sees the homogeneous blend so characteristic of St. Vincent's work and of a few Canadians. That daemon, the dreaded turmoil, upheaval and distraction of his Ego must be fled at any cost, whether it takes the form of the Mistress of Bedford's prolonged beauty or the devilish antiquity of the Wenlockian phase.

To become better acquainted with phase "c", one can do no better than quote from this poem entitled pathetically, Les Fleurs, beaux et mals which is appropriately placed in the middle of The Narrow Hall.

Notice the touching Anglo-saxon influence mingled with his Canadian expression.

"Que je sois morte avant la fin.
Que je vive jusqu'à la fin.
Que je n'entends pas le premier cri.
Que tous sois.

Que j'suis. . . . . . . . . . and forgfy us ure gyltas;

Que j'suis.

Fly down black death."

As in opening up a series of hall doors, one achieves a glimpse of reality, so in this poem. Note the soul-searchings of the student of philosophy, the hours spent in subordination of reality and the final triumph of ideality. Note also the puritan meld St. Vincent is able to effect between his Gidian and Symbolist French, as also his metaphysical and pre-Chaucerian influences. But again St. Vincent is forced to turn to animals for the primary cause and final reason of existence, mingled of course with his neo-agri-humanitarianism.

"Dogs lie complete
licking thistle burrs out of feet.
Of dogs they say
their heaven is not of the earthy way.
Their eternal home
contains two gates of richest bone.
Of trees and trees there is no end,
for never the axeman to the tree stump bend.
And in their oblation
is seen a quadruped (leashless) invisible reincarnation.
There is no purposeless infinity
for nary a cat can climb a tree."

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One senses the rich and current blend of modern philosophy prevalent and latent in such a poem. In one magnificent sweep, we see everything from the Miletians to the Positivists. St. Vincent possesses this unique capacity of compressing all in a short space of time and view. As in a narrow hall one often senses a hurried compression, perhaps of one door leading to the final door. One cannot over-stress the significance and weight of St. Vincent’s choice of the title *The Narrow Hall*. Here is a book so intensely interesting that one cannot but stoop down and peer through the prolific keyholes and come eye to eye with the idyllic wenlockian peasant. There is the smell of unswept floors. There is the strange humanity moving in strange hours (probably as St. Vincent experienced in his unbounded travels). Surely, he asks in the next poem, which shows the Hopkinian influence of phase “e”.

“*You were at Wenlock walking the narrow Hall* between twelve and one walking the Hall, where the ladies came and went

Talking of Sir Byngish Kent?

Where the lamps uttered and sputtered

And Mrs. Rosenworth’s baby arrived screaming?

O! Horror horrorhorror

Keep back, is there no way to keep back.

To stave to stay back, bind, wind, steep and reap

Keep, lock stock, store and hoard, Hoare

Frost of the early Wenlock sheep,

Hoare? Hroor, horrorhorror

wen—

Lock whither? Hither? Nither!”

All St. Vincent’s cultural influence is climactic. One assumes that such magnificence could not be attained again. But surely he strives on the greater heights. “There is utterly no peace,” said St. Vincent. “One must be ever striving on to create as furiously and dispassionately as we all know how. The end shall be in the narrow hall, when all the narrow doors shall be opened. And in their sudden efflux, all people shall be crushed in their famine to gain freedom. Our idyllic state morality shall serve as a shining chain whereby we all die magnionious in the tomb of the narrow hall. The same that saw the strange humanity move at strange hours.” So does St. Vincent wax eloquent in his more inebriant prose works, few of which having been published because of the public’s reticent taste.

Although St. Vincent never voyaged beyond the narrow limits of Wenlock, Montreal and the University, yet his fertile genius knows no limits. In a single simple leap, we are transported to Europe or even China. In this poem entitled easily *Whence*, note how St. Vincent’s metaphysicism and Canadianism are transported with him. Also, the climax of all phases joining in a blaze of realism.

“*who

why AM I “what

where


where where where? - longitude 42' latitude 48' (Wenlock)

who who who? - male, neurotic, siatic.


Again St. Vincent charms us with his facile solutions to Modern Philosophy. Notice how his muse retains that sense of idyllic decorum necessary in a pastoral atmosphere. There is no philosophy grandiose, yet simple enough to contain St. Vincent’s pastoral philosophy. One must always give unlimited rope to the Dionysian horse of genius, otherwise does it perish. St. Vincent demands this rope as no other single Canadian poet. Study carefully this poem entitled *Resolution E 245*, from *The Narrow Hall*. The savants will appreciate the intentional hypermetrical effects.

“*It’s easy to see how

Ogden Nash

got his cash.

