

The BOWLING GREEN

The Folder

HERBERT ASBURY'S reprint edition of Jerry Thomas's "Bon Vivant's Companion or How to Mix Drinks" (first published in 1862) is an admirable contribution to our social history. I am a little disappointed, however, that Mr. Asbury in his delightful prefatory essay on Jerry Thomas makes no allusion to Professor Thomas's disciple and rival Harry Johnson. Jerry Thomas's fame is secure; as the inventor of the *Tom and Jerry* his glory, I hope, endureth as long as men remember how cold weather used to be mitigated. But Harry Johnson's "Bartender's Manual," though evidently inspired by Jerry's book, has merits of its own. Harry Johnson learned his trade in San Francisco, in the 50's—perhaps under the actual tuition of Professor Thomas, who had gone there in '49. In that famous "tourney of skill" held in New Orleans in '69, when the six most famous bartenders of the country engaged in competitive artistry, it was Harry Johnson who won the palm. What a scene! It seems to me that somewhere I have seen an old print illustrating the event—I wish I could find it again. Certainly the occasion was worthy of a Currier and Ives lithograph.

Judging by such pictures as have been preserved I do not believe that Harry Johnson's moustache was in any way inferior to Jerry Thomas's. Of Professor Thomas's whisker, which infatuated generations of admirers, Mr. Asbury remarks that it even exceeded the famous moustache of Charley Sander—"it was generally conceded that Professor Thomas's was more thoroughly trained, or cowed, and lay closer to his cheeks." But it does not look to me (in Mr. Asbury's frontispiece) nearly as luxuriant as Harry Johnson's, which had moreover the outward whorl of the true type. The profusion of Harry's drapery almost ensured his being an abstainer, as most of the great bartenders were. I submit a portrait of the phenomenon as document for students.

It is my impression—Mr. Asbury will correct me if I am wrong—that it was Harry Johnson who is supposed to have perfected the Old Fashioned Cocktail which has enjoyed so large a revival of patronage in this later generation.

Most of all in Harry Johnson's book I enjoy his shrewd comments on the proper conduct of a bar-room and his extreme sense of the respectability of the enterprise. I think it is true that most of the fanatical prohibitionists never saw one of the really mannerly bar-rooms of the old time. Harry's comments on the philosophy and ethics of Free Lunch, etiquette to be observed toward customers, cleanliness, the training of apprentices, the necessity of the bartender never smoking or joining in a drink, no dicing or cards to be allowed, all testify his fine instinct for deportment. Nothing distresses him so much as any lack of delicacy—

Overlook the entire lunch-counter, keep it in proper condition, and also have an eye on some customers who are not as particular as they ought to be, and see that the patrons use a fork and not their fingers in digging out or helping themselves to the eatables. If necessary, the lunchman should caution the customer against forgetting the use of the fork, but, of course, he must do it in a gentlemanly manner, or, otherwise, he would offend those who have simply forgotten.

Harry Johnson's "Remarks About Cashing Checks," as I have said before, are a perfect little essay. I quoted them once, long ago, nearly in full. Lord Bacon himself might have been more witty on this difficult topic, but could hardly have been more sage. A few words only:—

If I had any advice to give, it would be not to cash any checks whatever, if it is possible to avoid doing so. Where there is a large number of checks cashed, there will be some trouble, if not actual loss, connected with the collections. In cashing checks, you should also have your wits about you, be as calm and collected as a bank official, examine the check, back and front, and see that it is perfectly drawn. Do not keep checks in your possession a minute longer than possible.

Harry would perhaps have disapproved the candor of the modern hideaway joint that displays the legend: BANKS DON'T SERVE MEALS, WE DON'T CASH CHECKS, but he would have un-

derstood the reasons for it. I have always liked his title-page description of himself, which seems so very contemporary—"Publisher and Professional Bartender."

We always reserve a small affectionate sprig of laurel for any really new and shining coinage in the realm of blurb. This time it goes to Mr. Harry Lanier for the genial little circular of his excellent magazine *The Golden Book* which, it says,

May fairly be classed as what the modern psychologists call "essentialistic reading."

