

BEYOND EARTH

What Strange Cosmic Power Influences Humans?

By WHAT RIGHT does man presume that he is the chosen being of the universe and that the earth alone shapes his existence? In the infinite spaces above, tenanted by vast and magnificent worlds, are Cosmic forces which influence the life of every mortal. As iron filings respond to the attraction of a magnet, so too, your acts are the result of an impelling influence upon your will. Just as the unseen Cosmic rays give the earth form and substance, so too, from the infinite reaches, an invisible subtle energy affects the thought processes of every human. Life itself bows to this strange universal force—why, then, should YOU not understand and COMMAND IT? You are like a pendulum either to be swung forward to happiness and the fulfillment of your dreams, or backward into discouragement and disillusionment. Why remain poised in a state of anxiety, uncertainty, and anticipation? Learn to draw to yourself these Cosmic forces which will give your mind the creative impetus that will assure the end in life you seek.

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Not for the curious nor the skeptical, but for the modern man and woman the Rosicrucians, a progressive movement of thinking persons, offer a free, Sealed Book, telling how you may acquire the truth about these phenomenal Cosmic powers little understood today and which make for freedom and attainment in life. THIS IS THE DAY AND AGE OF MASTERY. Throw off the age-old custom of—"let life be as it may"—and learn to create it as you wish.

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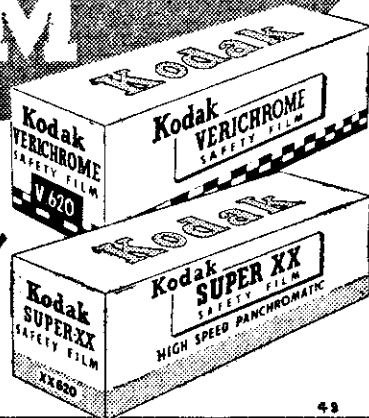
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Books

THACKERAY AT LAST

THACKERAY: *The Uses of Adversity, 1811-1846*, by Gordon N. Ray, Oxford University Press, Geoffrey Cumberlege, English price 35/-.

(Reviewed by A.M.)

LIKE other Victorians, Thackeray has suffered in the critical weather of our time. Dickens's weaknesses are not less, but his more original genius and springtime energy are better able to carry the handicap than is Thackeray's autumnal disposition. And Thackeray, in the present author's words, has been judged "by the standards of a narrowly defined modernism." His sentiment irritates a hard-boiled generation, and his moral convictions grate on a school that dislikes earnestness and even raises negation to a principle.



W. M. Thackeray

Another reason, the foundation of this important work by Professor Gordon N. Ray, of the University of Illinois, is that Thackeray's explicit wish deprived him of an official biography. Like that of Dickens, his life is very fully documented. Many books have been written about him, but none with more than partial consent and co-operation of the family, or with complete access to material. The result, so the argument runs, has been unfortunate for the writer and the man. He had enemies and aroused jealousy. Gossip was busy with him. Asked if it was true that he had seduced Charlotte Brontë, Thackeray replied sardonically, yes, and he had killed their six children with his own hand! So a false picture became current. Michael Sadleir, authority on Trollope, described Thackeray as "both a hypocrite and a snob," but in reviewing Professor Ray's four volumes of Thackeray's letters and private papers, published with family consent, he handsomely recanted. With the same authorisation, and using much new material, Professor Ray is writing the first full official biography in two large volumes. Volume one takes the story up to the success of *Vanity Fair*.

Having declared Thackeray to be a great novelist and a good man, his biographer depicts, sometimes brilliantly, the layers of adversity through which he passed. The Anglo-Indian society into which he was born lived regally in India, but was looked down upon at home. Thackeray deplored the restrictions of his education—narrow, stupid and brutal at Charterhouse, and narrow but urbane at Cambridge—and Professor Ray thinks these led him to undervalue intellect and form too limited a view of the "gentleman." Then, with money in his pocket, the idle pleasure-seeking in England and on the Continent, when he nearly joined the class of solid loafers that he despised and detested. These experiences account for the crop of gentlemen-blacklegs in his early stories. Professor Ray believes that, always disposed to self-criticism and repentance, he was here not only expressing his moral indignation, but purging himself of memories.

Thackeray was born to write, and the loss of his money, combined with his marriage, which was happy but tragic, forced him to do so. He had read widely and exercised fully his genius for observation. Professor Ray takes us through the hard struggle with apprenticeship, complicated by poverty (when his wife's mind gave way he was nearly penniless)—the burlesques, short tales, satires, including the work for *Punch*, until he made a name with *The Book of Snobs*, and crowned it with *Vanity Fair*.

Professor Ray writes of "the peculiar bitter-sweet flavour of Thackeray's mature personality and work." His own happiness had been shattered, but he believed in the possibility of happiness for others. He had much to subdue and co-ordinate in himself before he reached maturity. A fierce radical in some respects, who loathed social humbug and carried his satire right up to the Throne, he considered that a cultivated class, maintaining the ideal of a gentleman, was essential. This biography brings out nothing more strongly than his belief in moral values. A leading present-day authority on the Victorian Age, G. M. Young, ranks Thackeray, with Dickens and Carlyle, as "the third great moralist of his time."

The evaluation of *Vanity Fair* that closes this first volume will warm many a Thackerayan heart. To the author it is a revolutionary novel, the first achievement of "massive realism" in English, written with "that subtlest art which conceals art." He sees good reasons for the inclusion of *Vanity Fair* among "the half dozen great novels of the world." Following Edgar Johnson's monumental "Life" of Dickens, and American co-operation in the Oxford Trollope, this biography should make us more aware of what we owe to American scholarship in the study of our common heritage.

VIGOROUS AND WITTY

TIGER AT THE GATES, a Play by Jean Giraudoux, translated by Christopher Fry, Methuen, English price 8/6.

IT is said that Byron, of all English poets, has been most popular on the Continent. One can understand this; for Byron, throughout his work, adhered to a single principle—the audience exists to be entertained. Not to be instructed, warned, buffeted, or placated; but to



JEAN GIRAUDOUX

The audience exists to be entertained

N.Z. LISTENER, APRIL 27, 1956.