

Carrying On

The White Monkey, by John Galsworthy. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. \$2.50

Arnold Waterlow, by May Sinclair. New York: The Macmillan Company. \$2.00.

Unity, by J. D. Beresford. Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill Company. \$2.50.

The Heavenly Ladder, by Compton Mackenzie. New York: George H. Doran Co. \$2.50.

THESE four novels represent characteristic enterprises on the part of four practitioners who established their points of view, their technique and their vogue from ten to twenty years ago. They have now only to fulfil the expectations which their readers have formed of them. They do this. It might have been prophesied beforehand that if they should write more novels these are the novels they would write.

Mr. Galsworthy continues to profit from the longevity of the Forsyte family. Diminished as they are in numbers they are still enough to populate a novel. There is Soames, well preserved and perhaps indestructible, to assist as the undertaker of the family fortunes at his cousin George's death; there are Winifred and the Val Darties and June. Above all there is Fleur with the new connections which she has gathered, her husband Michael Mont and his father Sir Lawrence, Ninth Baronet, who revives memories of the patricians whom Mr. Galsworthy, as the Sir Joshua of his day, has so often painted. There are Bicket and his wife to recall the unhappy plebs in *The Silver Box* and *Justice*. There is Ting-aling, the Chinese toy dog, as exotic and more pervading than Miranda in *Fraternity*.

Mr. Galsworthy's theme is degeneration. First, the crumbling of the solid edifice of business through the decline of responsibility of the directorate, the corruption of the management and the emergence of democracy in capitalism. Soames Forsyte, as he faces the wreck of the P. P. R. S. recalls bitterly how Old Jolyon would have handled his shareholders. Property itself has changed its character, and the man of property finds his occupation gone.

Passing the Bank of England, he had a feeling of walking away from his own life. His acumen, his judgment, his manner of dealing with affairs—asperged! They didn't like it; well, he would leave it. . . . He would resign his trusts, private and all. . . . But a sudden wave of remembrance almost washed his heart into his boots. What a tale of trust deeds executed, leases renewed, houses sold, investments decided on—in that room up there; what a mind of quiet satisfaction in estates well managed! Ah! Well! He would continue to manage his own.

This collapse takes place in a world of modern society, love, talk, art, literature of which Mr. Galsworthy has caught the appearance and accent with his practiced if somewhat weary skill. It is a world of youth as disillusioned as Soames in his old age, but less reconciled: "Youth feels . . . main stream of life . . . not getting what it wants. Past and future getting haloes. . . . Quite! Contemporary life no earthly just now. . . . Don't see Life itself, only reports, reproductions of it; all seems

shoddy, lurid, commercial. Youth says 'Away with it; let's have the past or the future.' " And it is to the future that Fleur looks at the end with the eleventh baronet Mont in her arms.

In *Arnold Waterlow*, Miss Sinclair has returned to the outline of *Mary Olivier*. Arnold's quest, like Mary's, is spiritual freedom, which he pursues from the cradle onward. Like her he must achieve it in the midst of the English family which Miss Sinclair has so often depicted, and against the persistent maternal pull. If Aeneas had borne Hecuba on his shoulders from burning Troy, we should have a more precisely descriptive name for this Anglo-Saxon state of mind than Oedipus has given it. It will scarcely do to call it the Anchises complex.

Arnold Waterlow's inner life is the masculine counterpart of *Mary Olivier's*. He has none of her exquisite moments of intuition in which the external world is resolved into pure sensation. His idealism is an intellectual achievement. He thinks and wills his way to oneness with the infinite.

Once in the darkness Reality had found him and possessed him utterly, at any moment it might break through and find him again. Unless there was something in him that came between. . . . He gave himself up now. He willed his deliverance. He stripped himself of everything save the bare will to know Reality. His will waited in the darkness, effortless and still. Quietly, before he was aware of its coming, it had come. Something stirred in the darkness; he was conscious, again, of a queer, still throbbing, subtle and strange, as if his whole being were set to a finer pitch of vibration; then stillness again; then an incredible happiness and peace, and the sense of irrefutable certainty.

In the course of this mystical adventure Arnold is involved with several women besides his mother in relations in which the theme of renunciation is sounded in various keys. Of these ladies *Mary Unwin* in particular makes one regret that Miss Sinclair has suppressed the sense of humor which made the world brighter with Mr. Waddington of *Wyck* and *A Cure of Souls*.

In *Unity*, Mr. Beresford's heroine, like Miss Sinclair's hero, is absorbed in a quest, the quest which gives her her name and the title of the story. Men determine the pattern of her life, as women do *Arnold Waterlow's*. Again there is renunciation—the admirable husband gives way by an *Ethan Fome* catastrophe to another, the sharer in the mystic bond through which *Unity* is to achieve unity. Mr. Beresford's mysticism is not without the delicacy which in the part he touched has the intimations which lie behind the world of sense, but his story is commonplace.

