

ladies and crooked New York politics of one hundred years ago. Engineer David Wakeman emerges triumphant in every case for a very interesting picture of metropolitan life in the 1830's.

Although it is classed as a war novel, there is hardly anything of war itself in *The Wine of Astonishment*, by Martha Gellhorn (Scribner's, \$3.00). Most of the skirmishing takes place in bedrooms, whether it is the Lieutenant Colonel or his jeep driver, Jacob Levy, who is involved. It is, however, rather a story of deeper meaning, in its development of characters and portrayal of the philosophy of life on the part of individuals of different types.

MISCELLANEOUS

According to E. M. Butler in *The Myth of the Magus* (Macmillan, \$3.75), all great prophets, conjurers, magicians, and charlatans

are more striking in their likenesses than differences. In the legendary history of almost every people is a mythical hero, and the pattern of his life is followed in the story of most of the men she describes. Zoroaster, Moses, Solomon, Christ, Merlin, Rasputin—all of these have much in common with the legendary figure.

The author sets up a table listing the ten outstanding features common to most legendary figures. These features include: a mysterious origin, a period of wandering, a magical contest, a mysterious or violent death followed by a resurrection. The author proves to her own satisfaction the common basis on which the lives of these characters are based. This is a careful study, full of rich material. It will interest all those who enjoy folk-tales and anthropology and remind the reader of Fraser's *Golden Bough*.

A Westerner, on the occasion of his first visit to Boston, gave the following account of his sight-seeing ventures:

"The bean eaters had a sign on every corner. Here was a plate announcing that in this house John Hancock and John Quincy Adams spent the night on such and such a date; on the next corner a house will be plainly marked as the spot where the wife of General Warren died—to say nothing of the markers of the route taken by the Continentals to Bunker Hill, etc.

"I was very much interested in Boston and rode all around the town, but was particularly interested in one house out near the edge of the city marked as follows: 'This is the house that Paul Revere would have passed if he had gone this way.'"

—*The Haversack*

Some years ago an elderly man was riding a sight-seeing bus up Fifth Avenue. This was his first trip to New York, and he was sitting on the edge of his seat, taking everything in, while the conductor of the tour was calling out the points of interest.

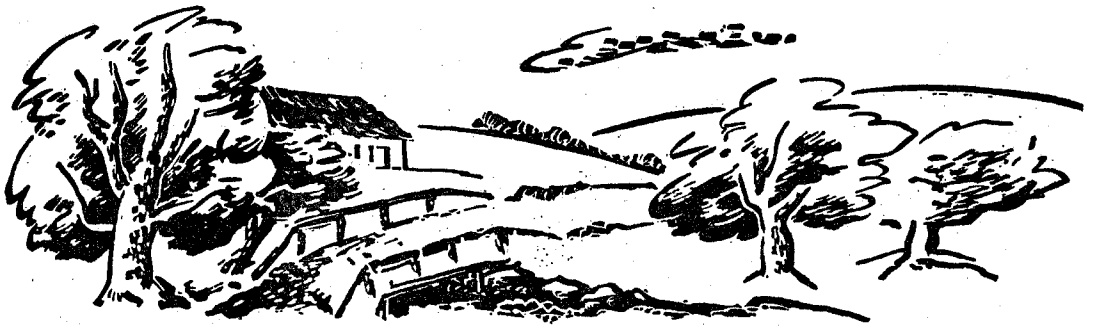
"We are now passing the Astor mansion," he said. The rider, more familiar with the older generation, asked confidently, "John Jacob?" "No!" said the conductor, irritated at the interruption, "Vincent."

Soon the conductor announced, "This is the home of the Vanderbilts." Again the old man apparently spoke out of turn, "Commodore?" This time the fellow fairly barked at the poor visitor, "William H.!"

The man settled back in his seat, apparently duly squelched, but when the guide called out, "This is beautiful Christ's Church."

Grandpa straightened up and, with a twinkle in his eye, asked meekly: "Jesus?"

—*Digest of Digests*



COUNTRY COMMENT

Do you remember "The Peaceable Kingdom," celebrated painting by the early Nineteenth Century Edward Hicks? I am looking at a postcard reproduction.

In the foreground is a well-posed group of animals, both wild and domestic, and three small children. I think I can identify two cattle, two calves, a sheep, a lamb, a goat, a dog, a lion, a leopard with spots, a tiger, and a bear. The three children are very young, very tender, very cherubic. All the animals look peaceful and unworried except the lion and the leopard, both of whom are clearly under a sense of strain. The lion, sitting upright in the center of the group, wears an intense, staring expression. The leopard lifts its head with precisely the look of a stern elderly lady librarian who has just overheard whispering in the library.

In the middleground and off to one side are a group of people. With a magnifying glass I make out seven Quaker-looking gentlemen in knee breeches, long coats, and broad triangular hats; four nearly naked Indians in various postures; and, as well as I can determine, the four wives of the Indians, standing side by side and costumed in strangely familiar-looking evening dress. Obviously a friendly parley is going on here. Luxuriant foliage provides a background for the animals, and behind the Quakers and Indians an idyllic vista extends to faintly luminous hills.

How does the text in Isaiah read? To refresh my memory I turn to the eleventh Chapter, familiar in churches at Christmas.

The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb,
and the leopard shall lie down with the kid;
and the calf and the young lion and the

fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

Here, to be sure, in the picture the bear and a cow are munching, neck to neck, on the same stalk of grain. But the question that cries out for answer is this: As soon as the animals are permitted to break their pose and go their respective ways, will the bear indeed be satisfied with grain? Will the lion be content with straw? And will the calves, the lambs, and the children seem less toothsome than they used to seem? Staring obediently yet anxiously into the eyes of Edward Hicks, the lion is plainly worried, and I have little doubt that this is what worries him. Isaiah may be right about the straw, but Isaiah did not say when, and that is enough to put any red-blooded lion in an embarrassing position.

It is the animals, strictly speaking, who represent Isaiah's Peaceable Kingdom. Isaiah said nothing about Quakers and Indians, and Edward Hicks seems to have included them as an afterthought. Yet it is those Quakers and Indians off to one side that in my opinion constitute our real hope. Suppose worse comes to worst in the foreground. Suppose the lion falls upon a cow, the tiger upon a calf, and the leopard lies down gluttonously with the lamb. Suppose each takes a child for dessert. Suppose all this. Make it as bad as you can. Can't the Quakers and Indians go on with their parley? Is there any insuperable reason why they themselves and among themselves cannot set up The Peaceable Kingdom?

ROBERT FRANCIS