

I can not live—for myself, for my own self; I live for show, for people.” And this lonely god, perhaps because lonely, could be cruel and almost sadistic in his treatment of Gorky as an artist. It was in his novels that he had the gift (or is it the illusion?) of compassion.

To convey so much in so short a book is a nice illustration of Gorky's own courageous expressiveness. After all, the “remorseless explicitness” of most biography and criticism is of no use at all. In legal documents it is all right to be remorselessly explicit, and in druggists' prescriptions, and cooking recipes and directions for visiting the suburbs. The object in such documentation is to point out the particular details that must be observed among a host and confusion of details. But in an attempt to convey character nothing is less important than the explication of say, the subject's sisters and cousins and aunts. These details are utterly innutritious. Equally innutritious are the usual momentous “facts” as to where Yasnaya Polyana is and who Countess Panin was and what the Metropolitan of Moscow said about Tolstoy in 1889. The essence is the man who, first of all, would appear to our own senses, and, secondly, would reveal himself in his talk and tone and mood. These are the things by which we judge our wives and children and friends and rivals and associates—the things, that is to say, which create emotion. And because Gorky is an artist, not a legalist or a dry-as-dust or a pedant, he puts us in possession of his own emotions about this great man, and renews for us the horrible emotional problem of greatness with overweening individuality as against the ordinary quietness, furtiveness and objectionableness of the human cockroach.

Emotions are as powerful as strong horses, as solid as granite. This is Gorky's realization. And because he respected his emotions regarding this old Titan of Russia, we have now one of the most real of biographical contributions. And yet most editors and publishers would have felt that these were mere fragments and would have howled for the circumstantiality of “fact.”

F. H.

Beyond the Horizon

Beyond the Horizon, by Eugene O'Neill. New York: Boni and Liveright.

THE authentic drama in America, the drama of the valiant Little Theatres and the dusty first editions unsold on publishers' shelves, is developing two distinct tendencies toward realism, the one subjective, almost subconscious, as in some of Alfred Kreymborg's plays, the other objective and romantic as in the dramas of Eugene O'Neill.

It is the fashion to speak of romanticism as though it had been hatched and incubated by the early Victorians, had reached with them a respectable old age and been buried with fitting honors in Westminster Abbey. The truth is the Victorians were not romanticists but sentimentalists. The age of Victoria ushered in an age of intense commercial activity incompatible with romance, but as wistfully eager for a public alliance with sentiment as any wealthy grocer for a beautiful and aristocratic wife. Sentimentality and big business, like sentimentality and politics, mutually assist and sustain each other, and this is even more true of our own than of the Victorian age. We Americans, master-merchants of the world, are an exceedingly sentimental people—witness our popular ma-

gazines and the noble appeals in the editorials of our daily newspapers. But as for the Romance of Big Business—that is one of the ready-made phrases we keep in the labeled jars of our minds.

Romanticism is the will to beauty without any retarding consideration. It is as ageless as death or love or avarice. It is the fertilizer of life as well as of art, the infusion without which creation becomes a sterile and brittle thing, lacking the virility to perpetuate itself.

Eugene O'Neill is a romanticist who takes one by the scruff of the neck and holds one's nose to reality. His is a spirit stark, eager, alive. Even in his most photographically realistic plays, *Before Breakfast* and another one-act drama where the crushed seaman dies in his reeking quarters, one feels he has not only a hold but an agonizing clench on life. Yet it is not life as some of the great Scandinavians and Russians have given it—life that has not only passed through the senses but through the inmost essence of a single consciousness to emerge in a great and terrible art. For this it is too minutely reproduced in its physical and accidental manifestations, such as dialect. The life of the spirit alone will bear faithful reproduction without either becoming “lurid” or losing its impressiveness. And this perhaps only because the in-vision of even the greatest artist is not strong enough to discover spiritual minutiae; unlike the camera it cannot see too much.

The theme of the three-act drama, *Beyond the Horizon*, is the old unappeasable hunger of the wandering spirit that is always at odds with those who are content to burrow in some settled patch of earth. The brothers, Andrew and Robert Mayo, typify these opposing forces. Andrew is the pioneer who attaches himself firmly to that which surrounds him and which he, having no comparison of a richer inner life, finds complete and satisfying. Unlike Robert, driven always toward some shifting and elusive Grail, Andrew only pulls up roots with the definite hope of a more durable replanting. While Robert is the eternal poet-adventurer who rides after his own dreams, unaware that he himself projects before him like a lantern the gleam that he follows. “You have it or you don't,” he says, explaining his obsession to Ruth on the eve of a three years' trip on a tramp steamer to the Orient. It is the appeal of Ruth, loved by both brothers, and by all authority of nature a mate for Andrew, that induces Robert—hopelessly unfit for such a well-made socket of earth—to stay on the farm and marry her. Andrew, the loss of his first love souring home for him, goes off on the tramp steamer in his brother's place. For this he gets the curse of his father. The old man whose farm has become his religion and who owns no God but earth, is left like some angry priest who sees an acolyte's back turned on the sacred fire.

In the second act we see the slow withering of personality. The old man Mayo is dead, and Robert, his gleam almost blackened out without the winds of the world to blow on it, struggles ineffectually with the ruin about him. After a scene of recrimination, Ruth—her vanity outraged by the failure of her man to win the community's approval for the only values she or it comprehends—makes an advance to Andrew who is unbelievably obtuse. Andrew, unsensitive, hardy as spear-grass, is the only one of the disrupted human things who has prospered. But at the last he too is denourished, no longer sturdy, firm-rooted, but run to the very stalk of enterprise—“gambling with the thing that he had created.”

