

Typical and Unique

CHICAGO. By CHARLES EDWARD MERRIAM.
New York: The Macmillan Company. 1929.

Reviewed by ROYAL J. DAVIS

CHICAGO is a typical American city and there is no other city just like Chicago. This paradox is not Professor Merriam's thesis, but he recognizes the fact which it expresses and in one of the most interesting and illuminating analyses of American politics which have ever appeared he presents both the general and the special aspects of Chicago's politics and government.

The general aspects—a "visible" government, an "invisible" government, the struggle of political organizations for the opportunity to plunder the city, the efforts of public-spirited citizens to gain control, the endless varieties of graft, the alliance between public officials and the underworld of vice and crime—are made vivid by Professor Merriam's constant attention to detail and frequent anecdote. The special aspects of political Chicago are its complicated government, or rather, its numerous governments—it was Chicago that astonished the country and flabbergasted itself by producing a seven-foot primary ballot—an unparalleled maze of political factions which shift with every election, and a boldness of criminal activities that throws into stronger relief than elsewhere the collusion of police and gangsters and makes people think of Chicago as a frontier town.

Professor Merriam has been Alderman and candidate for Mayor as well as student and author, and his political experience, upon which he draws freely, supplies him with both information and illustration. He proves afresh that there may be greater revelation in a story than in a statement. A few months after he had won a hard-fought battle in the City Council on behalf of an ordinance forbidding billboards on roofs he saw, high on a roof, a huge billboard inscribed, "Vote for Merriam." "So thoughtless," he comments, "are one's friends." The psychology, both of political leaders and of the public, is set forth in these pages in authoritative fashion. The holier-than-thou attitude assumed by residents of other cities toward Chicago because of Mayor Thompson's antics is indirectly rebuked in an account of "the pineapple primary" which shows Professor Merriam's understanding of political psychology as well as his knowledge of Chicago. He doubts whether the famous "America first" slogan did not lose more votes than it gained and makes a good case for the conclusion that if the campaign had not been so short—three weeks—the route which Thompson suffered in the primaries of 1928 would have come then.

In his chapters on "Some Chicago Leaders," "Actual Government," and "The Pineapple Primary and Others" Professor Merriam gives a "close-up" of Chicago which is a model for corresponding pictures of other cities. He writes in no mood of despair. Somehow, despite her politicians, Chicago has developed a system of parks which any city might envy, has reclaimed her lake front, and was the first to put forward a "city plan." As Professor Merriam says, "Chicago outlived the terrible scourge of the Great Fire; and it will outlive the pestilence of grafters and racketeers." If his pages present an unflinching view of what's wrong with Chicago, they also contain abundant evidence for the hopeful note on which they end.

Austrian Tales

SELECTED AUSTRIAN SHORT STORIES.
New York: The Oxford University Press. 1929.
80 cents.

THE World's Classics has added to its excellently printed and bound series a collection of Austrian short stories which includes Austrian authors already known and several others now to be met in English translation for the first time. Vienna forms the background and music the theme for a number of stories. The first and longest sketch, "The Poor Fidler," is by Franz Grillparzer who was a friend of Schubert and one of Austria's most famous playwrights of his day. Arthur Schnitzler is represented by a short, interesting sketch called "The Prophecy," dealing with the intricacies of the accomplishment of foretold tragedy. "The Finch," by Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, and "A Rainy Day," by Felix Braun, have the same clear simplicity as the younger German writers, such as Klaus Mann, show. Herman Bahr's "The Beautiful Wife" is an amusing turn on the necessity beauty

has for acknowledgment. "The Troglodyte," by Ferdinand von Saar, and "Madame Nikolitch," by Adam Muller-Guttenbrunn, both realistic studies of women, form an interesting contrast in technique. The selections from Vicenz Chiavacci and Robert Hohlbaum are rather sentimental tales of musicians. Karl Strobl's "The Journey to the Centre of the Earth" is not as Jules Verne as it sounds, being a fantastic expedition of some children into their own cellar. From so catholic a list any reader should find something to his taste—but more probably he will read right through the collection.

