

Villa Pliniana

By Edwin Blaisdell, '32

They had told Arnold that Villa Pliniana was the coolest villa in Italy. He went to see it; they were right, and he rented it. He moved in with the definite intention of spending the summer in solitude and peace—and in coolness.

He had chosen the perfect place. A real Italian villa built in 1570, Villa Pliniana stood on the very edge of Lake Como, its foundations projecting into the water. It faced north and was forever protected from the hot Italian sun in the deep green shadow of the towering wooded cliff rising immediately at its back. The building itself was rather unimpressive, a melancholy, gray block, flanked on one side by a decadent formal garden squeezed between the lake and the cliff. The principal feature was the water. A mountain torrent was partially deflected on the height above the house and brought down to the huge open hall which connected the gray wings. There it spread and tumbled down between moss-covered rocks, forming a fluid, roaring wall, the entire back face of the room. Thence it gushed out again beneath the balustrade of the loggia, a foaming crescent on the soft blue surface of the lake. The entire villa was continually filled with its spray and cool dampness, and ever rushing roar. The floor was always damp. Moss grew between the flagstones. The remainder of the torrent thundered down the cliff a short space distant. It could be reached by many devious ways, winding always in the shade of great trees and flex hedges, and watched from many cool bowers.

Arnold thought he was in heaven. No, not that, because he didn't believe in heaven. But it was wonderful. He spent days resting in languid laziness, watching and listening to the falls from some dark nook. He stepped in the coolness and shade. He soaked in them. His dry and wrinkled skin began to feel comfortable once more. His eyes felt better. He had certainly struck paradise.

Of course, the first couple of weeks he had to growl at a few of the damned society bugs, come to see who was the new occupant of Villa Pliniana. They soon stopped coming. He didn't remember having seen anyone come twice. Arnold growled very successfully for a young man.

Now he was at last comfortably established in his solitary routine. Every morning he took a plunge in the lake, and then spent most of the rest of the day in its cool waters. He divided the remainder between lolling in deep shade before the falls and sitting in the open hall of the villa, staring at the flowing wall, listening

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SMALL TOWN LIFE

THE PAVED PATH—by Phyllis Hambleton. Thomas Y. Crowell Co. \$2.00.

"The Paved Path," an English novel of modern life in an old-fashioned town, expands the triangle to include a man and three women. How this one man, a general practitioner, tries to live a discreet life while being caught in the meshes of scandal until he himself doubts the value of good living, is the theme of an absorbing novel told in a convincing manner.

The author chooses her women characters cleverly, with the idea of their representing, as well as any three characters can, twentieth century womanhood. The first, who in a less modern story would be a villainess, is the typical "bad girl," unprincipled, shameless. The second, the girl Doctor Devenham loves. The third, Catherine Hallet, gives up her life to keeping him from degradation.

The story, with its numerous characters and subsequent plots, emphasizes one idea—that one cannot live free in a small village, where every act is subject for gossip and every newcomer clay to be molded over the inevitable village pattern. In this unusually good novel, Phyllis Hambleton combines the best of Warrick Deeping's style with Hugh Walpole's ideas to make a most pleasing whole.

—C. B.

In celebration of the centenary of Victor Hugo's "Hernani," which occurs this year, there has been placed on exhibition in the Sterling Memorial Library at Yale University an exhibition of books of the French Romantic period, the authors of which contributed to the triumph of the movement.

Shane Leslie, the Irish author and journalist, who is a cousin of Winston Churchill, has written a long poem dealing with the battle of Jutland. His manuscript has been read for possible errors of fact by Lord Jellicoe, Lord Beatty, and other naval experts.

Those books are the most valuable that set our thinking faculties in the fullest operation.



ANNE DOUGLAS SEDGWICK

PHILIPPA

PHILIPPA—by Anne Douglas Sedgwick. Houghton Mifflin Co. \$2.50.

"Philippa," by Anne Douglas Sedgwick, is the usual excellent entertainment that flows from the pen of this successful author.