Of poetry he made a hash,

dining on moron’s mash,

appealing to their laughter brash

and NEVER to their wet eyelash.”

Let me quote from a recent set of lectures given to the Australian semi-neoclassicist revival group jubilee in Montreal by St. Vincent. “The reality of modern poets with their withered leaves twirled and whirled in the sewer’s rough grating is what I have attempted to gather. Together with the smell of steak and airwick in the gangways at seven o’clock when the ship leaves for Southampton or Liverpool. This is what I call
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associationism. In our clime where we are all unbounded by time, we ought to live more pastorally and metaphysically. We must be unmindful of the Eastern Sovereign, or the Southern President. Canada's talents, although frozen, are latent talents. In this narrow hall of ten powerful doors, there is but one key, and in my father's house are many mansions. Therefore, walk surreptitiously." Here is the height of Canadianism expressed with St. Vincent's idyllic decorum. But he has shown his patriotism in such flower-scented poems as To Our Dear Queen Mother,

Our beloved carpet maker.

"Hail Fair Queen, thou that dost the tapestry
Weave, making Bayeux look like a workman's Sleeve. Into the periphery of the wond'rous Fingers, do I hope this poem longly Lingers. May thy eyesight remain as Bright, to be able to thread thy needle at Night (as well as to read this poem by candle Light). How must thy finger pad be pressed to Bone, engaged in such a monstrous task Alone."

In this poem perhaps St. Vincent's idiom is best revealed to us. In any great poet, one must mention the bad as well as the good. All of us have faults. Great men often have as remarkable weaknesses as strengths. So in St. Vincent's brief tussle with Dalism.

"Why O! Heaven

O Hem A
Must we endure this insipid swell.
Carlie Joanie Griffie dilly-dally in the slum
While their old man is on the bum.
Ran away with baby bonus
protected by the government onus.
Now in salt he's safely stored,
(killed himself in psycho ward).
Now we get our baby bonus
tho' our cousins will not own us."

Ste. Adolphe 1945

Let no country lover shun these tense poems and with unbridled eye to see naked existence revealed at the source with the beauty of metriciousness. There is in his poetry, that dissonant quality of spring—the daemoniac Stravinsky-like resurge mingled with Bach-like creativity. St. Vincent, in phase "b", can consider such homely every day images as overcoat buttons on the tram. And these he elevates to a reality all their own associated with Syrian symbols. Again their similitude to the roundness of cattle eyes recalls St. Vincent to his precocious pastoral youth.

"Hoye! Hoye! Hark! Hark!
the cow bell church my life.
The thrice rung three toll........now
clank..................and now
clank..................and now
clank.

Already comes the Robin,
nest-builder, high contractor,
egg-maker. Around my thighs
he barks his mouth. Hoye! Ho! Stop!
you distended button dull-eyed cow.
i go."

Listen to the music in this poem and latent in all St. Vincent's poetry. One can hear the distinct clank of each tinkling cowbell echo.

To sum up this brief sketch of metaphysicism and Canadianism in the poetry of John St. Vincent Smith, one can do no better than quote from the poem Tra-la, the lovesong of J. Alfred Footprint placed meaningfully at the end of The Narrow Hall.

"Zumba, zumba, zumba, zi;
Cast the cymbals in the sky.
You and I shall go to church
While the Pisan pulpits lurch.
'Man is born in nepharious sin.'
(But how in the world did you come in?)
Mummy do the dead close their eyes?

The Magi are warring in the eaves.
As all the canticles are writ on leaves.
Filed among the pews of birch

—31—
Remarkable how the night bats perch!
To the grave of polished marble
...... sotlice
Never, never your dogmas garble
...... sotlice.

Wenlock, 1949

The Narrow Hall has only recently been mentioned by the Massey commission as the greatest piece of literature to come out of a truly Canadian setting. To be paid tribute by this commission is indeed to prove St. Vincent’s extreme Canadianism. Wenlock, already is a village with acausal historic connections. In the town hall one still sees the register signed by Thackeray. Indeed, it is said that many of Wenlock’s simple peasants were used in his unfinished novel, *Becky Firthwith*. The noble elms that grace Wenlock’s quaint street were planted by the governor in memory of the many brave Wenlockian sons who fell during the Fenian raids.

One must mention the avant-garde cover which adorns, so appropriately, the outside of The Narrow Hall, and congratulate St. Vincent on its clever metaphysical toning. Any student wishing to pursue further this study would be well-advised to consult this book of twenty poems so full of simon-pure Canadianism. And then let him give witness to this truly idyllic, aesthetic, pastoral Canadian.

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**A MITRE ANTHOLOGY OF POETRY**

**DESPAIR**

Paint a picture of despair
And colour it with the depth of tone
That is misery.
The world will wonder at such grief
And regard it with scornful disgust
And unbelief.

