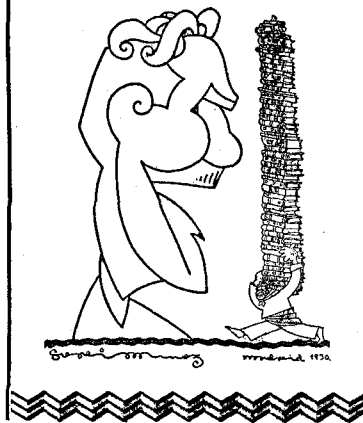


THE LITERARY LANDSCAPE

by

HERSCHEL BRICKELL



IF THIS number of the Landscape sounds a bit tired it is because the Landscaper has just been indulging in some severe mental exercise. He has spent three hours in the smoking room of the good ship *Europa* trying to explain Prohibition to a Spaniard and a

Greek, both men of good will and very friendly to America, but both puzzled beyond words by what they had seen of the liquor situation in New York. It is not possible to realize what a tangled question Prohibition really is until one tries to reduce it to simple and understandable terms, and especially to justify it in the slightest degree to foreigners who are accustomed to seeing every one drink and no one drunk. How well the Landscaper made out with his task it would be difficult to say, but add to the original burden the handicap of the necessity of trying to make the explanation in Spanish and French, and the resulting fatigue should be easy to understand. Most troublesome of all it is to attempt to explain how a nation looked upon as intelligent and progressive — the leader of the modern world — can continue to put up with so complete a farce as Prohibition. Both Spaniard

and Greek assured the Landscaper that they had had anything they wished to drink from the moment of their arrival in the United States, and one of them spoke no English!

Of course, this has very little to do with literature. But it has a good deal to do with life, and even a

Landscaper has to emerge occasionally from the seclusion of a cabin piled high with books to look about him; to sniff the good salt air and warm himself in the summer breezes from the Gulf Stream. And to consider his fellow man; to watch the other passengers and speculate about them and to listen when they talk, always opening new vistas of personality. Usually, too, there is spy work to be done on board ship to see what people are reading. This time, only one book has been sighted, a detective novel. The Landscaper has no explanation for the absence of reading matter, although from the reports of publishers during the early weeks of the autumn few books were bought for farewell presents, or for any other purpose. . . . The majority of the passengers are probably too eager to get back to their homes in Germany to bother about the diversions of reading; besides, at the rate most

people read, there is hardly time to start a novel on one of these sea-going expresses before Cherbourg is sighted.

An Abundance of Books

THERE are many good books available just now; the promise of the early fall season has been amply justified, and no one in search of inexpensive and satisfactory Christmas presents need look any further than the nearest bookstore — not drug store. Or if this number of THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW does not reach the reader's hands in time to be of assistance at Christmas, New Year's remains; for that matter, no real excuse is needed at any time to give books. Almost any one beyond the age of thirty or thirty-five is sure to be pleased, for example, with *Pre-War America*, the third volume of Mark Sullivan's remarkable history of the United States, the general title of which is *Our Times*. The new book covers the years between 1906 and 1908, although it rambles backward and forward; like its predecessors it is pieced together from innumerable scraps, bits of popular songs, fads, news stories, the weight of William Howard Taft, and what have you. The illustrations are from contemporary cartoons, portraits and advertisements, and they add enormously to the interest of the volume. It is even conceivable that the younger generation might enjoy this book, thinking with the slightly fiendish delight of all younger generations what a quaint lot their elders must have been in those days of long ago. Two and a half decades, actually, and what changes! Even if one isn't at all certain that the world moves in

a forward direction, it manages to change its face pretty completely in these days in no time at all. Mr. Sullivan's book, which is published by Scribners at \$5, deserves a triple-star.