Three Blind Mice

SEE HOW THEY RUN. By HELEN GRACE CARLISLE. New York: Jonathan Cape & Harrison Smith. 1929. \$2.50.

Reviewed by GLADYS GRAHAM

IT is as if Helen Grace Carlisle had written the lives of each of her heroines separately on different colored sheets of paper and had then torn them all up together and tossed the fragments into the air. From the ensuing colorful shower "See How They Run" seems to have been pieced together. But many important bits concerning each heroine were lost in the process, other bits were fitted in too close to each other forming tiresome repetitions, and inevitably the whole has a staccato and uncohesive quality wearying when so long continued. But since these three blind mice run into so many strange alleys and live so much of their private lives in public they are not likely to lack for readers.

Olivia, Rose, and Mary Elizabeth have come from Chicago to New York to seek what they would call Life and Love and Work. Olivia comes from the home of liberal, thoughtful, social-minded parents and expects to become a great actress. Instead she becomes a show-girl and the mistress of an uneducated, gin-drinking taxicab driver. Mary Elizabeth comes from a conventional suburban home in search of kisses that endure. She secures them and, with a little strategy, a young French husband. Rose comes from a thirteen-in-family, two-room tenement home. Her desire is to express herself in beauty and in some exalted love. She is trapped by ugliness and misery. But before they reach these endings they live variegated lives in their apartment "with one room to sleep in and one room for visitors." They all become members of the "Dancing Daisies" chorus, attend parties in Greenwich Village, and give other parties themselves. One goes to jail for a night, one has recourse to pay-as-you-enter surgery, and all three pretty well run the gamut of misadventure in New York.

"See How They Run" is the story of high hopes everywhere baffled and thwarted through lack of understanding. Youth is sacrificed before old tricks and old hypocrisies. Youth betrayed from within and without is the recurring cry of the book. In presenting this general theme Miss Carlisle succeeds admirably, but when she gets down to particulars there is a different story to be told. The three girls, as girls, scarcely exist. They each, to some extent symbolize a strain in youth but no one of the three is complete. They lack the continuity of character which gives to the people of fiction lives of their own that seem to run on unbrokenly even when they are absent from the actual page.

Olivia receives the fullest characterization of the three. She is completely realized and portrayed in her bondage to passion. We are given in detail her three loves: her intense, protective passion for Rose, the humiliating drug-like desire she has for Jack, and her love for Martin, an insidious blending of the other two which makes it, to her, the most dangerous of the three. But what else do we know of her? We are told over and over again what she believes herself to be, what the author believes her to be, but we are never shown through action that she is any of these things. We never feel the tragedy of the prostitution of her talent because we are never convinced that she has talent.

It is easy enough to go on with negative criticism telling the things Miss Carlisle has left undone. It is more difficult to say why, in spite of its deficiencies, "See How They Run" stands out from its own kind as it does. Perhaps it is because of the sharp freshness of the book, its utter refusal of old forms (good or bad), its insistence on everything being expressed first hand as it were. Perhaps the uniqueness arises from a quivering intensity the novel has as if life so pressed in upon the author that she feared to take time to set it down to best advantage lest some of

it escape her. She has had no thought to assort ideas or arrange sentences, to distil character out of experience; she has merely jotted down raw material. And out of this has sprung a sense of the living texture of those mad, courageous years that run so quickly into middle-age.

"The Wild West"

A MAN SCANS HIS PAST. By M. CONSTANTIN-WEYER. New York: The Macaulay Company. 1929. \$2.50.

