

## Hyperspace

THE LIFE OF SPACE. By MAURICE MAETERLINCK. Translated by BERNARD MIALL. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co. 1928. \$2.50.

Reviewed by RALPH M. EATON  
Harvard University

RELIGIOUS mysticism always commands respect. The affirmation of faith in the last chapter of this book is the one clear element in the author's wanderings through the abstractions of Einsteinian mechanics and non-Euclidean geometry. M. Maeterlinck speaks the language of the mystic with telling effect but makes of the abstract ideas of science nothing more than fantastic nonsense. Through two-hundred pages he conjures with the magic words "fourth dimension," growing more obscure as he proceeds and ending with a confession of total ignorance upon which he founds his belief in God.

I bow before Him and am silent. The farther I push forward, the farther He withdraws His bounds. The more I reflect, the less I understand. The more I gaze, the less I see, and the less I see, the more certain am I that He exists; for if He does not exist there is nothingness everywhere, and who can conceive that nothingness exists? . . . If in this life I could know or conceive what God is, I would rather that I had never been, for the Universe would be merely an incomprehensible absurdity.

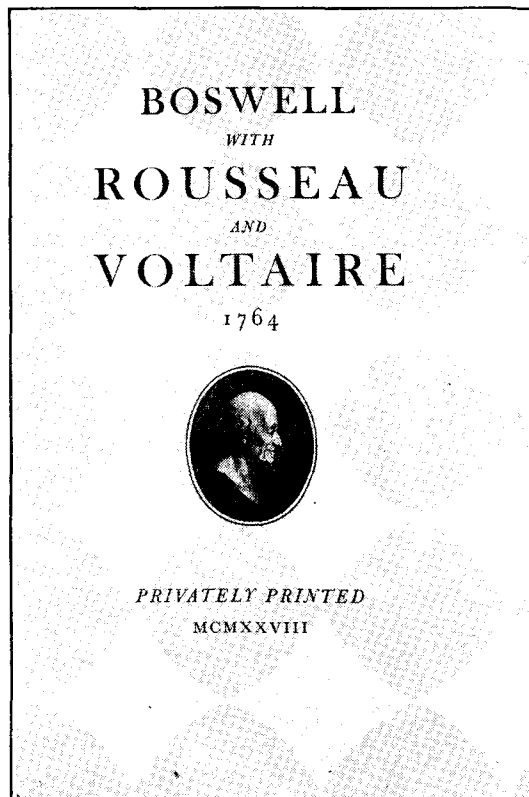
"The Life of Space" seems to have been inspired by Ouspensky's "Tertium Organum," to which M. Maeterlinck frequently refers. The spirit of the two books is the same. Both authors are hypnotized by the idea that time is a fourth dimension of space, upon which they believe the theory of relativity to be built. But the authoritative work on relativity from which M. Maeterlinck quotes, Professor A. S. Eddington's "Space, Time, and Gravitation," makes a different statement even in the passage quoted, "the real three-dimensional world is obsolete, and must be replaced by the four-dimensional space-time with non-Euclidean properties." Neither Professor Eddington nor any other relativity theorist believes that time is a fourth dimension of space. It is a fourth dimension of spatio-temporal events, of physical occurrences, but not of space alone. The difference is profound. For M. Maeterlinck time becomes a superspace in which our three-dimensional world has its being; the happening which we call time is illusion and unreality. "It would perhaps be simpler to declare at once what is probably the ultimate truth: that eternity, perpetual and universal simultaneity, or the eternal present, is the fourth dimension of space and time—that is, the greater unknown of two terms which comprise only the unknown." For the relativity theorists time is of the stuff of nature. The physical world is a related set of happenings within which time has its being. The three dimensions of space are abstractions from the concrete physical facts, which are completely described only when their fourth dimension of happening is taken into account. The concept of time as a fourth dimension of events is precise and verifiable; the concept of time as a fourth dimension of space is vague and contradictory to experience.