A Great and Wicked City

FOR those who enjoy dipping even further into our past, Edward Van Every has furnished delightful entertainment in *The Sins of New York, As Exposed by the Police Gazette* (Stokes, \$5). F. P. A. supplies the introduction for this dip into the gaieties of the 'Forties and 'Fifties and the 'Seventies and 'Eighties, and there are more than one hundred illustrations taken direct from the pages of Richard K. Fox's own journal, which every American boy of older generations must have read, blushing, in some barber shop, even if he never dared buy a copy for his own private perusal. Mr. Van Every makes it clear enough that we really aren't so far advanced along the primrose path; styles in sins change, perhaps, but fundamentally they remain the same. While we are on the subject of books of this sort, *I'm Sorry I Have Offended, And Other Sob Ballads*, collected by Clarence H. Knapp (Putnam, \$2), also deserves mention. There are introductions by both Frank Sullivan and Corey Ford, both slightly superfluous, since the songs are really funny enough without having their humor underlined, and there are highly amusing woodcuts by Donald Streeter. This is an important addition to current Americana; there is no telling what might be deduced about our changes in manners and morals by studying these ballads in

comparison with the boop-oop-pe-doop songs of the moment.

A Dip Into Our Past

THE books by Messrs. Van Every and Knapp can be given with safety only to persons with a sense of humor, while the Mark Sullivan book is likely enough for anyone. And if you happen to know a serious-minded American who is interested in the civilizations that have flourished and died on this continent, the most promising book for him is *Ancient Life in the American Southwest* by Edgar L. Hewitt (Bobbs-Merrill, \$5), with many handsome illustrations. This is about as far away from the usual dry-as-dust archæological study as anything that can be imagined. Dr. Hewitt treats these civilizations as if they were still alive, and is as much interested in the legends of the Hopis, Navajos, and other peoples as he is in the ruins of their villages. Before we have done with our digging in the Southwest, we shall probably have discovered that a state of civilization had been reached by more than one of these ancient tribes to make us blush when we look at our own — think of Hollywood, for example, in comparison with the Seven Cities of Cibola. . . . What a lot we have learned about our continent in the past twenty-five years and how infinitely more fascinating both North and South America have become because of the admirable work of archæologists and ethnologists! Dr. Hewitt deserves congratulations for a really splendid book, which is scholarly without losing any value as entertainment.

One other volume comes to mind

with excellent possibilities as a holiday gift, and this is Paul Morand's *New York* (Holt, \$2.50), which has fourteen striking illustrations by Joaquin Vaquero, a young Spanish painter and architect. M. Morand's book has been one of the outstanding successes of the year in Europe, having sold more than 200,000 copies in France alone, which is fully significant of the interest the city has for foreigners. Much of the interest of the book lies in the point of view, of course, and the highly travelled and keenly intelligent Frenchman has many shrewd comments to make, including the conclusion that in time New York may give place to Chicago. Written primarily for the French, *New York* should serve as a practical if somewhat informal guide-book to the city, a careful revision having been made to bring it as nearly down to date as is possible in any volume about a city that changes as rapidly as this one. M. Morand's critical attitude toward New York will probably please the millions of Americans who say they wouldn't live in it if they were given the City Hall for a private residence.

More Books About America

SEVERAL of the books mentioned might have been classified under the familiar heading of Americana, material for which is never lacking. Indeed, the section of the Landscaper's library devoted to books about his own country threatens to crowd out other divisions, and there are several shelves — long shelves — crowded with nothing but books about the West, all published within the past four or five years. A recent addition to this general group, which

is also filled with interesting literary reminiscences, is Hamlin Garland's *Roadside Meetings* (Macmillan, \$3.50). Mr. Garland came to New York in 1884, and met William Dean Howells first of all; afterward he came to know just about everybody, and there are many tales in his book of Whitman, Kipling, Cable, Mark Twain, Riley, and scores of others. This is really an informal literary and cultural history of the period covered by its author's lifetime, excellent for reading and useful for reference.

