

At which the last son, Humor, winks . . . his way
Of intimating—"Wait! I'll save the play!"

So much for Genius and his brood! . . . And now
That we're instructed, with a parting bow,
I beg you to observe—*yourselves*, and see
Art's final requisites . . . Exhibit "B."
Namely (and such are rare) an Audience
Of charm—of culture—of intelligence.

The Curtain trembles! Up my spine I feel
A lurking Author's agonized appeal!
He fears I'll lecture all his lure away.
He's wrong, though . . .

I commend to you—a *Play*.
LEE WILSON DODD.

Rome's Balkan Stepchild

A HISTORY OF RUMANIA. By N. IORGA.
Translated by Joseph McCabe. New York:
Dodd, Mead & Co. 1926. \$4.

Reviewed by HAMILTON FISH ARMSTRONG
Author of "The New Balkans"

PROFESSOR IORGA, one of the small group of Balkan savants who by their real scholarship have acquired a European reputation, has done a service to his country by providing it with a well-written, adequate history, and seeing that it was successfully translated into good English. His book ought to have a welcome outside the narrow circle of those closely interested in Balkan politics. Rumania has been the battleground between East and West from the days of Darius to those of William of Hohenzollern. Its complicated story has a bearing on many European problems, modern as well as ancient.

The story is of the romance-speaking people of the Carpatho-Danubian area who evolved a national characteristic out of the most diverse and uncertain elements, and maintained it against successive barbarian waves beating in from the Asiatic steppes, and, more lately, against the Magyar on the west, the Slav from almost every direction, and the Turk from the south. Their outposts have retreated from the pastoral valleys and uplands of Thessaly, Macedonia, and Dalmatia, or have been absorbed in the mass of the populations of those Greek or Slav lands. But at home they managed to retain, stolidly and undemonstratively, the Ruman characteristics which were imprinted on Dacia by the Roman legionaries, and the farming Romans who, Professor Iorga believes, also followed in the wake of Trajan's banners.

The author describes, in detail and with interesting personal allusion, but without being pedantic, the history of the Rumanian people through the Middle Ages, the Turkish tyranny, the decadence under the eighteenth century *boyars*, the stirring of nationalism from Transylvania eastward to Bessarabia in the nineteenth century, the birth of the nation after the union.

The reason for the hesitation of Rumania between the two rival camps in 914, and the course of Rumanian history during and since the war, are summarized, rather unsatisfactorily, in half a dozen pages. There is also a chapter on Rumanian characteristics and civilization, but in general the author is most successful in the field of history where there is no room for the politics of the present (in which he himself participates) to color his judgment or restrain him from absolutely frank expression. However, on the whole the book is remarkably free from bias, does not exaggerate (as Rumanians are prone to do) the rather tenuous line of Rumanian descent from the Roman mother of civilization, and avoids allowing Balkan antagonisms of the present to warp the writer's judgment of the past.

Altogether, Professor Iorga has grounds for quite enough pride of authorship for him to resent the substitution of the translator's name for his own on the covers in which the American publishers have bound up the English sheets of his book.

"Marcel Rouff, whose 'Sur le Quai Wilson' has set Paris by the ears, is an open Socialistic enemy of the League as at present constituted," says *John O'Londons Weekly*. "This partisanship may detract from the merit of his book; yet, on the other hand, he happens to be editor of the *Tribune de Genève* and he was responsible for presenting his own country to the League several years ago, so that even if he does rummage in the backstairs and take crack after crack at the League and its personnel, he cannot be dismissed as one who does not know what he is talking about."

The BOWLING GREEN

The Folder

I FIND in The Folder three of the prettiest possible examples of the artist's consoling habit of considering life's doings from the standpoint of his chosen *métier*. The first is from an author who is also an expert on fine typography:

Two stories I want awfully to get at are these: one a hard, cruel theme of frustration (set perhaps in Linotype Bodoni) and the other a light and fanciful and beautiful thing (set, maybe, in French Cochon).

The second is in a charming letter from a dentist; extracted, shall we say, from a dentist's technical description of some very dainty work he has been doing upon a fair patient. It seems to me a perfect little essay on the Artist's Conscience:

I have been able to avoid the appearance of large masses of gold in the occlusive surfaces and other tooth walls exposed to view. By these means I have made strenuous efforts to conserve æsthetic values which I feel to be of great importance especially in the mouth of a woman. The work has not been done merely on so many teeth as individuals but I have been at pains throughout to produce a real restorative operation, coördinating tooth with fellow-tooth and with antagonist, to the end that the mechanical values and functions of the denture might be conserved. To do less is to fall short of one's obligations and privileges.