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Interesting attempts to represent a fourth dimension of space in imagination have been made by Howard Hinton, an English mathematician, whose works M. Maeterlinck draws upon. It is easy to see that this effort of the imagination might lead to "months of labor and an intensity of a sort of delirium." But it is no trick at all to represent a four, five, or even an  $n$ -dimensional space in series, if we spare ourselves the effort of representing it in imagination. A series consists of objects arranged in an order. Space is a three-dimensional continuous series, that is, the series of points which make a line themselves from series of lines, which are planes, and these again form series of planes, which are cubes. We need only define a series abstractly and then conceive of a series of series, a series of series of series, and so on, as far as we like. There is no reason to stop at four dimensions. These mathematical concepts beyond three dimensions have no counterparts in the sensory world, but they are none the less consistent with themselves and easily understood. M. Maeterlinck argues that since mathematicians can construct such ideas space must be really four-dimensional; though he could equally well argue that it must be nine-hundred-and-nineteen-dimensional. He explains the three-dimensional

appearance of the world through the limitations of our senses. This is no different from holding that anything conceivable, fairyland or Alice's tea-party with the March Hare and the Mad Hatter, must exist and that we need only slough off our inadequate eyes and ears to perceive these things. Not a surprising belief for the author of "The Bluebird!"

The doctrine of "escape into the fourth dimension," preached both by Maeterlinck and Ouspensky, has as much foundation in modern mathematics as a doctrine of escape into Wonderland. The poet's imagination peoples his fictitious hyperspace with strange hyperspatial beings, and finally man himself freed from his three-dimensional body may traverse the interstellar distances and stray into remote worlds. The reader will do well to enjoy M. Maeterlinck's Wonderland and discount his science.



Title-page for Volume IV of the Isham "Boswell."

## An Entertaining Trifle

ACCIDENT. By ARNOLD BENNETT. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1929. \$2.50.

Reviewed by GRACE FRANK

DESPISE its title and the railway crash from which it derives, this is a perfect book for train reading. Its short chapters give one a sense of covering much ground rapidly, and in the pauses between them one can glance surreptitiously at the snakeskin slippers of the lady over the way with no guilty feeling of betraying one's author. In fact the author's keen eye for the non-essentials of a railway journey and his ability to extract adventure from the least of them, will make even the spiked heels of an invisible neighbor potentially rich in romance.

This novel belongs to Mr. Bennett's lighter moments, those moments when, after dining extremely well at one of the luxurious hotels he so loves to describe, he apparently comes home and beguiles himself between midnight and bedtime by dashing off a few chapters of a "Mr. Prohack" or a "Denry the Audacious." At such times Mr. Bennett writes with gusto and perspicacity, his touch is always competent, sometimes expert, and the things he has to say are very diverting, if not precisely important.

In the present book we follow a successful executive off on a holiday from the moment that he leaves London in a train *de luxe* until he reaches Genoa—after a wreck and various other adventures—in a third-class carriage. Alan Frith-Walter, with his wealth and ease, his kindness and generosity, his small worries and his not very deep thoughts, sums up pretty fairly about ninety per cent of the successful executives one knows. He has an agreeable habit of shifting his angle of judgment so that the impossible people of his first impressions become quite companionable on second consideration, and, integrity itself in all his financial dealings, he is able to perform miracles even in a train *de luxe* by effectively administering small bribes. Only the head waiter, "at once defiant and intimidated," resists him for a moment: "he had the air of saying that for a tip of fifty francs you could not fairly expect the whole earth."

Usually, however, Mr. Frith-Walter expected the whole earth and got it. For six pounds a week and a sympathetic demeanor he had secured the services of "a creature mysterious and divine," his perfect private secretary. With a sympathetic demeanor—which did not always square with his thoughts—he attempted to placate his daughter-in-law, Pearl, when she unexpectedly appeared on the train and told him that she was running away from his son, Jack, because the boy had gone Labor. "But he won't stay Labor," said Alan at a venture. . . . "No," said she, with the very faintest well-bred sneer as she took a fresh cigarette, "he'll be Communist next."

The book proceeds smoothly something like that, and in the end it makes very little difference whether Jack goes Labor and loses Pearl or stays Tory and keeps her. As a matter of fact, Mr. Bennett's solution is more original than either of these possibilities, but he holds his readers' attention less by his plot than by his humorous fooling with people and things—especially things—along the way. Not to be ranked with "The Old Wives' Tale," the Clayhanger trilogy, or "Riceyman Steps," nor even with "Mr. Prohack," "Accident" is nevertheless an entertaining trifle, wise, amusing, and unusually well-written for so slight a venture.

