

## A CARTOONIST'S PHILOSOPHY

By PERCY CROSBY  
Reviewed by New York Times

**A CARTOONIST'S PHILOSOPHY.** By Percy Crosby. 252 pp. McLean, Virginia. Percy Crosby. \$2.

THERE is many a nugget of sound philosophy of the sort that one can live by to be found in "A Cartoonist's Philosophy," by Percy Crosby. The creator of the famous "Skippy" cartoons is, in this case, also his own publisher. As he informs the reader, "Eight prominent publishing houses saw no commercial possibilities" in his book, and as he had something that he wished to put before thinking Americans he took the issuance of the volume into his own hands. The first half of the volume concerns itself with a visit to Europe, the date of which is not given. The scene is depicted by the author with all the appreciation of the trained artist for what should be played up on the canvas and what should be subdued. And reading these pages, the thought suggests itself that young writers might do well to take a few lessons in drawing or painting; too often what a young writer assumes to be highly effective description is only a muddy collection of words simply because his eyes have never been schooled to see composition in a landscape of myriad detail. Crosby's pages are a valuable lesson. This is not a landscape, but since depiction of a person is of even greater importance to a writer, it serves even better as illustration. "Harold" is a former Cockney "Tommy" who became Crosby's chauffeur.

Relaxed, Harold always gave the impression that he had just finished first in a marathon race. When in the attitude of listening he puffed and perspired, while his large blue eyes drooped until the lids slowly closed, like one swooning. When he spoke the eyes splashed with animation. His arm always churned the air when he talked as if he had an imaginary crank in his hand and was in the act of spinning the earth.

The reader who fails to derive a deal of amusement from the author's discourses with Harold, which, brought together, would fill many pages, is greatly to be pitied. Harold is genuine; Crosby did not invent him. Harold "referred to Kings, Generals and statesmen with the same intimacy as he displayed toward members of his own squad."

This book, of course, would be sadly incomplete if "Skippy" were not to appear, and Mr. Crosby has made no such error. "Skippy," leading up from turtles to God, in an amusing dialogue, should help more than one of us along the road of wholesome thought.

Evidently the road of the cartoonist who essays to portray children understandingly is not always an easy one, as a few pages on persons who have taken the truthfulness of the "Skippy" portrayal to task would show. But whatever the arguments therein brought against Mr. Crosby, the thousands who have taken wholeheartedly into their lives this cartoonist's rare creation will be with Crosby.

Before approaching Mr. Crosby's arraignment of prohibition, it should be noted that the complainant comes into court with hands clean. Percy Crosby, who makes no concealment of earlier friendship with the bottle, from personal conviction that the friendship was not serving his best interests in life cut the binding tie with one resolute slash. Hence, he argues the general question from a strictly nonpartisan standpoint. Summed up, it would seem to be the cartoonist's thesis that any legislative document which deprives the citizen of free ethical choice is not a wholesome piece of legislation. Hence, although it is a specific act of law-making that Mr. Crosby brings under the fire of his guns, he is actually arguing, not a particular premise, but a general premise. As in the "Skippy" philosophy, the cartoonist's method is frequently made through the medium of the Socratic dialogue, a weapon with which Mr. Crosby is extremely adept. We give one example of this skill. The repartee is between the "Hundred-Per-Cent American" and the "Philosopher."

H. P. A. The law was a war measure.  
Phil. And the American people were informed of this?

H. P. A. Certainly.  
Phil. But after the war was over the measure ceased to exist?

H. P. A. How could it cease to exist? It's in the Constitution.

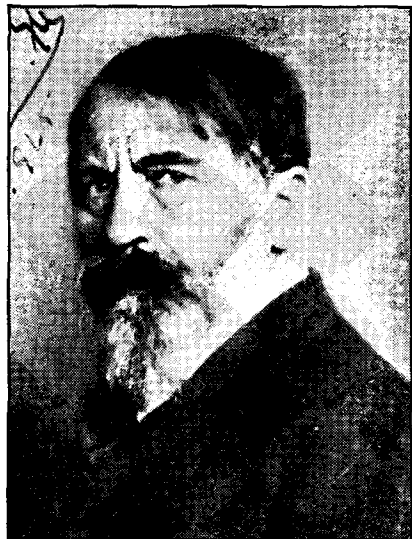
There is much on religion in the book. There is a chapter on art. And although such a glimpse of the varied contents as has here been given may make the book appear as more a random collection than a connected whole, it should be noted that all is held together by the unifying tenet contained in the lines from the Hindu "Bhagavad-Gita" which Crosby quotes.

