

writer to accomplish with his first volume. Perhaps his next will have more to do with that other civilization which is, to us, America.

CLINTON SIMPSON

ADRIGOOLE by Peadar O'Donnell (PUTNAM. \$2.50)

As in his former book, *The Way It Was With Them*, Mr. O'Donnell has written a story of a group of ordinary people in Ireland that is beautiful and exciting but never obviously sentimental. It is the story of the boy, Hughie Dalach, a peasant, who grows up on the soil, marries a childhood sweetheart and, after years of fighting against poverty, sees his whole world wrecked by chance circumstances.

The story is told lucidly and straightforwardly without malice or extenuation. The author does not obtrude himself and in the tragic denouement neither expresses nor implies the slightest blame. The tragedy could have taken place only in Ireland and among the Irish, yet it is but one facet of the misery, experienced through other causes, suffered by the poor everywhere.

Yet only in Ireland can one find the particular gaiety of the idyllic scenes in the early part of the book. There is a rather brave and steadfast acceptance of life and its hardships that is unusual in novels of the soil. The people seem to work with nature instead of fighting against it. Much of the charm of the book is in the minor characters. It is a crowded canvas, but Mr. O'Donnell has filled it with real people. Even those characters who appear for just a few pages are unforgettable.

The propagandists have given us political novels, and the romantics, like Byrne, have written luscious prose poems of adulation. And in all these Ireland has been a moot subject. But Mr. O'Donnell, with artistic integrity, has placed his emphasis on the novel, of which Ireland happens to be the scene.

PAUL ALLEN

THE BEST SHORT STORIES OF 1929 edited by Edward J. O'Brien (DODD, MEAD. \$2.50)

O. HENRY MEMORIAL AWARD PRIZE STORIES OF 1929, edited by Blanche Colton Williams (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. \$2.50)

THIS YEAR Mr. O'Brien's culling of short stories from American magazines celebrates the fifteenth anniversary of its birth, while the O. Henry prize volume is now eleven years old. Both Mr. O'Brien and Dr. Williams, despite their arduous labor at the task of winnowing "the best" tales from the thousands published every year, retain their optimism; Mr. O'Brien takes a look back at the first volume of his collection and declares it was full of formula stories, while Dr. Williams rejoices in the award of the first O. Henry prize of \$500 to a story that first saw the light of day in the pages of *THE BOOKMAN*, "Big Blonde," by Dorothy Parker. Does a careful reading of the two volumes seem to justify the faith of their editors in the present and future of the American short story? Paradoxically, while neither volume appears to shelter very many stories that are likely to be read with pleasure ten years hence, the answer must be in the affirmative.

Mr. O'Brien is quite right in declaring that present-day American short-story writers have defied the Machine Age to the extent of giving both vitality and variety to a literary form that has several times in its past hardened into a formula. It is true that when we all knew what a short story should be like—remembering Poe and Brander Matthews—the task of choosing great stories was easier than it is today; the old footrules are no longer of any use.

Of the three stories awarded prizes in the O. Henry contest, it is interesting to note that two of them might once have been called "character studies", except that in the day when the characterization was used there were no such portrait painters at work as

Dorothy Parker and Katharine Brush. "Big Blonde" is not really a story; it is the essence of biography, the direct, simple, unsentimental, and yet queerly moving study of a certain type of woman. Mrs. Parker has done what it takes a master to do. She has done a type to the life and she has also made the reader feel the individual. In "Him and Her", Miss Brush's story, we have another venture into the field of portraiture; a conversation between two servants is made to sketch swiftly and surely the master and mistress of a household. Miss Brush, whose "Night Club" has become a sort of contemporary classic, is less happily represented with another story in the O. Henry collection, the only author to win two such inclusions. Her "Speakeasy" has its poignance and its possibility, but its basic idea has been used many times.

It is interesting to note that the only story to be included in both the O. Henry and the O'Brien collections is also by a woman, and belongs quite definitely to the prevailing hard-boiled fashion. This is "Manicure", by Margaret Leech, an admirably handled slice of New York life, with a neat use of what Frances Newman called the "reversal of situation" in its ending. Ten of the tales in the O. Henry volume, out of a total of seventeen, are by women, while only four of Mr. O'Brien's twenty are credited to women. These statistics are offered for what they are worth, which is probably very little, although they may bear some relation to the sex of the respective editors.

