

Venus Anadyomene "Mrs. Seaborn," while the lowly Psyche became the orphan "Sukey," and the not altogether reasonable Eros was translated into the brain-wandering "Erik."

Yet, though "Opus 7" is in the Warner tradition—if one so young may have attained a tradition within seven volumes—it is something new. For one thing it is in verse; for another it is written in couplets that are neither heroic nor experimental, but—if there is such a word—reventant. It is as if the ghost of Pope had seized Miss Warner's pen and, allowing her to control her own fancy, had added a series of commentaries to prove that the proper student of mankind was a woman. Superficially, "Opus 7" concerns Rebecca Random, a besotted crone, who lived—incongruously enough—in Love Green. Old Rebecca, with an even greater incongruity, had "a green thumb"—that is, she had, through no virtue of her own, a way with flowers. She was a careless, even a neglectful gardener; she neither hoed nor weeded! never divided nor disciplined her plants. And yet

They thrive, said she,
As children do, by mixing company.

More strangely still, Rebecca did not care for flowers—except as a means of supplying herself with gin. Rebecca's fame spreads, and with fame, rumor multiplies and grows monstrous.

Two-headed monsters are the natural diet
Of those pure minds which dwell in country quiet.

But I have no intention of tracing Rebecca's history through her triumph to its tragic finale. It would scarcely be fair to the reader to divulge the outcome; it would, however, be equally unfair not to say that, in spite of a not-too-convincing conclusion, Miss Warner has mixed her wit with wonder—the apostrophe to Spring is a digression which is as successful as it is daring—and that there is as much truth as poetry in her lines. Novelist and lyricist have joined hands here—and extraordinarily skilful and sensitive ones they are.

Apart from the ending, this reviewer has only one complaint: he can scarcely forgive Miss Warner so wilfully prosaic a title. The poem itself suggests a dozen better ones: "All for Gin" "Blossoms and Bottles" even—for the macabre finale prompts the pun—"Fleurs de Malcohol."

Adventure in the Jungle

GREEN HELL. By JULIAN DUGUID. New York: The Century Co. 1931. \$4.

Reviewed by ARTHUR RUHL

PART of the charm of young Mr. Duguid's story of his experiences in the jungle of eastern Bolivia is due to a certain downrightness and naïveté unusual in such explorer's records. He had never roughed it, apparently, knew nothing about horses or looking after one's self in the open, in hard country. He is quite frank to admit that getting away "from the 8:15 to town in the morning" and over the horizon thrilled him in every fibre, and even to confess that in moments of danger he wasn't as all there as he should have been because of a bad habit of hunting, subconsciously, for pat phrases to describe the very peril he was experiencing.

This sort of self-consciousness might be irritating, but in the case of a man so ready to learn and so game as Mr. Duguid, it has just the opposite effect. After he calmly stepped over to that anaconda, and getting a half-Nelson on its neck, held the thrashing serpent until his friend, Bee-Mason could gallop back to camp for his moving-picture and get both man and snake on the film, nobody who hates snakes as much as I do will have any doubts of the author's sporting spirit!

"Green Hell" is his name for the forest country of the Chaco (the region over which Bolivia and Paraguay have had bitter boundary disputes) stretching between the head-waters of the Paraguay River and the foothills of the Andes. Possibly the name plays the horrors of the region up a bit, or lends a slightly misleading connotation. The enemies which the party had to fight—their route ran roughly, along the line of the 18th parallel, South Latitude—were not so much excessive vegetation, for they followed, for the most part, a known trail, but constant lack of water, plagues of flies that tormented by day and made sleep impossible for as many as four or five nights running, vampire-bats that sucked the blood of their pack animals in the darkness, and finally, although this was only a brief episode, hostile Indians.

The going was hellish enough, goodness knows.

There were four in the party—three who had come out all the way from England, and a fourth, "Tiger-Man," a capable, tough-bitten, Russian, whom fate and a sentimental misadventure had landed in the South American interior, where he had turned professional tiger hunter. The three Europeans made no secret to themselves of the fact that what they really were out for was adventure and escape "from the 8:15," but they had, nevertheless, the "alibi" which convention usually demands in such cases. Señor Mamerto Urriolagoitia, known as "Urrio" in the book, Bolivian Consul-General in London, could offer a perfectly proper commission from his Government. Bee-Mason, a professional cinema operator, was out to make a commercial film. Duguid could explain that he had been invited to act as chronicler of the expedition. All four seem to have been good fellows and gallant sportsmen, and if the Bolivian government learned anything useful as a result of their trek, so much the better.