I am the soul that dwells within,  
Life's essence to defend;  
I am the origin of life,  
Its middle, and its end.

Considering all the good that is to be found scattered through "A Cartoonist's Philosophy," many may question whether eight publishers might not have made a mistake.

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## The New Books

The books listed by title only in the classified list below are noted here as received.

### Belles Lettres

THE SAILOR IN ENGLISH FICTION AND DRAMA. 1550-1800. By HAROLD FRANCIS WATSON. Columbia University Press. 1931. \$3.

A useful study of the nautical references in important English books through the period described, with a bibliography. It should be useful to students of English fiction.

THE PEPYS BALLADS. Vols. 5 and 6. Edited by HYDER EDWARD ROLLINS. Harvard University Press. 1931. \$3.50 each.

These new volumes contain topical ballads from 1689 to 1693 and, with every variety of literary merit and demerit, constitute "a mirror of the time," doing for the original readers (and for us, incidentally) the office of the sensational newspaper and the motion picture news reel.

MILTON'S EDITORS AND COMMENTATORS FROM PATRICK HUME TO HENRY JOHN TODD. Oxford University Press. \$4.

A PERSIAN PEARL. By Clarence Darrow. Stratford. \$2.

### Biography

PAVLOVA. By WALFORD HYDEN. Little, Brown. 1931. \$3.

Mr. Hyden was musical director for Pavlova and this is a personal study based on his own experiences with Pavlova. While not a real biography it is a rather complete study of her professional career.

GIOVANNI VERGA. By THOMAS GODDARD BERGIN. Yale University Press. 1931. \$2.

This is a brief biographical and critical study of the Italian short story writer who is best known here by his "Cavalleria Rusticana" and whose less known work is of equal interest. A concise and scholarly book.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF RICHARD BAXTER. Edited by J. M. Lloyd-Thomas. Everyman's Library. Dutton. 90 cents.

A HISTORY OF THE BORGHIAS. By Frederick Baron Corvo. Modern Library. 95 cents.

### Drama

THE GRUMBLER. By OLIVER GOLDSMITH. Harvard Press. 1931. \$1.50.

"Hitherto only one scene of this farce has been printed in the standard editions of Goldsmith's works. While it is only an adaptation and not in Goldsmith's best manner, nevertheless it bears the marks of its author's irrepressible dramatic genius." This edition is printed from the licensor's copy in the Huntington Library. The play is annotated and has an introduction.

### Fiction

THE GROWING TREES. By RUTH MANING-SANDERS. Morrow. 1931. \$2.50.

Once more we meet the sensitive, imaginative young English lad, whose dotting mother makes valiant efforts to shield him from life. After James Brock's father dies in the war, Mrs. Brock transfers to him all her stifled love-emotion, and succeeds in making a Peter Pan of him. She dies in the middle of the book, but not soon enough to permit James to grow into a human being. At this point also, the book breaks in half. While the first section, dealing with James's adolescence, progresses at a leisurely pace, and while he remains throughout the novel a man who has been nourished on ballads, the second half rushes rapidly to a foregone conclusion.

In London the young man, still sensitive, idealistic, and imaginative, boards with the Viberts. Mrs. Vibert is a real human being. Scatter-brained, emotional, kindly, she attempts to prevent the disintegration of her home. Mr. Vibert, the artist, lives openly with his aging model; Netta, the elder daughter, "knows her own mind" and exploits men for her own purposes; Prothe, the younger, is sweet and innocuous. Inevitably, James falls under the influence of Netta who, when her opportunity comes along in the per-

son of Harry Bettany, successful young novelist, heartlessly deserts him. The erring pater-familias returns to his home, and there is reason to hope that James will eventually fall in love with the sweet and innocuous Prothe.

All this is related in a graceful and entertaining manner that maintains the reader's interest but moves him little, if at all.

THE DARK HORSE. By ROBERT GRANT. Houghton Mifflin. 1931. \$2.50.

Through four hundred and thirty-nine pages of this novel of Boston after the World War, Robert Grant manipulates his cardboard figures in the gestures of social and political intrigue. The book makes dull reading, despite the serious intention and painstaking deliberation of its author. The style is reminiscent of Henry James at his worst, the majority of characters are stilted and inhuman, the dialogue pretentious and unnatural. No slightest glimmer of humor comes to relieve the deadly monotony of the tale. In this sequel to his previous novel, "The Chippendales," Mr. Grant has attempted to deal with situations that should be of eternal human interest: the after-effects of war on character, politics, and love. But one individual attains vitality—the girl Rachel Carver—and she is not of the upper crust of Bostonian society. Her presence in the book is a distinct relief from the general atmosphere of snobbery, smug pretentiousness, and boredom. This atmosphere is Mr. Grant's only notable achievement.

