

is as sincerely in favor of the Revolution as any Communist; and says he thinks the Revolution will come gradually.

Personally I feel that, come fast or slow or both, the Revolution will leave no Braleys behind to spoil pulp paper for tone-deaf and image-blind babbitts, and I feel also that this one is too perfect a specimen of his kind to lose. I suggest therefore that a rising proletarian satirist capture him on the hoof and use him as a minor figure in a chronicle of these times of capitalistic collapse. I don't see why the subject would object. It's his only chance for immortality.

MURRAY GODWIN.

Brief Review

WE ACCEPT WITH PLEASURE, by Bernard DeVoto. Little, Brown and Co. \$2.50.

The fact that DeVoto is one of the noisiest of the new American disciples of Pareto ought to lend interest to a novel that deals with post-war disillusionment, the Sacco-Vanzetti case, intellectual life in Chicago and Boston, and the dissolution of the Boston Brahmins. The novel, however, turns out to be a thoroughly confused and flagrantly superficial book, studded with passages in Mr. DeVoto's best Saturday Evening Post manner. It is, moreover, full of echoes: the man and woman the author expects us to admire are straight out of *Arrowsmith*; there are some very bad bits in the manner of Joyce, and there are several second-rate Proustian touches; the author's general attitude towards Americanism and the war has been much better expressed by Archibald MacLeish. According to the blurb, *We Accept with Pleasure* has "neither cause nor thesis," and we also learn that Mr. DeVoto takes great pleasure in "shooting holes in historical and literary theories." This determined and rather childish negativism, so apparent in the author's magazine articles and in his book on Mark Twain, seems the only purely personal element in the novel.

TO EACH A PENNY, by Francis Plummer. Lothrop, Lee and Shepherd. \$2.50.

There is something a little old-fashioned about this novel. Perhaps it is because the main theme, the heroine's experiences with trusteeships, reminds us of *Rollo at the Bank*; perhaps it is because the minor theme, the heroine's love affairs, are handled with post-war, Lawrencean vividness. The book, though better than these comparisons would indicate, is hardly worthy of a man who, according to the dustcover, "devotes six hours each day to reading and to fresh thoughts."

THE QUEST FOR CORVO, by A. J. A. Symons. The Macmillan Co. \$2.50.

Frederick Rolfe, who liked to refer to himself as Baron Corvo, was perhaps the most eccentric of all the eccentrics who appeared in English literature in the nineties. His story is an amusing one, and Mr. Symons has made it more amusing by telling how he discovered

the very obscure details of Corvo's life. For what it purports to be, the book is excellent. But of the forces that made Corvo what he was Mr. Symons has nothing to say. He persists in treating Corvo as an isolated figure. In fact Corvo was isolated, but he was nevertheless an unmistakable representative of a brief but significant phase of England's cultural history. Mr. Symons is a very good detective, but the emergence of "decadence" as a literary force is actually a more interesting, as well as a more important, theme than the talents, either as writer or as cadger, of Frederick Rolfe.

TO THE NORTH. The Story of Arctic Exploration from Earliest Times to the Present, by Jeanette Mirsky. Illustrated. Viking Press. \$3.75.

Written with refreshing enthusiasm, a lively style, and a sweeping comprehensiveness, Miss Mirsky's book has many virtues. It is the only one in its field, and one which, through sensitively and subtly interwoven quotations synthesizes the brilliant literature of this subject. Not the least of its virtues is its understanding of the chief motivation for

polar exploration — trade routes and trade. Had the author made that the chief focus as well for her treatment, her valuable book would have been more penetrating and more valuable.

THE ADVENTURES OF DON QUIXOTE, by Miguel Cervantes, the Motteux translation with 16 full page illustrations by Doré in aquatone. Modern Library Giants. \$1.

LOOK HOMEWARD, ANGEL. Thomas Wolfe. Modern Library Giants. \$1.

THE THEORY OF THE LEISURE CLASS. Thorstein Veblen. Modern Library. 95c.

THE GREAT GATSBY. F. Scott Fitzgerald. Modern Library. 95c.

