

of them, "Buttin' Blood," would certainly find recognition outside its present volume.

The strong religious feelings of the negro are the themes of two of the stories, "The Road to Canaan" and "His Drazzlin' Light." Superstition is the emphasized element in the powerful "Cunjur," a long story that is perhaps the best in the collection, a story of cumulative horror, in which a yellow boy who has been away to college, matches his mixed blood and superior knowledge of the world against the voodoo of an ancient crone, who knows all there is to know of black magic. The old woman wins, as she would have won in the circumstances; indeed, there are none too many white persons who could have stood up against the atmosphere of terror that was built up about the yellow boy by the other servants' belief in Aunt Runa's mystical powers. Superstition—in this case fear of the unknown—is the principal element in "Blow, Steamboat, Blow," which is not without its humor. "Shoo-fly" is a negro love story, deftly and entertainingly done.

"The Road to Canaan" is, then, in itself an accomplishment, and a collection of short stories that ought to be read both for their intrinsic merits, and for their bearing upon the continuing effort of Southern writers to deal not only justly and fairly with negro characters, but to make them appealing without resorting to any unfair means; Mr. Patterson's little negroes in the stories about the children are far funnier than the familiar black-face comedians of such writers as Octavus Roy Cohen. And yet they are done with sympathy and understanding. But the stories are even more an earnest of what might fairly have been expected if Mr. Patterson had lived, for they disclose an unusual grasp of the problem of character creation, in addition to their other merits, and lead one to believe that their author might have done distinguished and important novels. His name might easily have been written in a few years alongside the names of Julia Peterkin and DuBose Heyward.

A Tale of Greenland

ESKIMO. By PETER FREUCHEN. Translated by A. PAUL MAERKER-BRANDEN. New York: Horace Liveright. 1931. \$3.

Reviewed by DANES BARRINGTON

THERE can be at least two reviews of "Eskimo," one impression, emotion and flub-dub, the other as Poe might have written it in his "Gold Bug" mood.

The impressionist begins by taking Rockwell Kent's word for it that here is a story about Eskimos written by a man who "spoke their language, shared their thoughts," who "became one of them," who "married Navaranna." Throughout its five hundred odd pages he would follow the lives of Mala and his people. He would marvel at the local color, the small detail of living, that is crammed into its chapters. He would find on nearly every page a mental adventure, dramatic, quiet, unpleasant, incredible. He would overlook the fact that Mr. Freuchen repeats some of the common errors about Eskimos in his conviction that here is a fascinating cross section of unspoiled lives such as geographies have never given us. His white ego would be reassured by his acceptance of Eskimo admiration for white powers and at the same time humbled by knowledge of their powers which we have lost these many hundred years.

There are in the tale some episodes which are grotesque and revolting. The impressionist would refuse perhaps to believe had he not Mr. Freuchen's word for it that they happened. Certainly a man who "looks back into the primitive years that were his own and tells to us what he was privileged to understand" would not invent customs and conditions which would destroy sympathy for people whom he loves. Accepting Mr. Kent's valuation, then, these episodes appear to enhance the sincerity of the book.

Has the realism any reality behind it? Apparently the author is trying to describe these Eskimos as they are, but how does he know they are that way? Checking up on him, we find that he has been in Greenland many years, but chiefly with the blond and civilized Eskimos. Even the time spent in north-west Greenland around Smith Sound was with Eskimos who have been in frequent touch with Europeans since they were discovered by Ross in 1818 and in almost constant touch since Peary took up his residence among them in the early '90's. True, he married Navaranna, but she was only an Eskimo by courtesy, a woman of partly European blood and training. There are scarcely any but part Europeans

among the whole thirteen or fourteen thousand of the west Greenlanders south of Melville Bay.

On the basis of the reasonable assumption that no one can understand a people unless he has lived with them several years during which he understood and freely used their language (not the trade jargon which has passed for the Eskimo language ever since ships started north), and by comparison with the writings of the only three men who meet these requirements—alphabetically stated, Jenness, Rasmussen, and Stefansson—Mr. Freuchen's ethnology has an alien hue. He has expressed Eskimo thoughts and feelings which even the moderately detective-minded can trace to their Nordic origin. By the same comparison we find that Mr. Freuchen does not describe the civilized Eskimos whom he knows (the plot of the story does not admit of its being laid in Greenland), but guesses, on the basis of his knowledge of the civilized, what the savage would be like. The savage, however, is not like that by the testimony of Jenness, Rasmussen, and Stefansson. Mr. Freuchen has created a half-way Eskimo who is neither civilized nor savage, who may be artistically true, but who does not exist ethnologically.