And the third comes from the studio of a painter in Greenwich Village:

For a while I was in a hellish state: the feeling that I was past forty and no longer really young, though of course we always think of ourselves as still merely kids. I was in hell's own misery of restlessness, indolence, self-scrutiny and postponement. I was *in vacuo*. Every day that went by was far too oddly complicated, grotesque, and vivid to attempt any transfer of it onto paper or canvas. Then somehow I have realized lately that I am really only just beginning to live and that all the most beautiful possibilities are ahead, not behind. I've learned, still only a pitifully clumsy little bit, but still a little, to read something of the inner character of other human beings—all bedevilled like myself by the pressing fancy of some loveliness, some consummation of the heart. At 1.30 this morning as I lay awake wondering whether to go on trying to think, or whether to get up and try some anæsthetic, a sudden brightness beamed me. The moon, across those billion leagues of crystal sky, had hunted me out on my very pillow. It never happened before. By some accident of cosmic timing and window arrangement there was a moment, before she slid behind a big apartment house, where she laid her magic right on my face as I lay there solitary in the studio. Did it calm me? Not a damn bit, but it made me think of you and your moonlight chapter. So I thought about you a little, finding you less troubling to think about than some other matters. Then the moon of course brought me back to Endymion and the Keats illustrations I've been doing—and what are you to do if you begin thinking about Keats at that time of night? I'll tell you what I did, absurd as it was. I lit some candles and arranged a light and took a pencil and a sheet of board and sat down in front of the mirror and spent an absorbed happy hour drawing a portrait of myself. I called it *Portrait of a Damned Fool Who Couldn't Sleep*. Drawing faces of course is the only thing that makes life sensible. What else is so exciting and impossible? What is finer discipline than that madly tender and rigorous attempt to catch the finer shadows of anxiety and "obstinate misgiving" that are in faces—and their immortal laughter?

In the witty little leaflet occasionally issued by the Hadley Book Shop (South Hadley, Mass.) occurs the pleasantest review we have seen of Elinor Wylie's charming "Orphan Angel." It is signed W. D. B. and goes thus:

In 1822, off Leghorn's shore,
A Yankee clipper saved from hungry fish
A being of a most angelic mien—
The time, the place—and who but Percy Bysshe?

His rescuer, David, brought him back to health
And so it came about that, far from lost on
The bosom of the deep, he soon became
An able seaman on his way to Boston.

On reaching port, he and the doughty Dave,
Considering their partnership was lucky,
Set out to find a lovely orphan girl,
Silver, her name was, and her home Kentucky.

Then followed days idyllic with romance
With meetings strange and with adventures glamorous;
And, as it happened, everywhere he went
The poet found the girls distinctly amorous.

They loved his eyes, they loved his gentle ways;
He charmed them and bewitched them and to each he
Gave a sweet smile and now and then a kiss—
And all this time his wife was at Lerici.

Feeling myself far too much of a rustic, I picked up a copy of the *Official Metropolitan Guide*, issued weekly by the Hotel Association. How little do we countrymen realize the violent and tempting gaieties of the big town. For instance the New Masses Workers' and Peasants' Costume Ball, of which we read this advertisement:

Jazz, Sing, Riot, Hell, Fun, Dance—If You Like to Blow Off Steam—If you need something Red-hot to make you forget prohibition—If you're tired of being good—If you're sick of your job—If you want to meet pretty girls, Bohemians, Red Devils, Anarchists, Nuts, Writers, Roughnecks, Wage Slaves, Cops, Esthetes, and Heywood Brown—COME! COME! COME!

I must add, to forestall any enthusiastic rush of steamblowers toward the safety valve, that this event is now in the past.

Congruity, Pa. (what a pleasant name for a village: looking it up in the atlas we find it not far east of Pittsburgh) writes:

Speaking as a pharmacist, and a former peddler of nostrums through the countryside, I know exactly what literature nowadays is up to. It is constructed on a formula precisely like the old-fashioned corn cure, which was made of a mixture of alcohol (13 per cent) and cannabis (41 grs. per fl. oz.). Cannabis is a moraceous herb of the hemp family, very powerful for eating away callouses. The mixture is a clear, highly volatile syrup with a strong sweetish, aphrodisiac perfume. (Keep phial tightly corked when not in use.) The same is true of contemporary fiction. It is effective, if properly applied to indurations and callosities of the spirit caused by the tightness and friction of modern life. After application, soak the mind in very hot water, and then out comes the callous. I read *The Saturday Review* carefully, and think it meritorious; but it seems to me strange that literary critics are so much more ignorant of life than the average country druggist.

