

## Contemporary Buncombe

GETTING YOUR MONEY'S WORTH. By STUART CHASE and F. J. SCHLINK. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1927. \$2.50.

Reviewed by REXFORD GUY TUGWELL  
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IF Professor Dewey's argument that philosophy is criticism is acceptable; and if it works both ways and criticism is also philosophy, Messrs. Chase and Schlink ought to be entered for the philosophy sweepstakes of 1927. Failing their complete qualification in this class, even, there is still a lot of amusement in store, for some of us anyway, in regarding the efforts of our respective go-getter friends to laugh off "Getting Your Money's Worth." What other tactics can be employed it is difficult to see; for unless all the signs fail, everybody is destined very shortly to become acquainted with a lot of facts which were never known before concerning contemporary buncombe. And if human nature has not undergone some strange mutation since it was last examined, the blurb-men are due to have chapter and verse cited to them rather saucily on every street corner, as long as the warm weather lasts, until they grow very sick of it indeed.

For those also who enjoy the little curiousnesses of ordinary folk in not too serious a way it will be amusing to watch a newly-enlightened, consumer-conscious public suddenly become estranged from some highly cherished friends. Sales Resistance, it is to be feared, is going to be more of a problem than ever for the serious students of business psychology. From tooth-paste and shaving soap to houses and clothes, all our modern paraphernalia, with certain honorable exceptions, be it said, will henceforth be regarded with a deep suspicion. They may be downright inimical, we are told; but certainly they cost too much. About the only common articles of use which have escaped are books. For a while yet we can live in sinful faith that, of these, the ten greatest ever written are published every month.



In a way "Getting Your Money's Worth" will have to be set down as an elaboration of the already familiar. But a useful one. Who is there who is not aware that every trip to the clothing shop or to the corner grocery is not, in some measure, humiliating to his intelligence? Yet, while what there was to go on was only dimly and rather generally realized, the daily stultification was carried out in silent and reluctant fashion. There was left, it is true, a residue of unrest which rendered us hostile to current cynicism, and even shaped some of us into gentle radicals. But lacking the materials for a genuinely detailed and devastating awareness, it ended at that.

Messrs. Chase and Schlink have stirred up two orators' nests with one stick. And, provided, of course, that they are perched on a high enough limb with an adequate protection of affidavits, they can settle down to watch as neat a little civil war as any small boys could well hope to have begun. In the nest there are, among the common run, some famous Captains: Listerine, Prophylactic, Puffed Wheat, Corn Flakes, Mobiloil, Murine, Celotex, and, to name a few—and that mysterious knight of whom we know only the pseudonym, B.V.D. In the other there are no famous leaders, though some champion may be expected to arise among the statesmen, if the cause should look sufficiently hopeful when the issue is really joined. Nor are the soldiers enthusiasts as are those others who oppose them. The drab cognomen covers them all: consumer. A mass revolt, this, rather than a civil war! But for all that it may come to something. The embittered consumers will at least do almost the whole of the laughing.

When the heat of the conflict has passed and the clouds of flying verbiage have subsided, when the captains and the Kings have most ingloriously departed, and only low moans are audible from Cyrus. K. Curtis and William Randolph Hearst, the masses will discover that they have won something other. There will then be need for another enin and Trotsky's return from Switzerland. For at a dismal day beyond the victory, when glorified tooth-paste has turned to chalk and perfumed alcohol can no longer be trusted to restore a vigor lost, ulitosis may no longer scourge us puny seekers after sex-appeal, but other dangers will inevitably arise; consumers will be quite defenseless in their

folly still, for they will necessarily remain human. Also there must be something more than a love of mischief to have justified starting all the racket. There must, in a word, be Constructive Suggestions. They will be found in the closing chapters.

## The Dilemma of Thrift

BUSINESS WITHOUT A BUYER. By WILLIAM TRUFANT FOSTER and WADDILL CATCHINGS. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1927. \$2.

Reviewed by EDWARD S. COWDRICK.