That famous editorial-page department "Men and Things," in the Philadelphia *Evening Bulletin*, gives an agreeable picture of the post-midnight hours in the Indictment Department of the District Attorney's office, in the Philadelphia City Hall. As one who has had some experience of hours both long and late I relish this description of the indictment clerk's well-earned recreations:—

Of three on hand long beyond the witching hour, one balances clauses or moves phrases as checkers on a board; another grinds a myriad mimeo'd forms, and a third, in waiting with a long list of filler, finds Elysium in a corner



(this time with Sharman's Cursory History of Swearing), bangs out a hurried note to an overseas bibliopole for some introuvable, or draws from its hiding place in his desk the copy of Stephen Phillips's "Paolo and Francesca," presented and inscribed by Phillips to Sidney Colvin (with several of Phillips's letters to Colvin laid in), or gloats over Fred Shinkle's old receipt-book (1760-1808) with its holograph receipts by Toby Hirte, of Kipling's Brother Square-Toes (possibly the only extant autographs, and certainly the only ones in private hands).

Anyone who knows his Philadelphia of course recognizes in this description our old friend James Shields, most persidious of bibliophiladelphians. Veteran of a thousand curious searches at Leary's Old Bookstore, ingenious ensuer of literary vestiges, it is good to know that even with so many transgressors in Philadelphia who have to be indicted in due form Mr. Shields still snatches those midnight moments of millennium.

Anne Goodwin Winslow writes from Raleigh, Tennessee:—

Your description of the drop curtain at the Rialto Theatre, Hoboken, is unmistakable. I have known that curtain in several cities, but best in Washington, where it used to égay the entr'actes at the New National. If you will look at it through your opera glasses you will doubtless see the words "Psyche at the Throne of Venus" inscribed upon it near the bottom. Many good jokes used to hang about this leaf-fringed legend. At least we thought them good—especially the ones we made ourselves. And there was the congressman from the West who laid down his glasses, turned to his wife and remarked:—"That's certainly the darnedest way to spell fish."

But mustn't you read *The Princess* again? You really should.

I suspect that Hugh Kingsmill's book on Matthew Arnold is going to be amusing. Whether it is sound or not is another question; I've only had time so far to read the first paragraph of the introduction. But that, I admit, gave me a valuable seizure of hilarity:—

One evening in the late autumn of 1912 Middleton Murry called on Frank Harris, at the offices of *Hearth and*

Home, a mild ladies' paper, which, after a long and blameless life, suddenly found itself struggling in the fierce embraces of Frank Harris, endured during six months the extremes of ecstasy and remorse, and died in the following year. In the spring of 1912 Murry, then twenty-two or three, had written of Harris as the biggest man since Shakespeare. Harris was content with this as a provisional estimate, but was waiting for it to be amplified.

The Bijou Theatre says of a play now running there that it is "Helping us to make 45th Street the most important and popular street in town." The *Saturday Review*, at number 25 West, will obviously not offer any contradiction.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

Hokum?

A LANTERN IN HER HAND. By BESS STREETER ALDRICH. New York: D. Appleton & Company. 1928. \$2.

Reviewed by EARL A. ALDRICH

SOME ruthless person should review Mrs. Aldrich's last novel, someone who would treat it with the callous injustice that it richly deserves, someone who would not mind ignoring its merits and who would call it canned soup and be done with it. For it is compounded to formula from beginning to end. It is one of the most typical novels ever written. There is a sticky quatrain by Joyce Kilmer on the title-page, whence comes the Polyanna title; there is all the covered-wagon epic stuff; there is the lovely and gifted girl who has the ambition and the ability to become a concert singer, a painter, and an accomplished lady all in one, but who refuses the loveless marriage which would make it all possible. There is everything in short that is traditional in the mid-western novel. It has all the sure-fire stuff in the world. For that reason there is no saying what it may not achieve.

