

"muckraking"; and such "debunking" as he executes is carried out with a light hand.

In order to escape from its present limitations he would have the college direct its main attention to a duty which is almost certain to devolve very soon on most of the college boys and girls, namely, "parenthood." He does not mean by this merely "homemaking," but all that goes to rearing a more intelligent generation than the last. Having this in mind as the sum and substance of his conclusion he takes up the various topics of discussion which his general theme invites.

His first precaution was to learn a great deal more about what happens in college than most writers on the subject. He visited many institutions, large and small, east and west, and south and north, for males, and for females, and for both together. He talked with all concerned, from the president to the freshman and the prospective freshman. His first chapter on "What do you expect of college?" gives under ten headings the various surmises of both parents and students. These may be summarized as follows: the idea that having "been to college" will afford a running start in business; for fun and the making of "desirable" contacts which may stand one in good stead later; for the perpetuation of dad's recollections of the college yell; for the continuance of a solicitous oversight and protection; for the certification of the élite; for learning a profession or trade; for the confirmation of home prejudices; for the training of experts and teachers—and, lastly, the preparation in an atmosphere of intellectual freedom "for effective participation as a responsible adult in the world in which he lives, in all ways as an intelligent active member in his community, his nation, and the fellowship of nations. For going on with the task of self-understanding, self-government, and self-development in the life that now is, and for the life that is to come."

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Whatever may be the divergence of opinion in regard to the first nine motives for going to college listed by Mr. Gavit we can all shake hands on article ten. The Rev. John Roach Straton, Mr. Mencken, Dean West of Princeton, John Dewey, and Upton Sinclair would join in a common blessing upon this high ideal. The college should turn out good and efficient men and women equipped with knowledge and lofty aspirations and prepared to take an active part in making the world better. Indeed one of our greatest difficulties in reforming our college ways is the pious unanimity in regard to the purpose of the higher education. It conceals and disguises the most divergent notions in regard to the nature and making of upright men and women and good citizens. According to the dying words of Mr. Bryan, the stalwart yeomen of Tennessee, uncontaminated by college education, are the very best judges of the proper relation of religion and scientific research. Dean West defends the old faith, is sure that the works of the Greeks and Romans, and the struggle to attain a highly imperfect acquaintance with their respective tongues contributes more than any other method to the forming of judgment and taste and a preliminary acquaintance with life and duty. Mr. Sinclair would feel that no education began to attain its end without tearing from capitalism its purple and blood-stained robes. Hundreds of scientific men would recommend the methods of scientific research as the best corrective to human perversity. Some of those who have had long experience in educational work might agree with Mr. Gavit that the discreet and effective showing up of revered prejudices, including the sacred dogmas of all the frantic simplifiers of human riddles, should be at least one of the main precautions to be taken in our efforts to make a good man out of a college boy.

In his chapter on "Religion and Radicalism," Mr. Gavit says that he finds no organized propaganda in the colleges directed either against religion or towards so-called radicalism—the precise meaning of which remains in doubt in his mind and in that of all thoughtful people. Some years ago Calvin Coolidge found that the "reds" were stalking the women's colleges. They appear to have given up stalking now; at least Mr. Gavit did not catch them at it. "At every college I was looking for something that could be called definite propaganda of 'radicalism'; such, for example, as extreme communistic socialism, sovietism, the so-called 'dictatorship of the proletariat,' the 'class struggle,' 'advanced' views on the subject of sex-

relations. I did not find it." He did find here and there in the departments of biology, psychology, and philosophy, a tendency toward "a sheer systematic materialism," which as he describes it appears to me quite alien to the representatives of biology, psychology, and philosophy whom I happen to know—and I know a good many. I never met one of the variety he pictures. There is surely at least as much humility in these departments as in any other. Mr. Gavit mentions one particularly offensive case and I suspect took this man as an excuse for a gesture of scorn when he encounters those "in the departments whose subjects of study come nearest to pure guesswork, where men, bushwhacking around the edges of the inscrutable, pontificate about the week's gropings in the realm of mind as if they had ultimate truth by the tail." Ah, yes. They should be hung, *me judico*. Now the drop has fallen I can imagine Mr. Gavit smiling and taking up his genial pen once more.

