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Brief Reviews

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sage, to make that the sequence (that the days go by) , is a definite commitment, and not to be dodged easily.

But put the weight on the other sense, of things shifting, between themselves—and *time* there to be a qualification among many—it is a release.

A release, immediately, of the very things themselves—not gratuitously, since relation is aimed at—why they all keep together. And to the extent that *time* bears on that, all right, i.e., all right to make use of it. But not as the main line.

The present novel¹ is attack on this ground. Clearly. Unequivocally aimed at that, to break *time* back to a use which isn't crippling. It is of very great interest.

BRIEF REVIEWS

The Pathless Grove, by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz; translated by Pauline Cook. Prairie City, Ill.: The Decker Press, 1950. 80 pp. \$1.50.

First and Last Poems, by Michael Sloane. New York: The Fine Editions Press, 1951. 72 pp. \$2.50.

In 1651 Juana Inés de Asbaje y Ramírez de Santillana was born, an illegitimate daughter, at Napanla, a village near Mexico City. In 1931 Michael Edison Sloane, grandson of Thomas A. Edison, was born in New York City. In 1695, having been for twenty-six years a sister in the Convent of San Jerónimo, and having been forbidden her "books and instruments" by a religious order which found her artistic independence of spirit unconventional and beyond tolerance, Juana Inés died at forty-three "showing (her contemporaries said) every appearance of desiring the end." In 1949, after having written for two years of the oppressive loneliness of his life, a loneliness which he felt could be relieved only by spiritual compromise ("Why do I keep on / Trying to burn under dull lights, / Draping my arm, book in hand,

¹ *The Beetle Leg*, by John Hawkes. New York: New Directions, 1951. 159 pp. \$2.50.

/ Over fences at night?") or by death, died at eighteen "as the result of an accident on the Gross Glockner glacier in Austria."

Juana Inés had a kind of inner tempered steel which Michael Sloane, at eighteen, did not have:

Dices que yo te olvido, Celio, y mientes
en decir que me acuerdo de olvidarte,
pues no hay en mi memoria alguna parte
en que, aun como olvidado, te presentes.

You say that I forget you, and you lie
in saying I remember to forget.
There is no place in all my memory met
where, even as forgot, you still are by.

But he knew as well as she the need for "unremembrance," the death of the personal past:

Somewhere all the great banquets of loneliness
became terrifying,
and I grew bored of terror.

After I ventured a time in littleness,
what was great for me vanished;
it is almost as though it had never been in me.

History, buildings, forests and people
all shrunk horribly
and I became tiny, unable to move
through the long bleak corridors which separated us.

And so I sat on a rock overlooking it all,
and finally turned away with a tired brain
and stared idly at the brown dust
running through my head.

All but the last two lines of the following poem would have evoked strong emotional recognition from Michael Sloane:

Con el dolor de la mortal herida,
de un agravio de amor me lamentaba,
y por ver si la muerte se llegaba
procuraba que fuese más crecida.

Toda en el mal el alma divertida,
pena por pena su dolor sumaba,
y en cada circunstancia ponderaba
que sobraban mil muertes a una vida.

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Y cuando al golpe de uno y otro tiro,
 rendido el corazón daba penoso
 señas de dar el último suspiro
 no sé con qué destino prodigioso
 volví en mi acuerdo y dije: ¿Qué me admiro,
 quién en amor ha sido más dichoso?

As sad as though I had some mortal pain
 I mourned love's new affront, its latest jeer.
 In search to see if death would not appear
 I only made the injury worse again.

All remedies involved the soul in strife,
 and sorrow mounted higher grief by grief.
 Each circumstance has strengthened my belief
 that deaths by thousands come to every life.

When by these blows entirely stupefied,
 my heart, now overcome and in distress,
 gave painful signs that it had finally sighed
 its last, I know not by what fatefulness

I came back to my senses then, and cried:
 But who in love has known more happiness?