The study of Andrew is a new light on our financiers. In it we see them as a race of denatured farmers, perverting their motive and creative power from the clean usage of the earth to the manipulation of "wheat pits" in the stone canyons of cities.

Andrew is a harsh mechanism of a man with the stridency of steel. His reiteration of material values falls upon the ear like hammer blows. Yet such as he is, he dominates the play—very much as his prototype is dominating America.

The drama draws to a somber close with the spiritual paralysis of Ruth, who has sunk to a monotonous voice muffled in a dirty shawl, and the death of Robert, who crawls out the window in his last moments to die as he would have died had he had the courage of his faith "in a ditch by the open road, seeing the sun rise."

Mr. O'Neill is most successful with such primitive types as Ruth. When he approaches a complex nature like Robert's, his presentation is weaker. Even Ruth remains too consistently crushed in the last act. Character cannot be changed or destroyed, though its manifestations may be suspended. And her possessive instinct would have again asserted itself and given some promise of closing with and overcoming the hostility of Andrew, thrust toward her by the chivalry of the dying man.

Beyond the Horizon is a good drama. It might have been a great one but for two defects that create and sustain each other, namely the theatre-consciousness of the playwright, and the fact that he is a too anxious father to his brood. Not one of his characters is projected far enough from the parent mind to create the impression of an entity independent of his guiding will. Each fits too snugly in his individual part. Thus we do not feel that vital continuation of personality after and beyond the spoken word that makes living forces of the great characters of literature.

But here is a dramatist in whom life the magnificent is riding with a loose rein. It will be of absorbing interest to follow his next leap.

LOLA RIDGE.

Lord Kitchener

The Life of Lord Kitchener, in three volumes, by Sir George Arthur. New York: The Macmillan Co.

IT cannot be said that Sir George Arthur has written a great book. Lord Kitchener, for all his obvious distinction, is hardly of three-volume calibre. He represents that British combination of soldier and administrator which has stood the imperialism of England in good stead during the last century of her history. Sir George has yet made out an admirable case for his hero; and not a little of what he has to say has so far escaped the printed record. He makes it clear that Kitchener was, above all, an organizer who understood, as few strategists except Napoleon seem to have understood, that half the art of administration is in the management of detail. He confers upon him a very real humanity. Kitchener, in intimate perspective, turns out to be less the ruthless and immovable soldier than a rather shy and sensitive soul who hates a fuss and is curiously interested in architecture and the details of religious liturgy.

From three reproaches, moreover, Sir George has no difficulty in rescuing him. It is abundantly clear that in principle his plea for a single military control in India

was far superior to what Lord Curzon, with not a little subtlety, represented as the predominance of the military aim. It is not less obvious that the prolonged campaign in Africa after he took command was due not to blunders on his part, but to the essential nature of the problem. Above all Sir George Arthur has no difficulty in establishing that while Lord Kitchener was Secretary of War the British in France were supplied not merely in quantity but also in type with the munitions they required. The myth of a tragic shortage which only the genius of Mr. Lloyd George could replenish is demonstrated by Sir George to be without the slightest basis in fact. Mr. Lloyd George simply reaped the fruits of Lord Kitchener's previous organization. It may be added that few things are more regrettable than that a great reputation should have been unnecessarily tarnished by the allocation of credit where it was patently undeserved.

On the more complex problem of the Dardanelles campaign Sir George is less satisfactory. It might have been expected that a man, the major portion of whose life has been spent in the East, would have sympathized with what, apart from Foch's last campaign, was the one great strategic conception of the war. But Kitchener does not seem to have given the cabinet any coherent sense of his views. He does not seem to have impressed Sir Ian Hamilton with any detailed or exact view of his function. He never seized, so far as an outsider can judge, the vastness of the problem, its difficulties or its promise.

Sir George seems to imply that a soldier finds it difficult to communicate with a civilian mind. Writing and speech, he tells us, both came only with difficulty to Kitchener. But it is of the essence of the English state that the military arm be subordinated to civilian policy; and if Kitchener could not express his views with plainness he was out of place as Secretary of War. We know both from the great Diary of Sir Ian Hamilton and from Mr. Nevins's admirable record that the fatal moment in that adventure was the naval bombardment. From Sir George's account, it appears that Lord Kitchener regarded unaccompanied naval action as a mistake. But in war the essence of wisdom is decisiveness. It matters less what you believe than that you should state your belief wholeheartedly. Here, at least, Lord Kitchener was in an admirable position to enforce his point of view. On his side there was the authority of Lord Fisher and against him no more than the amateur if brilliant, strategy of Mr. Churchill. That the latter should have triumphed is important evidence as to Lord Kitchener's methods. It means either that he lacked that genius for compromise which made Lord Haldane the greatest of British Secretaries for War; or else it means that he lacked that genius for clarity by which Lord Fisher was distinguished in naval affairs. That he served to the very limit of his powers is amply and nobly proved by these volumes. But they do not solve the deeper problem of the quality of his powers.

For when any final estimate of Lord Kitchener's work is attempted, great and single minded as his services unquestionably were, the positive achievements with which his name will be associated are hardly of the first importance. His survey of Palestine was a solid piece of technical accomplishment; but there were a hundred others not less competent to the task. His conquest of the Sudan was made against a people without the scientific resources he could bring to his aid and Omdurman was less a victory than a holocaust. Even in South Africa what leaps to the mind is less the relentless purpose by which he was inform-