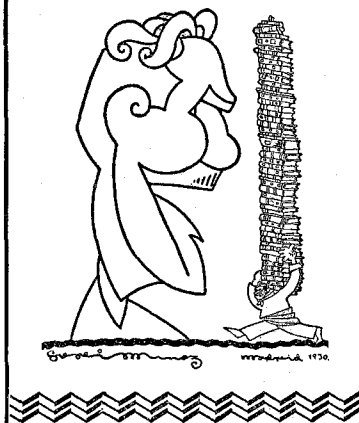


THE LITERARY LANDSCAPE

by

HERSCHEL BRICKELL



THOSE of the Landscape's readers who are unable to see the direct connection between the mechanistic developments of our own age and the happiness of the individual will find much aid and comfort in Gina Lombroso's *The Tragedies of Progress*, just now published by Dutton. The author looks backward to Arcady, when the Greeks refused to allow the secrets of medical science to be divulged — when the principal goal of thinkers was philosophy, and not methods for increasing production. A great many people in many parts of the world are thinking about the Machine Age just now, and no matter what one's point of view may be, the Lombroso book will be found stimulating and thought-provoking. Perhaps it is only fair for the Landscaper to confess that he is on the side of the Greeks, although, having been nurtured on the Emersonian theory of Compensation, he is not altogether willing to have the Machine tossed into the discard and all the altars to Materialism blown sky-high with Nobel dynamite. The Landscaper is fully convinced of the truth of the Biblical saying that man cannot live

by bread alone; it is difficult to understand how the most hardened skeptic can fail to be impressed by the persistence with which the race seeks something outside its physical satisfactions. Here in our own country, every sort of ancient cult finds its followers,

and astrology, as old as the Assyrians, interests us almost as much as the scientific analysis of the effect of our favorite cigarette upon our health and social acceptability.

Mr. Galsworthy on Happiness

JOHN GALSWORTHY said the other day in the course of a New York lecture that he knew only one real source of happiness, which was complete absorption in one's work. With this thought still in mind, the Landscaper spent a day in a great printing plant, where books are turned out by the thousands on the Ford system, and watched many men and women at their machines. . . . A day's work consists of so many mechanical gestures, and so far as the emotional satisfaction is concerned, these people might just as well be canning tomatoes, for what they are working on is not a book, the product of some one's mind and

effort, but a set of sheets, a binding case, a bit of crash to be glued to a backstrip. How can they be so absorbed in work of this sort as to be happy? The answer is obvious; they cannot. Happiness comes at the end of the day, if at all. This criticism of the Machine Age has been voiced thousands of times and answered just as often, it is true, but not to the satisfaction of this observer. But whether the Landscaper's attitude has been reached by reason or whether it is altogether the result of his having lived in an agricultural environment in his young years and of having had generations of ancestors who lived on the land — who were farmers, no matter what their vocations — is a difficult question to answer.

Any one whose life is spent with books might be expected to think a variety of thoughts upon stepping into a plant where they are manufactured. There is something disturbing about the perfection of machinery that pours out a Niagara of bound copies; something that causes nightmares. First of all, one thinks of that brilliant remark of Mussolini's at the time of our crash in the autumn of 1929, a remark that very nearly swung the Landscaper to the side of the Italian dictator, which was: "Production is mechanical, but consumption is human," the neatest summary of the present economic dilemma of this country that has ever been made. It applies with especial force to books, where so much depends upon intangible qualities of appeal. Actually, the books that can stand machine production must, in most instances, be of a low mental level —

of the level, let us say, of the movies, the radio, and other forms of popular amusement.