If the book is read as a novel and its bizarre situations accepted as we accept the conventionalized insincerities of the stage, it is interesting and absorbing. But calling it "Eskimo" is a plea to the reader that it is more than a novel, that its realism is copied from real people, that it is not a foundationless artistic creation.

Gordelpus!

LAST AND FIRST MEN: A Story of the Near and Far Future. By W. OLAF STAPLEDON. New York: Jonathan Cape & Harrison Smith. 1931. \$2.50.

Reviewed by FRED T. MARSH

LET us turn to Chapter X, subdivision I, page 207 of this extraordinary volume, headed "The Third Human Species." The opening lines read:

We have now followed man's career during some forty million years. The whole period to be covered by this chronicle is about two thousand million.

Now it will be easier to go on with the review.

In sober language, with many incursions into the realms of biology, physics, astronomy, and allied sciences, Mr. Stapledon, who is an English philosopher, has, with the aid of a positive genius for invention, created the most remarkable myth ever projected into the future. Starting from the present he follows the thread of human destiny to its end—some two thousand million years hence. And in doing so he has written a brilliant and stimulating volume.

In the near future occurs the rise of America to world dominance, followed by the destruction of humanity through the mysterious force Gordelpus—the name being a corruption of a then obsolete English expression used by a British scientist when he first sees this death-dealing power in action—"Gawd 'elp us!" But Gordelpus misses a bare handful of people exploring at the North Pole, and so, after the passage of a few million years, the Second Man, a new species, makes his appearance. This admirable race is eventually annihilated by repeated invasions of the weird inhabitants of Mars. The Fourth Men are the creations of the Third Men. Actually, they are little more than great concrete structures in which brain matter is grown like a culture. These soulless and bodiless monsters of intelligence destroy their makers and create the Fifth Men in their place. It is the Fifth Men who, through their knowledge of astronomy, learn that the destruction of Earth is imminent, and who set about the tremendous task of arranging for a migration to Venus. The Seventh Men are flying men. And the Eighth, after millions of years on Venus, migrate to Neptune. On Neptune man has his longest stay. Civilizations rise and fall. Finally, with the emergence of the Eighteenth Men, mankind reaches its highest peak. The Eighteenth Man is able to steer his planet about in the ether and approach the gradually cooling sun. But the end nears. He is the Last Man and knows that he is doomed.

Do not mistake this story for a Jules Verne romance, though it surpasses the wildest imaginings of that romancer. Nor is it a Butlerian satire, though it has satiric and analogical moments. Neither is it a Wellsian prophecy, although the early chapters sound a prophetic note. It is a myth, a mad myth, soberly written, of what might actually happen in

the light of the new science, the present state of all knowledge, by one who has allowed a trained imagination to wander at will over the possibilities. If Mr. Stapledon falls short of the literary quality of a Samuel Butler, if he lacks the vivid story-telling gift of an H. G. Wells, he writes excellently, and he has poured enough fresh ideas into this book for a dozen volumes and enough knowledge to fill a small outline of future science.

"To romance of the far future," writes Mr. Stapledon, "is to attempt to see the human race in its cosmic setting. . . ." In this powerful narrative the reader becomes sensitive to the insignificance, the minuteness, the transitoriness of our own tiny field of time and space, and, at the same time, increasingly aware of man's glory in attaining to the small estate which he now possesses.

Negro Superstitions

COLD BLUE MOON: A Novel of the Old South. By HOWARD W. ODUM. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co. 1931. \$2.50.

Reviewed by JONATHAN DANIELS.

THIS, the third volume of Howard W. Odum's trilogy of Black Ulysses, "greatest water boy and helper in America, maybe in the world," is a book of spectres dancing and menacing before frightened Negro eyes which only for the lack of a better name can be called a novel. Actually, though set within the frame of conventional Southern romance, it is a lively and poetic anthology of the ghost stories of the American Negro. The ghosts are not shaped for the novel but the novel is very gracefully shaped to hold Mr. Odum's collection of ghosts. Black Ulysses has his story of the big plantation to tell but the story and the characters are as remote and nebulous as any of the spectres. Yet the thin thread of the story upon which the individual tales are hung like bright colored beads give these stories from the whole South the artistic virtue of convincing life in a definite dimensional place in one Big House Hall.