THE KIRBYS. By MARGARET WHIPPLE. Putnam's. 1931. \$2.

On the title page of her novel Miss Whipple has put this quotation from Montaigne: "To my mind the best lives are those which conform to the common mold, with nothing astonishing or extravagant about them." Carrying out this idea, she has succeeded in making her characters both ordinary and interesting; but the story through which they move is less faithful to the spirit of the quotation. Yet the novel will probably prove tolerably diverting to a good many readers, for, in spite of its sugary conclusion and a good deal of improbable melodrama, it has suspense and a continuous narrative interest.

Father and Mother Kirby are middle class, respectable Americans—fighting mortgages, being bullied by their grown children, not really knowing what their life means or whither it ought to be directed. The three children suggest millions of other young cubs, and the various friends and prospective in-laws are reasonably typical of their separate breeds. Through most of the novel these characters wear very well, but towards the end they begin to lose form and definition. A synthetic happy ending completes their demoralization. And so Miss Whipple's study of lives in the common mold becomes something less than significant—merely another in the melancholy procession of novels that begin well but end feebly.

DISORDER. By SIMONE. Dutton. 1931. \$2.50.

In a time when the world is suffering from an overproduction of wheat and cotton—and books—there seems little excuse for publishing so feeble a work as this. Perhaps it is unfair to condemn it as a mere imitation of Julian Green, without his sinister power, for "Disorder" is handicapped by an exceedingly awkward translation. It is studded with such obscure sentences as: "This ray of sun, so pure as to be beyond all reproach, on brushing her reddish underskirt, seemed suddenly to become the oblique gleam from a lamp at a fair, projecting itself on some glass encircled with brass, through which the eye perceives the obscene and red image of the guillotine." After a few pages of that crystal clarity, the mind refuses to function.

Heralded in France as a subtle character study, in the English version, at least, "Disorder" loses significance in a morass of sordid, nightmare details. Emma is another in the succession of yearning virgins who trail their reegee charms through recent fiction. Any man would have been "her man," but with the cards stacked against her she never gets him, and so she reconciles herself to



spinsterhood. Madame Simone is a renowned actress. In this first novel she takes the reader on a tedious journey where dim, faintly repulsive shadows are seen through the mists of confusion.

**EVERY WISE WOMAN.** By WILLIAM M. JOHN. Sears. 1931. \$2.50.

Mr. John's first book, "Seven Women," was an arresting novel. The action covered the period of only a day. An aid society was virtuously meeting at a certain house while in a lean-to shed a child of sin was being born. Mr. John extracted to the last drop the irony of his dramatic contrast. His technique, brusque, almost unshaded, in its wood-block sharpness of outline, and having something of the same awkward and defensive quality as the characters it portrayed, was exactly suited to the effect Mr. John wished to produce. But it was a method very little adaptable and with a short range of appropriateness.

In "Every Wise Woman" the lack of resilience in the John technique is apparent. Here, where a more complicatedly related group is to be presented and the story covers the lifetime of one generation, the angular pattern into which "Seven Women" fitted so perfectly becomes a monotonous and restrictive mechanism. It must be very difficult for an author to lay aside an instrument which has responded with such complete success to his first needs, but one wishes Mr. John had attempted it.

"Every wise woman buildeth her home; but the foolish plucketh it down with her own hands," Mr. John takes as his text, and a mother-in-law he takes as an example. The mother-in-law theme is, of course, as old as gossip and as new as trouble. Yet it is a dangerous one. So many wooden women have creaked their unconvincing way through the lives of married children on the stage and in the novel. And Mrs. Overbeck (Every Wise Woman), although she is perhaps the most unpleasant belle-mere yet encountered, does not escape the marionette taint. She is driven by the author, not her nature.

On page one Mrs. Overbeck starts for a short visit to her newly married daughter, on page three hundred and thirteen she leaves after a twenty-year visit. During all these heavy, unhappy years she has truly plucked down her house with her own hands. She has by unvaried self-interest and determination brought about the moral and physical undoing of her grandchildren, although she has been powerless to alienate from each other the husband and wife with whom she makes her unwelcome home. The measure of her destructiveness seems a little pressed down and running over in the end. Mrs. Overbeck is too bad to be true. Surely once during her life she must have faltered on her evil way and done, even if unconsciously, a good deed or two; must have forgotten at some crucial time for at least a moment the Great God Self. But if she did, Mr. John fails to record the fact. She is the complete villain whose evil intentions know no let or hindrance. On the surface she is a self-sacrificing, kindly, and righteous woman. Her mask deceives a few characters in the book; but it is held too seldom and carelessly before her face to puzzle any others. She shows no development through the story, she is exactly the same woman in the beginning and at the end, merely with more evidence to prove it.