Aldous Wyndringham is married to Beth and they have two children, Philippa, aged fourteen when the story opens, and Billy, aged nine. Wyndringham is a government official of slight means—he is fascinated by the exotic Cosima Brandon who feeds on conquests. At last he inherits enough money to get his family off to the side and makes off to the continent with his charmer. With utterly preposterous egotism he expects everyone, including his wife, to understand and sympathize. And this, with utterly preposterous tenderness, everyone—including his idiot wife, does; with the notable exception of Philippa. His daughter, while she adores him, understands him too well to sympathize. The weakest part of the story is Aldous Wyndringham's handling—his character, as perceived by the reader is totally lacking in the magnetic charm he must necessarily have had to have exerted such power as his over women. He seems nothing but a moody, irritable, selfish, little man.

Philippa, while sometimes gaining the sympathy of the reader through her clear discernment and loyalty to this hopeless thing of a father, is really too extraordinary for fourteen, too hard and too clever, to prove in the least winning. She goes to live with her father and his new wife—the great love existing between the father and daughter a perpetual fear and torment to Cosima. She finally separates the couple. Then she marries a young American and at last leaves the father high and dry.

The book is extremely readable, extremely interesting and at times almost exciting. And it already has a wide popularity. A book by Miss Sedgwick is very like a crystal goblet of sparkling wine,—slightly to look upon, entrancing to the taste, and when finished, naught remains but a slight stimulation and a faint remembrance.

—W. B. S.

MODERN GALAXY

THE MODERN GALAXY — by Dale Warren. Houghton Mifflin Co. \$3.00.

Collections of modern short stories are usually not well received by the reading public because of the unmeetable competition of the magazines. Yet "The Modern Galaxy" is a collection which will undoubtedly stand among the few of its predecessors which have been given enthusiastic receptions.

Dale Warren has assembled in this work sixteen representative examples of modern short-story writing, and his selection is extremely unique in that he presents the reader with bits of literary work done by authors who are more widely read as novelists.

The work which will doubtlessly raise the most comment is a very short bit concerning the "Fame of Mr. Beatty", by James Norman Hall, author of many works of a psychological nature. Liberty magazine publishes no dearth of character sketches of the forlorn bookkeeper of forty or so, but Mr. Hall has humanized the man to great extent, and has so painted his picture as to bring the happy-care-free, but rather drab, life of the simple accountant close to the reader's sympathies.

A very interesting bit of character, done in the most modern of styles by Katherine Newlin Burt, is found in "Herself". The twosidedness of human nature, one of Stevenson's favorite themes, is presented in a distinct manner, and not without polish.

No collection is complete without its detective and mystery stories. "Miss Hinch", written by Henry Sydney Harrison, occupies itself with the capturing of a female criminal by a

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In Explanation

THE TECH presents with this issue a book and literary supplement. It contains reviews of books which the editors believe will be of interest to all Technology students, together with three original essays which have been considered by the Faculty of the English Department to be of special worth. The selection of books has not been confined to fiction, but also contains writings on controversial subjects which should be of interest to everyone.

This supplement is somewhat in the nature of an experiment and the appearance of future similar supplements will be contingent on undergraduate approbation of this one. The editors therefore solicit criticism and suggestions as to contents and appearance.

Rowing

By Cyrus Haggood, '33

It's a tough racket, this crew business. No let-up in it at all; just a long, steady grind from early fall until early summer. In the fall you go out there on the river at seven in the morning. If it weren't for the cold, the intense, bitter, early-morning cold, you'd fall asleep standing up. It's the kind of cold that eats into you; and when you're standing around idle, waiting for the rest of the gang to show up, it makes you want to jump up in the air, turn hand-springs, slap yourself, or do anything that will drive it out. It's the kind of cold that keeps you in bed when you should be getting up, and tempts you, when the six o'clock alarm rings, to roll over and let the rest of those fools go out on the river without you. But something drives you on; maybe it's really because you like the thing. Anyhow, every morning you tumble out of bed and into the cold, just as it's getting light. Once you get out on the river it isn't so bad; at least you have a chance to keep warm.

Then the winter comes, and you go inside on those damn machines. God, but that's monotonous. You row, and row, and sweat so that it seems as though you'll just dwindle down to a puddle of perspiration. And all the time, through all that half-hour of rhythmic torture, those fool coxswains sit up there and chirp at you, counting,—three hundred, three hundred and one, three hundred and two,—monotonous, tantalizing. Bah! wait until spring comes, and those runts will get theirs in the cool waters of the Charles.