The Standardized Book

IN SHORT, standardized production implies standardization of the product, and the thoughts set in motion by this statement are none too pleasant. The present publishing season has been interesting to study because the poor state of business in general has caused great emphasis to be laid upon "sure-fire merchandise," in short, upon books of a wide popular appeal. And what type of books have been chosen for the small-town circulating library sale of our country? The answer is easy: The season began with *Venus on Wheels*, and has gone on with *Naked on Roller Skates*, *Pick-Up*, *Impatient Virgin*, and so on and so on. . . . Perhaps there is some significance in these rambling remarks. Perhaps, on the other hand, it would be just as well for the Landscaper to get down to business and write about the books that are now stacked about him, leaving philosophizing to his betters.

Interest continues in Russia, at least in the judgment of most of the publishers in this country. The opinion seems fairly general that the Five-Year Plan is actually on its way to some sort of success; that the Russians are driving steadily toward the creation of as neat an imitation of this country as they can make, which is the most magnificent piece of irony of this century. The opinion is just as general that Capitalism is to be profoundly influenced in its social aspects by what goes on in Russia during the next few years;

there is little doubt that much of the thinking and planning done in this country since the Great Crash has been influenced by the Soviet threat to the existing order.

Three Books About Lenin

THREE of the new books on the general subject of Russia are about Lenin, and they offer an interesting diversity of opinion regarding the Father of His Country. Prince D. S. Mirsky, the well-known authority on Russian literature, and, as one might suspect from the title, a member of the old order, has done one, *Lenin* (Little, Brown, \$2.50), which is altogether in praise of its subject, the Prince having gone over completely to Soviet rule in the past year or so. He has the enthusiasm of a convert. On the other hand, Ferdinand Ossendowski's *Lenin, God of the Godless* (Dutton, \$3.75), paints Lenin as the orthodox in economics and religion would like to believe him to have been, in short, with horns, hooves, and a forked tail. Ossendowski has an unerring feeling for the sensational, and his book will entertain any one who enjoys reading about horrors. It is a little difficult to take it seriously, however, as its emotional motivation is all too plain. The third of the new books about Lenin is better balanced than these two, and contains, in addition to its biographical material, a fine, clear analysis of recent Russian history. This is *Lenin, Red Dictator*, by George Vernadsky (Yale University Press, \$3), translated by Malcolm W. Davis. Mr. Vernadsky's history of Russia has already been mentioned here before; it is exactly the right book for an intelligent reader who

wishes to know the historical background of the existing situation. His study of Lenin is that of an historian, reasonably unbiased, and intellectually sincere. It deserves the heartiest recommendation of the three books; certainly if only one of the lot is to be read, it will prove most satisfactory except to those who wish to have their prejudices confirmed one way or the other.

Russian Foreign Trade

ONE of the other new books on Russia is *Soviet Foreign Trade: Menace or Promise*, by J. M. Budish and Samuel S. Shipman (Liveright, \$2.50). Both these gentlemen are associated with the Amtorg, the Soviet purchasing agency in this country, and the U.S.S.R. does not get any the worst of it in their book, as might be expected. They paint the rosiest possible picture of the potentialities of Russian trade, and it seems obvious enough that their country is likely to become our largest customer within a very short time unless political considerations interfere with commerce. This, it might be added, is not likely to occur. If Russian trade is sufficiently large, it is reasonably sure that scruples will not annoy us too much. Another book is *Pan-Sovietism* by Bruce Hopper (Houghton Mifflin, \$2.50), which is really a study of the Soviets in operation, with some comment upon the possible effect of the success of the Communistic experiment on the rest of the world. The author wonders if Russia and the United States are to meet in a death struggle for world supremacy. . . . Houghton Mifflin are also publishing *New Russia's Primer* by M. Ilin, a little

book originally intended for distribution in Russia to explain the Five-Year Plan, which has now been chosen by one of our book clubs. It is a most interesting document.

