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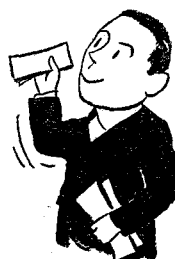


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Strachey has succeeded admirably in his attempt to give us an example of simple writing on a complicated subject. Despite the weaknesses of *Hope In America*, Strachey has given us a model of simplicity which is a challenge to all who wish to write for the masses. His comments on the American scene should be handed to friends, fellow workers, and neighbors who need to be convinced that democracy must and can be preserved.

BRUCE MINTON.

## Fiery Fiorello

THIS MAN LAGUARDIA, by Lowell Limpus and Burr Leyson. E. P. Dutton & Co. \$3.

ONE great omen of hope in our national life today is the rapid gathering of progressive forces, cutting across old party lines, into a democratic coalition against reaction. Therefore, a friendly biographical estimation at this time of Fiorello H. LaGuardia, one of the most potent leaders of this coalition, is supremely significant.

In *This Man LaGuardia*, Messrs. Limpus and Leyson present a fast-moving, newsy, well documented picture of the mayor of the City of New York. It is a story of growth and development—the growth and development of a son of an Italian immigrant army-bandmaster into a formidable and brilliant figure in American public and political life, a figure feared by Tories and fascists, loved by the common people, hated by Tammany Hall.

This book is the second LaGuardia biography to appear within a year and it is distinctly the better of the two. The student of political and social trends will find it extremely valuable as a source book, for between its covers there is considerable LaGuardia correspondence heretofore unpublished and many facts in the subject's turbulent political career little known to the public.

Progressivism was traditional in the LaGuardia family. Fiorello's grandfather, Rafael Enrico LaGuardia, "had donned the 'red shirt' of Giuseppe Garibaldi and fought beside him from one end of Italy to the other." And his father, Achille, imbued in Fiorello a love and understanding of culture. Achille LaGuardia, a gifted composer and leading cornetist of his time, came to these shores with the great Patti as her arranger and accompanist. Later, as mayor of the largest city in the world, Fiorello, through free park concerts and the city radio station, gave the best of the culture and music he had learned to love to the masses of the people.

Strangely, he was first to learn to hate Tammany Hall, to which he later gave two resounding thrashings, when he was a small boy living with his parents at a Prescott, Ariz., army post. He read about Tammany corruption in the occasional copies of the *New York World* which were delivered to his home.

Fiorello was a bronco-riding youngster of

sixteen when his father was called off to the Spanish-American War. And he was on his own from then on. He argued the managing editor of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* into giving him a job as a war correspondent in Tampa, Fla. At nineteen he passed a civil-service examination for the U. S. Consular Service and off he went to Budapest and then to Fiume as vice-consul. There he mastered the German and Italian languages. (Italian was never spoken in his Arizona home.) He later mastered Croatian, French, Spanish, Serbian, and Yiddish.

And it was during these days of consular service that he first clashed with the powers that be. Circumventing official regulations, he set up his own rules and compelled medical examination of immigrants on the spot in Europe, thus saving transportation fees for poor families who later would have been refused admittance at Ellis Island, and enraging the steamship owners.

And then came the experience which was to influence the whole later period of his life. He studies law, is admitted to the bar, hangs out his shingle, and enlists in the cause of organized labor during the garment strike of 1912. His biographers say: "The wiry young lawyer was everywhere. He drew up briefs and argued cases, representing his peniless clients without expectation of remuneration. He worked on committees and even served on the picket line."

You meet him again in 1914 in his first political campaign: a candidate on the Republican ticket in the Fourteenth Congressional District, shaking his fist in front of his Tammany opponent's saloon, challenging him to debate. He is defeated, but he comes back in 1916 and wins. The old guard in Congress is scandalized to have as a colleague a man who has marched on the picket line. But the war fever is on. LaGuardia, a declared pacifist, is swept with the tide. He votes for the war, deserts his seat in Congress, and shows up at the front as Major F. H. LaGuardia, pilot, U. S. Air Service.

He falls out with his Socialist friends and has many bitter clashes with them over his war position when he returns. But back in Congress he is the spectacular progressive battling for women's suffrage, against racketeering in munitions and arms, against the anti-Red espionage bill. As president of the Board of Aldermen and throughout his long years in Congress he fights for many of the measures his Socialist friends advocated.

Back in Congress again, LaGuardia was warring against the Ku Klux Klan, child labor, Republican and Democratic Tories, war profiteers, high meat prices, and Red scares. He demanded immigration inspection of Archduke Boris of Russia to determine whether or not this "repudiated royalist" was likely to become a public charge.

Then we meet the more mature LaGuardia, the Fusion mayor who licked Tammany in 1933. A harassed and hard-fighting man, he is attempting to put his clean-government reform measures into practice. He is still battling with Tammany, but some of his mea-

tures have alienated the important forces that stood at his left. The breach becomes narrow, however, as his administration pushes forward and the forces of labor unite with other progressives behind him and deliver another smashing defeat to Tammany in 1937. A registered member of the American Labor Party, he is today not only the mayor of New York, but one of the most important and dynamic leaders of progressives nationally.