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In regard to the great problem of how to make college education fundamentally important and at the same time avoid "controversial" matters, which are usually just those best worth understanding, the writer says: "The only thing to do is what the best young-minded educators are doing; to welcome the spirit of challenge and inquiry, and lead it to the assimilated knowledge which is the sole safe guide for permanently valuable action." At this point Mr. Gavit makes a pertinent quotation from Professor Harry Overstreet, respecting one of the unmistakable aims of college education and one of the most neglected and hardest to reach:

What then is the eager-minded student to do? . . . Grow the habit of critically examining basic assumptions. There are basic assumptions everywhere—in the newspapers, in business, in churches, in the home, in politics—assumptions that underlie the things that people think and believe and do. The first step towards gaining an intelligent grasp of one's world is to discover and to question these basic assumptions. That is what the world, despite itself, is forced to be doing to-day. It is at work with a number of the assumptions that almost brought our civilization to wreck. What are these assumptions? Why did they almost wreck our civilization? What are the new assumptions that must be formulated and believed if a wholesomer civilization is to be achieved?

As things are now I find myself little interested when I meet new people or address audiences as to whether they have had a college education or no. It seems to make so little difference in one's general outlook and frame of mind. It should be otherwise. Four years in college should cultivate intelligence and openmindedness in a sufficiently marked fashion to be easily noted. In most cases the college graduate appears to have undergone no greater alteration than might well take place had he passed the previous four years amidst the vicissitudes of non-academic youth.

Mr. Gavit describes a new movement in a very few of the colleges which consists in giving, during the first year, a sort of orienting course to which representatives of a variety of departments contribute. This is an excellent notion so far as it goes. But there is danger that the course will be crowded with statements by instructors who are too departmental to produce a fairly coherent impression. Had I my way I should have a close conspiracy of instructors who should enjoy at least half the attention of the students during the whole four years and whose business it should be to realize the aims so well set forth by Professor Overstreet and approved by Mr. Gavit. The great departments of human interest, especially religion, business, the relations of men and women, education and civic responsibilities, should be all subjected to analysis and criticism in regard to their nature, origin, and present status. In the usual departmental divisions of a college or university it is quite possible, in spite of so-called introductory courses, to miss most of the deeper significance of our knowledge and customs. Those who conducted this proposed enterprise in general sophistication would have to be peculiarly qualified, peculiarly friendly and coöperative. They might also have to put up for a while with the jeers of those, who having no knack for this kind of thing, might cry, "smattering." For it is no easy task to give a college course meaning beyond the mere statement of a series of facts in this field or that; and it is so very easy to plod along without asking the embarrassing question, "How much is being learned and what imaginable good am I doing beyond winning a rather scanty livelihood?"

As was said at the start, Mr. Gavit puts college

into the midst of life. He sees that one goes on living in a rather miscellaneous fashion even if he is spending a part of his time in study and in listening to lecturers. So a good deal of the book has properly to do with "The course in sportsmanship," "extra-curriculum" activities, the ratings of achievement, the attitude and precautions of the college administration, especially the rôle of personality and sympathy in adjustments to individual cases. I suspect that the newest element in college affairs is the awakened students themselves. When I went to college no one blasphemed against the educational process; now many students cry out on the futility of the whole thing as they find it. Some day it may be realized that the tastes, inclinations and judgments of the students should be looked to as a potent reforming element in bettering matters.

Introducing—"Anhedonia"

WHEN LIFE LOSES ITS ZEST. By ABRAHAM MYERSON M. D. Boston: Little Brown & Co. 1925. \$1.75.