A Reporter's Life Story

THERE are fewer books about our town country on hand just now than is customary, but one of the lot will go some distance toward making up for the scarcity. This is *The Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens* (Harcourt, Brace, two volumes, \$7.50), which is the record to date of one of the best newspapermen this country has ever turned out. His name ought to be familiar to every one; certainly none of us old enough to recall the Era of Muckraking have forgotten the valiant service he did in those piping times, when we all had the naïve faith that it was only necessary to expose evil to destroy it. This remark is over-cynical, for Steffens, Ida M. Tarbell, and others did accomplish much real good. Steffens has told the whole story in his *Autobiography*, packed it with names and incidents, and made it interesting to read. It is an historical document of real importance, as well as the record of a splendidly adventurous and courageous career. One hopes that it will be put in some handy place around all our schools of journalism. . . . It gets a triple-star from the Landscaper this month.

Other books that are about ourselves and our country include Dr. John T. Faris's *Roaming America* (Farrar and Rinehart, \$3), which is a gossip guide-book to the territory easily reachable by following the

main highways. It is admirably done, filled with interesting information and ought to prove a *vade mecum* for the intelligent motorist, who really wants to know something about the country traversed. There is a good map in the back. In fact, all it needs is a good first-aid kit to be indispensable for motoring. Then there is a large volume on *Our American Music*, by John Tasker Howard (Crowell, \$6), some 766 pages of information about music in this country, with many illustrations, a full bibliography, a complete index, and sketches of dozens of the young composers who may in time do something to give us standing in this branch of art. Mr. Howard has said all there is to say; his work has been thoroughly and intelligently done, and the book should be useful as a work of reference for years to come. *The Pinkertons: A Detective Dynasty* by Richard Wilmer Rowan (Little, Brown, \$3) tells the whole tale of the work of the Pinkertons through the Civil War period, and the time of the Molly Maguires in the Pennsylvania coal fields, down to the present. There is plenty of excitement in the book, and it is both readable and informative. It is probably just as well to snatch a novel from the fiction classification, and mention it here, since it is so definitely about America.

An Englishman on America

THIS is *Juan in America* by Eric Linklater (Cape and Smith, \$2.50), which is a satire on many, many phases of life in this country, written by a shrewd Englishman who has travelled widely and well. It will not offend any except the unco

patriotic, and it is not too much overdrawn; Mr. Linklater remains within the bounds of caricature. There is a lot of good-humored raillery in the book, and whether one reads it merely as entertainment or as witty commentary upon the present state of affairs in the United States, it will prove worth the money.

There is no dearth of biography at present, although it is fairly safe to say that the vogue of the past five years is declining, perhaps because we are running out of easily available material, and perhaps, again, because the public is a little weary of the fictionized type of biography, which may be very, very good, in the hands of a master, and very, very bad when it is no more than an excuse for the dodging of research. The subjects at present range from Haroun Al-Rashid to Helena Petrovna Blavatsky. H. P. B. is rather roughly handled by C. E. Bechofer-Roberts (Brewer, Warren and Putnam, \$3.50), the title of the book being *The Mysterious Madame*. It is principally concerned with the life story of Madame Blavatsky, although it is also brought down to date by some account of the activities of Annie Besant and her Messiah, Jedda Krishnamurti. Theosophists will not like the book at all; others will find it interesting reading. *Haroun Al-Rashid's* book is by Gabriel Audisio, a distinguished French Orientalist, who paints the famous Caliph of Bagdad in lurid colors, and emphasizes the licentiousness of the times, and especially of the Court. McBride is the publisher of this somewhat sensational volume, and the price is \$3.50. The translation is none too good.

Mrs. Chapman as Biographer

FOLLOWERS of the work of Maristan Chapman in the way of romantic novels of Southern mountaineers may be a little surprised to discover Mrs. Chapman in the part of the biographer of a Frenchman of the Second Empire, but her *Imperial Brother: The Life of the Duc de Morny* (Viking, \$3.50) is an excellent book. The Duc de Morny was a many-sided person, as well he might have been, considering his ancestry. He was the natural son of Queen Hortense of Holland, and his grandfather was none other than Talleyrand; he was also related to the Empress Josephine and Beauharnais. At the court of his half brother, Napoleon III, the Duc de Morny matched wits with Eugenie and was one of the principal actors in the sorry tragedy of Maximilian. He was an intimate of both Bismarck and Palmerston. Mrs. Chapman's material is full of interest and she has handled it skilfully, her training as a novelist standing her in good stead.

