

payers back home. The financial burden of defense fell then on the shoulders of the Canadians and on the natives in other colonies. This made the second Empire more popular in thrifty Westminster. "Oriental" Disraeli deftly reversed himself and became an imperialist. He crowned Victoria as gaudy Empress of India in 1876. During the final quarter of the nineteenth century, imperialism became the rage in all Europe. Interimperial rivalry led straight into 1914, and the 1914 aftermath into 1939.

Mr. Adams considers the second Empire the world's warden of freedom. His style is persuasive; his scope encyclopedic. He dislikes Hitler and Stalin. But there is a sentimental, eulogistic undertone throughout. Napoleon is underrated as a democrat and civilizer. The vitally important Little Englanders are undertreated. The rather disgraceful Boer War is whitewashed. The German people are called things not far short of "Huns." One feels that Mr. Adams believes the English-speakers are a chosen race, with a globular mission. In short, Mr. Adams is an Anglophile and proud of it. He reminds us that our country was part of the first empire for a *longer* time than it has since been independent. He thinks that, somehow, the current war will benefit his dear old England. This really excellent book, in short, is handicapped, here and there, by an unfortunately streamlined, 1940 "Kiplingery."

ROGER SHAW

**A SOUTHERNER DISCOVERS NEW ENGLAND,** by JONATHAN DANIELS (Macmillan; \$3.00).

Whether Yankee ingenuity and thrift can stir up enough breeze to rescue New England from the doldrums is a question engaging the interest of many of our countrymen these days, and an increasing number of essays and books is being devoted to the subject. The latest and most balanced report comes now from Mr. Jonathan Daniels, a camera-eyed Southerner, who recently revisited the land of his ancestors and recorded his findings. In certain respects *A Southerner Discovers New England* is a companion volume to the author's earlier study of the South.

Mr. Daniels evidently arranged his tour with considerable thought, and the result is a sprightly and provocative story of industrial, agricultural, and maritime New England, interspersed with descriptive flashes and amusing anecdotes. The people themselves do most of the testifying. Whether it is Governor Saltonstall, of Salem aristocracy; the ex-whaler in Nantucket; the Manchester mill hand; the Boston banker — they all speak willingly and well for the benefit of their Southern visitor. A few take a defeatist view; others are bewildered by changing times; but the majority regard the future with a determined optimism. A Harvard student of journalism said, "Bostonians are living on money

their ancestors made and contributing nothing," while youthful Mayor Tobin of Boston cautioned, "Don't ever think New England is licked. It's not."

There are brilliant chapters on the "Quoddy" project; the dilemma of Manchester, New Hampshire; Rhode Island hopefulness; and the paper industry in northern New England. In the course of his travels Mr. Daniels came on a number of talkative people and subsequently concluded that the laconic Yankee is a myth. This is heresy, of course, and Mr. Daniels is here assured that most New Englanders in small towns and country areas remain decidedly taciturn, in the Coolidge manner.

The book is a skillful job of first-rate reporting, written in an engaging, impressionist style, compact and clear. The frequent analyses are often penetrating. New England readers, in particular, should discover a good deal that is stimulating and valuable — about themselves.

OLIVER JENKINS

**A MARY WEBB ANTHOLOGY,** selected & edited by H. L. WEBB (Dutton; \$3.00).

Heretofore unpublished verse and excerpts, samples of her best descriptive and poetic prose from known works, have been gathered by Mary Webb's husband before his death. Mary Webb, "with a burden of beauty lipping about her head, gently blundered into immortality." The edition is a charming one, appropriately illustrated, with colored plates and black-and-white drawings by Norman Hepple and Rowland Hilder.

E. V. A.



### **The Reviewers**

P. W. WILSON, a former British newspaper editor and member of the English Parliament, is a special writer for the New York Times.

JOHN J. SLOCUM is a former staff member of and contributor to the North American Review.

DONALD B. TANSILL, Vice President and General Sales Manager of the Pepperell Manufacturing Co., is the author of *So You're Going to Sell*.

