

In this book we see Emerson as his neighbors saw him—as a careful citizen who kept his fences in repair. We see him as his contemporaries of a larger world than Concord saw him—as sage, teacher and prophet. In addition, we are favored with rare glimpses into the soul of the man. We see him waging a long struggle against the repressed and artificial intellectuality which had swathed his childhood and youth, digesting the teaching of books, and turning from them to the teaching of life, or, as he would have said, Nature. We see him losing his rigid creed of individualism and self-sufficiency in the growing realization of his own very human loneliness, coming to the conclusion that “The study of books is sickly, and the garden and a family, mother, son, and brother, are a balsam. There is health in table talk and nursery play. We must wear old shoes and have aunts and cousins”. We see Emerson’s whole system of thought developing from his life and character and environment. Surely, there is no better way to write the biography of a thinker. Mr. Russell has added nothing new, in the way of factual material, to what we already know of Emerson; but he has integrated the facts into a memorable form.

MARGARET WALLACE

CARRY NATION *by Herbert Asbury*
(KNOPF. \$3.00)

AMERICA has always been rich in unbalanced fanatics and Carry A. Nation was not the least of them. This Hatchet of the Lord who went about smashing up saloons, snatching cigarettes out of the mouths of amazed young bucks and lecturing young ladies who ventured to osculate their swains in the public ways was a phenomenon peculiar to evangelical democracy. Her strength was in her angry convictions and supreme fearlessness. How much she may have been responsible for letting loose the obnoxious swarm of prohibition zealots over this fair Republic is a question. Anyway, as a prime example of what

drives wild-eyed young men to Europe for the rest of their natural lives she was without rival. Mr. Herbert Asbury has done all that could be done with her life and anybody who desires a closer acquaintance with the actual Carry may secure it through the pages of this lively book, wherein nothing is set down in malice or ridicule. Mr. Asbury regards Carry Nation as a freak of civilization and he sets out to explain her through her own divagations. The result is a very good book that alternately amuses and depresses the reader. The comic side of Carry was patent; the depressive side is evident in the very possibility of her existence. Whether or not she was important enough to warrant a biography has been a matter of some argument among critics. It seems to me, however, that any individuality that the public has crystallized into a myth possesses enough revelatory betrayals of the civilization wherein that individuality had birth to vindicate extensive treatment. Carry was militant; there are many Carry Nations living today (some of them in trousers) who are not militant but who share her viewpoint to a great extent. When we have become civilized enough to laugh these people away and out of court we shall have achieved a maturity at last. Lord, Lord, how long the day is coming!

HERBERT GORMAN

LEOPOLD OF THE BELGIANS *by*
Comte Louis de Lichtervelde (CENTURY.
\$4.00)

AS THE American translators of this book inform us, this is a political rather than a personal biography. It is important for it tells authoritatively and dispassionately the story of Belgium’s greatest king. Leopold II has been variously maligned as the rake of Europe and the ravager of the Congo blacks. It is easy to see why he was misunderstood. He had his own aims to pursue, and he was great enough to prefer calumny to failure of his grand plans.

King Leopold saw what the narrow, conservative little Belgium of his time did not foresee—that his country needed a colony. Asia and America were not to be had either for the asking or the taking. There remained the almost untouched continent of Africa. Under the guise of scientist and religious humanitarian he gained an entry there. He consolidated himself with the consent of Europe, including England, which rejected Stanley whom he used. Stanley prosecuted at Leopold's personal expense the explorations he had begun himself. To give some idea of King Leopold's patriotic altruism, it is well to quote from the narrative itself:

To find funds, to satisfy creditors, to try to make sceptical financiers share his ardent faith in the future of the colony, such was his real life in the beautiful setting of the monarchy. And all this for whom? For a prudent, hard-working, upright country, which as a whole did not want a policy of expansion and whom it was necessary to enrich against its will, with all the tricks which others would have used in trimming it.

We get here the background of Belgian

politics, against which Leopold stands out in history as "neither a figurehead nor a hawk". When he died, he gave to Belgium the colony which he had won with his intelligence and his own money. And, when he died, it took another great Belgian, Cardinal Mercier, to realize his full worth and to speak a fitting epitaph at a time when others had only ill to speak of him. Cardinal Mercier issued to the Catholics an ultimatum countersigned by the entire episcopate, part of which ran thus:

The priests have celebrated mass, the faithful have prayed, have taken communion for the repose of the soul of the great King that Belgium has just lost and whose glory, contrary to the fate of most human reputations, will grow as years permit us to appreciate better the immense services rendered to civilization by his genius and perseverance. . . . *Nolite condemnare et non condemnabini.*

The Cardinal and the King are both dead, and this book is one worthy proof that neither need fear the judgment of enlightened posterity.

NORAH MEADE