For all the characters and years that crowd the pages of "Every Wise Woman" one discusses and remembers only Mrs. Overbeck. From one point of view that is a flaw in Mr. John's pronouncement, from another perhaps it is a virtue. At any rate, the Mother-in-Law, in capitals, remains the universal enemy, and here is news, bad news, of her.

**PRINCE JALI.** By L. H. MYERS. Harcourt, Brace. 1931. \$2.50.

The chronicle of an Indian prince, son of a Buddhist and his Christian wife, and set in the sixteenth century, this novel of L. H. Myers is curiously vague. The style is fluid, graceful and urbane, but the story is strangely unsatisfying. Young Prince Jali, secretly tortured by self-doubt and striving to attain some sort of balance in a world for which he feels himself entirely unfitted, never once reveals recognizably human qualities. The book reads like a lecture, as though the author were preaching a sermon on the text of the young prince, not as though the boy himself were experiencing any of the emotional turmoil

of which so much mention is made. Failing in his effort to obtain perfect objectivity, the author has also failed to breathe life into his creation.

**HERE THEY ARE—AMOS 'N' ANDY.** By CHARLES J. CORRELL and FREEMAN F. GOSDEN. Ray Long & Richard Smith. 1931. \$1.

As one who has never heard Amos 'n' Andy on the radio, this reviewer read with great interest the explanation of the popularity of the pair, published as an introduction, by Irvin S. Cobb. Mr. Cobb speaks of "genuine, orthodox, true-to-type, flesh-and-blood Afro-Ameri-

cans." After reading the dialogues of these two there seemed a simpler explanation: What they say is funny. It is great old minstrel show stuff and undoubtedly as dramatized before the microphone it is well done. What we need is not a Mr. Cobb to tell us why good black-face vaudeville is popular but somebody else to tell us why the old all-male minstrel shows have disappeared, being supplanted by shows full of coffee colored girls. The popularity of Amos 'n' Andy is a healthy sign that Americans have not lost their old love for good low comedy. Even as a book they make good laughter.

## History

**BEFORE THE MAYFLOWER.** By JOHN YARDLEY. Doubleday, Doran. 1931. \$5.

A scholarly and interesting study of the pioneers, especially in Virginia, who opened up the country before the better advertised Massachusetts venture began.

**BEYOND THE SUBLIME PORTE.** By BARNETT MILLER. Yale University Press. \$5.

An elaborate and interesting study, abundantly annotated, of the Grand Se- (Continued on page 273)

## FICTION

### RIVERS OF DAMASCUS

By DONN BYRNE

★From the N. Y. Herald-Tribune: "Eleven as fascinatingly told tales as you are likely to find in a year's reading. The title story is almost as delicately informed with nostalgic tenderness as Messer Marco Polo. Read them, read them!"

★From the N. Y. Times: "Nowhere is Donn Byrne's amazing versatility better exemplified than in this collection of eleven short stories gathered together for the first time in book form." \$2.00

### WIVES AND MOTHERS

By JEAN RUDD

A story of a family of women caught up by the restlessness of the days when home-making ceased to occupy women's entire lives, and time hung dangerously on their hands. Like most women of today they have to face the dilemma of Love vs. Career and the problem of making a choice. WIVES AND MOTHERS presents two generations of women, a mother and her five daughters, who meet this problem with varying fortunes and run the gamut of woman's experience in marriage and work. \$2

### THE YOUNG MRS. MEIGS

By ELIZABETH CORBETT

Mrs. Meigs is a "young woman of eighty" who stubbornly refuses to be put on the shelf by her family. She is the heroine of one of the most charming novels of the season.

★From the N. Y. Herald-Tribune: "The young Mrs. Meigs stands out as an attractive and memorable figure. Elizabeth Corbett has portrayed her with much delicacy and whimsicality." \$2.00

### PIE IN THE SKY

By FREDERICK HAZLITT BRENNAN

A novel which is aptly suited to the problems and thought of today: the story of a family of American Reds and the rebellion of the youngest member of it against revolutionary ideals.