Reviewed by BARTLET BREBNER

PROBABLY there still exist first visitors to Paris whose long-premeditated purpose it is to ransack the book-trays along the quays of the Left Bank. They expect all sorts of treasures, for they have read Anatole France, and they find—cheap editions of scabrous memoirs, minor pornography, and French translations of American dime novels. Buffalo Bill and Colonel Custer are the heroes whose recorded exploits are hidden nowadays under the mattresses of André Gide's precocious schoolboys. It is disappointing, but it is a prevailing phenomenon in Europe of today. The bookshops in all capitals yield as their standard American literature the translated novels of Jack London. Now the home talent are writing in imitation of Kipling, London, and Grey, and in this 1929 the Prix Goncourt has gone to M. Constantin-Weyer for a hair-curling drama into which he has woven vignettes chosen from his twelve years of roving life in North America. Apparently the Goncourt Prize Committee has transferred its approval from variations on European themes to the deeds of red-blooded he-men.

The rhythms of this story essay to be great ground-swells of human emotion and somehow fail even to rock the reader's hammock. The creed and philosophy of the storyteller aim to be very vigorous and stark (he would "eliminate all neutrality" from his world), but the tale he tells is too fantastically melodramatic to serve for more than a swift moving-picture. The Prize was obviously not awarded for the story or the shallow soliloquies on humankind which accompany it, and it is puzzling to know why such a vehicle won such honor. The answer seems to lie in the author's unquestionable ability to picture sharply and economically life in the Canadian West and in *Le Grand Silence Blanc*. He chooses the times and places where in the ten years before 1914 a great flood of settlers from Europe and the United States swept the cattle-men and ranchers from the plains, and he flings at the reader a wealth of convincing sketches of plain and forest and frozen north. The narrative is full of neat, true impressions—the sound of snow-shoes, the color of prairie-pools in northern Saskatchewan, the tricks of sunlight and aurora borealis when the temperature drops far below zero, the atmosphere of Edmonton and Winnipeg of twenty-five years ago, the habits of animals, the spirit of the *courreur-de-bois*, the devotion of the frontier priest. By making his hero a settler in summer and private fur-trader in winter, the author sweeps into his net farm land, western cities, the forest, and the barrens. As a sop to his French audience he even manages a two-page trip to Quebec.

Perhaps this review is merely another wail over the decline of the essay. M. Constantin-Weyer could in that form have written compellingly well of an era and of places which have not been well described, without weakening his effect with improbabilities and platitudinous psychologizing. Some readers may remember the late L. F. Rouquette's fine travel essays, which Clarence Gagnon illustrated so beautifully in 1928—"Le Grand Silence Blanc." The success and beauty of that volume make one wish that M. Constantin-Weyer also had remained true to his experience. This poor novel shows that had he done so we could have praised him with little qualification. He might better have taken Louis Hémon as his mentor. As it is, our praise goes to the translator, who is remarkably successful in dignifying poor material and whose transcriptions of slang and *patois* ring true.

A fountain has been set up in Frankfort, according to *John O'London's Weekly*, to shock-headed Peter, the famous character created one hundred and twenty years ago by Dr. Heinrich Hoffmann for his son, and afterwards given to the world in "Struwwelpeter." The original manuscript may be seen in the National Museum at Nuremberg.

The BOWLING GREEN.

THIS is the end of the fifth year of the *Saturday Review*, and it seems appropriate to complete the lustrum by clearing up some accumulated miscellany. Always arduous in the interests of our customers we have planned an unusual feature for the sixth year of this resodded Bowling Green. It will run serially—with, presumably, occasional circuit breakers—for a dangerously long time.

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We have been guilty of discourtesy in not replying to several inquiries asking specifications of the old books that were discovered in the attic of The Foundry, the old iron works in Hoboken. I shall attempt a precis of that matter presently. One of them, appropriately enough considering the grimy condition of the ancient building, was *Ethics of the Dust*—an 1889 American reprint of it, including an extraordinary supplement called "Fiction, Fair and Foul." In this Ruskin utters some comments on the realistic fiction of his time which sound exactly like many of the critical outbursts of conservatives today.