But when the spring comes along you begin to relax and think that it isn't so bad after all. It really seems good to get out on the river again; to row and sweat as you did before, but really move and not be anchored to the floor in a machine. Here you can breathe the good fresh air once more.

And then the race comes. You sort of sense its future being a few days before by a queer, empty feeling in your stomach whenever you think of it. At every mention of crew, the blood begins to flow faster through your veins, and your temples throb; it seems as though an electric current has gone through you. You begin to lie awake long into the night, hot, sweating, feverish, and thinking; thinking of the race, what you were going to do, what you shouldn't do, what you should do, on and on, indefinitely, abstractedly, almost deliriously. God, but the anticipation of it is horrible; devastating to your nerves. And then, that last night before the race, when you thrash around in a troubled sleep; a sleep troubled by anxiety, and that awful anticipation again; it's anything but pleasant. The next day you're awake at sunrise, wide awake and thinking again. Your breakfast and lunch don't taste good, but you eat, even though you're not hungry. You're continually bothered now with that queer, unpleasant, sinking sensation in the pit of your stomach. Your heart seems to be beating at a breakneck pace; your blood is coursing faster; you can hear your temples throbbing, and your brain is in a whirl. You seem tired, deathly tired, and rather limp. You keep consoling yourself, and trying to be calm, but it is impossible. It seems hard to get a good breath, and you reprimand yourself, thinking how hard it will be to breathe when you're in the race.

You go to the boat-house and put on your rowing togs, all the while bewildered and hardly knowing what you're doing. Everything is unusually silent and strained. Force of habit guides your actions. Finally you have to talk and you say something silly,—but anything as long as you can break that awful suspense. You try to be jolly and fail miserably. You go downstairs, "get on the boat" and put it in the water, hardly noticing the coxswain's commands, or the people who



RAFAEL SABATINI

THE KING'S MINION

THE KING'S MINION by Rafael Sabatini. Houghton Mifflin Company. \$2.50.

"The King's Minion" by that captain of story-tellers, Rafael Sabatini, is—as the publishers introduce it, a story of the Beau Brummel of the court of James I, and the desperate game he played to rule a kingdom and wed a great lady. The Beau Brummel is the blond and handsome lad, Robert Carr of Ferniehurst, the kingdom is England and the great lady is Frances, Lady of Essex.

One day, while King James was watching a festival in the tilt-yard, Fate introduced him to Robert Carr. The king, a sputtering, conceited ruler, was an admirer of fine manhood, and the beautiful carriage and striking features of young Carr delighted him so that he all but legally adopted the young esquire. With the favor and fancy of the king, and the brain of Thomas Overbury, an old friend, all to his advantage, Carr steadily rose to nobility and statesmanship. Then, through an exciting series of events, most of which centered around the victorious Lady Essex, whom Carr later married, his power crumbled.

Mr. Sabatini has very evidently saturated himself with a knowledge of the period of this story for he has described his characters and settings with the greatest care and accuracy. It is a colorful story, fashioned by a dexterous hand, and all in all is one of Sabatini's best. The author has the ability, or better the gift, of making a new and fuller language from an ancient collection of words. Rafael Sabatini is one writer who can make twice-told tales of history live again. Or, to wax colloquial, he can and does, take the "hiss" out of history.

—W. B. S.

are standing on the dock, wishing you good luck and cheering you. The coach's last words seem inane and you tighten your rigger, tie your lock, and shellac your seat as though he had never spoken. Your limbs quiver, your arms are unsteady, and everything seems unreal. You take a few practice starts, row up to the starting line, size up your opponents, pessimistically inwards, and optimistically outwards, wager your shirts, and take your mark. When the gun goes off, you seem to be transformed into a machine; that's all it is,—a human machine in perfect working order with seven other machines. You put all you've got into each stroke, and try to bend your oar. You try to think of things that will encourage you, and try to forget that you're getting tired. You try to keep your eyes in the boat, but it's hard not to take a peek. You think of abstract things; your mind wanders. Aren't we getting near the bridge yet? God, but it's hot! Hard to get a full breath; lungs burning like hell; sweat pouring into eyes and burning them too; getting tired as hell; mouth dry, like sawdust, sagging down into the seat; hell, sit up straight and row. Stroke getting shorter; lengthen it out, lengthen it out; don't let the stroke drop. Here's the bridge; God, only half through; hope I can make it; mustn't quit though, it wouldn't be fair to the rest. Hell, someone's caught a crab; feel the boat lurch? Hey, Martin, get that oar out of the water; get it out, damn you! God, but I'm tired! Keep rowing, keep rowing; it's just repetition; nothing hard. Chest seems to be bursting; eyes getting dim, must be the sun that's dimming them; damn the sun. It shouldn't be long now; be damn glad when we cross the line. Only forty more! One, two, three,—God, I'm tired; but it's almost over, faster, faster, faster! Why does it always have to be faster? Why does it? Can't keep it up much longer. We're over! What a feeling! No more dim eyes, burning chest, throbbing head, or monotonous repetition; no more anxiety or anticipation—just rest.