Those of us who read Vernon Lee Parrington's two volumes on *Main Currents in American Thought* some three years ago have looked forward eagerly to the completion of the publication of this splendid work, and the third volume is now available. It is called *The Beginnings of Critical Realism in America*, and covers the period between 1860 and 1920 (Harcourt, Brace, \$4). Professor Parrington was not able to complete his task before his most untimely death, but the early part of the volume is finished, and the remainder is made up of notes which are quite as interesting and provocative as the earlier chapters. The first two volumes, it may be recalled, won the Pulitzer Prize for history in 1928, and the committee has never made a better choice. The theme of the new volume is the industrialization of the United States under the leadership of the middle class, and the rise of a critical attitude toward that class. Some of the writers discussed are Dreiser, Lewis, Zona Gale, Anderson, and Cabell, and the comments are always interesting. If the Landscaper were asked to choose a work of this period likely to survive the

test of time, *Main Currents in American Thought* would certainly be one of the first selections. It bears comparison easily with the Beards' *Rise of American Civilization*; one can not escape a feeling of sadness that its author had to die when his career was hardly begun. Men of his type can not be spared in any country, and least of all at the present time in our own.

A Study of the South

ANOTHER book of importance to Americans is Howard W. Odum's *An American Epoch: Southern Portraiture in the National Picture* (Holt, \$3.50), a study of the South in the first thirty years of the present century, and the result of ten years of research. Dr. Odum has attempted an original method for presenting his story in applying the peculiar technique of his two books about Black Ulysses, *Rainbow Round My Shoulder* and *Wings on My Feet*, to sociological and historical material. This does not make for the easiest reading in the world, but anyone with patience will find that it does result in a curiously rounded and well-balanced picture of the South, by far the best that has been done up to the present time. It is a critical study, with some unsparing attacks upon certain evils, but the censure is prompted by affection; many of the pages glow with the warmth of the author's love for his section of the country. There is a complete bibliography and index, and after the book has been read, it will probably become a standard work of reference even in small private libraries.

An engaging contribution to the story of our country, which will

serve as a guidebook for those who make pilgrimages to Mount Vernon is Marietta Minnegerode Andrews's *George Washington's Country* (Dutton, \$3.75), a book in which Mrs. Andrews's well-known flair for interesting gossip is at its best. There are innumerable stories in the volume, and descriptions of many other famous homes in Virginia.

Brandes on Voltaire

THE biography shelf seems especially rich just now, the offerings being both numerous and of high quality. Most tempting of all, perhaps, is a translation of Georg Brandes's *Voltaire* (Albert and Charles Boni: two volumes, \$10), which for all its high price is the sort of book that ought not be missed. It is as much a study of the Eighteenth Century, which belongs forever to Voltaire, as it is of the man himself, a masterly analysis of the birth and growth of Rationalism, the greatest blessing—or curse—of our own age. The whole background of the period is painted in, and against it moves the slight figure of the Frenchman who turned the world upside down, or right side up, according to the way one looks at these matters.

Those who have sampled the splendid life of Jeb Stuart by Captain John W. Thomason, Jr., which has been running in Scribner's, will be interested to know that it is now available in book form, and with excellent illustrations by the author. There is no more purely romantic figure in all American history than the Confederate cavalry leader, who was a personification of the old South, and Captain Thomason has done a

portrait of him that is a notable addition to biography in this country. The book is published by Scribners at \$5. It should find a large group of readers waiting for it; the Landscaper suspects that more than one person has wished for just such a book about General Stuart. He died at thirty-one, which added the last necessary touch to his flashing career, the ideal *beau sabreur*, and one of the last great cavalry leaders of a line that reaches all the way back into the early history of the race, or at least as far back as the use of horses in warfare. Captain Thomason has done the battles with complete understanding. Also available is a life of another Confederate cavalry leader, Nathan Bedford Forrest, who, if less romantic in appeal than the dashing and handsome Stuart, was as good a leader. This life is by an English officer, Captain E. W. Sheppard, who belonged to the Tank Division in the World War, and who has made a most comprehensive study of Forrest's campaigns and his remarkable tactics. English military men have never neglected Southern leaders, and it is interesting to know that the tradition continues, although there is little reason to believe that knowledge of the kind of warfare waged by Forrest will be of any use in the future. Captain Sheppard's book is published by the Lincoln MacVeagh-The Dial Press, and the price is the same as the Stuart volume.