Reviewed by JOSEPH JASTROW

University of Wisconsin

THE story of what happens when nerves give out is as significant as it is distressing. The war-shocked soldier, sleeping soundly under the thunder of German guns, and on his return to a sheltered life of peace kept awake by the ticking of his watch or the beating of his arteries, is but one illustration of a protean theme. The wearer of hero medals becomes a whimpering baby; the sturdy and strenuous master of industry is irritated to despair by the simplest task; the fertile writer cannot compose a letter; and all lie day and night on a listless bed of pain,—in a hell partly of their own making, or rather in the slough of despond imposed by their nervous breakdown. All the zest and "pep" has gone out of life; pleasure has given way to fear, confidence to worry, the sense of success to a pang of misery. The emphasis of Dr. Myerson's admirable and timely analysis is upon the emotional factor of the prevalent disorder of our civilization—at one time called "Americanitis"—upon the fact that the central symptom of the malady is the lack of pleasure, the incapacity to desire and enjoy, which alone makes life worth living and constitutes the criterion of normality. That is the lack that incapacitates, the true suffering of illness, the menace of age as well as the price paid by youth for living beyond the nervous income. Neurasthenia is the common name for the handicap and remains the better one, since the root-source of the trouble is an impairment of the energy-cycle, which is maintained, it is true, by the feeling of zest in activity, but holds in its own right a vital place in the physical and mental economy.

The neurasthenic is mainly so by temperament. He pays for his sensitiveness—which often makes high achievement and the more delicate and rarer quality of performance possible—by a greater liability to upset and disaster. A chemical balance is more readily put *hors de combat* than a grocer's scales. But we all have our set measure of resistance to the wear and tear of emotional assault; and any of the major assaults, such as illness may so raise the threshold of mental pain that we become as sensitive to displeasure, as incapable of reacting positively and normally to the thrills and excitements that we live by, as does the neurasthenic by misfortune of heredity. But for the extreme assault of war, many a soldier might have remained dimly aware of his neurasthenic vulnerability.

The theme is important for the picture it portrays of the liability of nerves; making it plain that behavior is conditioned by an integrity of function, which too commonly we interpret in the abstract terms of moral qualities. It is important as a matter of hygiene and prevention, supporting the policy of ministering to the satisfactions that keep the individual sanely and safely hedonic. Asceticisms and prohibitions find that Nature takes its toll; though no less a life of indulgence leads to an anhedonia of jaded futility. Mental hygiene has come to its own in these latter days; and neurology has as legitimate a voice as philosophy in prescribing the precepts of wise living. In this volume Dr. Myerson

has added to his contribution to the popularization of sound principles of mental living set forth in otherwise directed purpose in his "Nervous Housewife" and "The Foundations of Personality." It is well to recognize in anhedonia a new name for a persistent enemy of happiness.

A Novel of the Soul

THE PROFESSOR'S HOUSE. By WILLA CATHER. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1925. \$2.

Reviewed by HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

THIS is the age of experiment in the American novel. No sooner had the seers of the academies decided that American life was too thin and too unsophisticated for mature fiction than a flood of novels began (and this new book is one of them) in which new methods of story telling, new angles of approach, new styles were exploited in order to catch the manifold facets of an American social history that suddenly began to seem the most important, the most auspicious, and, paradoxically, the most menacing phenomenon of the century. In ten years the American novel has become, if not deep, rich. Such an outburst of technical experiment is almost irresistible to the professional reviewer. He must take the new American watch apart to see how it works, and whether its parts are certified by experience. Yet technique is not important except when it fails, and if the new technique of "The Professor's House" creaks a little, a method is only machinery after all, and we may turn to the more interesting question of what Miss Cather has got into her book.