## Life and Miss Parker

NETTLE HARVEST. By SYLVIA DENYS HOOKE. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1928. \$2 net.

Reviewed by AMY LOVEMAN

MISS JANE PARKER, born to a realization of the circumscribed existence that was hers on the morning of her forty-fourth birthday and sallying forth on the impulse of the moment to challenge life, adventured richly for a time only to end by plucking the flower, safety, out of the nettle, danger, that was living. Between her sudden impetuous departure from the discreet routine of a quiet London neighborhood and her return to the unamiable amenities of its circle, lay a round of experiences, fantastic, painful, and surprising that would have shocked a less complacent soul into expansion. But Miss Parker came through them affrighted rather than enriched, uncomfortably aware that life for most of mankind was a battle whose aftermath was suffering and guerdon courage to endure the pains of the spirit, but determined to suffocate the uneasiness that stirred within her in the security of mission teas and Cheyslemore Square.

For Miss Parker quailed before life as her excursion into the Hovingdale countryside revealed it, quailed before the fact that life had brought to Anne Leaf, into whose home she stumbled, illness, and a love that could know no fulfillment, and eventually forced renunciation; that to Anne Leaf's brother, wearing the pathos of his mild lunacy as evidence of his mortal hurt, it had meant the fullness of love and the agony of losing it; that to the artist who loved her it had brought a hopeless struggle between a reverent passion and the obligations of an uncongenial marriage; that even to his adolescent daughter it meant pain and turmoil of soul. Life proved too much for Miss Parker; she fled it, and returned to her neat, ordered existence to resume its petty duties and pleasures. She marked her return to its safety by sitting down to a conventional Cheyslemore Square lunch of a new-laid egg and some bread and butter and some tea. And, says Miss Hooke, "she ate the egg solemnly, as if it were a rite like the purification of women after childbirth, cleansing her from the stains and pollutions of her contact with Life."

It is a quiet, but excellent, story that Miss Hooke has written, delicate in its intuitions, subtle in its analysis, and tempering its ironical humor with a sympathy that is ready but not sentimental. Those who enjoy good craftsmanship will follow its chronicle with a pleasure that derives as much from the skilful unfolding of the tale as from the incidents and characters that make its story.

Margaret Carlyle Aitken, a niece of Thomas Carlyle, has presented over seven hundred autographed letters of her uncle to the Scottish National Library.

The archives of Schwyz in Switzerland, among which are documents about the legend of William Tell, and other historical treasures, are to be made accessible to the public.



## A History of Canada

THE RISE AND FALL OF NEW FRANCE.

By G. M. WRONG. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1928. 2 vols. \$10.50.

Reviewed W. P. M. KENNEDY  
University of Toronto

THESE two volumes—the first, we believe, of a new history of Canada—are a remarkable and scholarly achievement at the end of a long professional life as public lecturer, teacher, writer of growing accomplishment, and above all as creator and active supporter of some prominent vehicles for historical criticism and learning. Mr. Wrong's achievement is, in addition, all the more remarkable on account of his peculiar conception of his subject. He begins with Marco Polo and we are tossed round the seven seas of exploration. Europe, Asia, Africa, and America pay tribute to the author's pen, and pageants of human endeavor flit across his pages or are so woven into the texture of the story as sometimes to obscure the colonial developments. On first reading, all this produced irritation and annoyance, and left the impression of bad historical perspective, of a certain defect in literary art. To the former we shall return; but we should like at once to point out to new readers who, in the latter connection, may experience similar initial difficulties, that we found during our second reading that Mr. Wrong had conceived his book in a fine, if peculiar, literary manner. He has flung his ideas far out in time and in territory, and then with considerable skill made them gradually converge with illuminating effect on the colonial history. The style, too, is excellent: clear, precise, and effective. There are, here and there, peculiar phrases and peculiar orderings of words which seem to "smell of the lamp," and sententious commonplaces and aphorisms which annoy; but the long and complicated story as the author conceives it is told with sustained effect and progressive success. It affords many opportunities for bias and partisanship. In avoiding these, Mr. Wrong never degenerates into a bald chronicler. He is not afraid to make judgments and they are objective, courteous, and scholarly. The volumes are beautifully printed and admirably indexed, and there are clear and adequate maps.