And yet it too has often felt
The drowning flood of pain
That is misery.
But when a poet would express
The agony of deep Despair,
They scoff.

And Despair is a terrible longing
For peace of mind, and happiness
That eludes me.
That airy spirit will waft away
But, Despair rolls heavy as a tombstone
On my soul.

Oh, yes I hear the scornful laughs
From those who ridicule this feeling
That is misery.
But I know Despair, and I am not alone —
The feeling clogs with its poison the pores
Of the world,
And pain, and grief, and bitter tears,
And utter hopelessness are theirs who are ridden
With Despair.

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LUTES OF SPRING

Oh let the lutes their lyric music play
And send the notes to warble in the sky
While all the winds whisper and softly sigh
In wonder at the lutes' welcome of May.
With feathered wings the merry bluebirds fly
The air to fan the silvery notes on high,
Then glide — to listen as the light tunes die
And then again burst forth in chorus gay.
For now, since once I heard a lute in Spring,
The fluid, mellow treble calling clear —
A sun-drenched day is ne'er without a faint
Echo of warbling lutes and tunes that bring
True meaning to the birth of lyric Spring.

AD CERTOS HOMINES

O Lord, sharply decline thine
right hand o'er mine offending
right hand; cast off, cast down,
make pure the nine stars
of delight and still the dusk
passion in the upturned, unturned
heart.
For,
have we walked where lilies fade
in the drawn and waning tiger shade,
where thy whetted and blunted purpose dies
and few pluck out the offending eyes.

FEAST OF THE PRESENTATION

February 2nd.

Our Lady treads the drifting snow
With Love held to her breast,
Her eyes alive with ecstasy,
Her heart with sorrow blest.
The silver parapets of hills,
And pines in silvered green,
Unfold their beauty in the sun
To kiss their forest Queen.
The four-edged breezes of the morn
Their snow-smoked censers swing
In silent worship, as she bears
Her firstborn Offering.
"All Holy to the Lord" she sings,
And then, with arms uncurled,
She lifts Love and presents Him in
The Temple of the World.

THE DYING FIRE

The night is still outside — in here it's dark.
Some softly glowing coals glimmer and wink,
And other sleepy embers tiredly blink —
A burning ash death-leaps in a fading arc —
But finally the darkness, deathly stark
And still, and deep, coming from hell's own brink,
Must now erase the friendly firey link
Between myself and courage — Time will mark
The night with streaks of light, but now
My eyelids close against the fears of night
And soon I feel secure in dreams of day
And friendly fires, while silence smooths my brow —
A soft silence, heavy with sleep's strange might —
Unbroken silence but for sifting ash whispering of day.
**LA MER**

When silent, the short winter hours of your departure drip lifeless in my death-housed hand; when distant, the glass-cold memory chills, throttles my sea bosom and your drifting lips curled white, hang softly for a kiss. . . . . . . . . . I cannot reach but heaven, is too far from star-journeying's to over-reach the sun's definite spears thus.

All told, the wintered-down station of cinder-drab roof was me. Wandering unshaven with ash-cold face, the metal city jangling beside.

Silent the return into the mummy, the winding bandage caulks the sea-short memory, reminisces, the glass cut bondage with blood at both wrists, and the tomb silent street. All the funeral years arrive on felt-thudded feet, and tide the forgotten fish.

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**GOD**

God is a Musician —
Masterly playing the four-cornered winds;
Heard in the trumpets of Spring,
Answering hills, and the quiet river's flow.

God is a Poet —
Cargoed in soul with His message of Peace;
Praising the beauty of Truth,
Calling Himself a poor fool for the world.

God is an Artist —
Painting His earth-canvas red with man's blood,
Gold with the lives of His Saints,
Black with His own human death on a tree.

God is a Spirit —
Spirit of Love asking love in return:
Spirit all holy and good,
Seeking to dwell in the heart's hermitage.

**Leon Adams**

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**MUSIC AND SNOW**

Sad strains of music seemed to fill the air —
But faint, so faint — seemed only the echo
Of melodies, as hushed as shrines of prayer,
Reaching me from afar in a swelling flow
To mingle with the drifting flakes; and care
Was banished by the music and the touch of snow.

— And as I dreamed, I wished for one to share
My memories of joy and pain of long ago.
ON READING WHODUNITS

Readers of the *New Yorker* may remember an article by Edmund Wilson about detective novels in which he began by stating that he did not like them and would have preferred not to read or discuss them at all. It is not surprising that what followed was a little peevish in tone. Yet his strictures, which we readily admit, prove only what we knew before, that detective fiction is not literature. Wilson’s point of course is that what is badly written is (or ought to be) painful to read, so why lacerate our sensibilities?

