

articulated relationships, through vanities and neuroses, painlessly. She has learned her manner from various insinuating styles, adopting thereby too tangled a technique. In her effort to show you how people may come away from experience empty-handed, she loses a certain concentration. She leaves you anxious, impressed, yet unappeased.

"DEEP EVENING," by Eugene Löhrke (Cape & Smith, \$2.50). On the night of the costume ball, a de luxe transatlantic steamer, garnished with pseudo Watteau canvases, potted palms, and a regiment of menials, en route for New York, meets her chill fate against an iceberg. The impact reduces her sybaritic elegance, within an hour or so, to a groaning, water-logged hulk. From

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Able Seaman Morgan at his watch in the crow's nest to puffy, ailing Mr. Vierstein on his second-class bunk, every one aboard faces, for that brief span, his dreams, his purposes, and his ghost. Thurlow Barton, stockbroker, bachelor, bulbous product of old New York; Giuseppe Ziemssen, Swiss gigolo become waiter through hazards of war; Mrs. Gilpin, nerve-tortured, fading beauty of the world's drawingrooms; Major Wandrell, inarticulate, locked between the standards of an old soldier and a dim sensitivity—all of them are thrown, by the glare of fear, into high relief before themselves. All of them, save Giuseppe who plunges into panic, find that the sum of their lives adds up to futility, that the ultimate moment makes no difference, that somehow they were on the wrong track from the start. Thus Mr. Löhrke stringently admits what most of us know and would not dare to expose. Bitterness wells up from his compact, rather too obviously high-pitched story to sting you with its quota of irrefutable truth.

V. P. R.

"AMERICAN EARTH" by Erskine Caldwell (Scribner's, \$2.50). Here we have short stories and sketches by another pupil in the Hemingway branch of the Sherwood Anderson school. Hemingway is introducing a good many of them to Scribner's, which is decent of him and clever of Scribner's. The trouble is that most of them write alike, select the same subjects—American, close to the soil, close to the speakeasy—and try the same style. They deal with "things I saw," "things I heard," not with "things I thought." This is no defect since that is what they set out to do. But the Anderson school, strong, flourishing, nearly native though it is, is not the only school in American fiction, nor necessarily the finest. A good deal of the work in the Hemingway branch is becoming cut and dried. Originality is at a discount, predictability at a premium. Erskine Caldwell is one of the star pupils, we should say. His things are very short, striking and honest.

"STRANGE THOROUGHFARE" by Sonia Ruthèle Novák (Macmillan, \$2.50). This is a long, chaotic novel, the story of a life which is not like a life but like a film, flickering and run off too fast, or like a jumbled, exhausting dream. The heroine, Esther O'Shane, who is the heart of the story, is a southern girl of dangerous blood, whose undisciplined childhood grows into undisciplined maturity, or such maturity as Esther can achieve. We meet her in her grandmother's home, and follow her to

New York, Atlanta, England, Greenwich Village, dance studios, concert stages, bootleggers' apartments, hospitals. All talent, all emotion, all vague loftymindedness, without control, or sense or imagination, Esther progresses with equal turbulence through adventures too varied and constant for description, and finally dies as she completes the score of her symphony. In life, Esthers never finish their symphonies. The only false note in a true and thorough characterization is that finished score. The whole novel, however, is not as successful as the characterization. Written almost entirely in dialogue, it lacks the narrative basis which alone would have made so rapid and melodramatic a story clear. Madame Novák's talent, like her heroine's life, suffers from lack of discipline, and her novel is out of focus and gives the reader a sense of strong energies dissipated because uncontrolled.

F. L. R.

New Biographies

"NOGUCHI" by Gustav Eckstein (Harpers, \$5). When Hideyo Noguchi died of yellow fever just three years ago on the West Coast of Japan, he was truly a martyr of science, whose pioneering soldier he had been for all his mature life. His predecessor, Dr. Adrian Stokes, had met the same death. Noguchi, almost with his last breath, ordered that his body should be used for research work.

If it is permissible to speak of a born bacteriologist, Noguchi was almost that. From the time when a Japanese microscopist showed him a living disease germ on a slide, this gangling, poverty-stricken peasant boy, with an arm terribly burned, with no influence, gave his days and nights (he often worked all night three nights running in his later years) absorbing, one might almost say, bacteriology through his pores, until he became the most famous man of his day in his own line and contributed materially to human safety. Americans risked their lives in proving under Major Walter Reed that yellow fever came from one species of mosquito—and some of them did die. And in one year in Havana the deaths from yellow fever fell from three hundred to three! But it was Noguchi who isolated the parasite of yellow fever. His discoveries in the fields of paresis, syphilis, rabies and infantile paralysis were steps on the way to medical advance. He has been called a human dynamo. All but homeless and penniless in America, he attracted the attention of Dr. Weir Mitchell and Dr. Simon Flexner and found his full opportunity with the Rockefeller Institute.