Like all Mr. Odum's books about the Southern Negro this volume is not only authentic but rich and vivid as the Negro's own life, sensuous but also full of hilarity, and full of pain. The stories which come from the race memory of Black Ulysses range from the poignant and poetic to the ridiculous. It is a pity that Mr. Odum has seen fit to include some stories which have been so long and so familiarly in the mouths of the end men of minstrel shows. Although there is sometimes a fatiguing element in Mr. Odum's verbiage and impressionistic cataloguing the book has much beauty. Always when Black Ulysses is speaking there is a fine, true rhythm in his words, authentically Negro and yet not too heavily loaded with dialect. The best of the stories in the book lose none of their poetry in the fine prose which Mr. Odum can write when he will. As a whole the book is a well done and distinctive work possessed of an artistic form lacking in so many anthologies of folklore material. And undoubtedly it is the best collection of the ghost superstitions of the Southern Negro ever brought together.

A Dose of Optimism

(Continued from page 769)

tellectuals and the artists, disapprove, and they do disapprove rightly and violently, of the excesses of the profit making motive, it seems a platitude to say that they should do more than criticize. Yet they are not reaching even the point where Walt Whitman failed. He proposed in his poetry to set forth imaginative ideals of character and achievement which should be patterns for his democracy. Instead of that he projected a half mystical, half pagan hero, who was a heroic Walt Whitman but nothing that the masses he loved could follow or even understand. And our more peevish writers (the foreigners of course are not responsible) by their purely negative criticisms are not only missing the immense potentialities which to any imagination not bound by literary teas and magazine offices are so clearly still present in the United States, but are failing to hold that mirror up to their countrymen which, like all mirrors of the imagination, shows what is and might be as well as what seems. If they wish to humanize our civilization let them, having got rid of their bile, begin by humanizing, and fortifying, first themselves and then their books.

The BOWLING GREEN

Granules from an Hour Glass

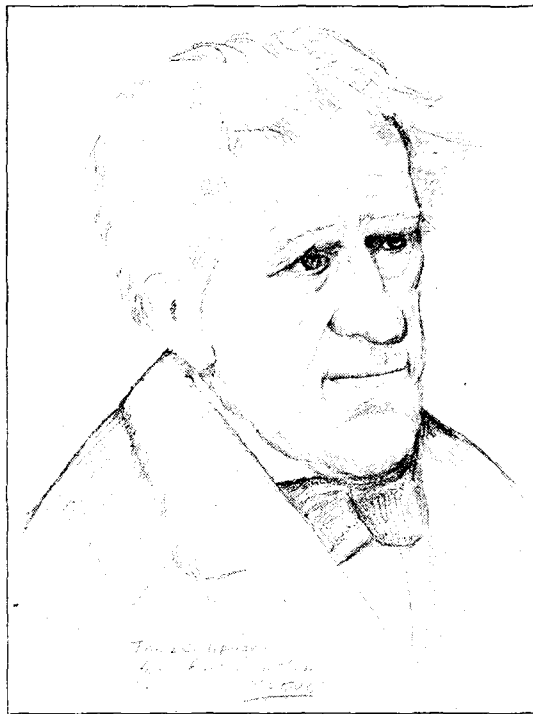
ONE of the most interesting of all literary letters will be sold at auction by the American Art-Anderson Galleries on Wednesday evening, April 29. It is the letter (referred to some weeks ago in this Green) from Herman Melville to Mrs. Nathaniel Hawthorne (4 pp. and in excellent condition; we have read it ourselves), dated Jan. 8, 1852. Hawthorne and Mrs. Hawthorne had been reading *Moby Dick* (which was dedicated to Hawthorne) and commenting on it. Melville wrote:

... It really amazed me that you should find any satisfaction in that book. It is true that some men have said they were pleased with it, but you are the only woman. . . . But, then, since you, with your spiritualizing nature, see more things than other people, and by the same process, refine all you see, so that they are not the same things that other people see, but things, which while you think you but humbly discover them, you do in fact create them for yourself—therefore, upon the whole, I do not so much marvel at your expressions concern'g *Moby Dick*. At any rate, your allusion for example to the "Spirit Spout" first showed to me that there was a subtle significance in that thing—but I did not, in that case, mean it. I had some vague idea while writing it, that the whole book was susceptible of an allegorical construction, & also that parts of it were—but the speciality of many of the particular subordinate allegories were first revealed to me after reading Mr. Hawthorne's letter, which, without citing any particular examples, yet intimated the part-&-parcel allegoricalness of the whole.

The dedication copy of *Moby Dick* is now in the private collection of Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach. For this unique item we shall hope to see the spirited bidding it deserves.

