

appalling blather of the New Thought. I recall also Henry David Thoreau: he survives in the Boy Scouts. I go back to Thomas Jefferson: he would no more recognize the Bill of Rights that we know than Christ would recognize Methodism. I come down to Daniel Coit Gilman: his Johns Hopkins has been taken by the babbitts, and he is forgotten. The roll of such men might be lengthened almost endlessly. They all offered light and leading, and they all came gorgeously to grief.

"When the U. S. A.," says Dr. Canby, "in addition to supplying a post office and a federal building to every American city, provides a sage, a saint, or a hero whose job is merely to live there, we shall advance faster on the road to high civilization." But that is precisely the point: the United States, as a nation, is not interested in supplying him, and he would be chased from his station if he volunteered. What shows itself in America is not a mere indifference to light and leading. Above all, it is not an innocent, wistful yearning for them, as of a lost calf for its mother cow. What is visible on all sides is a raucous and implacable hostility to them—an organized intent to put them down. Thoreau, in his day, was laughed at, but that was as far as it went: today he would be jailed. Jefferson, in his, was damned magnificently, but he served two terms as President: today he would be ineligible for any office of trust or honor under the Republic.

It seems to me that there has been a change here, and that no resort to the sentiment of hope can dispose of it. Canby, for once, lets the ideal run away with the real. The barbarian invasion that he confronts is of a kind new to the world, for its troopers do not come from afar but spring up from the soil. To call it an invasion, indeed, is to stretch the meaning of the word: it is actually a rising of the native *chandalas*, a revolution from below, a *jacquerie*. Another thing separating it from other such eruptions is the character of its leadership. The men who should be in the field against it are giving it aid. The typical salient American becomes a sort of amalgam of Babbitt and Elmer Gantry, and when he speaks it is in the camp-meeting falsetto of William Jennings Bryan. Thus a Millikan leaps sobbing into the baptismal tank, a Tarkington approaches the throne of Rotary on his knees, and a Hoover hands over the government to Bishop Cannon and the Anti-Saloon League.

Are light and leading prescribed for this malady? Then it must be on the principle of Samuel Hahnemann, for the patient is already getting too much from the attending quacks. The *Saturday Evening Post* alone is administering a million kilowatt-hours a week, and there is another dreadful dose every time a labor leader is invited to a swell banquet, or a Federal judge mounts the bench, or a Washington correspondent gets an open wire. What is needed, obviously, is not more of the same, even though it may come out of another bottle; what is needed is an antidote. The precise nature of it I do not presume to specify, for I was trained as a pathologist in the school of Skoda, and have no passion for cheating the mortician. But perhaps even a nihilist may suggest that, when light and leading fail to cure, it may be sensible to try a whiff of grape. How many heads of Emersons would it take to civilize Mississippi? I guess a hundred thousand, not wishing to seem excessive. Forty hangmen could do it much quicker, beginning with the rev. clergy.

Thus I can't follow Canby in his therapy. In that direction, I believe, mass production is bound to fail. The average, normal American is bound to remain a jackass, for such is the inscrutable will of God, and the typical American leader is bound to remain another, for the Devil pulls him as God pushes. But there is yet room for a minority to function and flourish, and I see no reason why it should not wrest a certain amount of liberty from the implacable fates. Were all of the Athenians civilized in the days of the illumination? I seem to discern a doubt of it in the leading case *The People vs. Socrates*. Was Renaissance Italy free from bankers, realtors, bishops, college presidents, stock jobbers, boosters, wowsers? The reports I have heard run the other way. Searching the books, I encounter Hoovers, Otto Kahns, Millikans, Cyrus H. K. Curtises, Charlie Schwabs, Jim Watsons, Smoots, Governor Fullers, Dr. Frank Cranes, Billy Sundays, and Rabbi Stephen S. Wises. Searching further, I find Irving Babbitts, Paul Elmer Mores, Edward H. Boks, and Bishop Cannons. Nevertheless, a minority survived, and out of its fight for life there flowed a civilization.