The book has little to say about Mr. LaGuardia's present and most important administration. Its greatest weakness is its thinness in analysis. The authors see their subject as a brilliant and clever maneuverer, who won political fights by beating his opponents to the punch and by outsmarting them. This is true to a certain extent. But under the surface there are social and political forces at work—the progressive forces with which the man has allied himself and which made him what he is today.

One can see these forces lurking between the lines, but they are never placed boldly and squarely in proper perspective where they belong. The organization of the American Labor Party is also inaccurately presented. It is seen as a "Democratic creation—an ally of Tammany until LaGuardia walked off with it when its sponsors' back was turned." Nothing could be farther from the truth. The party was launched by a coalition of union men, liberals, and other progressives to defeat the reactionary presidential candidate Landon in 1936. It arose out of the needs of labor for broad, independent representation, never was an ally of Tammany, and the mayor did not walk off with it, but became part of it.

The biographers mistakenly insist that the official title of the young Italian organization set up by Vito Marcantonio to support LaGuardia was the "Ghibonnes." This, however, was the derisive title given the group by the Tammany enemies of LaGuardia, who wanted to make the young Italian progressives appear as tough guys and hoodlums, which the Italian word "ghibonne" signifies. The book, nevertheless, is one of the most important biographies of an American to appear this fall.

HARRY RAYMOND.

## Studies of Reputations

THE WRITINGS OF E. M. FORSTER, by *Rose Macaulay*. Harcourt, Brace & Co. \$2.50.

THE LIFE OF D. H. LAWRENCE, by *Hugh Kingsmill*. Dodge Publishing Co. \$2.75.

BOTH of these books are studies of reputations, but beyond that they have little in common. One might, indeed, say that Miss Macaulay's aim is to show why E. M. Forster does deserve his reputation, whereas Mr. Kingsmill wants to prove that D. H. Lawrence doesn't deserve his. Neither, it may be pointed out at once, succeeds.

Mr. Forster published the first of his five

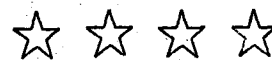
novels in 1905 and the fifth in 1924. In spite, however, of his long silences, he has a curiously strong position in the affections of a not inconsiderable number of readers and in the opinions of his fellow-craftsmen. The work he has done commands respect, and, furthermore, even at nearly sixty, he gives the sense of impressive possibilities. More than twenty years ago one knew what to expect from Wells, say, or Galsworthy or Bennett. One still does not know what to expect from Mr. Forster.

That is Miss Macaulay's theme, and it is a worthy one. Her treatment of it, unfortunately, is less commendable. As she treats each of Forster's books in turn, mingling summaries and comments, one notes with pleasure how good the summaries are, but the comments are marked with a coyness that is almost paralyzing. Even her shrewder observations do not seem to get her anywhere. We gather that she likes the five novels Forster has written, and wishes he would write another. That is where she starts, and that, to all intents and purposes, is where she finishes.

Aimlessness is not one of the vices with which Mr. Kingsmill can be charged. His professed purpose is to take all the many books that have been written about Lawrence and reduce the facts to a clear pattern. Actually there is, behind the smooth pretense of impartiality, as deadly a hatred as has made itself felt in recent criticism. Mr. Kingsmill's violence of feeling can be compared only with that which inspired Malcolm Muggeridge's attack on Samuel Butler, and it may be worth noting that Messrs. Muggeridge and Kingsmill have at times been collaborators. Kingsmill has written some amusing, if malicious, books, notably his biography of Frank Harris, and he might have done good work in puncturing the Lawrence legend—if he had not been so determined to demolish Lawrence himself.

Regarding Lawrence as both dangerous and contemptible, he attributes his viciousness to two qualities: his sexual incompetence and his materialism. By no means clear when he talks of Lawrence's psychological peculiarities, he becomes little less than asinine when he discusses "will" and "spirit." In any case, however, one cannot take his psychological and philosophical excursions seriously, for he obviously has no interest in objective analysis. Always he attributes to Lawrence the worst motives imaginable, and he conducts his whole argument with the aid of innuendo.

Only the idolatrous few will deny that Kingsmill is occasionally correct. The picture of Lawrence and his followers that emerges from the memoirs of the latter is, to put it mildly, disillusioning. Oscar Wilde once said, "Every great man nowadays has his disciples, and it is always Judas who writes the biography." Lawrence's apostolic band seems to have been composed almost equally of Judases and jackasses, both articulate, and between them they not only have provided plenty of material for a Kingsmill but have intensified the doubts of more dispassionate students. Yet,



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Dec. 23—Friday evening—"From Spirituals to Swing"—An evening of American Negro Music. Featuring Count Basie—Carnegie Hall, 57th Street and Seventh Avenue, N. Y. C.

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