The latest additions to the Modern Library are good examples of its policy of publishing those contemporary books which some contemporary opinion nominates as classics, and those of the older classics which retain an appeal to the contemporary reader. The library now has under way an undertaking which has thus far been inexplicably neglected, a selection from the works of Lenin.

Book Notes

Readers of literary sections in the daily papers are familiar with "book notes" in which the fact that X's novel is in its second printing; that Y has gone to Bermuda; that Z has sold his latest story to *Esquire*, is offered as pregnant news. Our book notes will be somewhat different.

Publishers are fond of advertising their books as a relief from the burdens and cares of the world. In competing in this literary aspirin business the Appleton-Century Company is issuing "The Tired Businessmen's Library," including:

Scrambled Yeggs, by Octavus Roy Cohen; *Crime at Cobb's House*, by Herbert Corey; *Murder Below Wall Street*, by Roger Delancey; *The Pleasure Cruise Mystery*, by Robin Forsythe; *Death and the Dowager*, by Bertrand Huber; *Murder in Church*, by Babette Hughes, and *The King in Check*, by Talbot Mundy, etc.

Still another publisher is interested in soothing the nerves of the victims of capitalism. He is not, however, limiting himself to tired businessmen. He is more democratic. He is writing books for tired stenographers and tired shipping clerks. The series is called *Arcadia House*, and the Arcadian brand of paregoric includes:

Hand Made Rainbow, by Mrs. Pugh Smith; *If the Sky Fall*, by Helen Partridge; *Love in the Springtime*, by Peggy Dern, and *Tear Stains*, by Peter Marsh.

In the symposium held by the Macaulay strikers about a week ago at which three pub-

lishers appeared to air the views of the publishers on the question of union organization, Mr. Hillman, president of the Godwin Press, said that he would chase out any employe who dared to belong to a union. He said that if any of his girls organized he would feel exactly as if his wife had gone to a lawyer to settle a family difficulty. Apparently, any publisher is willing to consider his hired help as members of a large family, providing he can be the papa. There have been of course in the past cases where fathers exploited their children, and the salaries Mr. Hillman boasted of paying indicated him to be another such case. The other publishers present took a milder line. They all declared they believed in organization — somewhere else.

When the Literary Guild was organized, its solemn purpose was to choose the best book every month, from the lists of all the publishers. Recently the Literary Guild has been sold to Doubleday, Doran & Co., which conducts a very large open shop printing plant in Garden City, and which is willing to do anything in order to keep its presses running, whether it means the publication of telephone directories or literature. There are two aspects that might be considered in this movement. First, the improbability of preserving the supposed impartiality of the Literary Guild judges in the face of inevitable "business necessity"; second, the inevitability of firings as the two organizations amalgamate. Under capitalism literary interests along with the interests of the workers are equally unsafe.

Science Notes

DAVID RAMSEY

A "WIND OF DEATH."—The spotlight at the eighty-sixth meeting of the American Chemical Society was focussed on Dr. George H. Cady of the United States Rubber Company who announced the accidental discovery of a new gas which destroys life and also explodes when sufficiently concentrated. The "wind of death" was discovered by Dr. Cady while experimenting at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. It is potentially an irritating gas-like phosgene and could be used for the mass destruction of enemy armies and non-combatant civilian populations.

In his report to the Chemical Society Dr. Cady said that if "one inhales a small amount of the compound one starts to cough and a deep breath, even of fresh air, taken after a coughing spell produces still more irritation of the lungs." The publicity bureau of the Chemical Society added to this by announcing that "a blanket of gas over the enemy's trenches would be destructive to life," and boasted that the "discovery attracted unusual interest among chemists in view of rumors reaching this country of new war gases developed in the laboratories of Europe."

Up to this point the stress was on the "accidental" nature of the discovery and its future use as an instrument of mass murder. Then someone must have realized that a ghastly error had been committed. It was pretty obvious that the only accident in connection with the whole affair was the public announcement by Dr. Cady. Someone had pulled a terrible boner in permitting the general formula (if not the concrete details) to be revealed, and in exposing the kind of "pure" research that goes on in so many of our university and technical laboratories.