But as a matter of fact, "A Lantern in Her Hand" isn't just tripe. Given any literary ability, whoever does not mind writing to formula is certain to make something of his material. Sure-fire stuff does at least go off. Mrs. Aldrich has some duds, it is true; one of her young men goes off to each of three wars, but the author is too soft-hearted to let him get hurt; Abbie Deal's husband dies without either warning or explanation; the epic formulas, after the manner of "Show Boat," especially the one about the wind blowing and you can't stop time—"time please stop and let me think"—are bores; Grandpa Deal's quizzical remarks don't quizzle; and Abbie's conversations with her dead husband leave one dry-eyed. Even so. But Mrs. Aldrich has some real prairie blizzards (more sure-fire stuff, in which the stolid German neighbor drags Abbie through several rods of blinding snow, rods that seem miles, and gets her inside just in time, literally, for Abbie's child to be born), some lovely descriptions of the coming of spring across the prairie, and a dirt-storm that carries entire conviction.

Now if a writer is able to make the pioneer hardships seem real and pioneer accomplishments heroic she can go a long way. Mrs. Aldrich can do these things. And finally, if a writer can make a mother's sacrifice and the Christmas parties seem real he can make anything go. Well, either the reviewer was tired and his guard down—or else Mrs. Aldrich has command of simple pathos. She does make the settlement of the West seem an epic accomplishment. That just men and women could have brought it about and borne children and educated them and built cities and so on passes belief. She does make bearing children, and loving them, and teaching them, and cheerfully giving up all the world that they might have it instead, seem worth doing. Novels will go on telling about these things forever, and people will read them, and laugh over them, and cry over them. And it will do people no harm. Only the authors should be told this, that the formula should not be written too close to standard, and that there are better sources of inspiration than the less tonic lines of Joyce Kilmer.

Walther von Molo, who has shown conspicuous fervour in the biographical novel—his heroes include Schiller and Frederick the Great—has found a congenial subject in Martin Luther. The action of "Mensch Luther" (Zsolnay, 6.50 marks) occupies only two days; the scene is Worms; the date 1521. But the book is not merely historical; there is much in it that applies to our own times.

The United States of Advertising

MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT'S friend, Tom Pinch, looking over the "want-ad" page in his newspaper (as we all do at times, seeking a cook, or a flat, or mayhap a job), is led to wonder why more of the "wants" do not cancel out.

"Here are all kinds of servants wanting all kinds of employers, and all kinds of employers wanting all kinds of servants, and they never get together," he observes to John Westlock.

But they do, of course. That is what perpetuates the want-ad page. They come together, but there is no record. The advertisement disappears, to make place for another.

The classified page changing from day to day, with its thousand contributors, each writing his own copy in his own individual way, is a human document which the social historian of the future cannot afford to ignore. It is a microcosm of the wants and wishes and desires and hopes of a community. Other observers besides Dickens have noticed it. But the professional advertising man disdains it. It has received no polish from his bag of tricks, no enhancement from art, typography, or copy writing. It remains virginal, the spontaneous, impromptu advertising of the people. In England and France it has developed its own peculiar code, by abbreviating the important words for economy's sake (payment being by the word and not by the line as with us) which is curiously comprehensible in spite of its uncouthness.

—Pens, fam., d. pitt, prop., bois 10 Ha., trav. p. jol. riv., 28 fr.—Varnier, Pont p. Semur (Cote-d'Or).
—Cote d'Azur a v. jolie villa nve mblée b. jard. 630 m. 6 p. et gar. 3 terr. perg. chauff. cent. eau, gaz, él.—Ecr.: Villa Sol y Sombra, boul. de la Mer, Fréjus—Plage (Var.).

The want ad has persisted from the beginning of printed advertising in its same humble typographic form. It is readable literature, and has always been so, an index of manners and morals, miniature biographies, skeleton plots for novels, unconscious humor, compressed in three lines. And this simple, elementary and direct form of advertising is the source of all the modern display advertising that fills newspapers and magazines, and expands them until editors are hard put to it to find enough pure reading matter to balance their publications.