Brooklyn Heights writes:

I hope that the Deity was not disturbed to observe that 2,924 readers of the New York *World* don't Believe in Him. But then, at the steps of the Brooklyn Bridge, right alongside the World building, I heard two stalwart Salvation wenches in scarlet cloaks singing merrily and in double cadence "My Heavenly Father Watches Over Me." I was so pleased by their brawny simplicity that I put a quarter in the tambourine.

R. M. M. writes from the Official City News Bureau of Miami Beach, Florida:

Let me begin with the thread-bare flattery that ever since the halcyon days of your column in Phila. I have found your stuff vastly entertaining. True, you occasionally lapse into extra-columnar abstractions that I fancy are about as understandable and stimulating to the Man in the Street as an essay on the categorical imperative of Kant; but in the main—and I say this with two years' column-conducting experience behind me—your literary batting average runs perilously close to the .500 mark. . . .

But what I started out to say was that your December 4th revival of the old Desert Island Books wheeze set me thinking just now. Is it out of order for me to append my own list-of-three to the laudable selections of those Indianapolis booksellers? Well, then:

"A Night in the Luxembourg," by Remy de Gourmont.
"The World Machine," by Carl Snyder.
"Spoon River Anthology," by Edgar Lee Masters.

For either the second or third I might countenance the substitution of Horace or Martial in the Loeb Classical Library editions, but not for anything in English would I change the other. "The Revolt of the Angels" or "Penguin Island" might do in a pinch.

"Bryn Mawrtyr '89" writes from Valladolid, Spain, a reproach that seems heartily well deserved. She says:

Allow a belated but passionate protest against the anonymous reviewer of "The Big House at Inver," by Somerville and Ross, in *The Saturday Review* of August 21. Mr. Ross, forsooth! and Mrs. Somerville!! What for a reviewer did you pick up or pick out? Hasn't he ever heard of those authors before???

Having been in a civilized and English-speaking land when the issue came out, I wasn't alert to see it; there were other things to read. Having rescued it in a mutilated condition from fate as wrapping paper in Valladolid, I have devoured it, though three months late; and let me hope that in those three months you have received many hoots and sneers. A general reading knowledge ought to be demanded of every reviewer.

The most curious side-flash of the eye lately was an item in the catalogue of a Christmas exhibition of prints at Harlow's on Fifth Avenue. It was an etching by the greatly admired James McBey: *Gunfire, Mount of Olives*.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

His "Life of Palmerston" having now been published, Mr. Philip Guedalla is engaged on a "Life of Wellington." This is likely to be ready next year, but in the meantime Mr. Guedalla is preparing for a tour in the United States.

Books of Special Interest

This World of Ours

- THE SURGEON'S LOG. By J. JOHNSTON ABRAHAM. New York: E. P. Dutton & Company. 1926. \$5.
 TRAVEL AND ADVENTURE IN MANY LANDS. By CECIL GOSLING. New York: E. P. Dutton & Company. 1926. \$3.50.
 LANTERNS, JUNKS AND JADE. By SAMUEL MORRELL. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company. 1926. \$2.50.
 EAST OF SIAM. By HARRY A. FRANCK. New York: The Century Company. 1926. \$3.50.
 RAINBOW COUNTRIES OF CENTRAL AMERICA. By WALLACE THOMPSON. New York: E. P. Dutton & Company. 1926. \$5.
 ISLANDS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN. By PAUL WILSTACH. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company. 1926. \$4.
 THE MAMMOTH. By BASSETT DIGBY. New York: D. Appleton & Company. 1926.

Reviewed by DALE WARREN

RARE it is that the reviewer, presented with an armful of "travel books," is unable to spot at a glance at least one "guide-book," unable to find a single author who urges him to travel and sets about telling him how to do it. It is obvious that none of the volumes listed above is subsidized by the various steamship agencies, for each and every one would have been written if American tourists were not to be reckoned with in increasing numbers each year.