Whatever profound ethnological, climatic, commercial, or other observations Señor Urriolagoitia may have turned into the La Paz government, young Mr. Duguid's narrative stands on its own feet and quite justifies his own part of the trip. It is one of those occasional "travel books" (cheap and insulting term in such cases) of which their authors write but one, generally, and which, because of the fresh feeling and honest heart-thumps that go into them, deserve to be placed with literature generally reckoned as more imaginative.

What Mr. Duguid "discovered" in the Chaco is of no moment. But what he felt, as a civilized man suddenly dumped out of the city and into the jungle, and out of the twentieth and into the sixteenth century, was worth feeling and worth recording. His fat book is lively all the way through—one of those happy narratives which serve as a partial substitute for the great mass of city prisoners who can't run away and have such adventures themselves.

Hiking in Nicaragua

VAGABOND'S PARADISE. By ALFRED BATSON. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1931. \$2.50.

MR. BATSON'S yarn of his tramping and hitch-hiking adventures, all the way from Nicaragua to New York, by way of Honduras, Guatemala, and Mexico, is first-class of its kind. The kind gets only so far, of course, representing a sort of worm's eye view of the countries traversed, but the young Canadian-American's record is an honest one, lively and full of humor; he sees life, and in his slapdash way he knows how to write.

He was soldiering with Nicaraguan rebels when a U. S. Marine commandant, before whom he was hailed, decided that it was time for Batson and his pal to move along. He had nothing much but the clothes he stood in but he moved with alacrity. New York was only a few thousand miles away, and for a healthy bachelor in the twenties what are a few thousands miles more or less?

Below that chilly level on which tourists and the occasional "serious" tropical travelers move; among beach-combers, the proprietors of little *cantinas* and fourth-rate hotels, the dwellers in little thatched huts along the trail, and so on, there waits a certain warmth and welcome for the hiker who obviously has nothing; especially for a good-natured, likable, white man. You smile at the brown mother's babies and she brings you a pile of home-made *tortillas*. The crew of the rusty banana tramp give you a square meal and a bath and a cigar from the old man's private stock. People are pretty decent, after all.

Batson met all sorts, lived on the country. He was in no particular hurry; could dance with a pretty *señorita*, take a hand in a poker game, stand up to the bar and take—or if he had any money, give—whatever was coming in the way of drinks. He shot an anaconda and ate some of it; was in the thick of a first-class political, plaza gun-fight; hobnobbed with bullfighters in Guatemala City, was entertained by lonely planters, caught a ride when there was one, and when he couldn't walked. Without any agony about it, Batson sees beauty frequently and makes the reader feel it. He can be breezy enough about the "natives" without any of the all-too-common North American insolence. The sort of "tramp" the Spanish-Americans must have been amused to have with them, and whom his own people can read with pleasure.

The Homespun American

AMERICAN HUMOR, A STUDY OF THE NATIONAL CHARACTER. By CONSTANCE ROURKE. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company. 1931. \$3.50.

Reviewed by ROBERT E. SPILLER
Swarthmore College

THE homespun native American makes his first bow in Miss Rourke's pages as the Yankee peddler, swapping his calicoes and his fabulous yarns with irresistible persuasion as he marches from the New England of his birth down a fertile Carolina valley or along the Ohio. In him humor and the epic spirit of the frontier are for the first time identified. He is followed closely by the backwoodsman with his exuberant confidence in himself, by the negro on the Georgia plantation or the Mississippi River levee, and finally by the pioneers of the Crockett stamp and the gold seekers of '49. Kniving, dancing, singing, and telling tall tales, these makers of the new America discovered folk bottoms of a native literature. The traditions of Europe and Africa were remembered, but only as seeds to be planted in a new soil and allowed to grow. America had been old because her cultures had been transplanted; when she became young at last, her youth was grotesque, prolonged, and ungoverned.

Miss Rourke thus probes her problem to its fundamentals and seeks an explanation for American humor in its folk epic element. A cursory examination of the origins of any other racial or national literature will quickly affirm the validity of her approach.