It is a fine and interesting story shot through with drama and romance, with ambition and heroism, with comedy and tragedy. For New France was a remarkable experiment. Not merely was an attempt made to reproduce a province of old France in the new world, but the attempt also took on grandiose conceptions—an imperial colony stretching from Hudson Bay to the Gulf of Mexico and from Acadia to the mysterious western prairies. Three ideas governed—political absolutism, religious uniformity, institutional paternalism; or rather these three aspects of renaissance sovereignty were brought to bear at the birth of the experiment; they controlled its fairest promise; in some measure they contributed to its failure. Now concepts of this nature need trusted personalities for their application. Where the life and energizing purpose of a colonial plan are derived from above—from authority—and not from below—from the colonists—then reliance must be placed in an emphatic measure on individuals placed in power. Mr. Wrong has grasped this, and his most effective pages are those in which he allows to emerge the characters of governors, bishops, intendants, explorers, and so on. The reader is likely to miss all this. Had we been writing the history we should have begun with a chapter on political absolutism, and should have attempted at once to show how New France and New England had ultimately behind them the same renaissance political principle; but in the one case it was applied in all its stern reality, in the other it was satisfied by a somewhat careless respect for its mercantilist policy. Our plan is obvious, and Mr. Wrong achieves the same result by a more indirect, perhaps more artistic, method; and in filling in, or writing out, the details of personalities, his work discloses with cumulative effect the fundamental conception of the colony. On the other hand, the general reader is likely to overlook this conception; and if he does so, he has, we believe, missed much of significance and importance.

Be that as it may, the volumes abound in interest. The first half of the first volume, even with the help which we have already ventured to suggest in approaching it, is hard and exacting reading.

When, however, Mr. Wrong gets into his stride the interest increases. We watch the colony. Is it merely an idea? Is it only a dream? Has it any reality? Are the mountains in birth with the ancient poetic offspring? Before we can answer, Mr. Wrong sweeps us into the magnificent plans of Louis XIV and his ministers. Older ideas are galvanized into life with the impact of newer ambitions; and at long last New France is strong enough to challenge authority over the Indians, to speak in the gate with New England, to be a real factor in North American politics. The visions of the past take concrete form in growing population, in far-flung endeavors, in religious zeal, in political accomplishments. And Mr. Wrong heightens the effect as he brings important men and women on and off the stage. Then a set-back comes. The New Englanders grow active, suspicious, fearsome, and warlike. Europe casts its shadow, and French interest flags. There is a miasma abroad. We fear, and know not what we fear. Death's pale flag is already advanced on the face of the colony, before Mr. Wrong almost tenderly rings down the curtain on what is really an anti-climax of tragedy.

We have already made some implied criticisms. Before making others, we wish to avoid as far as possible a disease which is rapidly becoming endemic among reviewers—that of telling an author how he should have written his book. Here, however, Mr. Wrong has not helped us, for his rather perfunctory preface does not inform us either of his conception, his plan, or the class of readers for whom he has written. Of the first two we have already said something, and we should only like to add that we miss an account of those aeonian processes which endowed New France with limitless economic possibilities—an account which Mr. Wrong must give somewhere in his later volumes, if he is to explain not merely the prosperity of Canada, but its peculiar economic problems and its natural strength in resisting political absorption by the United States. In addition, in the admirable account of Indian life, we miss any revealing study of its real influences on the white settlers. The Indians had a civilization—what has it contributed to the white man? In connection with the third point we are somewhat at sea. Mr. Wrong, however, seems to fall between two stools. If his volumes are intended for the general reader they are far too long, and they lack the skill and charm of his "George Washington." If they are intended for the scholar and professional historian, they are indeed far from being definitive. For example, the institutional and legal aspects are weak. Nor does Mr. Wrong bring into relief the fur trade and the economic activities of the colony. We do not pass in review as it were, the material balance-sheets—and they are available—of the political experiment. Nor do we see clearly the processes of social disintegration, the growing friction against authority which Murray at once noticed on the fall of the colony, which a few years later perplexed Carleton, when neither priest nor seignior could woo the *habitants* to the general defence of their hearths and homes against the invading American revolutionaries.