Juana Inéz had a knowledge of happiness and a faith. Together they got her through forty-three years. With neither one nor the other, Michael Sloane was pledged to an early death:

Crashing hulls mean the water is near,
 And green somewhere
 Beyond the dirt;
 And white deserts beyond that.
 The gray leaps into my eyes
 Blackening them and cursing;
 The slime-caked hull moulds into my skin,
 And then it's over.
 I can not escape;
 My vocation is with this death
 And the yellow teeth
 Stand out on both sides of the river
 Waiting.

The differences between the two persons are manifestly immense. Not the least is the fact that Juana Inés became one of Mexico's outstanding literary figures (samples of the translations in the volume

under consideration, reproduced here, obviously do not render full justice to the originals which, however, are also included). Michael Sloane was just beginning to perfect his idiom (his work often reads like sincere translations of excellent poems). Juana Inés, with her moments of tension and struggle surrounded by periods of contentment, could be pert and satisfied in a way Michael Sloane never knew. And she had her religion. Yet in a curious way they share a crucial likeness: both seem to have escaped into death. Juana Inés' faith undoubtedly gave her death meaning for her, but it does not seem to have done the same for her life. Perhaps this is the only ultimate difference that belief can make. Their compelling similarity lies in their acute awareness of the life-principle wherein the strongest desire for personal fulfillment leads to the most intense frustration, and the interaction that follows inevitably defines one's life. In a letter to a bishop in which she defends the freedom of study habits which had been hers since childhood, Sor Juana Inés writes:

... I thought I fled from myself, but miserable me! I brought myself with me and bear my greatest enemy in this inclination [to study], which I cannot determine whether heaven gave me as endowment or punishment. For after being suppressed or impeded by such exercise as religions hold, it blows up like gunpowder, and confirms in me that deprivation is the cause of desire."

In Paris in 1949, Michael Sloane put it another way:

Sometimes I think people
On the streets
Should go rolling great hoops
Before them.
On these should be inscribed
In beautiful words
All their desires.
And when they wish to meet,
They should, like mystic wands,
Bring softly together
Their hoops...

—J. V.

Vida y Obra de Sarmiento en Síntesis cronológica, by Julia Ottolenghi. Buenos Aires: Editorial Kapelusz, 1950. 387 pp. Available from Stechert & Haffner, 31 E. 10th St., New York 3, N. Y. \$2.50.

Julia Ottolenghi's *Vida y Obra de Sarmiento en Síntesis cronológica* records in outline form, day by day, year by year, from his birth in 1811 until his death in 1888, the events in the life of the great Ar-

gentine exile, educator, statesman, reformer, editor, journalist, President, and gifted writer—Domingo Faustino Sarmiento. Carefully gathered from National and Provincial Archives, private collections, correspondence, the Museo Histórico Sarmiento, and numberless critical and biographical studies by Argentine and foreign writers, as well as the fifty-two volumes of his *Obras Completas*, this amazing mass of information seems to merit the publishers' claim that it "reconstructs, in the most complete form heretofore published, the entire life, activities, publications, ties, and even comparatively unknown details about the character and ideological formation of Sarmiento," indispensable to the Sarmiento student.

We learn, for instance, that when he was nineteen he met and saw for the first and only time—and five years before the *caudillo's* assassination—the legendary "Tiger of the Plains," Facundo Quiroga, subject of Sarmiento's unique book *Civilización y Barbarie: Vida de Juan Facundo Quiroga*, a study of the *gaucho* and of the tyrant Rosas' *caudillo*. It is on this remarkable book, translated into English by Mrs. Horace Mann in 1868, and his travel books and reminiscences—*Recuerdos de Provincia* and *Viajes por Europa, Africa y América*—that his literary fame rests.