The second step in her study takes her inevitably to the stage, for it is in drama that the folk spirit of literate men first finds its ripe expression. Strolling players through the west and south used the cabin, the barn, and the river boat, and conspired with the minstrel, the burlesque, and the stock companies of the urban east to immortalize these native types. The Yankee in his gaudy Uncle Sam costume joins the backwoodsman and the negro in the specialty act and in the full-length comedy of manners. Even the American cockney is personified in Mike Fink, and innumerable others are added to the list. When at last this folk material found its way into journalism in the monologues of Artemus Ward and Josh Billings, its underlying philosophy was ready made and its forms and directions defined. Mark Twain and Bret Harte had some hankerings after a remembered and milder tradition, but the forces in themselves and in their environment were too strong for them.

Miss Rourke thus aligns herself with Mr. Lewis Mumford, Mr. Van Wyck Brooks, and those other literary historians who interpret broadly and sometimes superficially in terms of social movements and forces. But her penetration and grasp are sufficient to make her thought both illuminating and logical. So skilfully does she handle her material, that her conclusions, many of them sensational, seem almost too obvious for mention. This is especially true in her treatment of major American authors, many of them not ordinarily thought of as humorists at all. From humor in its superficial aspects she is carried down, willy-nilly, to the substrata of the American mind. The ratiocinations and the grotesque myth-making of Poe, the introspective lyricism of Emerson, the cosmic egoism of Thoreau and Whitman, all bow to their prototype, the Yankee Jack Dowling. In bald statement, such syntheses seem almost grotesque themselves, but in Miss Rourke's lucid mind, and even more lucid style, the march of their logic is irresistible. When we learn that Christopher Newman of *The American* (and, oddly enough for a study of humor, Henry James receives almost twice as much attention as Mark Twain) is what he is be-

The Saturday Review of Literature

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Published weekly, by the Saturday Review Co., Inc., Henry S. Canby, President; Roy E. Larsen, Vice-President; Noble A. Cathcart, Secretary-Treasurer, 25 West 45th Street, New York. Subscription rates per year, postpaid: in the U. S. and Mexico, \$3.50; in Canada, \$4; in Great Britain, 18 shillings; elsewhere, \$4.50. All business communications should be addressed to 25 West 45th Street, New York. Entered as second class matter at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 1, 1879. Vol. VII. No. 39.

The Saturday Review is indexed in the "Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature."

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cause of this native tradition, we agree; and we understand better than we did why Robinson, Frost, and Sandburg are writing American literature, whereas Lowell, Longfellow, and Stedman for the most part were not.

The chief value of Miss Rourke's survey lies in her amazing power of critical synthesis. She introduces some new material and has depended almost entirely upon original sources. On the other hand, there are some rather obvious elements in American humor, such as the tales of Paul Bunyan and Tony Beaver, or the ballads of the cowboys and the mountaineers, for which we might wish fuller treatment than is given them. But by restricting herself to the material which she considers of ultimate significance, by never departing for an instant from her thesis that humor is basically the expression of the folk epic spirit, and by maintaining her swift and lucid critical style at an even level, she has succeeded in writing, apparently almost by accident, the first satisfactory short history of native American literature.

As It Is

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT LUKE'S. By PHILIP STEVENSON. New York: Longmans, Green & Co. 1931. \$2.

Reviewed by BASIL DAVENPORT

ONE of the most far-reaching of all fables for critics is the story of the answer made by Degas to the lady who asked him why he painted such ugly women. "*Mais, madame,*" he replied, "*les femmes en général sont laides.*" That not only is perfectly true in itself, but lends itself to innumerable paraphrases; thus any writer who considers treating life at a preparatory school must either be false to the facts or must be sometimes dull, for "*la vie à l'école est ennuyeuse.*" Most authors have chosen the former horn of the dilemma; Mr. Stevenson (who will be remembered for his sympathetic studies of adolescence in "*The Edge of the Nest*") has to his great credit preferred the latter. He is interested solely in depicting school life as it is; and he is prepared to run any risk to do so.

This, which is the weakness of the book, is also its strength. Mr. Stevenson, instead of taking a single hero, has divided his attention equally among a number of boys, fits and misfits, those who enjoy the school and those who hate it, those whom it helps and those whom it harms. He always maintains this carefully balanced view, presenting all sides and letting the reader form his own conclusions. Thus, to take one example, he unsparingly presents the head master as a conscientious snob, encouraging snobbery in the boys; on the other hand, he demonstrates that the school enormously improves the manners of the rough diamond's son, and since snobbery appears in the human soul anyway and good manners do not, perhaps the head master may be acquitted on balance. Similarly, he steadily records that one of the older boys suffers from romantic love of a young one (which goes no farther than an emotion); he records this, without hysteria, as a peculiarly pitiable form of growing pain, which will as probably pass off in time as the romantic adorations small boys conceive for older ones, with the warm encouragement of educators. And one feels everywhere in the book a warm sympathy for all the boys in it, whose difficulties so often increase, for a while, faster than their strength. Thus he records their struggles with philosophy, not with the superior amusement at callowness of Mr. Booth Tarkington, but with the evident knowledge that schoolboys look for a philosophy, with very little help from anybody, because they genuinely must.