It is in fact the very limitations of the detective novel which give it its nearly universal appeal. A man who reads *Hamlet* or *The Waste-land*, *Vanity Fair* or *Elders and Betters* must read creatively; these works make emotional demands upon the reader. But the detective story, composed within the rigid conventions of the genre, entertains without making such demands. The mass of men, leading their lives of quiet desperation, usually prefer relaxing with a detective story to being stimulated by superior forms of literature. It may seem odd on the face of it that we should find relaxation in tales of violence, blood, poison and arson; but they are only stage props. We do not really believe in the dismembered body packed in a suitcase and checked in a locker room. When we do believe in the reality of the murder described, as in *Crime and Punishment* we read the book in quite a different spirit.

Reading a detective story is playing a game with an author, who pits his ingenuity against our ability to see through it. We are “given”, usually, a corpse, an assortment of people with varying motives and opportunities for committing the crime, and a sleuth whom we accompany, now along true paths and now up blind alleys, to the solution of the crime. The author may not resort to poisons unknown to science with unheard-of effects, nor produce in the last chapter a murderer to whom we have not been introduced, nor deliberately misinform us, nor pin the murder on the narrator or on the sleuth, and so on. All the unwritten rules have been violated — Agatha Christie makes the murderer the narrator in *Roger Ackroyd*, the detective in *Murder at Christmas*; the policeman on the beat is the murderer in Georgette Heyer’s *Murder with a Blunt Instrument*; and Michael Innis gives us a murder story which ends with no murder having been done — but such infringements must prove to be their own justification if they are to be forgiven.
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We are not totally indifferent to literary graces, of course. A success of the 20’s, grandly labelled “A Fleming Stone Mystery” by Caroline Wells turns out to be simply unreadable today because every page bristles with exclamation points, and the spirit flags before one has encountered a dozen of these “notes of admiration”, as Byron called them. Translations of French detective stories fail to be widely read because they too seem distressingly staccato in style. Most of us prefer to plod along with Inspector French methodically tracking down a clue.

Readers twenty years hence will probably find most of our current detective fashion unreadable because of the pointless brutality which embroiders a large percentage of it. The cast of these hard-boiled, hard-hitting, and hard to read tales usually includes a hero who is always battering someone or being battered himself without noticeably advancing the real action of the story, several beautiful but soulless nymphomaniacs, a half-witted and corrupt police force, and a “hood” or two. They are composed in a style which aims at starkness and which makes one wonder if the influence of Hemingway has been anything but regrettable. Another feature psychologically interesting is that nearly all dialogue is obstinately, perversely ungrammatical. Even in Raymond Chandler, the best writer of this school when we meet a character who speaks precise English we immediately (and correctly) suspect that he is a pretty nasty specimen — “Nice use of the subjunctive,” mutters Philip Marlowe, “I'd like to kick his teeth in.”

Most writers of this school are American, but England has her Peter Cheney. But the coldbloodedness here is not so convincing. There is plenty of rough persuasion, and Lemmy Caution and his colleagues display a truly phenomenal toughness as well as a staggering capacity for hard liquor, but there is a boyish swagger, a disarming naiveté about the writing. Every costume of each of the hard gem-like maidens is described in detail, and their eau de nil underclothes lovingly dwelt on. Every time the hero takes a drink, which happens frequently and usually from the bottle, we learn how much he drinks, how much is left in the bottle, and how he shudders as he drinks it. The latter detail makes one wonder why he doesn’t dilute it, but he never does.

Amateur sleuths abound — sometimes a young couple, ruthlessly whimsical, like Mr. and Mrs. North; sometimes a self-made criminologist like Peter Wimsey; sometimes a criminal lawyer like Arthur Crook; sometimes a dauntless and rather nosy spinster like the heroines of Mary Roberts Rinehart, Mignon Eberhart, Leslie Ford and numerous others. Most lesser lights among women writers of detective stories share an irritating foible — a tendency to exclaim regularly, “Had I but known, etc!” It is hard to see what object these little laments serve unless it is that they seem to promise us further disasters. The reader begins by passing over these passages and ends by passing over the author altogether.

An atmosphere of horror and suspense is not easy to sustain. John Dickson Carr (Carter Dickson) is best at this with his Sir Henry Merrivale—Dr. Gideon Fell creation, who seems to be a cross between Winston Churchill and G. K. Chesterton. Nicholas Blake in his latest book, Head of a Traveller achieves signal success in this respect. Blake, which is the pseudonym of the poet C. Day Lewis, maintains a uniformly high standard, usually lighter than Carr’s stories because of the debonair character of his hero, Nigel Strangeways.