Lives of Mrs. Eddy

TWO new lives of Mary Baker Eddy are current, Fleta Campbell Springer's *According to the Flesh* (Coward-McCann, \$3), and a more or less "official" study, *Mary Baker*

Eddy, by Lyman P. Powell (Macmillan, \$5). Of the two books, Mrs. Springer's is by far the better, although, if one may go on making comparisons, neither can hold a candle to Dakin's excellent biography of last year. Mrs. Springer's book is better in its earlier chapters, which are concerned with the childhood of the founder of Christian Science. Dr. Powell is, one hears, an Episcopalian clergyman who has been for years interested in mental healing, and who wrote about Mrs. Eddy a good while ago in a somewhat different tone from the present pæan. The trouble with his book, official or not, is that Mrs. Eddy appears a rather silly and tiresome prig, and this, one gathers, she was decidedly not. The impression grows upon this wholly disinterested observer that she was about as remarkable a woman as this country has produced, and this impression has nothing to do with the success of the movement she started. Sects rise and fall without any special relation to the truth of their teachings or the purity of motives of their founders. But as a personality, there must have been amazing things about Mrs. Eddy; one can not, even if one wished, escape a feeling of deep respect for her accomplishments. It is also undeniable that she founded a religion which has brought happiness to a good many thousands of people, and which has had its influence upon the practice of medicine generally. The more intelligent physicians of the day are respectful, at least, of the influence of the mind over the body. Of course the earliest physicians realized this connection, but there was a tendency at one time to substitute the charms of anæsthesia and

asepsis for more subtle matters. . . . It is unfortunate, to get back to the Powell biography, that the church could not find a better book to give a leg up, but there is a curse on official biographies, and properly so. Perhaps it should be added that no one has informed the Landscaper of the official standing of the Powell book; he merely observed that there was a first printing of 50,000 copies in an extraordinarily dull season and made his own deductions. Mrs. Springer's book, it should be said in closing the subject, is written with a keen sense of humor, which does it no hurt.

Churchill's Early Years

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY of unusual interest is Winston Spencer Churchill's *A Roving Commission: My Early Life* (Scribners, \$3.50). This covers the first thirty-five years of the career of an extraordinary man who has managed to keep in the thick of things since boyhood, and who writes well. He has done a bit of history here that many people will find highly interesting. Another recent autobiography of English origin is *Retrospect* by Lord Balfour, which carries the subtitle *An Unfinished Autobiography* (Houghton Mifflin, \$2.50), and which covers the years between 1848 and 1886. Lord Balfour's relations with Salisbury, Gladstone, Disraeli, and other worthies of the period are told. Then there is *Mr. Lloyd George: A Study*, by Sir Charles Mallett (Dutton, \$3.50), which puts the character of the Liberal leader under the microscope, and which will help some people to understand a curiously baffling personality.

Another recent American autobiography that is history as well is *The Reminiscences of a Marine*, by Major General John A. LeJeune (Dorrance, \$4). The author was commandant of the Marine Corps from 1920 to 1929, and actually saw some forty-one years of travelling and fighting before he retired to the relative security of a position as superintendent of Virginia Military Institute. He was an Acadian by birth.

Among the more or less miscellaneous biographies that have recently engaged the attention of the Landscaper are studies of *Albert Einstein* (Albert and Charles Boni, \$2.50) by Anton Reiser, who is one of Einstein's closest friends; and another life of Byron, *The Passionate Rebel*, by Kasimir Edschmid, also published by the Bonis, the price being \$3. This is a novelized biography, the principal emphasis being upon Byron's love for his half-sister, of which much is made. Edschmid is well known as an Expressionist in Germany, and there are striking passages in his book, although he is working with thoroughly shop-worn material. The tireless Hilaire Belloc has added a study of *Wolsey* (Lippincott, \$5) to his long list, and while the book is informed with the prejudices of its author, it is good reading, and a really excellent picture of Tudor England. Recently added to the Bourbon Classics, published by Lincoln MacVeagh-The Dial Press, is a new edition of *The Memoirs of Marmontel*, in a translation by Brigit Patmore, with St. Beuve's essay on Marmontel included. Marmontel, it may be recalled, was a protégé of Voltaire, and a close friend of Mme. de Pompadour. His memoirs are

among the brightest chronicles of the period, and they are now presented very attractively.