Why not again? I see no impediment in the

nature of man. All that is needed to set the thing going, so it seems to me, is a better organization of dissent. As matters stand, there is a vast dispersal of energy and effort, due on the one hand to an unhealthy proliferation of infra-minority *bloes* and on the other hand to a pervasive wariness and irresolution, hard to distinguish from doubt. In brief, the emerging American is still not quite sure of himself. If, venturing into political speculation, he revolts against such mountebanks as Coolidge, it is only to throw himself into the arms of such worse mountebanks as Borah. If, taking the great science of morals as his province, he finds Prohibition too nauseous a dose, he leaps from it protesting virtuously that he is still against the saloon. And if, being of softer fibre, he turns to esthetics, then he almost always drags into it (even to Greenwich Village or the Café du Dôme) his congenital superstitions as a Christian, a taxpayer, a bachelor of arts, and a patriot.

The result is a carnival of folly, with Babbitt roaring over the show. One beholds Professor Babbitt damning the Jews because they are not Greeks, and Waldo Frank belaboring the Nordics because they are not Jews. In politics every Liberal is hitched to some zany across the fence, and so no two Liberals can agree. Parties dissolve into factions, *bloes*, squads, lone wolves. Criticism resolves itself into a series of trials for heresy. Save on the lunatic fringe, the only thing cherished in common is the fear of the righteous. The case of Sinclair Lewis's "Elmer Gantry" recalls itself. What caused that highly ingenious and illuminating tract to be damned? Was it its lack of truth? Not at all. It was damned for the precisely opposite reason—because it was too painfully true—because it was true beyond the endurance of an *intelligentsia* still removed by only one degree from the Methodist Book of Discipline, and still haunted, on dark nights, by the uneasy feeling that nothing good could ever come of spitting into the pastor's eye.

Thus, by a circuit, I come back to Canby, and his prescription of light and leading. He is right at bottom, but he takes in too much territory. The business of civilizing the whole American people, even by a hair's-breadth, presents all the cruel difficulties of draining a butt of malmsey at a gulp. It may be done some day, but never by mortal man. Let Canby shut off his dreams of miracles, and apply himself to a practicable concern. Let him try his hand on the American *intelligentsia*, seeking to find out what they have in common and to concentrate their energies upon its promotion and defense. He has, it seems to me, two sound qualifications for the task. The one I have already mentioned: he is a man of hopeful habit, and has an imagination florid enough to make his hopes seem charming to others. The other is a pawky shrewdness which enables him to see clearly the difference between a hawk and a handsaw.

I direct your eye to two chapters in "American Estimates": the first is called "Gyring and Gimbaling" and the second "Scholarship." The former, by the ancient device of the *reductio ad absurdum*, reduces the pretensions of the *transition* outfit to complete and horrible imbecility. The job, indeed, is done magnificently. There is, on the surface, the utmost urbanity, but underneath there is the malignancy of a vice crusader. In "Scholarship" the victims are the dismal pedants of the Modern Language Association—in other words, Canby's own lodge-brothers. What remains of them, when he lets them go at last, is little save a smell of burnt chalk. In three devastating pages their gaudy nonsense is disposed of forever. Let there be more such operations. Let the clowns be chased out, to give headroom to rational men. And then let us have some light and leading.

My space runs out with only parts of "American Estimates" noticed. But they are plainly the most important parts. The rest of the book develops the themes that they give out—always ingeniously, often very penetratingly, and never without careful regard to manner. Canby's writing strikes me as extraordinarily good. There is never any strain in it, never any sacrifice of simplicity to effect, but all the same it shows hard and honest effort. To write thus, painstakingly and yet, so to speak, innocently, is surely not easy. I seem to see signs of epigrams, of eloquence turned off just in time. They fill me with pleasant sentiments, for I have to read much in contemporary criticism, and I tire of virtuoso pieces, made to alarm rather than instruct. In Canby, despite the debaucheries of

New York, a trace of the schoolmaster survives. He tries to give his customers their honest money's worth in light and leading. That is why I nominate him for the task of rounding up the intellectuals, young and old, and teaching them what it is all about.

Sketches With a Difference

WORLDS WITHIN WORLDS. By STELLA BENSON. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1929. \$3.

