ALLEGRO, JOHN, THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS, Spectator, 197:680 (1956:July 6) p.18

SPECTATOR, JULY 6, 1956

Clock Lodge, Crowborough, Sussex

SIR,—Evasiveness has no part in the deliberations and writings of Mr. René MacColl and myself. For examples in the art of evasion your correspondent Mr. Cullen should study the answers of successive Home Secretaries when questioned about the Casement diaries.

My endeavour to enlighten Mr. Cullen on the points which confuse him? When I examined the original diaries, I had armed myself with extracts from the typescripts—time, date, place and the actual quotations. There were in the originals, exactly as I expected to find them in the handwriting of Casement. Interpolation and forgery of the diaries would have been out of the question. There was no space to do so, and the slapdash of the ink was a guarantee of fact.

To the second burden. Thomson was by no means a meticulous recorder of detail. Agreed, he had the historical fact and balance of presentation, and although there were lesser entries of sexual practices, they are none the less there. The Normandy forgery theory does not hold water and I have answered it in the third paragraph of my article (June 15). I am in entire agreement with Mr. Cullen about establishing the truth about the diaries. Give me a courageous legal adviser and a fearless publisher and I will do the job. Yours faithfully.

PETER SINGLETON-GATES

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SIR,—I am pleased to read in Spectator, June 15 a review by Virginia Graham of Women in Antiquity by Charles Seltman. The review seems to me to be a complete disservice of historical fact and balance. For example, this: "... up to the Christian era... women were considered equal... to men. Mr. Seltman presents a mouth-watering panorama of women untrammeled by social restrictions... all married, with extra-marital associations taken as a matter of course. In Sparta, for instance, a man would lend his wife to another man... so that neither adultery, bastardy, divorce nor prostitution were words to worry over. They simply did not exist."

This is no historical description of either the ancient or the medieval world. Adultery, bastardy, divorce and prostitution were all there, so were dreadful revenges, sexual jealousies, and all other human tortures. What was the fate of women captives in war, or under slavery? What was sold for debt or fallen into a poverty that yearned for food, or as inhabitants of a city given over to rape and sack? Does the reader imagine any hint of these things but terms it all up in words: "Intelligent, athletic, beautiful, and profoundly innocent—what magnificent human beings were our ancestors!"

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