ONCE more Messrs. Foster and Catchings are at their trick of placing a tack in the chair of that dignified old party, the Dismal Science, and are getting huge enjoyment out of the consternation thus caused to him and his followers. The present volume is an elaboration and popularization of the theories presented in the two earlier books, "Money" and "Profits," and like them it is sponsored by the Pollak Foundation for Economic Research. After "Profits" was published, the Pollak Foundation offered a prize of \$5,000 for the best adverse criticism of the book, with the result that 435 adverse and acquisitive critics entered the contest. If the Pollak Foundation got the worth of its \$5,000, it evidently was in advertising rather than in conversion, since the authors in the preface to their new book say: "As far as we can yet see, none of the criticisms which we have received from the prize essays, or from any other sources, reveals a fallacy in our main argument."

This main argument, as advanced in the three books, might be very sketchily summarized somewhat as follows: Productive industry under the present economic system does not disburse as wages or in any other way as much money as it expects to receive for the commodities which it has to sell. Consumers are dependent upon the money which they receive from industry in wages, dividends, and other income. Since consumers cannot receive the full amount that they are expected to pay for the product, and since, moreover, on account of the necessity for saving, they cannot spend all even of what they receive, the total purchasing power of the consuming public falls short of the distributive requirements of industry. This causes over-production and the necessity of periodical reductions of stock by the sale of goods at less than the cost of manufacture. Investment of the consumers' surplus funds in ways that add to productive capacity (for example, in bonds issued by corporations to raise money for additions to plant and equipment) makes matters worse, since it increases the output of goods without a corresponding increase in the flow of money to possible purchasers of these goods. Thus is created what Messrs. Foster and Catchings call "the dilemma of thrift." The situation can be remedied only by finding some way to get more money into the pockets of consumers.



This theory was put forward in the two earlier books, where it was supported by statistics and comprehensive economic arguments. In the present volume it is illustrated concretely by references to what the authors believe are the conditions in several of the basic American industries. One of the most challenging chapters is devoted to the motor car. The authors begin this chapter with the flat statement: "The present material prosperity of the United States is due largely to the automobile," and add:

Had it not been for the development of that industry during the last fifteen years, it seems probable that business would now be jogging along at a level not far above that of the decade before the World War. Certain it is, that without the great expansion of the automotive industry in this country, there would have been no such increases as those which have taken place in the volume of money, in consumers' income, in real wages, and in profits.

Equally impossible would have been the gains in building operations, in railroad development, and in highway construction. The fact that the United States has developed the largest new industry of this generation so rapidly that it now produces about seven-eighths of the world's output of motor cars is, in itself, enough to make this country far more prosperous than a score of countries which divide among them the other one-eighth of the business. Indeed, every index of our general prosperity reflects the growth of the automobile industry. The people of this country do not all ride in automobiles because they are prosperous; it is more to the point to say that they are prosperous because they all ride in automobiles.

This conclusion is supported by arguments somewhat too complicated to be summarized within the space of a brief review. It must suffice to say that the authors give credit in part to the growth of in-

stalment purchasing, and in part to the supply of new money put in circulation by the growth of capital incident to the rapid building of automobile and accessory plants and the development of allied industries.

If the theories of Messrs. Foster and Catchings are at variance with those of the orthodox economists, their method of writing is even more so. In literary style "Business Without a Buyer" compares with the "Wealth of Nations" as "The Private Life of Helen of Troy" compares with the "Iliad."

This reviewer began to read "Business Without a Buyer" in the keen anticipation that the authors here would reveal their solution to the problem which they propounded in their two earlier books. He was disappointed. Messrs. Foster and Catchings doubtless have a solution ready; several times in the book they lead the reader almost up to it and then pull him back. Specifically they disavow any purpose to upset the present economic system based upon production for profit. They also oppose inflation of currency, although unquestionably some method of expanding the available supply of money in proportion to the enlargement of industrial output is a part of their plan for relieving the situation.

The last chapter of the book concludes as follows:

Must the world continue to depend on chance? We do not take that hopeless view; we do not believe in the Economics of Despair. We are confident that we can propose a simple, feasible, and immediate way out of the Dilemma of Thrift—a way to save and thrive—a cure for business depressions—a means of enabling the people as a whole to gain greater and more durable satisfactions out of the marvellous machinery of modern business. That is the subject we purpose to discuss in our next book.