Some of the best detective stories are written by amateurs, who perhaps write them for relaxation as others read them. One such is Verdict of Twelve by Raymond Postgate, whose other writings deal with Political Economy. E. C. Bentley and Cyril Hare have each been content to give us only two, first grade examples. Among writers of other types who have written detective fiction are L. A. G. Strong, with All Fall Down, and Georgette Heyer with Beheld Here’s Poison and Murder with a Blunt Instrument. The latter has written a number of light novels of the Regency period, and the young men of her murder stories appear to be reincarnations from a more elegant day. Elegance however is a quality sufficiently rare to be refreshing.

The mantle of Philo Vance fell on Ellery Queen, although he is not so convincing as a person of great erudition, a gifted psychologist and an arbiter of taste. Ellery Queen does not drop his g’s (which is apparently meritorious if it is done deliberately) and he does not know the meaning of the word “fortuitous”, which can be found incorrectly used in every one of his books. They are nevertheless entertaining and ingenious.

Vance and Queen rolled together and multiplied would not make a Lord Peter Wimsey, in whom masculine logic and feminine sensitiveness are combined in the highest degree, who is a bibliophile, an internationally known connoisseur of wine, a diplomat, a philosopher, a hunter, a literary critic, an art critic, and a musician, among other accomplishments. As if this were not enough he is affectionate, witty and charming, though
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perhaps a little too given to airy persiflage. Interested readers of Dorothy Sayers (as no doubt all her readers except Edmund Wilson are) will enjoy an article by Paul Foster in Writers of Today, discussing the way in which her detective stories illustrate her uncompromising view of right and wrong and concluding that they are actually moral tracts. Apropos of wine snobbery, no one will resent a cult which is harmless in itself and has given us one of Thurber's best jokes: "It's just a naive little domestic Burgundy, but I think you will be amused by its presumption."

Another prominent detective is the gentlemanly Roderick Alleyn of Scotland Yard. He has solved a number of well-contrived murder mysteries, sometimes to the accompaniment of very amusing dialogue, as in Death of a Peer. Dialogue is Ngaio Marsh's forte, but occasionally it is singularly clumsy and flat, as in A Man Lay Dead, much of which is written as if she were bored with the chapter in hand and wished to get on to the next one. Miss Marsh seems to have fallen victim to an occupational hazard and, like Dorothy Sayers, fallen in love with her creation.

During the war the demand for detective stories was so great that publishers with paper evidently accepted all that came their way. Many of them were written by authors who obviously had little formal schooling or at least no regard for the tools of their trade—words. One such described a room in which the severe furniture arrangement was "mollified" by the walls; I never reached the end of that one. Fortunately Penguin, Pan and Collins remain, so one need not abjure the paper-backs.

Peace, My Daughters
by Shirley Barker.

Peace, My Daughters, Shirley Barker's first novel, is based on the witchcraft craze at Salem, Mass. in 1692, when the complaints of a small group of highly-strung children led to a rapid spread of hysteria and fear which culminated in the hanging of nineteen innocent persons and the imprisonment of some two hundred others.

Even as a child, Miss Barker was fascinated by the stories of Salem witches and her first poetic venture, The Ballad of Betsy Staire, dealt with this theme. Later, as a librarian in New York, with facilities for research at hand, she read practically everything that had been written on the subject, with the result that she was soon firmly convinced that some living evil had walked in Salem in 1692 and that no one had given a name to it. And so Peace, My Daughters is her explanation of what could have happened during that period of uncontrolled fear and frenzy which swept the small New England community.

Just as John Neal, writing Rachel Dyer some one hundred twenty years earlier, was not interested merely in the horrible accounts of torture and death, but rather tried to make them the background of a story which might provide a philosophical understanding of the whole problem, so Miss Barker introduces into her record the theory that the devil himself, embodied in the person of one John Horne, a shoemaker, actually dwelt among and influenced the Salem folk in the back year of 1692.

Many persons involved in the Salem tragedies have active roles in this impressive tale — among them Giles Corey, Sam Parris, Cotton Mather and Black Tituba. But the main characters, vividly drawn and warm with life, are those of the author's own imagination — John Horne, Briony and lovely Remember Winter.

Peace, My Daughters, however, is more than the story of the Salem witch trials. It is also Remember's story — the story of a brave woman and the men she loved. It is a convincing tale, boldly conceived, authentic to the minutest detail, and above all, beautifully told with simplicity and sensitiveness of a talented poet.
In recent years Phyllis Bottome has been much interested in psychology, and especially in the modified psychoanalytic system of Dr. Alfred Adler whose biography she wrote. *Private Worlds* was an outgrowth of this interest as also is her latest book, *Search For A Soul*. This is a pleasing account of her own childhood — a period she describes as the workshop of the soul, since at this time the choice of an individual's goal is unconsciously settled by himself. In this partial autobiography, which closes with her eighteenth year, Miss Bottome is both analyst and patient and critically examines herself, her family, her education and upbringing in order to find out "how the child I wrote about became the human being I am."