The story of his life and work is fully told in Dr. Eckstein's volume—almost too fully as regards the sordid, irresponsible, even dissolute, personal conduct of his early life. In time learned societies and the world's greatest scientists hailed him as the greatest of research workers.

The book is a worthy and welcome tribute. It suffers, however, from the author's constant use of the "historic present" and the excess of snapped-off sentences of a few short words. This style is efficient in making verbal pictures; but continuously carried on it becomes wearisome. One ventures to criticize also the constant mingling of the personal and scientific narrative—alternate chapters on each phase would certainly have helped the general reader to master the scientific part better.

R. D. T.

"GABRIEL the Archangel" by Federico Nardelli and Arthur Livingston (Harcourt, Brace & Co., \$3.50). This biography of Gabriel D'Annunzio is badly over-written, but that fault is most appropriate to its subject. D'Annunzio is, both as an artist and as a man, a type usually unpleasing to non-Latins; and, to most of us, what is remembered about him is the beauty of Duse's face and voice in his play, *Gioconda*. Nardelli and Livingston do not evaluate or even discuss critically D'Annunzio's work, so that the biography does nothing to suggest to the uninformed the place which that work occupies in modern Italian literature. Politically, D'Annunzio has been a force in Italy, where his theatrical qualities endear him. There is a good deal about his political activity, especially since the beginning of the war, in this book; but more space is given to his numerous love affairs. To this reviewer D'Annunzio's life seems absurd and not a little pathetic—one melodramatic gesture after another, all well advertised. Readers who share the authors' interest in their hero will probably find the book satisfactory.

F. L. R.

Behind the Blurbs

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY's *John Mistletoe*¹ and Jim Tully's *Blood on the Moon*² are both volumes of reminiscences. Beyond that they are about as different as any two books we have ever read. Tully is brutal, direct, undecorated; Morley is allusive, mellow, diffuse. If the mellowness sometimes becomes a little insipid, like that of any forced fruit, the brutality too becomes tiring. Both these gentlemen are a little too conscious of their special qualities, Morley of his

1. Doubleday, \$2.50.

2. Coward McCann, \$2.50.

charm, Tully of his virility. Not that their writing doesn't possess these qualities. Much of Morley's writing is very charming indeed. It is only when he becomes too conscious of it that it becomes either fine spun or pompous. Nevertheless you will thoroughly enjoy his recollections of Haverford and Oxford, of New York and Philadelphia, of books and newspapers and plays and their makers. But when you have read a few chapters of these, turn to Jim Tully and read for a corrective a little about saloons and jungles and jails. ❖ ❖ ❖ *Biology in Human Affairs* by Edward M. East is the Scientific Book Club May choice. ❖ ❖ ❖ A pleasing item printed by the Pauper Press is Mark Twain's short *Autobiography*³, with a frontispiece by Herb Roth, and reproductions of ancient woodcuts of some of the author's ancestors, one of them dangling from a tree. Unlike that of most of his humorous contemporaries, Mark Twain's work is as funny today as it was when it was written. ❖ ❖ ❖ *Solange Stories*⁴ contains five cases solved by Solange, the lady detective. These are fairly good stories, with a slight supernatural tinge. The rather pretentious foreword seems a little out of place. Considering, as the author does, that, as far as she is concerned, the field of the detective story is a small and humble one, it seems to us that she should have been able to labor in it to better advantage. She should not attempt to patronize an art that she practices only indifferently well. ❖ ❖ ❖ Mr. Podesta was standing on his doorstep, arguing with his daughter's suitor, when he gave a loud yell and fell dead. A small triangular wound was in his chest, but no stiletto was found. In the bushes was a bootlegger, in the front hall was his son, the sorehead Lory. Who slew him and how you will find if you read *The Three Cornered Wound*⁵. And very cleverly it was done, too, with the aid of Mr. Henry Ford.

WALTER R. BROOKS.

3. Random House, \$7.50. (Limited edition.)

4. By F. Tennyson Jesse: Macmillan, \$1.75.

5. By George Dyer: Houghton Mifflin, \$2.00.

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