At twenty Sarmiento was schoolteaching in Chile for fifteen pesos a month, a little later clerking in a Valparaíso store and paying out half his salary for English lessons and two *reales* to the *sereno*, or night watchman, for waking him up at two a. m. to study before his clerking day began. Before long he was translating a volume a day of Sir Walter Scott's sixty volumes of novels! At thirty he had settled his family in Chile and was busy founding schools and magazines, publishing editorials and articles in which he dealt with literary criticism, the drama, religious and educational problems, the Rosas dictatorship, colonization and immigration, Yankee customs, and current topics like "What the Foreigner Gets Out of Our Anarchy," "The Comedy of Freedom," and "There Is No Republic in South America."

Sent by Chile in 1845 to Europe and North America to study educational methods, in France he addressed the Parliament, and met Thiers, Guizot, Michelet, Lamartine, and Martínez de la Rosa, the Spanish revolutionist and dramatist in exile. In Barcelona he met Prosper Mérimée; in Potsdam, Alexander von Humboldt; in Cuba, the "Comandante José Primo de Rivera"; and in New York, Mary and Horace Mann. It was during his second visit to the United States as Argentina's Minister Plenipotentiary in 1866 that he wrote, or at least finished, his biographies of Lincoln and Horace Mann, met

Emerson, learned the tragic news of the death of his only son in action at Curupaití, and heard that he had been proclaimed presidential candidate of his country.

Too zealous and vigorous to be a popular president, his term of office was nevertheless marked by great industrial progress, educational, political and legal reforms, and the founding of many schools and libraries.

He died in the fall of 1888 in Asunción, Paraguay, where he had gone for his health, wistfully remarking as he set out that he did not expect to last the year, unless they elected him President again, in which case he would play a trick on them and live ten years longer. When the funeral ship reached Buenos Aires all ships in the harbor were flying their flags at half mast, and all dock and street lamps were lighted and hung with crepe. Wrapped in the flags of the four countries he had served in the interests of liberal democratic government—Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay, Argentina—he was buried in a grave carved with the epitaph he himself had composed: "One America, free, asylum of all the gods; with speech, land, and rivers for all."

At a time when the great Argentine newspaper *La Prensa* is dead, *La Nación* fighting for its life, and *Sur* heaping abuse on Mary McCarthy for her "America the Beautiful" (Cf. *Ultimas contestaciones a la encuesta sobre 'Norteamerica la hermosa de Mary McCarthy,'* Num. 203, Septiembre 1951, Buenos Aires), saying that we are a country of "fanatical, hungry, resentful, uncouth, demoralized peoples," who reveal our "barbarous and atrociously materialistic attitude by buying a bathtub only to exercise the right to buy it and not to bathe in," with thirty-five million neurotics who cannot abide "a civilization in the dead end street of their monopolizing materialism," and that Argentines should be loyal to their "cultural-European" rather than "natural-American" tradition, it is comforting to remember Sarmiento. He wanted to model his statesmanship on that of Lincoln and Franklin, his educational system on the theories of Horace Mann, and constantly looked toward North America as well as Europe for inspiration and guidance in his tremendous task of bringing to the dictator-ridden countries of the South educational opportunity, cultural achievement, political and economic stability, freedom and happiness. We have particular reason to be grateful to Julia Ottolenghi for bringing out her "Life and Works of Sarmiento" at this time."—
F. S.

Hernsprong, or Man As He Is Not, by Robert Bage, edited by Vaughan Wilkins. New York: Library Publishers, 1951. xiii + 248 pp. \$3.75.

Just why the novels of Robert Bage (1728-1801) should have suffered such long neglect when comparatively trivial work by other writers remains available is hard to understand. The present reprint makes accessible one of his most significant books, *Hernsprong* (1796), his last novel and the one most frequently cited in histories, though Sir Walter Scott, who regarded it as Bage's best, did not reprint it in Ballantyne's *Novelists Library*. As Mrs. Barbauld was careful to point out in her preface to the 1810 edition of *Hernsprong*, the book is "democratical in its tendency," sufficient reason for Sir Walter to omit reprinting it in favor of two others of Bage's novels.