Other recent biographies of importance are Fairfax Downey's *Burton—Arabian Nights Adventurer* (Scribner, \$3.50), a thrilling account of one of the most remarkable men that ever lived in this age or any other, admirably done; *George Washington, the Son of His Country* by Paul Van Dyke (Scribner, \$2.50), the story of the early years of the first President and especially a study of the formative influences that exerted their power up to the entrance of Washington into national affairs; *Galileo: Searcher of the Heavens* by Emile Namer (McBride, \$3.75), a modern biography of a great scien-

tist; *Cleopatra: A Royal Voluptuary* by Oskar Von Wertheimer (Lippincott, \$5), a most agreeable departure from the ordinary kind of biography of this lady, since it is an honest attempt to show her as a keen politician who never forgot her kingdom, and since Herr Von Wertheimer has not overemphasized the sexual elements in her story — in short, a good, solid piece of German scholarship; and *Cervantes*, by T. Y. Ybarra (A. and C. Boni, \$3), a superficial story of the life of the great Spaniard, which, while readable enough, does not add anything to existing knowledge, or, in other words, the sort of book that might be turned out by any good journalist with the time and patience to read fifteen or twenty of the existing lives of Cervantes.

A Contemporary Genius

THEN there is *Flying Dutchman: A Life of Fokker* by Anthony H. G. Fokker and Bruce Gould, the autobiography of the airplane designer, which is the revelation of one of the most remarkable personalities of our times, a man who is unquestionably a mechanical genius of the first order, with a great many of the familiar eccentricities of genius. His account of the invention of the synchronized machine gun is incredible, and yet it is well-known to be true, and much the same thing might be said of his exploit at the end of the World War, when he smuggled trainloads of airplanes and airplane parts out of Germany into Holland right under the noses of the Allied Commission. Fokker is only forty now; he was in his early twenties when his ships dominated the air on the Western Front and came

dangerously near to giving Germany the victory. His autobiography is candidly revealing, and Mr. Gould, who has helped him with it, does not interfere at all with the perfect self-portraiture of the book, which is important as airplane history, but far more interesting as the story of an extraordinary man.

A life of Nietzsche combined with a study of his philosophy is *Friedrich Nietzsche* by George Burman Foster (Macmillan, \$2.50). This is a reasoned piece of work, showing both the strength and the weakness of its subject. Curtis W. Reese acted as editor — the manuscript was left almost complete at the death of Mr. Foster in 1918 — and an excellent introduction has been provided by A. Eustace Haydon. An intimate story of court life in Rumania is Konrad Bercovici's *That Royal Lover* (Brewer, Warren, and Putnam, \$2.50), which is the tale of Queen Marie, King Ferdinand, and their son, Carol. This is a *chronique scandaleuse*, as might be expected, but Mr. Bercovici is supposed to know his Rumania. This brings the biography section to a close, except for a passing mention of the publication of *The Life and Adventures of Carl Laemmle*, which is by John Drinkwater (Putnam, \$3.50). Mr. Drinkwater tries very hard to explain why he chose Mr. Laemmle to write a biography of, but without much success. The book is pretty bad; there was no particular reason why it should have been written in the first place, and its intrinsic merits do not go any further toward justifying its existence. Mr. Laemmle is a successful motion picture producer, as almost every one knows, and not even Mr. Drinkwater can make any-

thing more out of a successful motion picture producer than a successful motion picture producer. There is an introduction by Will H. Hays.