Only a very naive person could have been taken in by the story that it was all an accident. The head of M.I.T. is Karl Compton, who is a leading member of Roosevelt's National Science Council. The United States Rubber Company is vitally interested in the manufacture of war materials. And Dr. Cady is a fine experimental chemist who is not in the habit of playing around with flasks in the mere hope that something may turn up. Put all these facts together and it is difficult to conceive of the matter as being accidental.

Something had to be done to counteract the early reports. A variety of stunts were used to kill the effects of the early release. A prominent science news agency sent out a communication urging all editors carefully to avoid any possible new scare about "a destructive war gas." It also sent out a statement promptly furnished by M.I.T. officials denying that chemical research at the institute was designed to develop war gases. Dr. Frederick G. Keyes of the department of chemistry de-

clared that "Dr. Cady has been working on fluorine compounds on a purely scientific basis. The fact that this and many commonly used gases are poisonous is no indication whatsoever that they are developed for warfare." This is in line with those other statements by certain scientists contending that poison gases are a boon to mankind.

Then Dr. Harrison E. Howe, the editor of Industrial and Engineering Chemistry got off the old bromide "that to the best of our knowledge and belief, research since the war has failed to disclose any gases for field use that are more advantageous than those known and used during the war." As the scientific representative of the chemical industry, Dr. Howe could hardly say less.

But the authorities were apparently still far from satisfied. Consequently a week after his report to the Chemical Society, Dr. Cady contradicted himself in a new statement. He now declared that "the impression which I intended to give was that the substance is merely an interesting laboratory curiosity which has no apparent industrial importance. Although it has some properties which are like those of certain war gases, its use for such a purpose is very improbable."

The reader can draw his own conclusion. But it must be pretty obvious that a certain chemist is in a hell of a mess, and may soon be missing from M.I.T.

The New Deal and Mining Safety.—The American Mining Congress in its meeting at Washington a few weeks ago sounded a warning that the safety of thousands of miners was being jeopardized by the curtailment of federal efforts to protect the lives of workers who toil below the surface of the earth. The Congress reported that a survey conducted by a special committee showed that nine mine rescue cars had been taken out of service. This left only two cars in operation by the Bureau of Mines to combat disaster conditions and to serve as training headquarters.

Lack of funds has practically stopped research on mine safety, according to the Congress. The Bureau of Mine's funds for the current fiscal year is smaller than the allotment for any year since 1920. It was pointed out that the budget was cut despite the fact that considerable work has been transferred to the Bureau from other governmental agencies during the past fourteen years.

This curtailment has particularly affected the training of men to help themselves and others when mine disasters occur. The scope of the first aid instruction and training for the prevention of accidents has also been greatly reduced. The number of men receiving this training has dropped from an annual average of 100,000 to approximately 50,000.

The report of the Congress further pointed

out that "The experimental mine developed by the Bureau as a means of studying explosions and their effects has been placed on a greatly restricted schedule which this year will permit its use during only a few weeks at the most. This mine without counterpart in the world has enabled the Bureau's experts to conduct tests which could only be made in an experimental mine and which could not be conducted within the confines of a laboratory."

Much of the credit for the former decrease in the number of mine explosions belonged to these unique experiments. Today the New Deal's economy budget will be directly responsible for the increase in mining accidents and disasters that will result from the sabotaging of the Bureau's experimental work and the breakdown of safety regulations.

Ice from Tropical Seas.—George Claude, the inventor of the neon sign, has been conducting experiments designed to obtain power by using the differences in temperature between the upper and lower levels of the ocean. He has now built a sea-going ice plant which will make clear blocks of frozen water by utilizing the limitless thermal energy of the ocean. In his older systems, one of the disadvantages of his scheme was that favorable places for the establishment of a land power station were very remote from potential consumers. The difficulty of transmitting the power from its place of development to prospective purchasers was too hard to surmount.

But in his new scheme, M. Claude uses a 10,000 ton ship, the *Tunisie*, which will manufacture ice for tropical countries. His boat is now bound for Brazil, where the ice-plant aboard the *Tunisie* will produce ice from water brought from the depths of the ocean.

By utilizing the difference in temperature between surface water and water from the depths of the ocean, M. Claude expects to generate 3,000 horse power to run his ice-making machinery. His work is not only interesting from a theoretical viewpoint, but it has prospects of opening up vast untapped sources of energy for mankind.

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