Much as Scott deplored Bage's politics, he admired Bage as a novelist. His life of Bage begins by calling the Quaker-manufacturer-radical-novelist "a writer of no ordinary merit in the department of fictitious composition." That he was. Bage was a dangerous "red," late eighteenth-century variety, a champion of the rights of man, and woman, a satirist of a degenerate aristocracy, a caricaturist of venal and hypocritical clergymen who practice what Bage terms "the art of assentation." As a philosophical and free-thinking reformer he anticipated some of the ideas of Malthus, Godwin, Mary Wollstonecraft, and others. And he used the novel, not inartistically, to disseminate his views.

Hernsprong, written when Bage was sixty-eight, displays the vigor and conviction with which the author held his radical views. The subtitle, *Man As He Is Not*, means, of course, man as he should be. The hero, Charles Hernsprong, was born in America (possibly the first such hero in English fiction) and was reared among Indians, from whom presumably he acquired the nobility, natural goodness, courage, and love of freedom which make him the embodiment of Bage's social ideals, for Hernsprong "could never learn . . . to suppress the sentiments of a free-born mind from any fear, religious or political." Such a synthetic paragon would, one might well suppose, be a dreadful bore, but thanks to Bage's lively invention and ironic wit, the book is highly enjoyable and the central idea and character are interesting to the end. Two excellent women characters aid a great deal, the vivacious Miss Fluart and Caroline Campinet, daughter of the

villain, Lord Grondale. Several minor characters, notably Mr. Sume-
lin and Dr. Blick, really deserve to be remembered.

Perhaps Bage was too much concerned with what he had to say and too little concerned with technical matters to be a first-rate artist. Flaws in this novel are manifest, but Scott's judgment still stands; Bage was "a writer of no ordinary merit," and anyone who reads him will encounter a distinctive wit, a skilled ironist, a sincere thinker, an enjoyable story teller. This new and long-needed edition of *Herm-
sprong* is most welcome.—C. V. W.

The Pleasures of Pope, selected and introduced by Peter Quennell.
New York: Pantheon Books, 1950. 265 pp. \$3.00.

Alexander Pope, by Bonamy Dobrée. New York: Philosophical Li-
brary, 1952. 120 pp. \$3.00.

The difficulty with any fairly brief selection from a major poet is patent. What you like, what I like, and what the selector likes neces-
sarily differ to some extent. *The Pleasures of Pope* has two purposes, one of which is to provide a choice and representative sampling in whole poems and excerpts of the sense, wit, and beauty of Pope's writing. In the small compass he has allowed himself Peter Quennell has met a tough critical problem with discriminating taste. One cannot say that all the best of Pope or all of Pope that is good is here, but one can honestly say (and as his second purpose Quennell wants it said) that here is a rare mind exhibited in some of the best things he wrote; here is a book, to quote from the Foreword, "planned to give pleasure; and in the present crisis of the world's affairs, when man-
kind as a whole seems to be losing faith in itself and losing touch with happiness, no source of deep, lasting, dispassionate enjoyment may reasonably be disregarded." Such enjoyment Quennell's volume offers for those who will take it. Whether many will is one thing; whether they ought is quite another, about which Mr. Quennell is no doubt entirely right. Those who do seek the pleasure provided will find it enhanced by the handsome printing and design of the volume.

In *Alexander Pope* Bonamy Dobrée provides an excellent brief critical biography which admirably complements Quennell's *Pleas-
ures of Pope*. The book is much more than that, of course, for Profes-
sor Dobrée is a sound and thorough scholar and a brilliant writer. In the lengthy parade of Pope scholarship this contribution, all the bet-

ter for its brevity, by which it is not to be measured, will retain great value for a long time. In eight short chapters are set forth the career and achievement of Pope by one who has the requisite knowledge of Pope, his work, and his times combined with the equally requisite admiration for his subject. Perhaps the best measure of the book is that it has value for both the beginner and the expert.—C. V. W.