A Variety of Fiction

ONE of the most engaging of recent novels is an English satire by John Collier and called *His Monkey Wife or Married to a Chimp* (Appleton, \$2.50). In brief, it is the story of the return from Africa to England of a young Englishman. His companion is a lady chimpanzee named Emily. Once at home, he falls in love with a pretty girl, but after many difficulties decides to marry Emily and return to Africa. This is a highly entertaining piece of fiction, and also a sharp and amusing comment upon civilization. It is no small feat to hold the interest of the reader in a book of this kind and to give its impossible story plausibility, but Mr. Collier has succeeded in both and heartily deserves a hearing. Brainerd Beckwith's *Galloping Down* (Century, \$2), is a fine, stirring story of Irishmen and horses, which begins in Ireland and finishes in Canada, a book that is sure to delight any one who has ever loved horses. There is a good love story, while the tale is not without its melodramatic touches, it holds the interest to the very end, its especial strength lying in the well-portrayed conflict between a wild father and his son. This is Mr. Beckwith's second novel, and it reveals a sound talent, one that is well worth watching. It is refreshing to find a novelist in these days who has real enthusiasm for his subject, and this Mr. Beckwith has — he can set the pulses stirring — provided again one has ever loved horses — by the

mere mention of the beasts. It is probably not necessary to explain that the Landscaper pretty well grew up on horseback, and that one of his deepest sorrows is the replacement in his own part of the country of good saddle horses with Fords.

About Family Life

OF FICTION, the past few weeks have produced nothing really startling in excellence, although, as usual, there is no dearth of novels that will serve to relieve the *tedium vitae*. One of the best of these is Susan Glaspell's cleverly conceived and neatly executed study of family life, *Ambrose Holt and Family* (Stokes, \$2.50), which stands as a tragi-comedy, and which is rich in overtones, and filled with quiet wit. Almost any one who has ever been a part of a family should enjoy this book. Two novels of our own immediate times are Stephen French Whitman's excellent *Here's Luck: A Social Footnote* (Appleton, \$2.50), the story of a gangster, written by a serious literary artist, who sees our lords of industry as picaresque heroes in direct line of descent from all soldiers of fortune; and *The Parable of the Virgins* by Mary Lapsley (Richard R. Smith, \$2.50), the story of life in one of our women's colleges, frankly and honestly done, and bearing no traces of exaggeration, a rather remarkable social document. A novel departure in fiction technique is to be found in Ruth Putnam Mason's *Woman Walks Alone* (Lincoln MacVeagh-The Dial Press, \$2.50), in which the story is told by the production of the thoughts of the characters, as in O'Neill's *Strange Interlude*.

A Novel of the Amazon

ANOTHER of the recent novels that has its remarkable qualities is *The Forest Ship* by Arnold Hollriegel (Viking, \$2.50), which has been translated by Edith Colburn Mayne, and which is told by a Marlowe-like gentleman. It is a story of the adventures of the Spaniard Orellana in the Amazon country, worked out by a clever device, and thoroughly good reading. *Thirty-One Families Under Heaven* by George Fink, translated by Lillie C. Hummel (Liveright, \$2.50), is a novel of life in the slums of Berlin that will recall Knut Hamsun's *Hunger*; an honest and forthright book, not for the weak-stomached exactly, but a credible picture of what goes on in our modern rabbit-warrens. Then there is a new novel by Felix Salten, the author of *Bambi*, *Samson and Delilah* (Simon and Schuster, \$2.50) in which Salten rings some changes on the Biblical story with a fair degree of success. And last, but not least, the fourth *American Caravan* (Macaulay, \$5), the annual of the vanguardists, which is always interesting because of its examples of trends in writing. The present volume is up to the standard of its predecessors, an important chapter in literary history, with a good many pieces in it that are worth reading for their intrinsic merits, provided, of course, one does not mind too much the experimental in art.