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FROM ONE POINT OF VIEW
(In the Chinese manner, more or less)

I

Looking across the valley of the Connecticut,
At sundown the hills are purple.
From the flat plains of Musashi,
On a clear morning one can see Fuji.

II

There they are interested in the stock market;
Here they want to know about "Walden."
My friends at home are sorry for me,
Exiled in a heathen country.

D. F. W.

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Always interested in the various kinds of human excitement that proceed in the building at 25 West 45, I was pleased to receive a card announcing that the metropolitan sales agency of the Rustic Well Foundry has been established at room 1203 of this our own beehive. Already in warm weather it is agreeable to contemplate the Frigidaire salesroom next door on 45th Street. Now also, on days of oppression, we can slip up to the 12th floor and see rustic well-heads. The Well Foundry also manufactures "artistic modern lamps, book ends, door stops and smoking stands."

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The most thrilling book I have read lately, by the way, is "On the Bottom," by Lieut. Commander Ellsberg, an account of the heroic struggle to raise the submarine S-51. Particularly for boys in their teens, for anyone who happens to feel down in the mouth about some job or other, it is pure adrenalin.

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M.A.J., of Walton le Dale, Orttanna, Pa., reports:—

All along the old Chambersburg Pike the rambler roses are in bloom, supported on steel trellises. Mark one for the Highway Commission.

Over in Buchanan Valley, Father Whalen has erected an appealing statue of Mary Jamison, the young girl who was captured by the Indians. Its pedestal is built of the foundation stones of her old home. Mark two for Father Whalen.

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The always admired literary editor of the Boston *Transcript* is the first Galtian to emerge from the shrubbery:—

The opening paragraph of your latest Bowling Green has lured at least one zealot from the underbrush. New editions of John Galt's books bob up every once in a while, although they usually come directly from Edinburgh without the intervention of an American publisher. The last edition of "Annals of the Parish" of which I have any knowledge was published in 1911 by T. N. Foulis of Edinburgh, and in this country by McClurg of Chicago. Foulis has recently published two other Galt volumes, "The Howdie and Other Tales" in 1923, and "A Rich Man" in 1925. Both these books have introductions by William Roughhead.

I remember seeing many years ago a set of Galt's works in which his name was given on the binding as Thomas Galt, although it was correct on the title page.

E. F. EDGETT.

The Manchester *Guardian*, which is so often first

with the news that really matters, gives a personal glimpse of Erich Remarque, the author of "All Quiet on the Western Front."

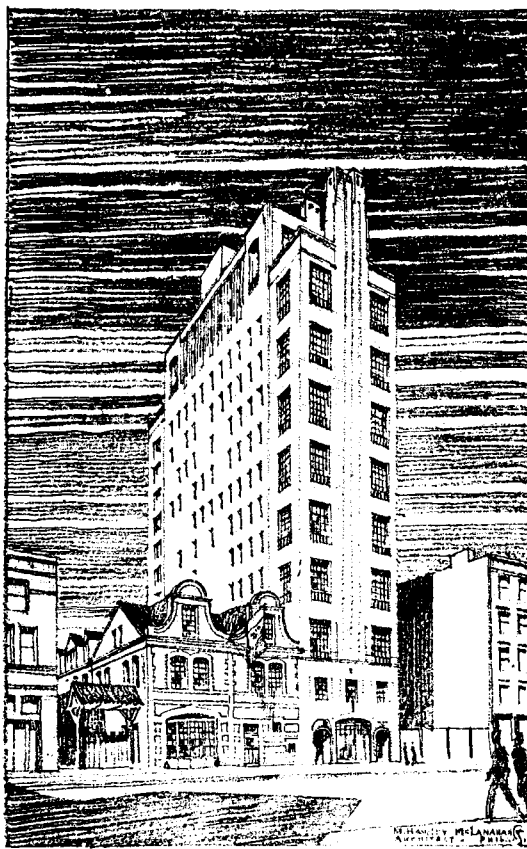
The other day a well-dressed young man, with fair hair, blue eyes, and sunburnt complexion went into a bookseller's shop and asked to see the newest novels. Of course he was shown "Im Westen Nichts Neues" ("All Quiet on the Western Front") by Erich Maria Remarque, and was told that half a million copies of this amazingly successful war-book had been sold in three months. "That is no proof of its artistic merit," he said. The bookseller continued his eulogy of the book, but was cut short with "I wrote it" from the young man.