Two authors win representation in both volumes, one the well-known Virginia newspaper editor, Sherwood Anderson, whose "Alice" appears in the O. Henry collection, and whose "The Lost Novel" is honored by Mr. O'Brien. Both are, one writes with some regret, altogether inferior to the earlier short stories of Mr. Anderson; in fact, neither is

more than a slight sketch, done in the wistfully poetic Anderson manner, but with very little substance. The other author to make both volumes is Pernet Patterson, a Virginian, who apparently began writing only recently after a varied and rather long career. Mr. Patterson's "Buttin' Blood" in the O. Henry volume is an appealing story about a friendship between a white boy and a colored boy that will be quite likely to touch the Southerners who have known the pleasures of such a companionship. His "Conjur" in Mr. O'Brien's book is a good yarn of conjuration worked on a yellow butler, newly arrived upon an old plantation. The atmosphere is excellent and the study of the conjure-woman herself very good indeed, but the ending is entirely conventional, and the story as a whole hardly notable, although there is sufficient talent in the two tales to justify a suggestion that Mr. Patterson be kept under observation.

In discussing the two other winners of the O. Henry prizes, Sidney Howard's curious tale, "The Homesick Ladies", which took the second prize was passed by; it is a pleasure to come back to it here and to say that it has a decidedly haunting quality. There are overtones in plenty in this story of the affection of two women for the house they grew up in, and this reviewer feels at the present moment that it is certain to be read again and very soon. He might add that the same thing applies to a delightful story by Willa Cather in the O'Brien collection, called "Double Birthday". Miss Cather is one of the few people equally at home in the short story and the novel. It is not possible, of course, to discuss all the thirty-seven stories in the two volumes in this limited space, but it should be added that there are several light-hearted ones in this year's collections, including Walter D. Edmond's especially amusing whimsy, "Death of Red Peril".

HERSCHEL BRICKELL

BIOGRAPHY

MAD ANTHONY WAYNE *by Thomas Boyd* (SCRIBNER'S. \$3.50)

FROM the even pages of Thomas Boyd's biography Mad Anthony Wayne emerges both as a very likable human being and as the perfect military instrument. In Washington's words, he was "more active and enterprising than judicious and cautious", but he was a Barney Oldfield among the generals of the Revolution: his seemingly reckless impetuosity was under control. In Virginia, in 1781, he saved himself by driving into the troops of Cornwallis with bayonets (his favorite weapon) when, by all the known and predictable laws of cause and effect, he had got himself and his eight hundred Pennsylvanians into a trap from which safe retreat was impossible and advance unthinkable. His storming of Stony Point on the Hudson, in 1779, which is what makes his name known to every schoolboy, shines like a sun in the military history of the phase of the Revolution that stretches lugubriously between Monmouth and Yorktown. It is true that he made mistakes, for a number of his men were caught and bayoneted near his own home in Pennsylvania by night during the lull between Brandywine and Germantown; and several years later, in Georgia, he failed to provide enough sentinels to give proper warning of a surprise attack from Creek Indians in his rear; but in the tricky fluctuations of war such mistakes might be placed more charitably under the heading of mischances made inescapable by the inscrutable laws of fortune.

All through the Revolution Wayne was an invaluable instrument. His one talisman was the word "attack". He had singularly

little chance to operate as a strategist of scope: the prosecution of the war was not the province of a brigadier whose affectionate title of "mad" was fairly earned. But in the post-Revolution campaigns against the Indians in the Ohio wilderness he had his opportunity to prove himself as a capable strategist, for, where Saint Clair and others had failed lamentably, he succeeded in studying the Indian country with forts and bringing Little Turtle, the Miami, and others to terms which spelled dispersal for the Red Man.

Wayne is hardly a figure to compel the imagination many days. Unlike George Rogers Clark, his predecessor in opening up the Northwest Territory to Americans, he did not conceive a vision to stagger the ordinary imagination and then proceed, almost miraculously, to make the dream a reality. But the gains made by daring men must often be consolidated by men as daring; and it was Wayne who consolidated the position of the young United States in the Ohio country which Clark's operations and the treaty of 1783 had brought under the young Republic's flag.

Mr. Boyd tells the story of Wayne from the day he left his Chester County home in Pennsylvania to join the Continentals until his death at gloomy Presque Isle on Lake Erie in December of 1796, in smooth, clear prose. The book contains a gallery of individualized portraits of Revolutionary War figures: Charles Lee (who caused the Washingtonian curses that have so shocked the hard-boiled twentieth century); the piddling Saint Clair; pompous, childish General Wilkinson; gallant Lafayette; ruddy Nathaniel Greene; and so on. Because its sub-