J. Johnston Abraham is a London doctor who went to sea for his health. Being a literary man with a list of earlier books to his credit, what could be more natural than that he should keep a diary and send it to his publishers when the trip was over? "The Surgeon's Log" is the day to day record of an eventful voyage, of a voyage that restored not only health but a forgotten joy of the boundless spaces as well. It carries the reader from Liverpool to Port Said, through the Malay Straits to Japan, and in and out of the picturesque islands of the East Indies. The shimmering, golden glamour of the East breaks through its pages, and even the most hasty cannot fail to detect the faint whisperings of a myriad Oriental tongues. If the book is not one to stimulate travel, it will at least prompt the reader to keep a diary when on the high seas and to record therein the casual impressions which take on an entirely new significance east of Suez.

Cecil Gosling describes himself as a "minor official in the employment of the Foreign Office," and his "Travels and Adventures in Many Lands" is projected against a background of diplomatic life. The travels and adventures take place in Central and South America, Europe, and Africa. The volume really constitutes an autobiography and its only claim to the "travel" class lies in the fact that the gift of days in Paraguay leads quite naturally to a rather intimate discussion of Paraguayan history, topography, custom and character. The book spins itself out to four hundred closely written pages and, with the exception of the inevitable cousins and aunts, is apt to find few faithful readers.

Another diplomat to employ his leisure hours to advantage is Samuel Morrill, who limits his reminiscences to China. His "Lanterns, Junk, and Jade" is a well-balanced volume in which facts and fancies are skilfully played against each other. One chapter is a delicate vignette of some of the lesser-known aspects of Chinese life while the next treats the various phases of Chinese development from a purely historical point of view. The book is in all ways the work of one who has responded both aesthetically and intellectually to his years of residence in the shadow of the Great Wall. Physically speaking, it is little short of a triumph.

The indefatigable Harry A. Franck, heralded by his publishers as "the modern Marco Polo and Magellan all in one," is still vagabonding, and his thirteenth travel shows him in the heart of French Indo-China. He calls it "East of Suez." Here we find an entertaining, diverting tale of vagabond days in the Orient, constructed along the familiar lines. Mr. Franck travels out of the love of travel and writes out of the love of writing, with the result that there is an unmistakable ring of sincerity and a contagious enthusiasm in his pages certain to impress both the actual and

the vicarious traveller. Those who think that China and Indo-China are one and the same will be rudely surprised by some of Mr. Franck's observations. To him, this important French colony is "not in any sense China, but the living line of division between two ancient and very different masses of Oriental civilization." The volume is thickly illustrated and contains a map of the sort that always should be, and seldom is, contained in books of travel.

In "Rainbow Countries of Central America," Wallace Thompson seeks to forecast the future of the "countries where destiny sits on national doorsteps," and there is a decided political and commercial slant to his study of this region which has all but forgotten its Indian colonization and its later heritage of mediæval Spain. In his own words, "I have written a book half travel-tale and half exposition of history. . . . I have tried to do what someone must some day do with the travel book; merge happily between its covers both the color and charm of the lands he tells of, and those relatively few dependable facts that are vital to the reader's full enjoyment and understanding."

Mr. Thompson enters at length into a discussion of America's policy towards Central America and concludes that the "rainbow countries" owe not a little of their latter-day progress to the brains of the State Department at Washington. The serious tone of the volume should not, however, frighten the prospective traveller as Mr. Thompson does not write with a heavy hand. Some of his word pictures would not be out of place in a volume of strictly literary adulation.

The nearest approach to the guide-book that this collection offers is Paul Wilstach's "Islands of the Mediterranean," a book which fits very neatly on the shelves next to the author's earlier volume, "Along the Pyrenees." Mr. Wilstach shares with Mr. Franck the zest for travel and experience that has animated the adventurers of all ages, and writes in a happy vein well suited to the character of his observations. The introductory pages on the lure of islands, in general, and the lure of the Mediterranean, in particular, admirably prepare the reader for the subsequent chapters on the unutterable fascination of Majorca, Corsica, and Elba, Sicily, Malta, and Sardinia, Corfu, Tinos, Crete, Rhodes, and Cyprus. Statistics and valuable bits of information of interest to travellers are appropriately segregated in an appendix.

Bassett Digby, F.R.G.S., is a scientist, not a travel expert, and his volume is primarily a record of mammoth hunting in Northeast Siberia. It is the story of an actual trip, yet embodies the results of research extended over a period of years in England, America, Sweden, Russia, and Japan. One cannot read it without sharing much of the author's enthusiasm for his task and coming to the conclusion that, when venturing into the Arctic, a prehistoric elephant is an ever more tempting quarry than the North Pole itself.