Remarque is at present in Davos, and someone who has met and talked with him there describes him as somewhat melancholy in tone. How can he be anything but serious when every day letters come thanking him for his book, letters from men whose terrible wounds are still unhealed, from the shell-shocked, gas-poisoned, and blinded? "When I came back my mother had died," he said, "and what is a family without the mother? I became editor of a sporting paper to take the edge off my sorrows." Asked if he had ever written anything before he replied:

"Only trifles not worth mentioning. I was unknown and found life hard. I had nothing in common with the manifestations of modern culture. I felt I was different and alone. One day I started writing. I had the material and it only wanted putting in order. But for a long time I left what I had written lying in a drawer and began other things. The book seemed to me too personal.

"I believe that it is an isolated success. The success took me by surprise, and left me cold. Far from giving me pleasure, it made me feel inexpressibly sad and helpless. Suddenly I, the unknown, became an object of interest and curiosity. It all depressed me, and I had to escape from Berlin and come here to Davos."

Remarque's flight from publicity does not mean that he is writing another book. He is chiefly occupied in answering letters. "I feel it is my duty to those comrades who suffered like myself. I will answer all those letters before I do anything else.



THE FOUNDRY, HOBOKEN

"To write another book after such an astounding success will be a difficult task. Perhaps I shall never write anything more. Why should I add yet another to the vast army who write from vanity, necessity, or because it is their vocation?"

Remarque has refused endless offers from publishers. He knows nothing of politics, except, as he said with a smile, that Stresemann is Foreign Minister. He has never read either Barbusse or Unruh. He is a native of Osnabrück, in Westphalia; and an orthodox Catholic.

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I have had a number of very kind letters in re the Voltaire library in Leningrad. Professor George R. Havens, of Ohio State University, has generously sent me a reprint of a paper by himself and Professor Norman L. Torrey dealing with the matter. It was published by the Modern Language Association last December, and as the subject is of wide interest I venture to reprint at some length:—

THE PRIVATE LIBRARY OF VOLTAIRE AT LENINGRAD

On the 15th of December, 1778, about six months after the death of Voltaire, his private library at Ferney was bought by Catherine the Great of Russia for 30,000 rubles plus a certain number of valuable presents to Mme Denis, Voltaire's niece. This library consists of about 7,500 volumes comprising, because of the number of large sets, about 2,500 to 3,000 titles. Catherine received her pur-

chase at St. Petersburg on July 30, 1779. Wagnière, the secretary of Voltaire, had been engaged to arrange the books in the same order as at Ferney and to prepare the manuscripts for binding. He arrived in St. Petersburg, as he tells us, "le 8 auguste 1779," and remained in Russia at the execution of the task set him by Catherine until probably January or February, 1780. The library was installed in the Hermitage and remained there until about 1862, when it was transferred to the Imperial Library of St. Petersburg, now the Public Library of Leningrad. There in the Fine Arts Division of the Philosophy Section these books are still to be found, carefully stored in their locked cases behind glass doors and supposed still to stand in the order in which they were arranged by Wagnière after that used by Voltaire himself at Ferney. Most of his books are contained in two large double-faced cases, each case about twenty feet long and ten shelves high, giving a total book space of some eight hundred feet. The bottom shelves are reserved for folio volumes, the second shelves for quartos and the smaller volumes appear on the higher shelves. A somewhat smaller case in the gallery above contains the rest of Voltaire's books. Under the former government of Russia no one was allowed to consult more than five books of this collection a day. This limit is no longer imposed and during the summer of 1927 the authors of this article were permitted to have before them on their tables any number of volumes that they wished.