H. GREGORY THOMAS is a lawyer specializing in international legal problems and relations.

WILLIAM CURTIS SWABEY is a teacher of philosophy at New York University and a contributor to philosophical periodicals.

HENRY L. DE GIVE, a graduate of Harvard Law School, is connected with a New York firm specializing in corporation law.

ROGER SHAW is a former editor, a radio commentator and lecturer on foreign affairs.

OLIVER JENKINS is a writer of verse, the author of *Captain's Walk*, and is associated with the magazine *Yankee*, as Poetry Editor.

# **Death in the Evening**

**by LETA CLEWS CROMWELL**

**T**HE QUESTION of the extent to which our artistic standards depend on the brevity of our existence makes for fascinating speculation. With the scientists working away to stretch our life span, we may have to alter our conception of tragedy. Shattered careers and broken hearts would lose a great deal of their poignancy if we had a longer time in which to mend them. Death itself might seem less sensational and not, as now, something approaching bedrock in drama. It is hard to convey the sense of rising excitement with which one views *Medicine Show*, concerned as it is with untimely death.

Did you know, asks the statistician, appearing before the curtain in the new Living Newspaper play by Oscar Saul and H. R. Hays, that there are 250,000 preventable deaths a year in the United States? And he invites us to follow him into the bleak hall of inquiry, where the tall gray portals close behind us, shutting us in with the facts. Everywhere there is illness—in the North, in the South, in the city, even “where the sun shines and the trees are green.” The country doctor examines Johnny’s throat; it looks like diphtheria, but there isn’t a hospital within fifty miles. One third of America, the statistician explains, is without a hospital within fifty miles. Mr. Hall has heart trouble, but he can’t get into a hospital. Mac starts to explain his symptoms, but it is already the next man’s turn at the clinic. There are needed 312,000 more clinic hours than are given, says the statistician. Yet Dr. Young’s mother begs him to skip his afternoon at the hospital and devote himself to his private patients. Otherwise, how is he going to live? The statistician finally summons a desperate little band of suffering folk who are doomed, unless . . . unless. . . . Meanwhile the giant clock above the door ticks loudly, that clock which is also the beat of the human heart.

Except for the false note of the Alice-in-Wonderland episode, there is an emotional drive behind the show that leaves one close to cheering at the finish, though unconverted to the cause of socialized medicine. That solution is not convincing. The villainy of the American Medical Association would appear to be exaggerated, while one shudders to

think of the new opportunities for graft with medicine in the hands of the politicians. As for the authors’ plan of adding \$850,000,000 to our national budget—the taxpayer might lose even his barrel and die of exposure. At the same time, adequate care for the indigent sick is no imaginary problem. Nor is the case of young doctors who are eager to serve in clinics but who must at the same time make a living for themselves.

The authors express the situation in looking-glass logic: The poor are twice as sick as the rich and get half as much care. Those who can’t afford a cold will have to get pneumonia. It’s a subject worth pondering.

The development of the Living Newspaper technique was the great contribution of the late Federal Theatre. Without inviting too many protests, one could say that it was truly modern. It was the technique employed by Orson Welles in his version of *Julius Caesar*. Lighting plays the lead in this kind of production, with a relentless spot illuminating first one group of actors, then another, on a dark and bare stage. Samuel Leve did the lighting for *Medicine Show*; he is also responsible for the design, almost Egyptian in its simplicity, that suggests a hall. Without a conventional set, and with almost no props, one’s imagination is free to soar. Jules Dassin has staged the scenes with great effect on different levels, even to evoking figures that speak from the walls. And he achieves real beauty in his marshaling of the condemned.

Requiring intensity and sincerity from its actors, *Medicine Show* has both of these. Of course it is not a field day for actors but it is one of those rare shows that really *uses* the stage.

To her students at Columbia clamoring for the definition of a play, Professor Minor Latham suggests that a play is a trap and that characters are either falling into an inevitable situation or struggling to get out of one. If so, *Medicine Show* is indeed a play. In any case, it has provided this column with the supreme satisfaction of rocking with approval. And the approbation goes, too, for the \$1.65 top for seats. An audience that represents the public, not only Broadway, is enabled to enter the theatre and to get its money’s worth.