The Story of the War

UNDER the all-inclusive head of miscellaneous, the most important recent book is quite obviously General John J. Pershing's

My Experiences in the World War (Stokes, two volumes, \$10), which by the time this appears will be on the best-seller lists. The Landscaper has done no more than sample the volumes, and while he cannot honestly report that Pershing is an exciting writer, there is a world of stuff that is as interesting as it is important. The publishers have given the books a fine dress, and there is no doubt that from our point of view this is the outstanding contribution to the story of the war. There are many illustrations, good indexes, and all the necessary paraphernalia for reference work.

Thomas Craven's *Men of Art* (Simon and Schuster, \$3), a book club choice that is an excellent buy for the money — the publishers originally intended bringing it out at \$6 — is a worth while volume, partly because it is certain to arouse antagonisms in the breast of any one who has ever looked at pictures and liked them. Mr. Craven writes from a single point of view, and is therefore irritating; his taste is not at all catholic, and the people he does not happen to like are given short shrift, but he expresses himself well, and he manages to cover an astonishing lot of territory, as the fat volume ranges from "The World Before Giotto" to the work of the Mexican Orozco. Of the Modernists Mr. Craven thinks very little; he likes the people best who were closest to the life about them, men such as Hogarth, Daumier, Goya, and in our own country, Ryder, and he allows his Puritanical prejudices to sway some of his judgments. But one expects to find things to quarrel with in a book of this kind. It would not be

worth the paper it is printed on if it did not start arguments. The writing is sound and good, and the illustrations profuse and beautifully reproduced, although blacks-and-whites obviously cannot be fair to painters whose skill lay in their use of color.

For those who like adventure stories of another sort, Julian Duguid's *Green Hell* (Century, \$4) is hereby recommended. It is the account of travels in South American jungles of four men, a Russian tiger-hunter, an English cinematographer, a Bolivian diplomat, and an Irish writer — Mr. Duguid being the last mentioned. It is a splendidly written story of incredible hardships of all kinds, floods, wild animals, insects, and Indians. The exact territory traversed lies in Bolivia, and few white men have ever seen it — few would wish to after reading the book. This is another of the Landscaper's triple-starred volumes for the month. There are two other books about this part of the world that are also worthy of attention, *Djuka, The Bush Negroes of Dutch Guiana*, by Morton C. Kahn (Viking, \$3.50), a fine scientific study of a primitive people; and *The White Gods* by Richard Friedenthal (Harper, \$3.50), the story of Cortez and the Incas, done against a magnificent background by a German scholar who can write.

The Glands and People

ONE wishes for more space at this point, but even with what little there is left, it is necessary to mention a few other books that deserve fuller treatment: For example,

Charles R. Stockard's *The Physical Basis of Personality* (Norton), an excellent scientific volume that should interest any intelligent reader; *Taming the Criminal: Adventures in Penology* by John Lewis Gillin (Macmillan, \$3.50), an optimistic account of the world-wide efforts toward improved handling of offenders against society; *Germany and the Germans* by Eugen Diesel (Macmillan, \$2), a study of the country and its people by a German; and if you have not already read it by this time, *Men and Memories* by Sir William Rothenstein (Coward-McCann), an English artist's rich memoirs. For those who dream of Taormina, or some of the other blessed places in Sicily, Arnold Wood's little volume, *High Spots in Sicily* (Sears, \$1.50) will prove useful as an informal guide; there is a preface by Emanuele Grazzi, Royal Italian Consul General in New York. Mr. Wood knows and loves the country and is anxious for others to enjoy it. And for all those who write, there is a brand-new edition of Roget's Thesaurus, this time called *Roget's Dictionary of Synonyms and Antonyms*, and arranged as a dictionary by C. O. Sylvester Mawson. Putnam is the publisher and the price is \$3.50 for the regular edition, or \$4 for the thumb-indexed volume. This is a noteworthy improvement upon one of the indispensable tools of literary effort, and ought to be on the desks of all those who use words and who can not keep in their minds the contents of the unabridged dictionary.