We are disturbed by Mr. Thorne Smith's representation of Burgundy (in his entertaining *Night Life of the Gods*) as a foaming and bubbling wine. He speaks (p. 46 and again p. 49) of the pop of the cork and the wine spraying out of the bottle. It is true that there are certain sparkling Burgundies, but they are a degraded and champagnized beverage, unworth the attention of connoisseurs. Also it is an uncomfortable duty to reproach Mr. Charles J. Dutton, author of *Murder in a Library*, for alluding to Barsac as a rare and precious vintage. Barsac is an over-sugary subdivision of Sauterne, relished mostly by women and college boys. It has always been a great favorite with undergraduates at Oxford, but mature palates do not take it seriously. But the same bootlegger (in Mr. Dutton's story) who overpraised Barsac, had elements of æsthetic judgment, for he had a Felicien Rops in his sanctum. One of the pleasantest Felicien Ropses known to the Bowling Green was discovered by the Grillparzer Verein when meeting at the Union Square Book Shop (30 East 14 Street). Since there have been inquiries about the Grillparzer Gesellschaft, we can explain that it meets irregularly to revive interest in the brilliant work of Franz Grillparzer, the Austrian dramatist, and to encourage a Viennese view of life. Wiener-schnitzel and Vienna bread are always served, but members on a diet are permitted gluten toast. Mr. W. S. Hall, the heraldic designer, has done a portrait of Grillparzer which we are privileged to reprint here. Encouraging rumors have been heard that the Germanic Department of Harvard University is going to revive one of Grillparzer's plays. We inquired about the copy of *Sordello* used by Katharine Cornell in *The Barretts of Wimpole Street*, saying it did not look to us like a pukka first edition. Ruth Benedict, Miss Cornell's press agent, reports "It isn't any edition, but a little green book of about that period that our property man picked up, with the poem pasted in." She adds that K. C. owns a copy of the first edition (1840) but thinks it too precious to risk on the stage. We are sentimentalist enough to disagree with that. We are all for getting first editions off the shelf and letting them share in actual life. It would add much to the value of that forgotten and unreadable little book to let it share in Miss Cornell's and Mr. Aherne's admirable performance. Also it would be a good press item. One of the best ways (perhaps the only way) to abash an Author is to let him see a book of his own actually running on the press. I saw a writer the other day watching sheets of his book printing on Miehle number 8 at the Country Life Press. It is a thrilling sight—those great sheets (32 pages on each side) flapping forward at you, running over a line of flame as they come—"to take the electricity out of it," said the pressman; but the author thought secretly, If there is any electricity in the book, better leave it there. The big white sheets rise up, curl over and fall forward just like a breaking wave. Another Literary Association for Long Island is that the final agreement between Sinclair Lewis and Doubleday Doran and Co. for Lewis's new novel was consummated over the telephone from a drug-store in Corona.

Omnibus books continue to flourish. Two promised for this summer that are heartily to our taste are *Snug Harbor*, a collection of W. W. Jacobs's heavenly tales of the Night Watchman and of Claybury; and a volume of Austin Freeman's Dr. Thorndyke mysteries. Probably a whole new generation has now grown up that does not know W. W. Jacobs' stories, the perfect anodyne for any lethargy, doldrum, or woe. The spell of their un-



FRANZ GRILLPARZER

boisterous humor and unflinching skill is permanent upon their devotees. At least ten New York literary agents have cabled offers to El Rey Alfonso XIII, Hotel Meurice, Paris, for his memoirs, to be called *Without a Castle in Spain*. There will not be a great many readers for Logan Pearsall Smith's *Afterthoughts*, but the few that do read it will weigh double in any properly balanced scales. Reading Pearsall Smith's aphorisms is like guessing your weight in a subway weighing-machine and getting your penny back. We still think his word-coinage *milver*, which he defines as "a fellow-fanatic," less effective than our own *kinsprit*, not yet adopted by Webster. Speaking of Austin Freeman's detective, Dr. Thorndyke, we are amused to think how the good Dr. must be weighed down by the scientific chattels he always carries in his pockets. Once we started to make a list of the things "he always carried." We remember, for instance, the tin collecting-box, the wire "smoker's companion" for picking locks, the micrometer caliper, the spring-tape, the seed-envelopes, the multiple lens.—All these, of course, in addition to the equipment in the "canvas-covered research case."—Will not Dodd Mead and Co. make up for us a detailed inventory of Dr. Thorndyke's portable equipment? The next omnibus volume we should like to see would be a Jules Verne; including the story about the steam elephant, which no one but ourselves seems to remember. But it is sad to recall that one of the best of the omnibus volumes went almost unnoticed—perhaps because it was priced at \$5—the Collected Short Stories of H. G. Wells. Captain David Bone of S. S. *Transylvania*, and all other good Scot seafarers who relish a braw Caledonian Doric, were pricked by a recent advertisement: "All the stewards speak English on Cunard-Anchor ships." People who have been noticing the specially vital tang in the air of upper Madison Avenue had not quite realized why. Messrs. Fortnum and Mason, the London miscellaneists, have opened a shop at 697 Madison Avenue and laid in a lot of Stilton cheese. Fortnum and Mason have always pleased the 3 Hours for Lunch Club because they amuse themselves by giving just the extra touch. When they have a Stilton