And finally comes Mr. Mackenzie with the third stage of *Mark Lidderdale's* ecclesiastical experience—another story of quest, in which the inner life is largely taken for granted and the narrative moves in a medium of institutional rites and ceremonies. Mr. Mackenzie writes of these with the same gusto with which he wrote of the theatre in *Sylvia Scarlett*. Mark has accepted the little Cornish cure which his grandfather had held, and attempts to direct the services and the life of the parish on the Anglo-Catholic model. There follows his struggle with bishop, church wardens, communicants and dissenters. Bit by bit the ground which he had gained is

torn away. The one hopeful feature in his campaign, his work with the children, is turned to his disadvantage, and at last, broken and beaten, he accepts the solution which was inevitable in *The Altar Steps*. At Monte Cassino, the ancient home of the Benedictine rule, he enters the church of Saint Benedict to renew his youth.

These four novels all arise in spiritual unrest, all are stories of seeking. In Mr. Galsworthy's the winds are lightest and most baffling; in Mr. Mackenzie's they blow with steadiest and strongest purpose. Each of the four authors shows a characteristic disposition not only in the management of his vessel, but in the port which he seeks. Mr. Galsworthy, it might be said, leaves us in an open roadstead, on a lee shore; but Miss Sinclair's and Mr. Mackenzie's harbors are admirably defended. And all four direct their various courses by the Victorian compass of which the needle points to the true north of renunciation.

ROBERT MORSS LOVETT.

Ancient America

The Land of Journeys' Ending, by Mary Austin. New York: The Century Company. \$4.00.

IT is not true, what we are always saying, that America is a young country. We say so because we are Europeans and antiquity for us lies across the two oceans. For four centuries we have been watering roots pulled out of the these antiquities and waiting for them to grow into a national culture; but the seedlings of Greece and Rome and mediaeval Europe have steadfastly refused to become an American forest. Mrs. Austin says:

We can no more produce in any section of the United States, a quick and characteristic culture with the worn currency of classicism and Christianity, than we can do business with the currency of ancient Rome.

While we swing from the apron strings of the Old World, the antiquity of America lies under our very noses. While we reach across oceans and centuries for the past of race the past of the country lies ignored at our hand. Our poets sigh for Florence and English villages and the enchantment of Aegean names; yet half across their own country lies a land mellowed by unplumbed antiquity, rich with the spiritual wealth of an original civilization. This is the theme of Mrs. Austin's book, a hope so vivid that she mistakes it for prophecy, that the ancient America which went down before two invaders, will conquer its conquerors yet.

There are reasons, beside the fact that it was written by Mrs. Austin, that make this badly named and badly bound book worth the reading. It misses being a great document in the history of American culture (if such a thing could be) by an absence of plausibility, but that does not impair its value as a book. It explains again, and very nicely, what has ever been hazy to the general—the New Mexico Movement (shall we call it that?) among painters and writers from the East, which has always seemed an affectation to people for whom the Southwest is the sole province of Tom Mix and Zane Grey. They understood from the railroad posters that there was an extravagance of color there, but it seemed too unsubtle and crude for the neurasthenics of New

York. And the Indian fetish was hard to understand, for the American is either sentimental or patronizing about the aborigine; he cannot take seriously the indigenous achievements of his own land. The brotherhood of New Mexicans takes them seriously, and Mrs. Austin, who takes them very seriously, goes a long way toward explaining why. She biographies the land and its achievements together, and under her painstaking pen the imagined crudities of the Southwest are split a thousand ways and deepened with a thousand meanings not apparent in railroad posters. She dips a little into geology and archaeology, much into history in a Little Jack Horner way, and scatters every page lavishly with pure description.

Go far enough on any of its trails, and you begin to see how the world is made. In such a manner mountains are thrust up; there stands the cone from which this river of black rock was cast out; around this moon-colored playa, rises the rim of its ancient lake; by this earthquake rent the torrent was led that drained it. What man in some measure understands, he is no longer afraid of; the next step is mastery . . .

To say that the Southwest has a significant past and will have a magnificent future, because it is a superb wealth breeder, is to miss the fact that several generations of men wasted themselves upon it happily, without taking any measure of its vast material resources. The nineteenth century assault which found California a lady of comparatively easy virtue, quailed before the austere virginity of Arizona; but the better men among them . . . married the land because they loved it, and afterward made it bear . . . Men felt here the nameless content of the creative spirit in the presence of its proper instrument.

Whatever Mrs. Austin writes about in her chapter-essays—the cultures that excavators have found, the cactuses under the Mogollon rim, the Spanish missions, sonorously named—to everything she brings the flash of an exhilarating idea, the pure color of a poetic conception. At the end the Southwest that has seemed so simply sagebrush is refined into a subtle ancient land, beautiful in delicate ways, with a wealth of symbolism belonging to its own proper past, and to the Spanish civilization that has mellowed over it.

At the end, again, one feels it has been worth the trip, but hardly worth sojourn at the destination. There is good writing in the book—fresh pellucid description, sometimes nearly passionate. But on the whole it is journalism. It is full of the segments of ideas, crystalline but fragmentary, unintellectual ideas born of intuition or emotion or some uncircular working of the mind. The thread upon which the book hangs is the most unintellectual idea of all, for it is only tenuously true, far too frail to bear the weight of meaning hung upon it. Mrs. Austin does not fail to convince us that there is beauty in the antiquity of our own country. She awakens that "steady purr in the midriff of our being" which is the pride of nationality. But she does not convince us, by citing the Thunderbird tourist agency and the dances of the young men of Prescott that the country will ever ground itself on these aboriginal foundations, or that the expression of our nationality will ever flow through the symbols of the cultures we destroyed.

ELIZABETH VINCENT.