In this tantalizing fashion the film ends, while on the screen might appropriately be flashed the announcement:

THE NEXT CHAPTER  
OF  
THE DILEMMA OF THRIFT  
WILL BE SHOWN  
AT THIS THEATRE  
NEXT SATURDAY NIGHT

## A Hardshell Doughboy

MATTOCK. By JAMES STEVENS. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1927. \$2.50 net.

Reviewed by ALLAN NEVINS

THE author of "Paul Bunyan" and "Brawny-man" had an excellent idea for a book about the war. He would show the impact of the conflict upon one of Mr. Mencken's boobs or yokels, an oaf from Clevisburg, Kansas, the son of a Tennessee Hardshell father and a strict Kansas Methodist mother, reared in the brimstone doctrine of the Rev. Pret Snodgrass. He would take this buffoon to France, throw him into contact with city lads of thrice his intelligence, exhibit all his deficiencies of intellect and his hidebound moral pettiness, and then bring him back to his Kansas steers and swill-barrels totally unchanged. Incidentally, he would show up at the same time the hypocrisy that honeycombed our army of democracy; the snivelling Y. M. C. A. men, the 101 per cent lieutenants who went about looking for Bolshevism among their privates, the cowards and skulkers, and the officers who had affairs with French girls.

It was a good idea, calculated to win the applause of all lovers of Mr. Mencken's doctrines; but it required a much more adroit hand than Mr. Stevens here exhibits. He tells his story in the first person. It purports to be the autobiography of Private Purvis Mattock, who has been reared in the faith of Peter Cartwright, has been exposed without much result to a country-school education, and is capable of emerging from a year's service in the army with the still unshaken idea that cigarette smoking is a sin. Doubtless there were ignorant and bigoted bumpkins in the army. But Mr. Stephens lays on his satire with too heavy a trowel. He makes the egregious Mattock exhibit himself so flagrantly that it destroys the reality of the study. A man might have committed all the idiocies that Mattock commits, but he would never have philosophized upon them with the uneasy self-righteousness which Mattock shows in this autobiographical narrative. He would have written of his exploits with naïveté and simplicity. Before the book is half finished Mattock has become a caricature.

Mr. Stephens displays materials which, given a good deal more subtlety of touch, would have made a remarkable ironic study of the war. His picture of camp-drill on the Loire, of garrison rows, of frog canteens and frog Sundays, of leave in Paris,



of a country doughboy's homesickness, of the comradeships, intrigues, and hatreds of a single company, and of its queer mixture of human types ranging from backwoods lumbermen to East Side Jews, is for the most part vividly and accurately done. The difficulty is that it is so often overdone. Take the Tennessee soldiers who deny that the ocean was three thousand miles across, even in the time of the flood:

"Boys, y'all heerd yit the pope is the ruler of this yere French country?" It was Hod Brogan, another of my squad, who asked that. "I jest larnt they air a Romish church in every French town, and no other kind ay-tall. I spoke to that Sergeant Shevlin about it, and he declared to his soul it was a-cause the pope runs the country; and he said when the pope come around we'd have to bow down and kiss his big toe! Well, them as is willin' kin. But as fer me, I was brung up in the Cumberland Presbyterian religion, and I'd die first!"

That got the Tennesseans excited, and they lost all their smiles and went to blasting the Romish church up one side and down the other. I was listening with a lot of natural sympathy until I noticed Corporal Sumovski was staring at them, with a hard scowl on his face. And then I remembered how he was a good friend of the first sergeant and how they would both go to the masses in the Houel Romish church, and I didn't feel so much sympathy with the Tennesseans. It was not good soldiering for them to mock the religion that the first sergeant and so many of the other non-coms of my company believed in.

This credulity is a bit exaggerated.

The Hardshell private does not get into the front lines, a fact which he and his mother regard as a sign of the special favor of Providence. Instead, he attains the rank of corporal at a safe billet in the rear, and wins the contempt and resentment of all his mates by acting as a spy for a captain—Capt. Frank L. Dill, later to be known as the author of the great war novel, "God's Crusaders"—who wishes all evidences of disloyalty and radicalism reported to him. Mattock gravely reports such indications of sedition as the remark of one soldier that President Wilson wished "to make the world safe for Democrats." Fortunately for him, soon after he is exposed as a stool-pigeon the armistice comes, and in the general jubilation he is restored to a measure of comradeship. In the end we see him going back to the old home farm, to Ma and her fried chicken, and to Elsie Snodgrass, "the sweetest, most religious girl in the whole town of Clevisburg, and the best to her folks." He settles down meekly under the divine will to forget the wicked days he had witnessed in the army.