For all practical purposes there are two grand divisions of advertising, the posted and the printed, the stationary and the movable, that to which the public goes and that which goes to the public. Posters, inscriptions, the sgraffiti announcements of gladiatorial combats on the walls of Pompeii, Luther's ninety-five articles nailed to the church door at Wittenberg, everything from a counter cut-out to a twenty-four sheet poster, from a tin snip to a street car card, is mural advertising. The mural form is the oldest, for printed advertising had to wait for Gutenberg, but the printed form is the more highly developed, and remains the most important, from a business and economic viewpoint as well as from a sociological and esthetic. Modern inventions have introduced new mediums, the cinema, the radio, and the airplane (sky writing), and they are being experimented with, and will be tested and allotted a work in the distribution of goods if found practicable and profitable, but printed advertising had its cradle, its incunabulum, as book collectors say, in the want ad.

The first offers of wares by mercers, ironmongers, and haberdashers appeared in the want-ad form, sandwiched indiscriminately between announcements of individuals desiring a sober footman or seeking a lost snuff-box, as you can see in faded copies of *Spectators* and *Newsletters*. That is, they were not "classified" as they are today. The commercial part of this advertising developed a new technique, known as display, but the want ad retains its pristine form, its naiveté and picturesqueness, and fills whole sections of metropolitan newspapers.

In the seventeenth century these little advertisements were known as *siquises*, from the phrase with which they invariably began, *Si Quis*, if anyone, very much as the modern French *petite annonce* starts with *On Demande*. In "Every Man in his Humor" Ben Jonson introduces an advertising man as one of the characters, and the description of Shift not only reveals the low esteem in which Jonson held the

craft, but is an admirable demonstration of Jonson's ability to write seventeenth century slang. In the play are given some specimens of Shift's talent as an ad-writer, which, for want of a better medium, are posted on one of the pillars in St. Paul's church. And these little scraps of utilitarian literature are revealing pictures of the times.

Later there were newspapers, and advertisers found their columns a better medium than the columns of St. Paul's. Addison, whose methods of getting business for his *Spectator* remind one of the ethics of the late *Town Topics*, observed with pompous condescension: "Those collections of advertisements that appear at the end of all our public prints I consider as accounts of news from the little world in the same manner that the foregoing parts of the paper are from the great."

His opinion was justified. Some twenty years ago Lawrence Lewis published a study of those times based on the news from the little world in the *Spectator*, and showed how valuable advertising can be as a footnote to contemporary civilization. Both Addison and his age stand revealed in all their baseness, corruption, and vanity. The continuing series of small advertisements, frank, selfish, self-seeking, and self-interested, are a sort of Pepys's Diary of an era.

But great as are the possibilities of advertising as a literature produced spontaneously by a people, few historians have noticed it. The Beards glanced at it in their memorable work, and Mark Sullivan has reproduced old advertisements for the light they throw on contemporary habits. It is to be hoped he will consider this factor in our life more fully as his work goes on. The New York Public Library is establishing a permanent collection of advertising, adding representative exhibits year by year, for current and future reference. Advertising has become a dominating factor in modern life. It is immaterial whether it is economically good or bad, whether it is vulgar, blatant, exaggerated, and misleading or a legitimate method of distributing goods; there it is. It exists. It is perhaps the most voluminous, most widely circulated, most generally read of any form of print. It is produced by forces growing out of our conception of life, and made possible by our mental attitude, and as such it must have influence, and is certainly a revelation of our character.

There is need of a calm survey of advertising by some dispassionate historian who will take the time to understand it without being misled by enthusiasts. It is now being vigorously debated by two schools. On one side is the economist who is disturbed by a new dimension in business which he cannot classify, and so writes it all off as an economic loss. When he is better informed as to the part advertising plays in our industrial civilization, he deprecates the admitted extravagance and exaggeration of some advertising. There are also the esthetes, annoyed by it without going deeper, at its bulk, its pervasiveness, its many ugly aspects. On the other side are its apologists, who profit by it or by the use of it, and who are sometimes as indiscriminating as its opponents. What is needed is intelligent criticism, which separates the actual benefits from the irrelevant and unnecessary faults. But no one can do this job who does not realize that advertising is part and parcel of our present industrial and commercial set up, that advertising is necessary to nationwide distribution of goods, and nation-wide distribution of goods is necessary to mass production, and mass production produces our present prosperity, such as it is. To abolish advertising means to knock the props out from under the whole structure. Nor could advertising be wholly abolished under any system of living. It has been present in some form to some extent in human affairs since earliest recorded history. It is not advertising that flutters the economical dove cote, but the amount of it, and the character of it, and the power and influence it acquires under the momentum of its enormous volume.