Conversation

By John E. Shea, '32

There are a certain number of sing-song phrases and silly alliterations that have lived mainly on the strength of their silliness and jingling sound. Most of them are rather easy to remember, and their being contrary to logical reasoning gives further reason for their longevity. One can easily find any number of them by turning the pages of an almanac or by reading Ben Franklin. I shall pick out one or two of these pearls of wisdom because they concern conversation, and furthermore, because they particularly annoy me. Who has not heard that an empty barrel makes the most noise, and that still waters run deep? I am not aware from whose lips these words originally came, nor do I care to find out for I prefer to let the dead rest. Of course, if one wishes to advance any argument on the strength of a proverb, it is the simplest thing in the world to find one to fit the case. From any of the bookstores, one may obtain an indexed supply of them. "Don't Let Your Hostess Out Wise-Crack You"; "Our Book of Classical Quotations," etc., etc., may be seen in any of our popular magazines. Thus I might say that conversation maketh a ready man, but I won't, because it does not begin to express the possibilities of a really clever repartee.

All will agree that reading maketh a full man, but many hold up the next most important educational unit to ridicule. I have said that it is next in importance to reading simply because it is an intrinsic impossibility to discourse with all the great minds of even one generation, not to mention those of countless past ages. Yet in another sense conversation compares with reading as a symphony compares with its canned equivalent, the phonograph record, or as the spoken play compares with the silent motion picture. The current misunderstanding of talk is due to the fact that it is generally considered to be the sort of thing carried on over the bridge table, over the back fence, at a funeral, or on the street corner. That is not talk; it is mere prattle or gossip. The only point in its favor is that it gives exercise to the lungs.

Who could place a valuation on the pleasure of being a member of the Johnson Club? To have been admitted to the society of that loquacious gathering, and to have spoken with such men as Johnson, Burke, Garrick and others who found their chief pleasure in talking and debating, would have been worth much indeed. Here we find Boswell who though a leech, a parasite, and a barnacle, was able to gather enough from listening to and observing Johnson to write an enormous volume which is more widely

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A FAMOUS FAMILY

ON FORSYTE 'CHANGE—by John Galsworthy. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. \$2.50.

From the pen of one of the ablest of modern writers has come another volume chronicling the events in the history of the great family of Forsyte. With the same cast of characters who have come to be known and loved by all the readers of "The Forsyte Saga," this book has already taken its place with the most popular of contemporary novels.

Nineteen short stories make up "On Forsyte 'Change"; each somewhat disconnected from the rest, and with settings ranging in time from the early part of the nineteenth century to the close of the World War. Some of the stories are grave, some satirical, and some farcical, but all contain the same combination of delicate humor and exquisite character portrayal that make the reader feel that he has known these Forsytes all his life, and that if he met one on the street he would greet him as an old friend.

The stories are disconnected in point of time, but they are bound together by the fact that they show scenes from time to time in the lives of the same characters. It gives the impression that there is a screen behind which momentous things are happening, and that we are only permitted an occasional intriguing glimpse. For instance, we see young Jolyon, on the eve of his matriculation at Eton, listening to his father's account of the defamation of his mother's grave. In the next scene we see him entering Cambridge six years later, and the financial difficulties into which he fell. And several stories later we come upon an account of the activities of his little daughter June, aged 8. And in between these scenes there are accounts of little events in the lives of the other members of the family and their descendants, all told with a style that is never caustic or exciting, but always suave and humorous.

This book will be read and re-read. It has the charm that is found in an old bundle of letters suddenly discovered

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