Plenty of Novels, Too

PERHAPS there is a little less of interest in the way of fiction just now than there was during the early weeks of the autumn, but there is not exactly a dearth of good novels. Francis Brett Young's long book, *The Redlands*, the Landscaper has barely seen, but it has had fine reviews in England and Mr. Young is usually safe, although there has been some variation in the quality of his fiction. At least he may be counted upon to write well and with intelligence; there has never been anything meretricious about his poorest books. This is not Mr. Young's first long novel — ordinarily it might have been expected to appear in two volumes — but it seems to be further evidence of a return in England, at least, to a suggestion of the triple-decker. This is a wholesome tendency, for there has been too much of a swing in the other direction; too many slightly long short stories masquerading as novels.

Readers who have followed the work of an English novelist who has preserved her anonymity with amazing stubbornness and success will be interested in *The Longer Day* (Bobbs-Merrill, \$2.50). It is by the author of *Miss Tiverton Goes Out*, and a number of other quite extraordinary books, and to the Landscaper is the richest and fullest of the lot. Primarily it is a long character study of the unusual woman, Brenda, who labored under the strange delusion that life would be far easier for every one if it were lived as if no one had

lived it before. Brendas are highly upsetting to an orderly world, and this one was born into the Victorian period. The background of the book is literary England under the good Queen, and it is beautifully executed, with many sly and cunning hits. The book is an exploration into the psychology of many people, and its symbolism may trouble those who wish all meaning to be on the surface; but even these will appreciate the subtle and very feminine malice of much of the story. It is told in the first person, and moves slowly, rising, however, to swift climaxes, with thunderous clashes of personalities.

Short Stories

LOVERS of short stories will find plenty of reading in the two annual collections, Edward J. O'Brien's *The Best Short Stories of 1930* (Dodd, Mead, \$2.50), in which many tales from the experimental magazines appear, and which includes Manual Komroff's *A Red Coat for the Night* from *The Yale Review*, a fine piece of work by the author of *Coronet*; and the O. Henry Prize Stories (Doubleday, Doran, \$2.50). The Landscaper had the pleasure of acting as one of the judges in the O. Henry contest, and his candidate for the first prize was beaten, but by a worthy competitor. He is still of the opinion that William March's *The Little Wife* is a corking short story; it may be read in the O. Henry volume. W. R. Burnett's gangster story, which won first prize, is also excellent. Whatever else the gangsters have done to this country of ours, they have been a godsend to several of our writing men. Then there is a collection of *The Short*

Stories of Saki by H. H. Munro, published by the Viking Press at \$3, with an introduction by Christopher Morley, which contains about as much entertainment as one is likely to find between the covers of a book this season, or next season, either, for that matter. And a new edition of Ernest Hemingway's first book of short stories, *In Our Time* — first book, in fact — which was praised to the skies at the time by all and sundry, including the Landscaper, but which sold in very small quantities. Edmund Wilson has written the Introduction and Scribners are the publishers. Some of the best work Mr. Hemingway has ever done is to be found in this collection; none of his admirers should miss it. In the early days one would have said that he was so much at home in the short story he probably would never develop into a novelist, and one would have been wrong, as is so often the case.

There is also a collection of short stories by Edith Wharton called *Certain People* (Appleton, \$2), which contains six tales, all of them admirably done, and one of them *A Bottle of Perrier*, which the Landscaper read a matter of four years ago in a third class Spanish railway carriage, a horror story of the first order. Mrs. Wharton's craft never fails her. And, too, there is *On Forsyte 'Change* by John Galsworthy, a collection of tales about various members of the Forsyte clan, nineteen in number. Devoted followers of the Forsyte Saga will want to read them all, but, one hopes, not too critically. They are, on the whole, as far inferior to the earlier short stories of Galsworthy as the second volume of the Forsyte Saga is to the first.