As a study in psychoanalysis, *Search For A Soul* is somewhat uneven, but as a personal memoir it recaptures delightfully the enchantment of childhood experiences and scenes, and provides a vivid picture of nursery life and manners in England and America during the last decades of the nineteenth century.

Phyllis Bottome was born in 1884 and grew up in a peaceful world surrounded by a loving family and indulgent relatives. Her mother was English — beautiful and happy, but a self-made invalid whose only interests centered around her family. Her father was American — a Church of England clergyman, robust, energetic, interested in one and all. She had two elder sisters, one spirited and domineering whom she hated passionately, the other gentle and submissive whom she adored. Phyllis herself was an over-sensitive, grave and imaginative child. George, five years her junior — ferocious and demanding — completed the family group. Considering the age in which they lived, her parents were uncommonly enlightened in the bringing up of children, but, according to the author, they made little use of their gifts and opportunities and did nothing whatever to help their children take advantage of theirs. There was abundant love, sympathy and understanding in the author's young life, but the fierce conflicts of personality which began in the nursery increased through adolescence and did much to influence and strengthen her early mistaken choice of character. Miss Bottome is always fully aware of these emotional undercurrents which so often disturbed the tranquility of her own and her parents' lives, but at no mite does she attach any blame or unkind criticism to any member of the family. It is fortunate, perhaps, that the novelist is predominant over the psychologist; for, although *Search For A Soul* undoubtedly will be of some interest as a psychoanalytic study, it will be better remembered as the refreshing and frank memoir of a little girl's growing up.

C. Oakley

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**ALUMNI NEWS**

The Rev'd Leonard J. Baird, B.A., Incumbent of Mattawa, has been appointed Curate-Assistant of St. Matthew's Church, Ottawa. Address: 157 First Ave., Ottawa.


Mr. George Whalley, graduate of this University (B.A. 1936, M.A. 1948) has recently been appointed to the English Department at Queen's University, Kingston, Ont. The Mitre, remembering scholarship which will not soon be forgotten, wishes him all the best in another step forward.
The Mitre

THE WING-CLIPPERS

Arriving in Ottawa from a summer vacation at Seattle, and filled with much enthusiasm to relate his summer adventures, John Stewart called on his father, Henry Stewart, for supper. The same senile, servile door-man wearing ribbons from World War I, opened the door for him, and led him through the dusty hall with its musty smell of old Sunday dinners, and with its monstrous historic furniture.

"What floor?" asked the shrivelled elevator-man.
"Five please," John answered.
"Been nice out, hasn't it?"
"I don't know I've been in the train all day."
"Ho, ho, ho! That's a funny one!"

The door of his father's apartment was unlocked, and John entered, feeling an old wave of fear pass through him. He made his way towards the living-room, and there he saw his father sitting alone amid cigarette smoke lazily rising into the dim light. The room was so perfect, so correct, and a dull depressing blend of dull colours and Victorian furniture. The paintings portrayed dull countrysides, without even a mood of melancholy, or portrayed dull crowded scenes as dull as the crowded finale of a long light opera. His father's face was covered with the bristling stubble of a moustache which made his face seem even more nondescript, and which hovered over his prim lips.

"Hello Dad! How are you?" John asked joyfully.

His father's face remained expressionless, but at last he answered, "Leave the room and come back."

John left, and on returning, said, "Well hello dad. I hope you had an enjoyable summer?"

His face, as before, remained expressionless, and the piercing glare of his bulging eyes caused John to shudder. "Leave the room, and when you return, address me properly," he said coldly.

On entering the room for the third time, John asked, "Oh dad, I hope I'm not disturbing your?"

His father silently studied him like an intern intent upon a masterpiece of surgery, and with vehemence, said, "Leave the room, and this time extend to me your hand."

John obliged, and after the handshake, Henry's face brightened rather mockingly, and a ridiculous scene of banality followed.

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As John related his summer adventures one by one, each one became shorter than the former one, because his father's face as before, remained expressionless, or because he would interrupt his stories to ask, "Where did you leave your luggage?" or cry, "Sit up."

During the conversation, Henry handed him an envelope, and said, "Here is some money for your mother." John took the envelope, put it in his pocket, and walked away to help his grandmother in the kitchen.

"Come back here!" his father cried, "What do you do?"
"Thank you dad. I'm sure mom will appreciate it," answered John as he continued to walk away.