George Washington: A Biography; Volumes III, "Planter and Patriot," xxxviii + 600 pp., and IV, "Leader of the Revolution," viii + 736 pp., by Douglas S. Freeman. New York: Scribner's, 1951. \$15.

Dr. Douglas Southall Freeman resigned his editorship of the *Richmond News-Leader* two years ago to spend more of his long work-days on his writing. Now he shoulders only two full-time jobs, one being two fifteen-minute radio news commentaries each day and the other, work on the definitive study of Washington.

Volume three, "Planter and Patriot," traces Washington's career from his retirement from military duty in the French and Indian War in 1758 to the critical month of December, 1775. The fourth volume, "Leader of the Revolution," concludes with the arrival of the news of the French alliance in April, 1778.

Freeman is a meticulous historian. He attempts to account for Washington's activities day by day, and he is generally successful in doing so. His research is a model of thoroughness and his presentation is straightforward and clear. The chronological approach will not let the reader overlook the tedious duties of Washington the planter. Before reading about his attendance at the momentous session of the Continental Congress in 1774, one must first consider the business affairs of a Mrs. Savage, with whom Washington had some minor financial dealings which required his attention before he could leave for Philadelphia. This sort of detail probably makes the reader somewhat impatient, as it did the eager delegate from Fairfax.

The historian can get a better conception of the growing dissatisfaction of the planter and land speculator with British policy by accompanying Washington during the critical months prior to the Revolution. Washington is shown, however, in a comparatively passive role during this period. Freeman does not point up, to the extent that Professor Nettels does in his *George Washington and American Independence*, the active part Washington played in the indepen-

dence movement. The emergence of Washington as a militant spearhead in the fight for separation seems more abrupt than it was.

Freeman is at his best in describing the military activities of the Revolution. These two volumes will confirm many students of American history in their judgment that he is the foremost living American military historian. He has the valuable gift of placing himself in the position of Washington and his contemporaries, without giving in to the temptation to describe events from the vantage of one who knows what happened later. The author is steeped in the period of history about which he is writing.

Freeman does not worship Washington, nor does he fail to point out his shortcomings. He does admire him, and these two volumes add depth to the picture of Washington as a great commander.

—W. M. D.

Fauré, by Norman Suckling. New York: Pellegrini and Cudahy, 1952. 229 pp. \$2.50.

Debussy, by Edward Lockspeiser. New York: Pellegrini and Cudahy, 1952. 304 pp. \$2.50.

These two titles form a part of the Master Musicians Series, edited by Eric Blom. It is a collection of about thirty volumes, completed or projected, of biographical and critical studies of great composers. Each volume is generously garnished with appendices, indices and illustrations. The *Fauré* and *Debussy* biographies, both revisions of earlier works, strike a nice balance between the popular and the technical, with the emphasis tilting very slightly in favor of the latter.

The Suckling work is marred by a somewhat depressing and rather too frequent manifestation of a lack of objectivity in its discussion of German music, or, more specifically, what is called "the Beethoven succession." The matter becomes more serious when we reach the discussion of the Lied and find no mention whatever of Hugo Wölf, and only a single slur *en passant* to Brahms. *Fauré's* place in the musical scheme of things is sufficiently well established for Mr. Suckling to have dispensed with such heavy-handed axe-grinding. It perhaps should be called to the attention of potential readers that the book is written by an Englishman (as are most of the volumes in the series) who quite often refers to minor English composers whose names are totally unknown in America. To find Mendelssohn rated so highly is in keeping with the author's British character, but to find that darling

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of the Victorians rated above Chopin is absurd. Nevertheless, as the first full-length study of Fauré in English the book deserves to be read.

The Lockspeiser book is more commendable—well-written, easily read, quite free of prejudice. Its value is increased by the inclusion of letters and new biographical data concerning Debussy not hitherto made public.—*M. S.*