

stories with a common heroine, Margaret Sargent, who is not to be confused with her author but is not to be wholly divorced from her, either. Time: the late thirties. Place: New York City. The first and last stories, which are the most subjective, seem to me the least successful; self-examination in them often becomes self-consciousness, sometimes even self-exploitation. But the middle four are in Miss McCarthy's best vein; they are social comedy of the highest order. "Rogue's Gallery," for example, still is funny on a fifth re-reading because of the wit and the inventiveness with which the author formulates a complete view of Mr. Sheer's personality—more of his destiny; by "complete," I mean extreme clarity of description—ruthless, implacable—combined with extreme charity of judgment.... These stories also suggest the atmosphere, the tone of the literary-left world of the thirties much as *The Great Gatsby* recreates the atmosphere of the twenties; there is an abundance of specific details that are precisely "right" for the period because they emerge from an imaginative feeling for the whole, for its peculiar, particular quality. I prefer the prose of these stories—wry and lean, direct, informal, journalistic, full of wisecracks—to some of Miss McCarthy's later, more elaborate prose. The "central" story is, I think, not the celebrated "The Man in the Brooks Brothers Shirt" but rather "Portrait of the Intellectual as a Yale Man," which is both a "social document"—through the thorough and acute analysis of the public personality of an individual—which cultural historians will neglect at their peril and also a commentary, accurate and ruthless and persistent—I like this quality in a good writer as much as I deplore it in a poor writer—on the American intelligentsia in general. As well as being extremely amusing for sixty-eight pages.

Dwight Macdonald

THE BUTCHER

The Tichborne Claimant. A Victorian Mystery.

By DOUGLAS WOODRUFF. *Hollis & Carter*. 30s.

The Claimant. The Tichborne Case Reviewed.

By MICHAEL GILBERT. *Constable*. 18s. 6d.

THE Tichborne case is the nearest thing we have to the Dreyfus affair—an ostensibly legal dispute which boiled over into politics. The two make a strange contrast. In the affair the issues were clear as crystal, though the events were confused—anti-Semitism, the honour of the

army, the Rights of Man, and so on. It is not difficult to understand why anyone was Dreyfusard or anti-Dreyfusard. But what made men rally to the Claimant? The forces behind the conflict were as obscure as the case itself. Yet the Tichborne case was a portent, hinting darkly at all sorts of developments which have now carried the day. A mass electorate chooses odd heroes; and the butcher of Wapping was the first of them, a sort of John the Baptist for Horatio Bottomley. The masses do not bother about the rules of evidence, indeed feel strongly against them. Hence the prolonged court-proceedings were irrelevant from the popular point of view; and even improved the Claimant's standing by going against him. He would have been far less popular if he had succeeded in demonstrating that he was in fact Sir Roger Tichborne. There is another, even more obscure point which neither of the present authors remarks on. Sir Roger Tichborne may have started in the landed aristocracy; the Claimant was a returned Colonial, and an independent one at that. Though the old order in England pulled him down, the Statute of Westminster may be regarded as the Claimant's revenge.

It is always agreeable for a reviewer to have two books on the same subject so that he can balance one against the other; particularly agreeable in this case when the two books are so very different and both have qualities of great distinction. Mr. Gilbert's is shorter, clearer, and more effective, the work of one who is at once a lawyer and a writer of detective-fiction. Mr. Woodruff's is much fuller with a good deal of new material which, like most fresh evidence, makes the story more confusing instead of simpler; it is better on atmosphere than on fact, and it loses grip in the courts which were after all a large part of the case. To put it crudely, Mr. Gilbert is a Rationalist who thinks that odd happenings from Claimants to ghosts can be explained away if one is careful enough. Mr. Woodruff belongs to the "no-smoke-without-fire" school. Faced with anything puzzling, he is inclined to say: "there must be something in it." I should guess that he believes in miracles and that Mr. Gilbert does not. I found Mr. Gilbert's approach more sympathetic and therefore more convincing. Those who are credulous may be of a different mind. I have no scrap of doubt that Roger Tichborne was drowned at sea in 1854 and that the Claimant was Arthur Orton of Wapping. Mr. Woodruff thinks this sort of imposture difficult. He should consider the record (ignored also by Mr. Gilbert) of the forty-six Pretenders who claimed to be Louis XVII of France, the boy who perished in the Temple. They impersonated not only him, but each other as well. They were of all shapes and

ages; some could speak no French. They all gathered a host of enthusiastic supporters. Compared to this, Orton had an easy time of it; and he often fell down badly. It is of no great moment now whether the Claimant was Tichborne, Orton, Castro, or Cresswell; but it makes a wonderful story. On one point both authors are lamentably ignorant. Neither seems to be aware that Sickert painted the Claimant's portrait. It is to be seen—but why should I reveal my little fragment of knowledge?