"Come back here! Don't you see that I'm not finished talking to you?"
"I thought you were tapering off."
"What insolence! Don't you know that when someone gives you an envelope with 'Kindness of . . . ' written on it, you're supposed to examine the contents and then seal the envelope?"
"No"
"NOW you may go and help your grandmother in the kitchen."

After exchanging the usual forced greetings with his grandmother, John asked, "How many pads shall I set on the able?"

She did not answer.

"Grandmother could you please tell me how many pads I should set on the able?"

"How many do you think?"
"I don't know."
"How many people are eating here tonight?"
"Three"
"And what am I cooking?"
"A roast and two kinds of vegetables."
"How many pads does that make?"
"Six"

After setting the pads, doilies, candles, plates, cutlery, and the candle-snuffer according to the meticulous arrangement which was demanded by the Stewarts for their cozy family meals, John asked, "Where are the bread-plates?"

"Where do you think?"
"I don't know."

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“Where do we usually put them?”
“I’ve forgotten.”
“Well why don’t you look for them? I always thought my children to be observent. We used to have little observance tests, and look at my children today.”

John fought a losing battle against his tact.
“Golly I feel tired”, John said, “I need a rest”.
“I know many businessmen who spend the entire night awake, and then return to the office in the morning. You don’t hear them complain.”

Already the unique influence of the Stewarts was overpowering him. Already he was dropping things, stuttering, fumbling, and uttering stupid and prosaic remarks. Here he was, reliving one of those Stewart’s suppers which he had formerly experienced through long agonizing years. Here he was, seated at the table as his old self, and with summer’s self-confidence and personality already departed from him leaving him in a state of utter confusion and dizziness.

At last Henry said, “I heard a good story today.”
“Oh?” answered his mother.

“There was tired man lying on his sofa, and then the telephone rang. His wife was too tired to answer it, and so the tired man answered it. ‘Hello’ he said, ‘How should I know? Why don’t you phone Dorval?’ His wife then asked him who was on the telephone, and he answered, ‘Oh some poor fool wanted to whether the coast was clear’.”

“That reminds me, Henry, those busses at Dorval are so crowded...”

With the utmost precision she plodded through a long tedious story. “And are those bus drivers ever rude! Why one of them even swore at me! I was so ANGRY!”

“Oh” John said sarcastically, “Did he even say ‘oh pooh’?”
“Oh John he said something even worse than that!”

“Sit up!” Henry cried to John, “You don’t have to lie all over the table. Today I went into a restaurant, and saw a man buttering his bread in the palm of his hand. I don’t know who he was, but you should have seen him.”

“I’m sorry I can’t tell you who he was, dad. Oh say, we had a patch test this summer for T.B.”

“Oh?”

“Some of us were quite disappointed; we had good results.”

“Why were you disappointed?”
“We weren’t really disappointed. I just thought it humorous our wanting more interesting results. Just human natu...”

“No but all I wanted to say was...”

“Believe you me,” said Mr. Stewart, “Many a man who didn’t make the army physical test, felt like quite a low worm.”

The meal continued in this manner. Mr. Stewart would take a minute bite, lay his cutlery resolutely and pompously on the table, and slowly chew his morsel. What could John say to this audience? At last he said, “Oh Dad, I hear a trireme is manned by three men per oar, not by three banks of oars.”

“That’s very interesting,” he answered and his face became animated and as he enthusiastically grabbed John’s bait, “I must look that up. Sit up, John! You should have seen how they trained us at R.M.C.”

John was full of confidence, now, and said, “This summer we had a French checker, and when we asked him whether he had seen any trucks go by, he answered, ‘I didn’t remark any go by.’ Sort of funny don’t you think?”

“In French, the word for ‘Notice’ is ‘Remarquer’.”

“It would be alright,” said Mrs. Stewart, “if you could speak French as well as he spoke English.”

John was finished eating, and uttering weak experimental ‘Yes pleases’, and watched the others or gazed about the room.

“Sit up!”

At last his father plucked a bone from his plate, and with eyes glowing with mirth, cried, “Just like a vertebrae!”

“Ha, ha, ha,” laughed Mrs. Stewart in dignified convulsions.

“Oh Henry, REALLY! Oh stop it!”

“Hilarious wot.” John muttered, undetected.

At last the meal was finished and John left his relatives to take his girl-friend to a dance.

“Well, I’ve told you about my supper with the Stewarts,” John said. “What do you think?”

“Oh don’t be silly”, said Alice laughingly as she tightened her arms about him and resumed to dance.

“But Alice, I’m not mature. What will I be like as a man?”