Reviewed by LEE WILSON DODD

STELLA BENSON is not a popular writer. The casual novel reader, in America at least—and I fear, also, in England—knows her not. She has her devotees, a small but faithful band, of which I am a pious member; and her devotees can give excellent reasons for their unforced devotion. What they can less easily give are sufficient reasons for the comparative neglect of her work. True, Stella Benson has a subtle, ironic mind, and it can hardly be maintained that subtlety and irony are qualities making for popular acclaim. On the other hand, she has gifts that would seem positively to assure a more general recognition. She can bring people, all manner of people, alive before us with an unerring artistic economy of words; she catches exactly the broken rhythms and peculiarities of contemporary speech; and in this connection, let me add, she is the one English novelist I know—the solitary Phoenix—who can reproduce the daily chatter of Americans as in itself it really and racily—though, for the most part, perhaps, so regrettably—is.

Even the gifted and much traveled Galsworthy is at a sad loss with the American language. He never writes a line of it (dare I say) *correctly*. But Stella Benson has caught our lingo, as she can catch any lingo—for her ear seems to be flawless. Nor is this all. Subtle and ironic she may be, and without a trace of the sentimentality so endearing to most of us; but in addition she can be broadly comic, producing true midriff laughter—or she can pass without sham or faltering to scenes of true tragic pathos which sound the human heart. (If you do not believe this, read "The Poor Man" and ponder well its concluding pages.) And finally, for I must make an end, Stella Benson has a gift that is all her own, for she offers us reality—the unmistakable, hard-boiled thing—but she offers it with a difference. She feels and gets through to us the *eeriness* that is always implicit for sensitive minds in the commonplace of life. There is an authentic magician in her. She presents you with the solidified egg, makes a slight pass over it, and—I can only say that something rather unexpected, rather disquieting, emerges from the egg. Stella Benson is not a little fey.

"World within Worlds," her latest volume, which I am supposed to be reviewing, is not a novel. It is a collection of those usually wearisome futilities—travel sketches. But Stella Benson is not that kind of globe-trotter; and I am minded to try my hand at a "blurb" for this rewarding collection. So be it.

If you like to laugh, read "Worlds within Worlds."
If you like to think, read "Worlds within Worlds."
If you like to chew the cud of sweet and bitter fancy—

But no, I am not good at this sort of thing! I prefer merely to call the attention of certain contemporary esthetes to one little dynamite bomb which Stella Benson has here, quite amiably, yet deliberately, placed among them. Its fuse is sizzling, and the explosion is over-due. At the end of a brief essay called "Angels and Ancestors" she writes:

I believe that the Chinese are one of the most prosaic and unoriginal peoples in the world to-day, and have the least to teach us.

Well, there is nothing either subtle or ironic about that!

Doubleday, Doran & Company announces a continuation of the Scotland Yard Prize for 1929 with an increased guarantee. For the best mystery or detective story submitted before December 31, 1929, Doubleday, Doran will award a prize of \$5,000, \$2,500 outright and \$2,500 as a guaranteed advance against royalties. The contest is open to all writers, professional or amateur, of whatever nationality, although manuscripts must be submitted in English. The length of the manuscript must be from 75,000 to 100,000 words. Manuscripts must be submitted to Doubleday, Doran & Company, Garden City, New York, and specifically addressed for the Scotland Yard Prize Contest.

The Ancient World

THE CAMBRIDGE ANCIENT HISTORY VII. The Hellenistic Monarchies and the Rise of Rome. Edited by S. A. COOK and M. P. CHARLESWORTH. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1928. \$10.50.

Reviewed by NORMAN W. DE WITT
Cornell University

THE day has long since passed since a Gibbon could complete single-handed the story of an empire. The writing of history has become an international, coöperative enterprise. It is no longer written with the pen alone, but also with the spade. Busy archaeologists in every land of Europe are literally sifting the dust of our ancestors to collect the evidence of migrations that were never recorded in ink. Numismatists and epigraphists are conning over coins and inscriptions to disentangle the chronologies of ancient dynasties. The lone scholar labors over his brittle papyrus to reveal the debits and credits of an Egyptian farmer. Between this army of specialists and the reading public stand the middlemen of learning. The historian has become a trained redactor of other men's researches.

To old knowledge the new must be welded. It has long been known, for instance, that the Celts had exploited the whole northern frontier of the Mediterranean in quest of new homes, and had established themselves permanently in Spain, Gaul, Italy, Scythia, and Asia Minor. Mr. de Navarro now describes these migrations with new precision of route and time and demonstrates from the evidence of burials that the original cause was the invasion of the Rhine basin and of central Europe by Nordic hordes from Scandinavian countries. This is an interesting chapter.