This is high praise; but the reader must be warned again that in its devotion to truth the book sometimes drags, as life at prep school does, in spite of its poignant excitements, and the division of interest among a number of boys, whose characters are so little formed that it is hard to keep them straight, prevents the concentrated sympathy which might help one's interest over the flat places. Any one who did not go to a boarding school and wishes to know what it is like may be advised to read this book; any one who wants a case pro or con had better not. The best and the worst that can be said of it is that any one who has been to a preparatory school will find here nothing that is not in his own experience already.

Kahlil Gibran, poet, philosopher, and artist, who died the other day, was widely known as an Arabic writer.

The BOWLING GREEN

The Red and White Girdle

IV. LE COUTEAU TOMBE

IN the dark days just before Christmas 1890, Michel Eyraud and Gabrielle Bompard came to trial. The court was crowded, but Bataille, always a stickler for the refinements of melodrama, reports that the spectators were not particularly of the *haut monde*. There were not very many notables, he says, though he remarks the presence of several members of the diplomatic corps; come perhaps to ponder the grievances of their indiscreet colleague M. Garanger. For the sensation-curious public one strong element of interest was the much-bruited issue of hypnotism, then in current drawing-room fashion.

There was from the outset little doubt as to Eyraud's fate. He had somewhat the bearing of a gambler who knows he has lost and must pay; his chief preoccupation seemed to be to defend his reputation as a one-time distiller of good cognac. The question was raised, but not settled, whether Gouffé's body was head-up or head-down in the sack; the point being that if the body was head-down then it could hardly have been lowered into the bag by block and tackle, as Eyraud maintained. In this discussion the sack itself was exhibited; whereupon, Bataille bluntly reports, "a cadaveric odor spread throughout the courtroom." The session had to be suspended while the room was aired.

Gabrielle's fight for life was of course the drama of the affair. Her defence introduced medical testimony too complicated to examine in detail here. She began the trial in strong combative spirit, retorting smartly to cross examination, insisting that Eyraud strangled Gouffé with his own hands and that the impromptu gibbet had never been used. But by the second day the ordeal was too much for her nerves. While M. Garanger was on the stand, and the details of her flight with the man of Foreign Affairs were being probed, she screamed and fainted in hysteria and had to be carried out by a guard. This caused a painful impression among the seats reserved for the diplomatic corps, and it was more evident than ever that the unfortunate Garanger's usefulness at the Foreign Office was over. The third day of the trial (December 17, 1890) offers a picture worth preserving. Bataille writes:—

With the snow falling outside, the court is plunged in almost complete darkness. The lights had to be lit at noon. The unlucky journalists, herded in their narrow pew, fraternally pass candle-ends to each other, sticking them in the ink-wells. These rows of wavering lights give the press-bench the appearance of a small chapel. In this uncertain light Gabrielle Bompard's face shows pale tones that would delight a painter. She is now entirely inert and seems in a state of collapse. From time to time her hand nervously clenches her handkerchief, then she returns into immobility, while Eyraud is quite calm rummaging through his masses of memoranda.

In this gloomy and tremulous light we have to imagine the packed courtroom rippled with those tense or relieved emotions which the reporter records as "mouvements divers," "sourires," "hilarité," "sensation prolongée;" we hear the clear and Latin logic of the French attorneys, their sharp voices shading masterfully through all the nuances of their art; we see on the table of exhibits those foolish and sinister properties with which we have grown familiar. There are Eyraud's rope and pulley; the false beard which apparently he did not use; the ill-famed trunk, bound at the corners with yellow leather; a sealed envelope marked *Gouffé's socks, used by Dr. Lacasagne in his identification*. There, as neatly coiled as a tropical viper, is the red and white rope-girdle itself. With perfect coolness Eyraud shows how the slip-knot was contrived.