This our most severe criticism. We do not get into the real colonial life. For there is a paradox in it all. Here is an experiment which to all intents and purposes failed. Here are cloud-capped towers and gorgeous palaces which apparently dissolve with the death of Montcalm and the fall of Montreal. Was there failure? Was there dissolution? What silent growth was there, what deep-based pertinacity of purpose, what secret processes of stability which in truth made New France one of the great successes in colonial history. It preserved its cultural life. It preserved its racial, religious, and national cohesion. It dictated terms to the fathers of Canadian federation in 1864. Today, this child of absolutism, this heir to the apathy born of paternalism meets its peers in the halls of legislative and executive and judicial debate, and at times lays down national policies. In a degree, a captive race has taken captive its proud conqueror. New France did not rise and fall: it fell and in truth it rose. There is something more in the history of New France than Mr. Wrong has given us; and it is that something, which to miss, is to miss the deeper and more abiding meaning of the history.

## Our Invisible Government

PROPAGANDA. By EDWARD L. BERNAYS. New York: Horace Liveright. 1928. \$2.50.

Reviewed by EARNEST ELMO CALKINS

IT is probable that Americans visiting Rome before the war saw the now common word "propaganda" for the first time on a large building near the Spanish Steps, the "Collegio di Propaganda Fede." Mr. Bernays cites this great Catholic missionary society to show how innocuous the word propaganda really is. It acquired its invidious significance during the World War, and then it was always the enemy who used propaganda. What the Allies did was the legitimate promulgation of a righteous cause. The war taught us the new possibilities of moulding public opinion, improved the machinery, and transformed the old-time press agent into the modern public relations counsel, whose clients are colleges, cathedrals, corporations, societies, and even nations.

Of this profession Mr. Bernays is one of the shining ornaments. His array of achievements, as chronicled on the dust jacket of his book, is a formidable one, ranging from press agent of the Russian ballet to public relations counsel for Lithuania. He shows us how we all take our cues from a few key men and women, "whom to admire and whom to despise, what to believe about the ownership of public utilities, about the tariff, about the price of rubber, about the Dawes plan, about immigration; who tells us how our houses should be designed, what furniture to put in them, what kind of menus we should serve on our table, what kind of shirts we must wear, what sports we should indulge in, what plays we should see, what charities we should support, what pictures we should admire, what slang we should affect, what jokes we should laugh at." These men are the president, his cabinet, senators and congressmen, labor leaders, directors of powerful corporations, a hundred newspapers and magazine editors, fifty authors, and heads of fifty charitable institutions, twenty movie magnates, a hundred fashion leaders, and clergymen, college presidents, and sports stars galore. Thus the majority is governed by a small minority. The propaganda is often unpremeditated, as when Irene Castle sets all the women to bobbing their hair. But it is with premeditated propaganda that Mr. Bernays is concerned. Conscious direction is given to events that ultimately make news, and many of these purposes are worthy ones. Half the front-page stories in a recent New York Times were propaganda and not spontaneous happenings, but news inspired by those wishing to get over certain ideas and thus make up the minds of the unthinking millions.

Analyzing all this, the author shows how the public relations counsel uses the same machinery in behalf of his clients, using all methods of communication which modern invention has greatly multiplied—speech, print and picture, radio and moving picture, and this new influence, personality, whereby a Lindbergh becomes an ambassador of good will. He shows how the old-time town meeting, once the only medium for the exchange of ideas, has been expanded by swift communication, so that a speech delivered to a small group in camera may be listened to by millions. He sees the new propaganda utilized not only by business and politics, but by education, science and art, woman's activities, and social service.

News takes such forms today that mere publication of so much of it is bound to benefit somebody. The mere announcement of a new invention or discovery lays the foundation for somebody's fortune. Unconscious propaganda has always existed and always will exist. The new propaganda merely avails itself of leadership and machinery already existing and functioning and guides and directs it. Mr. Bernays' story of the way the public's mind is made up for it is a highly entertaining book, and as it is copiously documented with modern instances, most of which the reader will undoubtedly recognize, it is equally an informative one.

Edward Thompson, dramatist, poet, novelist, and an authority on India, once wrote the following amusing epitaph for himself:—

Stranger, if passing by you seek to learn  
What man was he whose ashes fill this urn,  
Know: there's a ghost remembers how by Styx  
He marched with Maude; was with the few who first  
The embattled sandhills of Samara burst;  
And once hit Faulkner over the ropes for six.