“Oh Johnny, wake up. You’ve been depressing all night. Don’t let it worry you.”
"I'm their blood, their environment."
"Your folks are probably very nice people."

John danced on, making futile attempts to join her spirit of fluttering tinsel. Like most of his girl-friends, she slid gradually from his company, and joined a more stimulating group.

John heard a sudden roll of laughter. His eyes closed as he gripped his hand to squeeze the confusion and dizziness from his body. Then madly he clutched at one of his friends, and cried, "What, what are they laughing at?"

His friend stood aghast, and shuddered, "why we were laughing at Timmy's tie."

John stepped out into the empty street. He felt such a peace in his slow beating footsteps, and with a low voice he recited, "Let us go then you and I .... " He passed under the brazen glare of naked neon, and momently turned to look at his bleak wan face in the shiny black panelling. On he walked with that same rhythmic beat, and gazed into a chromium encrusted restaurant, and there in the display window lay a shrivelled tropical fruit. The strings of his face drew his mouth into a weak smile, as he realized the irony of it. Now and then his steady pace was interrupted by the sudden appearance of a car pounding over the pavement, or by the distraction of a crumpled piece of paper as it rolled along the street with an odd rustling sound. Oh how he wished that someone would suddenly appear saying, "Here I am, come out of the past to redeem you." John walked several times around his parents' apartment building, but at last found himself in the peace of his bedroom. After slowly undressing, he dropped into bed, leaned his sweaty back against the cool wall, and stared fixidly into the darkness.

**Peter Mickles**

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**A BISHOP'S DIARY**

being scattered excerpts of general interest to all

**March 19**
Mr. Mills pays a flying visit to his alma mater — though Mr. Wilson finds his visit to have been in vain. The Châlet rebells — how'd that get in here?

**March 22**
Two more cases of the plague:
"Frustra per autumnos nocentem
Corporibus metuemus Austrum..."

(which may be roughly paraphrased — for Dr. Jefferis' sake — as: it's an ill wind that blows...)

**March 24-25**
The nuts-in-May boys get together on the birds and the bees for a change, and weeks of careful preparation result in all sorts of nasty drawings and what not which draw immense crowds and seem to please everyone except Mr. Mickles. He, doubtless disapproving of the whole affair, manages to elbow his way through a nice glass case before he can be restrained. As for King's Hall... The Girls' Council banquet was flung hereabouts as well.

**March 28**
The last council meeting of the 49-ers ends without a quorum.

**March 29**
"Ring out the old, ring in the new..."

**March 30**
Dr. Jewitt gives his annual lecture — on 18th Cent. huxterting no less!

**April 1**
Another sugaring off. Urgle... urgle... urk...

**April 4**
Said Mr. Hugh Labbatt to Mr. John Labatt, "Let us brew some Anniversary Ale..."

We come to the attention of another Anglican review. *Easter intervenes*

**April 12**
Here we go again!

**April 14**
A stable stomp is held, and Shylock Smith amuses all and sundry attempting to maintain his equilibrium while in a somewhat uncoordindated state.
April 18 Psychology becomes quite the rage.
April 19 The Old Arts throws a banquet for the boys.
April 20 The Lenten Mitre suddenly appears. So does the fair Massawippi, and our nostrils quiver as floods and the Zephyrs of Spring bring it, rather forcedly we must admit, to our attention once again.
April 24 Alex gets the measles, but Tony rushes gallantly to the rescue. On with the show!
April 25 Blue and silver get the measles too.
April 26 A relay-race, no less, and though no records are smashed. 2nd Year pulls in a comfortable win. Well, well! Don’t tell us that the golf-course cherries are already in bloom?
April 27-28 The Winslow Boy — scant profit there — and The Lodge entertains.
April 29 The annual five-mile stakes are run, and Jack Lees coups the McGreer Shield in a photo-finish against Matheson of Old Arts. Dr. Lower of Queen’s tells the final meeting of the History Club about The American way of life.
May 1 The B.B.C. meets again.
May 2 We have a banquet, the awards are presented — some unusual stuff, there — and Fearless Fosdick rises even higher towards the pinnacle of fame. Oh, well... boys will be boys.
May 6 Lectures end. There are football movies as well, and in the evening, the Sprinters’ Spree. “Curfew shall not ring tonight...” labor omnia vicit...

Spring, though reluctant and somewhat fickle to boot, has finally arrived, and in the sheltered hollows of the woods the hypatica, the may-flower, and the shy violet have blossomed again. The Skunk-cabbage is also present.

It is too cold for swimming this year — Mr. Bennett’s effort of course excepted, and the exams are almost upon us. By the 22nd of May it will all be over. Many will return, some will fall by the way; a few retire to well-earned rest, we convocate on the first of June.

Ave et vale.

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