cheese it is "tinted with cowslip flowers." When they get "the Highland crofters" to weave ladies sports wear they are "dyed from lichens." Their assistants (their circular insists) wear "old-world frock-coats"—But not, we hope, in New World hot weather. The London *Studio*, reprinting one of Mr. Martin Lewis's lively etchings of New York scenes, referred to it as *Ice Cream Scenes*.

One of the best good news this clear weather is that Booth Tarkington is well recovered from his long and grave eye-trouble; news received with homage and affection by the innumerable lovers of a great writer. The bonny old *Newport*, steam barquentine schoolship once commanded and made famous by Captain Felix Riesenbergh, is to be replaced by a Hog Island steamship for the training of New York State's merchant marine cadets. The old *Newport* will not be forgotten by readers of Riesenbergh's *Vignettes of the Sea*. Muirhead Bone once did a drawing in her roomy after-cabin. It seemed to us that the most singular recent comment on American temperament was in an A. P. dispatch of April 10:

The children, in a nation-wide broadcast, retold their experiences in the tragic March blizzard. The youth who has been acclaimed as the hero of the tragedy, Bryan Untiedt, introduced his schoolmates one by one to the radio audience and then played a selection on his harmonica.

I was greatly pleased by Mrs. Pearl Buck's remarks (from Nanking, China) when her publishers cabled that her fine book *The Good Earth* had been chosen by the Book of the Month Club. She wrote:

Of course it is very good news that the Book-of-the-Month Club likes my book. I do not know exactly what it means, since I do not belong to this club, but I looked up an advertisement of theirs in the *Atlantic Monthly*, so I appreciate the fact that it must mean something for them to like my book well enough to put it on their list. . . . I have no pictures of myself. I do not seem to find much in my life that sounds interesting to put on paper. I cannot see that it matters greatly. I would like to be known not for myself but for my books. The Chinese are very sensible about this. They take the artist as important only because of his art and are not interested in the personality of the artist and consider him unimportant except as a medium. But I understand from some of my friends that this is not the case with Americans.

People are too likely to forget, in a period of temporary depression, that there has never been, and never will be, any slump in the Educational Book Business. Books for mere amusement necessarily have their ups and downs, but books for learning are always up. This comment is suggested by receiving a folder noting the 10th anniversary of the admirable State College Co-Op at Albany, N. Y., one of the outstanding college bookshops in the country, managed by Miss Helen Fay. Of this shop Professor Kirtland of Albany State College has said: "Two minutes there always remind one of the good things he once meant to write; and of the better things he still means to read." One of the best casual comments lately was that of A. Kroch of Chicago in the *Publishers' Weekly*: "Oftentimes I put a book to a test. Would it have been any loss to human enjoyment or to enrichment of human life if this particular book had never seen the light of day." When people of moderate means grow anxious at the high cost of edition-collecting, do they ever think of the extraordinarily low prices of actual autographs and letters? A catalogue of autographs from any good dealer—for instance Goodspeed's, 7 Ashburton Place, Boston—would surprise you. For example Mark Twain: you might have to pay \$1,000 or more for a perfect first edition of his more famous books, but you can buy interesting letters in his own hand for \$10 or \$15. The sad sincerity of a publisher's outcry was audible in Alfred H. King's announcement lately: "I published my first book, *Pilgrim to the Abyss*, on February 14, 1930. It was favorably reviewed in the New York *Sun* of February 13, 1931, a prize record for a belated review."—Alas, I believe that the Bowling Green has sometimes been even tardier than that in reviewing a book it had promised to notice.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

The Stockholm Opera has during this season produced a series of striking performances, amongst which the outstanding success has been "Orpheus in the Underworld," the classical operatic satire on the every-day life of the Greek Olympus, produced in an original setting enhanced by the magic wand of Max Reinhardt.