Miss Cather, I suspect, is wearying of broad pioneer movements and sharp contrasts between flaming emotion and commonplace environment. She is going deeper, and is prepared to defend the thesis that a new country may have old souls in it. An old soul is by no means a Main Street high brow dissatisfied with crudity. He is much too civilized to be upset by a difference of opinion over the value of culture. An old soul, as the philosophers say, is driven toward recognition. Life, for him, instead of consisting of so many successes, so many quarrels, so many events that can be ticketed for a biography, is a progress in self-realization, a series of discoveries as to what experience means for *him* when stripped of illusion and in its ultimate reality. Such a soul is most likely to fall away from his closest associates; success may be a burden, an admired wife a growing problem, children who become the hard worldlings that most of us are in our thirties, a depression rather than a comfort. Put such an old soul in a small western university, give him a charming wife who chooses the children's part, afflict him with two sons-in-law, one unctuous and one soured, and two daughters, one mean and one envious—and drama follows.

"The Professor's House" might readily have been written as a mirror of small town bickerings meticulously preserved in Miss Cather's cool, firm style. Professor St. Peter is too good for his job, and too civilized for his community; also he is a personality, with force, humor, distinction, charm. There have been two major experiences in his life, the writing of his great history of the Spanish adventurers, and his friendship with Tom Outland, the only first-rate mind that ever came into his classes. The history is written and has made him famous and financially independent. The boy is dead, killed in the war, but the patent he willed to his fiancée, the professor's daughter, has been exploited by the skilful Jew she married afterwards and has made the two of them rich and envied. Outland's fortunes, like Antony's, have corrupted better men, and brought pettiness to a family that was not necessarily committed to such a fate.

This is what happens on the smooth flowing surface of "The Professor's House," but it is not the story; the story is beneath. The story is slow discovery by Professor St. Peter—of himself. His family have moved with prosperity to a new house, but he clings, hardly knowing why, to his attic in the old house, beside the dress forms where Augusta, the sewing woman used to drape the young girls' dresses. Why is he happier there than in the new house? Why does his family

begin to weigh upon his nerves? Why does the memory of Tom Outland grow brighter until he sits down to write his story? It is a fourth of the novel, this story, antecedent to the main action, superficially irrelevant to it—the story of an orphan adrift in the Southwest who finds with his pal a cliff dweller's city on an unclimbed mesa, spends the best year of his life interpreting the experience of dead men, until from it he gets a perception of a life lived for ideas, a self-realization that this is how he wishes to live. Why does the professor, his work done, refuse to enjoy its fruits in travel, but rather cling to his loneliness, until, rather than face his returning family, he would, except for Augusta and the solid human nature she represents, have let the old gas stove, blown out by the wind, blow him out too?

These are the questions "The Professor's House" answers, not as a metaphysician would answer them, by analyzing the results of a self-realization which leads to new values that make the man different, but in rich and vigorous narrative. It is the difference between William James's study of religious experience and the narrative of a con-



Robert Schumann
from

"Robert Schumann," by Frederick Niecks. (Dutton).

version, although St. Peter goes through no conversion but something much commoner and more difficult to explain. He decides to follow his own soul. The behaviorist would say that he responds with exceptional sensitiveness to environmental conditions, which is about as far as the behaviorist can take you—and the justification for such a novel as this one.

It is not necessary to be metaphysical in order to enjoy Miss Cather's novel, for it is an engrossing story in spite of its seeming lack of plot. The personalities are as firm and convincing as always in her transcripts of life, and if there is no such poignancy as in "The Lost Lady," there is more subtlety and sophistication. Miss Cather's new hero is not greater or better or more tragic, but there is more of him. His life has more possibilities of depth as well as intensity.

Yet it is absolutely necessary to realize the metaphysics of recognition if one proposes to understand as well as enjoy this novel. And it is necessary to understand it in order to comprehend the method of telling. It is the past that counts most in the story, hence it is natural for the story to be told backward, always pointing from the future to the past. Du Maurier, with more romantic, less subtle material, did the same in "Peter Ibbetson."