In Italy, though southern parts still await the spade, substantial advances in knowledge have been made since Mommsen's time. By means of a double trail of cemeteries the slow, but steady, movement of the Italic races has been traced from the Alps southwards. These trails reach Rome itself but throw light upon the prehistoric period only. Concerning the beginnings of the eternal city itself there is more increase of controversy than of knowledge. Mr. Last manifestly thinks of primitive Rome as perched upon the summit of the Palatine and surrounding hills like medieval villages. Unfortunately the ancient writers assume the hills to have been sacred mounts crowned by groves and sanctuaries while the habitations occupied their flanks and the valleys. Virgil speaks of early Rome as "nestling in the depths of shady vales." This inconsistency is a foreboding of more controversy.

The same trails of Italic burials cross Etruria without throwing any new light upon the mysterious Etruscans. Such slight items of evidence as accrue to our scanty store from time to time have tended to strengthen the ancient tradition of an Asiatic origin. Mr. Last argues somewhat perversely for the persistence of a neolithic race in these parts, which, mingled with Italic Villanovans, produced the Etruscan civilization. We would as soon believe that the American Indian had mingled with Europeans to produce the culture of the United States. Further light is thrown upon the contacts of Etruscans and Gauls in Italy by L. Homo, though his dogmatic tone is at discord with the self-restraint of other contributors to this volume. His style is not free from Gallicisms nor his statements from inaccuracy.

In Spain the work of excavation lags, but Mr. Schulten knows all that is to be known, and writes with the ease that comes of long familiarity and mastery. His generalizations are lucid and his narrative strewn with shrewd observations dear to the hearts of scholars. His insight into economic problems, which fortunately the modern reader requires in a historian, is shared with Mr. Rostovtzeff, who writes of Egypt and Syria. Upon the slight but positive evidence of the papyri he builds up a consistent picture of a busy Ptolemaic household, and this is accomplished without vexing the reader with controversy or misleading him concerning the narrow limits of our information. This tone of reasonableness is shared by Mr. Frank, who treats of the First Punic War and its sequels in Roman administration. To his coherent argumentation is joined a marked suavity of style that entices the reader to read his chapters to the end, and those who own divergent views will have difficulty in escaping from his interpretations.

Outside of the portions mentioned there is little new in this volume. The frustrated experiments of the Greeks in federal government and the merry-go-round of dynastic wars, perpetual motion without progress, remain much the same, though better documented by means of coins and inscriptions. The contributors have done their work with diligent fidelity and general harmony. For instance, the view is consistently maintained that the rise of Rome is to be ascribed to a few simple principles of statecraft and to Roman character rather than to farsighted policies. For special mention may be singled out the brief chapter by Mr. Angus on the new philosophies, which is a model of brevity, accuracy, and fairness of statement.

Maps are numerous and no doubt accurate, because specially prepared, but the insertion of a few arrows here and there would have helped them to tell their story more clearly without detracting from their dignity. The most lifeless maps seem to be found nowadays in the best histories. Abundant indices, tables, and bibliographies render every topic treated very accessible. With the reservations above mentioned this volume may be recommended as a convenient and reliable record of our knowledge up to the time of publication.



Caricature of H. L. Mencken, by Scheel.

A Maker of North America

JAMES WOLFE: Man and Soldier. By W. T. WAUGH. Montreal: Louis Carrier & Co. 1928. \$5.

Reviewed by W. P. M. KENNEDY
University of Toronto

EVERY North American knows something of the romantic experiment in colonization which old France made in New France, and every citizen of the United States knows how in colonial days this highly organized feudal settlement apparently presented a threat not only to civil and religious liberty but also to colonial political aspirations. It is an old story, too, how France and England fought out their imperial rivalries in the Seven Years war and that North America saw great issues resolved. Louisbourg and Quebec, Amherst, Saunders, and Wolfe are names which mark the parting of the ways. When Wolfe and Montcalm, his defeated foe, died together on the Heights of Abraham, and when the French flag was lowered on the ramparts of Quebec, North American history closed one page and opened another.

