

ation complicated by a fissure between country and city; a grown up America still dominated by Calvinist principles; still parochial in its grasp of international relations; and committed today heart and soul to the worship of a new god called Prosperity, whose High Priest is Mass Production.

What the future holds for our country, this canny Frenchman is too wise to say, although he leaves ample opportunity for reading between the lines. For one thing, he sees our destiny turning toward the Pacific, where we are to champion the cause of the white race in the East, a portentous prophecy.

This portrait is painted by a Frenchman, an individualist and an enemy of Puritanism. One should keep the fact in mind, as he would wish it kept in mind; beyond that, it is without bias, painfully accurate, and, it needs to be said again, astonishingly correct in its observations.

M. Siegfried's book is of permanent value; it contains many good charts and carefully compiled statistics which the ordinary reader may skip without losing the thread of the narrative, although they are not put in merely to give the volume an appearance of authority.

Mr. Angell's horrible examples of the imbecilities of democracies in wartime are depressing beyond words, but unnecessarily repetitive. His general conclusion is one that is forced upon even the most casual student of contemporary civilization: That man's dominance of the material world has far outrun his mastery of self; of mind and spirit.

To restore this dangerous situation to a balance is the great task of modern philosophy, which thus far has made pathetically little progress. Mr. Angell's thinking about the matter has

resulted in constructive suggestions which are worth investigating.

America Comes of Age. By André Siegfried. Translated by H. H. Hemming and Doris Hemming. Harcourt, Brace and Company.
The Public Mind. By Norman Angell. E. P. Dutton and Company.

MANY VOICES

By Margery Swett Mansfield

SET aside the extremely radical poets, the writers of newspaper verse, your own personal favorites, and the half dozen or so outstanding figures who represent to you the largest talents of our day — such as, perhaps, Sandburg, Frost, Masefield, Robinson, Millay — and you still have left an incredible number of technically competent poets who would be sufficiently individual, and in many cases sufficiently subtle and thoughtful to win marked attention, did they not all live at the same time. They drown out each other's voices. The books here considered make a fairly representative cross section of contemporary verse after you have removed its extreme figures. Although the inexplicable magic phrase — the peculiar gift of the poetic genius — is all too scarce, the work is, nevertheless surprisingly able and imaginative.

I make quick exception of "Street Lamps" by Morris Abel Beer. His work is weak and inconsequential, though possibly its publication is excusable for the sake of those still old fashioned people who like to read pretty thoughts about their home town, even if it happens to be New York. He is too self conscious, or too conscious of being a poet, and often too bitter, to be a popular poet, and too unintellectual to please sophisticated

readers. In contrast, Amelia Josephine Burr in her "Selected Lyrics" writes from such a fulness of life, and such simple appreciation of it, that though she is not interesting technically she can hardly fail to appeal to thousands of girls and women who are just beginning to read poetry. I do not mean to be catty. We certainly have a shortage of good popular poets who can bridge the gap between Edgar Guest and the more subtle poets, and until it is bridged the more subtle poets will lack audiences.

There's a wee white shaving of a slim young
moon,
Sliding down the sky through the rose and
the gray.
The wind is rising cool and the dark will be
here soon,
Dear God, how glad I am that I have lived
today. . . .

Such lines will not hold the reader long, but they may point the way.

In this connection I recommend quite seriously, and hope that Glenn Ward Dresbach will not take offense, that the title poem in his "Cliff Dwellings" be tried out on junior high school students for possible adoption in the school readers instead of some threadbare Victorian poem still included because of its American theme. I do not consider Dresbach's poem either childish or classic, but it treats one of the most mysterious of American subjects — and one not too well known — in a dignified, unsentimental and unmoralistic manner, with here and there a fine poetic touch for a teacher to point out. And it should occasion interesting footnotes. The rest of the book does not seem up to his "The Enchanted Mesa", though certainly the last poem is a strong story effectively told, and "The Fence", "White Owl", and a few others can be named as fine poems.

George O'Neil's last book is pleas-

antly unusual in that it combines lyric quality and imagination with intellectual interest, escaping the lyric clichés — commonplace phrase and strained emotion. "The White Rooster" is a book to recommend to any intelligent lover of poetry, without fear of its proving either too difficult or too banal.