★From the Boston Post: "A very human story unfolded through the lives of its ultra modern characters. The power of this novel is increased by the fact that these characters are struggling with very real and very imperative social problems of our own day." \$2.50

### The HUNDRED DAYS

By TALBOT MUNDY

★From the Philadelphia Public Ledger: "A real bargain—two full length novels for the price of one; both typical Mundy tales, laid in the Far East and crammed with action. . . His stories never lag, and these last two should provide his large audience with pleasant entertainment." \$2.50

## CENTURY BOOKS for the FALL of 1931

### The INSECT MENACE

By L. O. HOWARD

Thousands of readers who think of insects as small insignificant things which we sometimes step on will be fascinated to read this book which shows them as part of a mighty empire threatening the ultimate supremacy of man.

★From the Scientific Book Club Review: "It rivals the best of the murder mystery stories in its ability to hold the attention of the reader." Illustrated. \$3.50

### MANHATTAN SIDE-SHOW

By KONRAD BERCOVICI

Another brilliant book from the pen of the gypsy of New York, akin in spirit to his famous *Around the World in New York*, but dealing with the many Manhattanites, great and small, whom Konrad Bercovici has met in his wanderings around the town. A gorgeous book of New York personalities, beautifully illustrated. \$4.00

### COLUMBUS CAME LATE

By GREGORY MASON

"Popular archaeology" introduced as a fascinating new hobby for everyone in a book dealing with the long hidden but glamorous period of America's distant past.

★Kermit Roosevelt writes: "It will prove of value to the scientist, and of interest to the general reader." Illustrated. \$4.00

### CHICAGO: A PORTRAIT

By HENRY JUSTIN SMITH

This book is exactly what its title suggests: a portrait of modern Chicago, illustrated by the striking drawings of the famous artist, E. H. Suydam. The author, a distinguished newspaper editor, presents the story of what Chicago has built and accomplished, the picture of a great city in its normal life and activity.

Illustrated by E. H. Suydam. \$5.00

### SAVAGE PARADISE

By MARGARET MATCHES

Every explorer and reviewer has hailed Margaret Matches to the ranks of adventurers—a spirited young girl who became bored with the humdrum life of the modern city and had the courage to set out on a tramp steamer to find her savage paradise somewhere in the South Pacific.

★From the Philadelphia Public Ledger: "If Miss Matches' book doesn't set your foot to itching, you're a hopeless case!" \$4.00

### MARCHES of the NORTH

By E. ALEXANDER POWELL

Colonel Powell, citizen of the world, here turns his steps to Canada and explores the Dominion from Cape Breton to the Klondike and from the American border to the Arctic, dealing with the history, the traditions, the resources, the politics and the people of the country.

★N. Y. World-Telegram: "It is more than a guide book; it is Canada today and yesterday, and it makes excellent reading." Illustrated. \$4.00

## GENERAL BOOKS

### BEHIND THE SCENES WITH OURSELVES

By CARL RAMUS

A book a common-sense psychology for everyone—explaining the reasons why we act as we do. Psychologists have praised this as a book which will lead every reader to a better understanding of himself.

★Dr. S. Parker Gidman says: "It is not only readable but it is reasonable and I wish it a wide circulation." \$3.00

### BENEDICT ARNOLD

PATRIOT AND TRAITOR

By OSCAR SHERWIN

★Harry Hansen, World-Telegram: "Mr. Sherwin writes a vivid, dramatic, swift-running narrative, with his news sense in excellent operation."

★New York American: "It is a good job he has done and he deserves much credit for the care he has taken in marshalling his facts. . . A swift, breathless book."

★Boston Advertiser: "It is more than a biography. Light is thrown on the war, the activities of great generals, and the social life of Philadelphia, 'which in 1778 was the metropolitan city of America.' The account of the capture of Major Andre is full and dramatic." \$4.00

### WINGS FOR MEN

By FRANK WEAD

A brilliant panorama depicting man's efforts to fly from the accounts of the earliest mythology down to the daily and hourly competitions for new records of the present day. The latter part of the book has been particularly praised for its capable presentation of the story of man's astounding achievements in the air during the past thirty years. Illustrated. \$4.00

### THE CASE AGAINST BIRTH CONTROL

By DR. EDWARD ROBERTS MOORE

Introduction by CARDINAL HAYES

★The Commonwealth: "This is by far the best book on birth control that has appeared in English. It is more scientific and vastly more accurate than any work produced by the advocates of birth control."

★America: "This is a strong book; strong in facts, strong in arguments, in its well-rounded presentation of subject."

★Philadelphia Public Ledger: "An epoch-making volume." \$2.50