A. J. P. Taylor

IN DEFENCE OF REASON

Logic without Metaphysics. And Other Studies in the Philosophy of Science. By ERNEST NAGEL. Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois. \$6.

PROFESSOR NAGEL is the most level-headed of philosophers. And I mean this mainly as a compliment. He discusses important questions, analyses them thoroughly, disposes of the nonsense that others may have talked about them, and comes up with plain and sensible answers of his own. He was a pupil of John Dewey, and though not himself a thorough-going pragmatist he has remained faithful to Dewey's criterion of "warranted assertibility." He is severe upon claptrap, especially if it is of a spiritualistic kind, but he is not, in general, dogmatic; his assertions are made with proper scientific caution, and one can be sure that they are warranted. At times one might wish that he would be a little more venturesome; that he would indulge his imagination or commit himself to some illuminating paradox: there is much to be said in philosophy for being interestingly wrong. But this self-restraint is suited to the part that he plays on the philosophical scene. I myself was once described by the late Mr. Wyndham Lewis as an "intellectual detective-sergeant," but however ardent I may have been in upholding the cause of reason, it was rather in the spirit of a vigilante. Professor Nagel is a commissioner of the intellectual police.

He is all the more qualified for this office in that he is one of the few philosophers who possess an adequate knowledge and understanding of modern science. Twenty years ago it was the fashion to proclaim that the future of philosophy lay in its becoming the logic of science: metaphysics having been discredited, there seemed no other useful road for it to follow. But things have happened otherwise. Metaphysics keeps on being disinterested, in order to be differently reburied, painstaking studies, with results of varying degrees of interest, are made

of our ordinary use of words, the realism of common sense is piously defended, the experts in symbolic logic pursue their mathematical research, and the natural sciences are pretty much ignored. Philosophers who have the analytical ability to throw light upon the use of scientific concepts for the most part lack the necessary scientific training: and when eminent scientists venture into philosophy they nearly always make a hash of it. Professor Nagel's contributions to the philosophy of science are not dramatic; but they are capable, lucid, shrewd, and well-informed.

The essays and reviews which make up his latest book range in date from 1934 to 1955. There are ten essays and twenty reviews and they deal not only with questions of method and interpretation in the natural and social sciences, but also with logic, analytical philosophy, the problem of truth, and, in the case of one or two of the reviews, with social philosophy and the philosophy of education. Professor Nagel tells us in his short introduction that "except for one essay, and apart from minor changes in the others," these papers have all been reprinted in the form in which they originally appeared. The result is, as he himself admits, that when one reads the book through, one discovers certain "shifts and oscillations in doctrine and emphasis"; but the general impression is that of a strong continuity of outlook and tone.

The essay "In defense of Logic Without Metaphysics," from which the book takes its title, was originally a contribution to a symposium in which the other two participants appear to have taken the line that the laws of logic are somehow based upon "pervasive ontological traits of things in general." Opposing this obscurantism, Professor Nagel himself adopts a mildly conventionalist position, which he further elaborates in an essay "On Logic without Ontology." More interesting, to my mind, is an essay on "Symbolism and Science," where Nagel distinguishes carefully between different types of natural signs, and between natural signs and linguistic symbols, and argues that "what are called theories in the sciences are primarily instrumental to establishing linkage between descriptive symbols: theories formulate comprehensive relations between things and occurrences so as to permit some of them to serve as reliable natural signs of others." There is also a more technical essay on "A Formalization of Functionalism," which is difficult but impressive, and, among the philosophical pieces, an account of Analytic Philosophy in Europe, which was based on a tour which Professor Nagel made in 1935. The impressions which he then formed now appear somewhat outmoded, but they have a certain historical interest.