Exceedingly promising is S. Foster Damon, whose "Astrolabe" shows imaginative preoccupation with science, philosophy, theology, as well as a sense of satire, and compassion. This last quality and his simple, effective handling of a line, are shown in "Last Supper". Jesus is speaking to Judas:

I knew, when wine from water ran,
That I must die, for man is man;
I knew, when wine was changed to blood,
That I must die, for I am God.
I chose thee, and I chose thee well
To do this deed; since thou wilt sell
For hate the thing that thou wilt buy
Again for love most bitterly.
Then shalt thou kill thyself for me,
And greater love there cannot be.
And now thy Passion must begin.
Fear not: let Satan enter in.
(Long since have I forgiven thee;
But how soon wilt thou pardon me?)

O silent one, take what is thine
— This last sop of the bread and wine —
To bless the deed; because a Tree
Is now prepared also for thee.

Another book of intelligent, courageous thinking about religion is "News of the Devil" by Humbert Wolfe. It is a long poem, the body of which tells in five foot couplets how a newspaper king decides to make religion effective by introducing business methods and publicity. But dying, or nearly, he receives a visit from God (or the Devil), and, stimulated by this unusual visitor, finds in himself something finer than the religion he had planned to boost. The treatment consists of sharply contrasting sections of keen satire and poetic sentiment, mixed with profound,

pantheistic metaphysics. If we admit the humorously forced rhyming of "business" in the satirical sections, the verse is adequate, which is saying much. The following is from a description of God:

or when upon the evening one white petal
of the last bird's song stirs the air a little,
and all the petalled beauties that ever were
in song and eve enchant the listener,
and there's nothing in the world but tender-
ness,
all that and more than that were in the face.

In "New Poems" the publishers of Ford Madox Ford issue for three hundred and twenty five of his admirers an autographed book pleasant to the sight and touch (as are most of these books) but containing only six poems. The shorter ones have a distinctive flavor but a not very general interest. The longer one has too easy a method of presentation to deserve special praise for it, though the result is amusing enough without obscuring the deep sympathy and understanding of the inherited cares of the small farmer, toiling over his books while his family sleeps, and his farmyard tells his woes. It has a sense of life.

Lola Ridge's third book opens with an interesting Chinese scene in free verse, and includes some Russian and some Bermudian themes. Sometimes the free verse is prosy, sometimes the moods seem strained for the sake of images, but Miss Ridge's talent is apparent. At her best she is subtle and thought provoking or has the delicate rhythm and charm of "Snow-Dance for the Dead":

Dance, little children, it is holy twilight. . .
have you hung paper flowers about the
necks of ikons?
dance soft . . . but very gaily . . . on
tiptoe like the snow.

I like Maxwell Bodenheim's "Returning to Emotion" better than his other books of verse, and I think most

readers will. It has the warmth and occasional lyric touch we have missed since "Minna and Myself" and contains longer, more mature, poems. The technique is less markedly gymnastic than that in his previous books—he tortures words less to make them form strange alliances. Or perhaps we have just got used to it. If not, I should say the change indicates a greater maturity and sense of poise in his art, a security permitting simplicity, or something more like it, for he is never simple. I like these poems, but if I hated them I should still give him a vote of thanks for his peculiar method. Who can read him and write as tritely as before? I believe his influence, direct and indirect, has been enormous. Everyone scribbling seems to know of him. And for how many years has he flouted the hackneyed, the sentimental, and the inflated?

Street Lamps. By Morris Abel Beer.
Harold Vinal.
Selected Lyrics. By Amelia Josephine Burr. George H. Doran Company.
Cliff Dwellings. By Glenn Ward Dresbach. Harold Vinal.
The White Rooster. By George O'Neil. Boni and Liveright.
Astrolabe. By S. Foster Damon. Harper and Brothers.
News of the Devil. By Humbert Wolfe. Henry Holt and Company.
New Poems. By Ford Madox Ford. William E. Rudge.
Red Flag. By Lola Ridge. The Viking Press.
Returning to Emotion. By Maxwell Bodenheim. Boni and Liveright.

WANTED: A GUILD OF LITERARY CRAFTSMEN

By Babette Deutsch

VAN WYCK BROOKS'S most recent contribution to criticism consists of a volume which may be divided into two parts. The first of these is a set