In a fascinating book, which everyone should read, George Bernard Shaw defines his conception of Socialism. With characteristic audacity he calls it his last will and testament. By it we are all made residuary legatees to a world rendered perfect by equal income. That is, the Esquimaux in his igloo

will receive exactly the same stipend as the president of the National City Bank. Although he does not say so, he evidently does not conceive of advertising in this new world of his. His opinion of advertising is apparent in those neat barbed arrows he knows so well how to launch. To put it briefly and bluntly, but not more bluntly than he does, advertisements are lies and the men who write them are prostitutes. We know that some advertisements are lies, but then so are some books on economics. There is probably the same proportion of falsehood, misstatement, charlatanry, and other unlovely and uneconomic vices in advertising that there is in all human products—in book reviews, legal opinions, medical diagnoses. But a world in which everyone received the same income might be a world made safe for advertising. The unequal distribution of money is one of the advertising men's problems. The selection of a medium in which to insert advertising is governed by the buying power of its readers. A Lincoln car must find a different market from a Ford car. Mediums are classified by the imagined incomes of their readers. High priced articles are advertised in class publications, supposed to be read by the well-to-do, and popular priced articles in mass publications with greatly increased circulations. But if everyone has the same income and the same buying power, every publication is equally good. The *Saturday Review* is as good as the *Saturday Evening Post*. Either everybody can buy the article, or no one can. The Lincoln will disappear, for it is safe to say that when incomes are equal the incomes will be Ford incomes. The purpose of the advertising then will be to find how many can be persuaded to buy Fords out of their allowances instead of, say, vacuum cleaners or radios.

Mr. Shaw might say there will be no advertising men then, because with incomes equalized there will be no money in the advertising game, but there will be at least as much money in it as in the brick-laying game or the play-writing game—both of which gainful occupations he expects will persist—and a man might have a fitness for advertising and like it and elect it as his job. Shaw has not pushed advertising off the map in his scheme of things. He has merely eliminated one of advertising's problems.

A detached survey of advertising must consider not only its effect on people, apart from its obvious purpose of selling them goods, but also how people influence the character of advertising, exactly as they influence the character of books, newspapers, magazines, plays, and moving pictures.

That eternal struggle, supposed to be going on in the soul of every editor, publisher, artist, playwright, author, and moving picture producer, the choice between satisfying an artistic conscience and giving the public what it wants, obtains in advertising also. Advertising must inevitably give the public what it wants. Advertising has no other end. It cannot rest content with the creation of sheer beauty as the artist or author may—and sometimes does. That it often achieves beauty, in word, in picture, in physical appearance, is due partly to the craftsmanship of those who produce it and partly to the growing knowledge that beauty has a power of its own to move men's minds. But the volume of advertising—and it is volume more than any other quality that makes the judicious grieve—and its direction, objective, character, are all results of the public's receptivity, of its acceptance of large scale living on the same general plan.

The inhabitants of these United States are more nearly like-minded than any other large group in the world. It is customary to describe them as standardized, and blame advertising. Advertising is far more engaged in exploiting like-mindedness than creating it. Our country, as contrasted with the older civilizations, has made its growth since means of intercommunication became common and plentiful. The railroad and motor car have made the country smaller. People get about and see how other people live, and adjust their lives accordingly. The tools and furniture of living are distributed with equal facility. We all live by doing one another's washing. The newspapers, which began as independent, individual, local organs of their communities, have been growing more and more like