It was on this third day that the great hypnotism controversy entered the proceedings. The gist of it was to prove whether Gabrielle could be held responsible for her conduct. Dr. Brouardel of Paris says that she is a thoroughly bad girl, naturally vicious and perverted; physically she is imperfectly developed, but exceptionally intelligent and completely answerable for whatever she does. She is not a hysterical type; she does not show the characteristic skin-insensibility of hysterics; on the contrary (and this amuses Bataille) Dr. Brouardel says she is unusually ticklish. Dr. Sacreste of Lille, however, who has known her from childhood, considers her a mor-

bidity suggestible subject. At her father's request he had hypnotized her as a young girl, in the hope of putting impulses of better behavior into her mind. He had tried by hypnotic suggestion to stop her making signals to young men on the street. He admits that this treatment had not been conclusively beneficial. ("Sourires.")

At this point there emerged the surprising fact that Dr. Voisin, the official prison physician, had hypnotized Gabrielle while she was under arrest before the trial; in a state of trance she had made statements said to have a bearing on the murder. Called upon by the prosecution to reveal the nature of these evidences, the prison doctor declined on the plea of professional privilege. The court upheld him, although Gabrielle's attorney was willing to have her hypnotized again in court and questioned about the crime. There was fierce argument on the point of professional decorum in this matter; so much so that the court was in an uproar and the hall had to be cleared. M. Bataille observes that a number of spectators who were standing quite orderly in the rear of the room were hastily run out, while the seats of advantage, where most of the noise came from, were left undisturbed. "Voilà la justice!"

To have the issue of Gabrielle's moral responsibility so fully discussed was plainly a triumph for her counsel. It was bound to create doubt in the minds of the jury. Professor Liégeois of Nancy, leader of the Hypnotism-in-a-Waking-State school of thought, now spoke for four mortal hours on the pathology of ecstasy, hallucination, somnambulism, catalepsy and induced unconsciousness. To the great annoyance of the District Attorney he insisted that Gabrielle was a mere automaton under Eyraud's influence. As a matter of fact he had never seen Gabrielle before, and I don't think anyone took Professor Liégeois very seriously. Certainly those of us who have grown to feel we know something about Gabrielle do not regard her as under any circumstances an automaton. But there was no way to abridge the learned professor's innumerable anecdotes of hypnosis; he alarmed the court by taking refuge in Article 319, paragraph 3, of the Criminal Code, which "permits a witness to make his deposition without interruption." Professor Liégeois seemed to contend that almost anyone might be put under the hypnotic influence of another, even unawares and in the twinkling of an eye; he told some remarkably sportive case-histories to prove it. To this the prosecution retorted that perhaps the Professor himself had been hypnotized by the lawyers of the defence, and had come all the way from Nancy in an unconscious trance of suggestion. M. Bataille, growing weary of all this, concludes that the Professor's sleep-inducing powers were indubitable; for during the whole course of his harangue Gabrielle herself slept soundly on the shoulder of a court attendant.

But we draw toward the end. The wrangles on the matter of hypnotism were finally dismissed as irrelevant by both sides. On the fifth day, with a return of strong French realism, the lawyers addressed themselves to concluding the unsavory business; and probably the jury were getting impatient to do their Christmas shopping. The Attorney General (M. Quesnay de Beaurepaire) said:—

Pour Gabrielle Bompard, je la remets entre vos mains. Elle a vingt-deux ans. Une fois, c'était au début de ma carrière, il m'est arrivé de requérir la peine de mort contre une jeune fille de vingt ans. Le jury ne m'a pas suivi, et, le soir, j'en ai été bien heureux.

The verdict was death for Eyraud, and 20 years Hard Labor for Gabrielle.

Eyraud was executed by guillotine on the Place de la Roquette, February 3, 1891. The last road traveled by that lover of sordid streets was the rue de la Roquette, highway of grim associations from the Bastille to Père Lachaise. From prison he wrote two letters to his wife and daughter which are singularly dignified and affecting. He begged them to forget him and change their name; he made no protestation of innocence. Called at dawn on the last day, he twice refused the brandy they offered him; cognac, his old friend and enemy, could do no more for him now. Perhaps in the soiled strands of red and white twisted in the story there is one flash of clear color. I seem to see it in his words on the way to the scaffold. He spoke of Gabrielle. "Ah, elle est jolie, celle-là."

"Le couteau tombe. C'est fini."

Gabrielle, if still living, finished her travaux forcés long ago—in 1910. Even now she would be only 62. I wonder if she feels a little queer when she sees a huissier; or remembers Niagara Falls.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.