For nearly one hundred and fifty years this valuable collection, owing to its remoteness and its comparative inaccessibility, has been very greatly neglected by scholars.

Rarely has the fascinating, though dangerous, study of sources been offered so definite and concrete a point of departure as is presented by the Voltaire library. Perhaps the cases of Montesquieu and of Victor Hugo are similar, but unfortunately in most instances such libraries have been dispersed, so that it is possible only in piecemeal and halting fashion and after great effort to determine with any degree of certainty upon what intellectual food their owners fed. With Voltaire the case is entirely different. We know, not of course all the books he consulted, but at least most of those he owned. A few volumes indeed have been lost and probably not all of the books owned by Voltaire in his youth remained with him until the Ferney period, but most of his library has been maintained intact. We have, moreover, extensive marginal comments, many of them of great interest, showing as they do Voltaire's thought often struck off at white heat, uncurbed by ulterior considerations of safety or by the effect of public opinion. Great numbers of his books contain many long narrow slips of paper used to mark passages which especially interested him. Their position in the books in reference to the context, the fact that they often bear the manuscript notation, "note marginale," and that they check with such a note in the margin of the book, the cleanness of the part of the slip within the leaves of the book, contrasting with the dusty discolored part outside, the manner in which these tags have become twisted together whenever there are many in a single volume, as well as the fact that many of the slips have been torn from letters or envelopes bearing on them "M. de Voltaire" or "Ferney, près Genève" or some other illuminating bit of an address—all of these factors indicate that seldom, if ever, have they been moved from their original position. Thus we can be sure in nearly every case that we are following directly the course of Voltaire's own mind. Moreover, in some cases Voltaire has torn off a tiny bit of paper from the end of one of these markers and stuck it down over the beginning of a passage which interested him. This unusual method of marking can still occasionally be observed. These stickers still stick.

It is interesting to note that Cicero is represented in Voltaire's library by seven titles, Malebranche by eight, Lucretius by five, Locke by five, Pascal and Plato by four, Descartes by six, Horace by three, Bacon by two (one version in Latin and one in English). Charron and Montaigne, La Mothe Le Vayer, and Chaulieu are of course to be found in the Voltaire library. Mandeville, Clarke, Hume, Milton, Shakespeare, Newton, Collins, Toland, Shaftesbury, Addison, and Bolingbroke are among the English authors represented, and there are many, many more. Voltaire's copies of Rousseau are of particular interest because of their piquant and characteristically Voltairean marginal comments. These marginal comments will be published later in another article.

But the marginal notes expressing Voltaire's violent antipathies, interesting and picturesque as they are, represent only one side of his mind and a side which it is easy to exaggerate. Often Voltaire was concerned only with serious documentation. Even when he has a general tendency to disagree violently with the author he is reading, he can nevertheless be sufficiently impartial to express frank approval when such approval appears to him to be due. Of this, Rousseau is an excellent illustration. While Voltaire writes in the margins of Rousseau's works many an unfair stricture, many an insult, or argument *ad hominem*, he is also capable of writing in approval of Rousseau's attack upon the efficacy of redemption: "bon." When Rousseau combats the doctrine of original sin, Voltaire comments: "Bon cela," and a few lines further down on the same point: "Hardi et bon." Even Locke, "le sage Locke," whom Voltaire so much admires and with whom he more generally agrees than with any other philosopher, is not taken without question and close scrutiny. When Locke in a dualistic passage says: "L'esprit peut mettre des corps en mouvement, ou s'empêcher de le faire," Voltaire has written on his marker: "Idée des esprits à examiner" and in the margin of the book: "Obscur et douteux."

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FROM ONE POINT OF VIEW

No topic touched upon by the Bowling Green in some time has called out so much correspondence as the Voltaire library; which one may regard as an encouraging symptom.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.