The experiment is not always successfully conducted. The long short story of Tom Outland does more than depict a spiritual experience; it winds through Washington intrigue with an effect of "this happened so I must tell it" which recalls the weaker passages in "One of Ours." Nor is the balance between plot and

significance elsewhere always preserved. Yet I am more interested in this story than in other books of hers which are more perfectly achieved. The soul, after all, is the greatest subject for art. We have swung in our American writing from sophisticated studies of sophisticated personalities through unsophisticated romances of simple folk to satiric narratives of commonplace people who are interesting only because they are pawns in a national society. Yet the rich, subtle natures, whose problems have no relation to success or failure as our world sees it, and who are not types of social classes or particular environments, seem always to escape the novelist, although they are probably more numerous though less self-conscious in America than in older countries where conformity is not regarded as a prime virtue. Miss Cather, one of the ablest novelists now writing in English, believes, what no Englishman or no Frenchman can be convinced of, and no native novelist since Hawthorne has practised, that there is profundity in American life. A profundity not merely instinctive such as Sherwood Anderson is revealing, but a conscious spiritual profundity which poets like Robert Frost and Edwin Arlington Robinson have long seen. This, more than "O Pioneers!" is a pioneering book.

An Evangelical Novelist

ONE INCREASING PURPOSE. By A. S. M. HUTCHINSON. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1925. \$2.

Reviewed by WILLIAM LYON PHELPS
Yale University

ALTHOUGH I have never seen the earthly tenement occupied by A. S. M. Hutchinson, I became intimately acquainted with him in 1912, on the appearance of "The Happy Warrior." For no one can read this man's novels without knowing the author. Every chapter is highly charged with his personality; which irritates some critics, and pleases many readers. It pleases me. There is no doubt that in modern fiction Hutchinson is a spiritual force, and as Browning said of "The Ring and the Book," his latest novel is

Clean for the Church, and dead against the world,
• The flesh and the devil,

a fact that in the common run of contemporary stories gives it a certain distinction.

After adverse criticism has finished every count in the indictment, the defense can rest its case on Hutchinson's power of characterization. In "The Happy Warrior" there is an all-conquering Boy, against whose vitality and sheer wholesomeness the barriers of mature inertia, selfishness, crustiness, and don't-interrupt-me-nowness fall; in "The Clean Heart" (1914) there is a roaring drunkard who saves first a man's mind and then his soul; in "If Winter Comes" (1921) there is Mark Sabre, who has the almost unique faculty of understanding people who hold opinions contrary to his own; in "This Freedom" (1922) there is the Cambridge graduate who reached perihelion in his undergraduate days, and has been receding ever since; in "One Increasing Purpose" there are three brothers who will not easily be forgotten, with a variety of human beings sketched in like

This lady who had been introduced to Sim by Lady Tony as "Fly Jannet, the writer, you know," was thin to the point of emaciation, shingled as to her hair, shorn as to her clothes (she was short and what portion of her presented itself above the table appeared to Sim to be entirely naked) ate scarcely anything, spoke not at all, and at the earliest possible moment planted in her mouth a cigarette tube which stretched half across the table, draughts from which she inhaled in volumes that caused the cigarette to splutter like a firework and exhaled, through her nose, in such very minute quantities as to give the suggestion that, like the most modern engines, she consumed her own smoke. Sim, at whose other hand was Linda, had made but one effort at conversation with her. "I am afraid I am the worst possible person to be put beside you," his effort had been. "I read hardly anything. What do you write?"

Miss Fly Jannet who was flicking a bit of fish round and round her plate addressed it and not Sim. "I don't write; I gesture."

Just for a change, it is rather refreshing to see the searchlight of satire removed, if only for a moment, from respectable business men, and from women who are faithful to their family duties, and turned on literary bluffers.

Like nearly everybody else, I missed Mr. Hutchinson's first novel, "Once Aboard the Lugger—" when it appeared in 1908. I know of only one man who read it, E. F. Edgett, the accomplished literary