Frustration

THE GREAT AMERICAN ASS—An Autobiography. Anonymous. Brentano's. 1926. \$3.50.

Reviewed by M. R. WERNER

ON the next to the last page of his autobiography the author of this book strikes the keynote to his unpleasant, but not insignificant, personality in this sentence: "I froth at the mouth with frustration." His book is what he himself admits in the closing phrase of the previous sentence, "an aching yawp." And three hundred and fifteen pages of frothing and yawping do not make for much except the satisfaction of his own feelings on the subject. He calls himself an ass continually, but the unfortunate part of it all is that he is insincere about it. He feels far more superior to his environment than the talents displayed in this story of himself warrant.

The book is a rather slovenly account of the terrible struggle of a man with his father and his environment. The struggle with his father is well told, and there are flashes all through the book of keen analysis of his predicament. But many men fight their fathers and manage by virtue of that very battle to establish a place for the talents which they believe they possess. The difficulty with The Great American Ass is that no one more than himself realizes the paucity of his talents, and he

spends an entire lifetime pitying himself, varying the monotony slightly by blaming now and then either his heritage or his countrymen. The samples of his poetry, which are sprinkled here and there throughout the book, indicate his mediocrity. One of the least sound types of human beings is the one which believes that the world owes it something—a living and satisfaction for its ego. Unfortunately, the world never recognizes the obligation, and one who is not willing to accept the fact has not attained that sufficient degree of pessimism necessary for self-preservation. Some day perhaps, a more benevolent state will protect people like the author of this book as it now does other victims of delusion.

"The Great American Ass" is a chronicle of a life spent in Kansas by a boy in a large family of Puritan heritage. The father, a Yankee, a practical joker, hard as the proverbial Puritan, and with all the distorted wit of his type, batters down the personalities of his wife and children, until they are finally forced to resort to a lawsuit in order to take part of the old man's property for their mother. The victory seems a puny one, but it is easy to understand the satisfaction which the author must have taken in it.

It is too bad to have to say harsh things about this man, for he already reveals too much in all the harsh things which have been said of him and his work. But then the pain which he has suffered from his frustration and his critics seems to be the one great pleasure of his life.

Seeking Happiness

UNDERSTANDING OURSELVES: THE FINE ART OF HAPPINESS. By HAROLD DEARDEN. New York: Boni & Liveright. 1926.

Reviewed by JOSEPH JASTROW

THIS is a commendable survey of a popular theme maintained and sustained up on a physician's experience. It has the commendable purpose of helping those who need it and who does not?—to get the most of the powers and satisfactions that are within their reach. It contains much good advice expressed with a good sense of phrase, and a poised perspective of selection. It might be damned by faint praise, but deserves a better appraisal; even while one may express regret that it does not attain a higher order of utility. It is directed to the relief of the inhibitions, impediments, and entanglements, that beset the path of expression in the striving for an efficient career and a happy adjustment to circumstance. But it is unfortunate that many of those who are the victims of such difficulty of endowment are too complex to be reached by so simple a technique. If simply constituted in psychic disposition, they are not likely to be troubled by the impediments that if slight enough could be treated by such direct and simple measures. Yet the stratum of the average is so extensive that the "technique of living" which is set forth will find its clientele.

The same stricture applies to the level of presentation, deep enough and correct enough, to escape the verdict of obvious superficiality or distortion, but not deep enough to avoid the fallacy of over simplification, the acceptance of verbal for real analysis, the weakness of an electric product lacking organization. By the same weakness it attempts too much, tries to serve as an experimental question-box to document the principles set forth, and is vastly over-weighted by an appendix on the sex problem in education, quite out of proportion to the rest of the theme. At the critical points there is either a begging of the issue, or a resort to an analogy that fails to carry; such as the attempt to illustrate the lack of social penetration by the quite differently conditioned illusions of sense. Naturally the major purpose is devoted to the treatment of the motivation scheme and the rational responses, founded in turn upon the great mass of habit formation that is the indispensable mechanism of present-day adjustment.

With so tempting a theme, quite the same that has given rise to a vast array of "fake" psychologies in the applied field where exploitation of the success and power motif is so easy a game to the "psychology" promoter, yet a theme absolutely legitimate and most important, one cannot expect that any but the rare mind with a fine restraint, and masterly control of the material will achieve a notable product. The same is true of many another field, many another "text-book" territory, but of none so notably as in that which offers aid to those in need of guidance in the art of living,—of emotional and intellectual living particularly.



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