Mr. Stevens had an excellent idea, and he possessed a great deal of first-rate material to support the idea. A little more delicacy and restraint would have made an unusual book of "Mattock."

## A Fine Art

THE MALLETT. By E. H. YOUNG. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company. 1927. \$2.

Reviewed by GRACE FRANK

MISS YOUNG'S is the humorously sensible attitude toward feminine foibles and self-deceptions that inevitably recalls Jane Austen's. Both these novelists look upon the loves and jealousies of the women they portray with the same clear, level gaze—and the same twitching lips. But whereas Miss Austen's lips used to curl pretty sharply on occasion and often came together with a snap, Miss Young is content to reflect her satiric observations of the life about her in the gentlest and most restrained of smiles.

It is in her portraits of the two older Mallett women that her restraint is most apparent, for Caroline and Sophia, spinsters both of them who never married for the best of reasons, were born to be caricatured. And yet even Caroline, the robust virgin who affects audacity and resolutely pictures her decorous past as a series of tremendous indiscretions,—even Caroline is a person rather than a type.

However, it is with the subdued fencing for position of the younger Malletts, of the hard little Henrietta and her mysterious, reserved Aunt Rose, that the author is chiefly concerned. For when Henrietta, offspring of a plebeian but virtuous mother and a well-born but worthless father, comes from the shabby boarding-house where she has been slaving to live with her aunts in the gracious gentility of their country home, she unwittingly thrusts her small, forthright person into the most delicate illusions of her Aunt Rose. None of the Mallett

women has married, but Rose, the lovely half-sister of Caroline and Sophia, has for some time past been appeasing her desire for dangerous emotion by a statue-and-bust sort of affair with a man whose wife is a hopeless invalid. Her relations with this man, Francis Sales, and with his suspicious wife have been growing more and more unsatisfactory of late, and they are in no wise improved by the presence of Henrietta or by the mutual attraction which Francis and Henrietta come to feel for one another.

The shifting reticences of Rose and Henrietta in these circumstances, the older woman's realization of her lover's limitations, her very real affection and concern for her niece, the young girl's wariness, love, and jealousy—all of these Miss Young studies with coolness and with a delightful dash of impishness. She shows, for instance, a quite malicious conversance with the emotions excited by Henrietta's first kiss. The child at once slaps the offender but "she was not really avenging an insult: she was simply expressing her annoyance at her pleasure in it."

Throughout, the author's keen insight nicely balances a subtle recognition of incongruities. If one feels at times a want of rounding in her characters—not a lack of actuality, but an angularity and spareness—this is due, in part at least, to her preoccupation with a strictly delimited portion of their lives. Her frame indeed seems just a little too tight for her picture. Much of Henrietta, more of Rose, and most of Francis fail to enter it at all. To be sure, these people all lack ardency, their blood is too thin and tepid for high adventure, their lives are themselves in the last analysis cramped and unimportant. But they become for the moment very interesting to us, and it is a high tribute to Miss Young's finely precise art, to its wit and charm, that we should want to know even more of the Malletts.

## Other Times, Other Customs

EIGHT O'CLOCK CHAPEL. By C. H. PATTON and W. T. FIELD. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1927. \$3.50.

GUIDES, PHILOSOPHERS, AND FRIENDS. By CHARLES F. THWING. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1927. \$3.50.

Reviewed by BEN C. CLOUGH  
Brown University

ALTHOUGH the Commencement speakers did not say much about it, the American college is, this year, at the turning of the ways. The large utilitarian university has come to stay on the American scene; by the same token the small liberal college is fast disappearing, but most people do not realize what has happened, and is daily happening. It may well be that mass production of university degrees is desirable (though that remains to be demonstrated), but no intelligent middle-aged American who will reflect on the matter can doubt that something unique, precious, and American is going to join the stage-coach and the Sagamore.