With the fall of New France the modern Dominion of Canada really began; and with the disappearance of French rule north of the St. Lawrence the American Revolution became a possibility. Thus both the great nations of the North American continent have a vital, if different, interest in the man whose genius conceived the military plan which laid low the strongest fortress outside Europe, whose triumph made it practically inevitable that North America should be not only preponderantly Anglo-Saxon, but should also forge ahead in democratic principles and work out in a new continent those slowly evolving methods of self-government which in Europe belonged peculiarly to the British people. James Wolfe is one of the fathers of Canada, and, as history was destined to prove, is one of the fathers of the United States. "They have gained Quebec but have lost their thirteen colonies" may indeed be a story foisted on some contemporary observer of

the scene by a wisdom endowed after the event. Be that as it may, the fall of Quebec holds an important and pivotal place in North American history.

Professor Waugh of McGill University, Montreal, has then a fine audience, as it were, to whom he can tell the story of those closing days of French rule and of the beginnings of what turned out to be almost unforeseen developments. It is well that it should be told by a competent and skilled historian. For Wolfe was by no means the lucky soldier of the schoolbooks, to whom a stroke of fortune brought magnificent success and deathless glory. As we read Professor Waugh's pages, we see slowly emerge,—and that in an age of military inefficiency,—a man to whom professional skill became a passion. When Pitt called him to the great and final adventure, he was risking the military destinies of a finely planned piece of foreign policy to the hands of one of the very few British soldiers who appeared to combine professional knowledge with that *nescio quid* which raises a man in any walk of professional life above his fellows. We may call it genius, or intuition, or anything that we will, James Wolfe had it. From the earliest days of his soldiering in Flanders, through the "Forty-five," through the routine of garrison duty, through the Louisbourg and Gaspé campaigns, to the victory which dying he achieved—all the history standing out vividly in Professor Waugh's pages—we see an evolving growth in military accomplishment, with touches here and there of that indefinable something which culminated in Wolfe's plan,—one of the world's great stories of inspired strategem—through which the Heights of Abraham were scaled and victory secured.

Professor Waugh's chapters, however, do more than reveal Wolfe's progress as a soldier. They disclose the man: his oddnesses, his social awkwardness, his love affairs, his ambitions, his Parisian experiences, and so on. In addition, the thirty-two years of his life (1727-1759) are reviewed against a background of social and political activities. Professor Waugh does not isolate his subject. He fits him skilfully into the scheme of history. His narrative then has a sense of width, of purpose, of comprehension which are all too often wanting in military biography. Professor Waugh has also a fine sense of form. Throughout he writes in clear-cut, simple, and practical English, and from his pages peeps out a spirit of quiet and kindly humor. In the closing scenes, which belong to the eternal tales which old men tell children, there was plenty of room for rhetoric, for high words to deal with high empires. Professor Waugh is not moved to make any experiments here. The story carries its own weight of interest. It is told simply as a soldier's story, with a modesty which is the native garment of heroic genius. This is indeed a book to read, and the publishers have added the charm of beautiful printing and binding and of excellent maps and illustrations.

A Comedian's Life

MY LIFE IS IN YOUR HANDS. By EDDIE CANTOR, as told to DAVID FREEDMAN. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1928. \$3.

Reviewed by ARTHUR RUHL

EDDIE CANTOR'S life up until his thirty-sixth year, when the comedian sits himself down to write his autobiography—or to tell enough of it so that his "ghost-writer," Mr. David Freedman, can write it for him—is an example of the American success-legend carried, if not to the *nth* power, at any rate to a sort of jazzed apotheosis.

A spindly-pop-eyed, flop-eared, lower-East-Side Jewish lad, orphaned at two years, living from hand to mouth in the gutters, on tenement roofs and fire-escapes, along with the gangs of his neighborhood, there was nothing "on paper" to show, when the 1900's began, that he would not grow up into a first-class pickpocket or gunman. "Who could tell," he asks, describing his early driftings between his impulse to act and get a laugh and to hang round street corners and pool rooms and become a gangster, "which would become a Gyp the Blood or Lefty Louie and which a Marcus Loew or Irving Berlin . . . travel up the river to the chair or up the ladder to the throne? . . ."

Well, Eddie traveled to the "throne." For his last picture in Hollywood he received \$114,000, or about \$24,000 a week. "Kid Boots," in which he was starred, "ran to a box-office of \$1,750,000 in New York, traveled on the road until late in 1926,