What this something was may be read, partly in the lines and partly between them, in two books which are opportunely appearing at the same time. The former, "Eight o'Clock Chapel," is a composite picture of the New England college in the eighties; the latter, "Guides, Philosophers and Friends," is largely, though not entirely, given to character-studies of the men who shaped our colleges, both in New England and elsewhere. Thus, in the one we see Bowdoin, Dartmouth, Harvard, Vermont, Williams; in the other, Hyde, Tucker, Eliot, Angell, Mark Hopkins. The college man of the moment, if he opens the volumes at all, will spend more time than he intended on them; the college man of yesterday will chuckle and sigh over them; but the historian of American thought (when he appears) will thumb them to tatters.

He will have a hard, but an interesting task, that historian, in explaining the account (in "Eight o'Clock Chapel") of how D. L. Moody, in 1885, spell-bound an undergraduate audience in Battell Chapel. Other times, other customs. More intelligible is the tale (from the Amherst of the 'eighties) of the professor who in explaining the camera, had the lecture-room darkened, except for a small aperture, and remarked that the image of the trees outside appeared inverted when thrown on a sheet.

"Now," said he, 'young gentlemen, if one of you should go out and walk across the field of vision,

you would appear to us to be standing upon your head.'"

A student obtained permission to perform the experiment; being, however, a famous athlete, he chose to walk on his hands, and the resulting image was perplexing in the extreme to the professor, though not to the class!

"Eight o'Clock Chapel" is enlivened by a host of like incidents. The book has excellent illustrations.



## Here's to Crime!

THE number of books that have appeared in the last two years dealing with famous crimes and famous criminals must by now be large enough to constitute Alarming Proportions if not actually a Rising Tide. I have no taste for blood and I am not a great reader, yet in the past eighteen months, just in the course of natural give and take between myself and the publishers, I must have perused in whole or part at least a dozen such works. I recall a few of the titles—perhaps not accurately.

Dainty Rogues in Newgate.

Every Boy's Book of Blackguards.

Six Fascinating Stranglers.

The Life and Times of Jack the Ripper.

Some Picturesque Poisoners.

Forgers All.

A Little Company of Crooks.

A Miscellany of Murders.

Thugs and Thyroid or The Endocrinology of Crime.

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This is a fair sample of the literature. Some of it is frankly gory and melodramatic. Some of it is informative, a retelling of crimes of which no educated person should be ignorant. Some of it masquerades as psychological or sociological documents. But whatever its intention and whatever its quality the time has evidently come for a judicious selection. No one can possibly master all these crimes, yet all of us, it would seem, must become familiar with some of them. We must bale out some of the rising tide or we shall be overwhelmed.

While we are waiting for "The Outline of Crime" to appear or for Mr. O'Brien to take the situation in hand and issue an annual volume of "The Best Murders of 1926, 1925," etc., will not some publisher of broad vision bring out a "Selection of the World's Choicest Crimes"? A friend has suggested that it be called "The Newgate Anthology or An Unsavoury Nosegay for Those Who Like That Sort of Thing." That would never do. What is needed is a title that will appeal to all, a book that can be put into the home. I think it should be called "The 1001 Best Crimes, Chosen and Compiled from the World's Masterpieces, for Home and Family Reading." There would of course be an elaborate system of classification in accordance with which crimes were grouped to suit varieties of age, taste, profession, and so forth. I cannot go into the thing exhaustively now, although I am willing to do so for any publisher who will pay me for my trouble, but I do not mind throwing out a few suggestions.

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Section 1 For Tiny Tots (4-8)—Tales of slaughter for the infant mind are of course no novelty. They have been the rule. Do not the hands of Jack the Giant Killer drip red with blood? But these stories have lacked moral pungency. I suggest as an example of something better the notorious crime of little Sophie Brennan, aged seven, who lived on the Rathgar Road, in the suburbs of Dublin, some time during the 'nineties. The Rathgar Road, take it from me, is not an inspiring place to dwell. Moreover, when you have to go to school every day in the week, with a half holiday only on Saturday; when on top of that you have to attend Sunday School for two hours on Sunday mornings, life is black. This was Sophie's fate. She hated Sunday School and she hated her teacher, an unctuous and sanctimonious curate, still more. Instead of wasting her energies in insubordination or outbursts of temper this remarkable child pur-