

## Decade of Heroics

THE DECADE OF ILLUSION: PARIS, 1918-1928. By MAURICE SACHS. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1933. \$3.50.

Reviewed by MATTHEW JOSEPHSON

OF this book there are two questions which one might justly ask—why was it written? And why did Mr. Knopf print it? The period described is one of the most stimulating, energetic, productive, amusing decades in what was for a time the capital of the world's culture. The author contents himself with devoting two-thirds of his book to the most superficial references to, or notation of, some four or five hundred characters of more or less importance, in which the adjective figuring most frequently is some derivation of the word "chic." Strangely enough, the only prominent persons who excite the admiration of the reader are those who seem to have remained indifferent to M. Sachs's charm: Gide and Picasso. The talent, nobility of soul, or charm of his friends (and M. Sachs does not hesitate to claim acquaintanceship with "all Paris") remain to be proved by some less interested partisan. His own attitude, so far as historical equipment goes, suggests that of any young man "on the make," and may be illustrated by the following quotation: "A young man approaches with emotion a woman, always beautiful and always young, who has understood and frequented so many admirable and celebrated people." One approaches with a considerably different emotion a young man who has capitalized his friendship for celebrated people so freely, and offers it to us like so much "watered stock."

The last part of the book is devoted to somewhat longer studies, including an attempt at interpretation, of Jean Cocteau, Jacques Maritain, Max Jacob, and Picasso. In the case of the first three such a rosy nimbus of sentimentality and religiosity is thrown about them that it is almost impossible to distinguish any flesh and blood in the characterizations at all; if one were totally unacquainted with their works one would suppose them all to be the authors of the Elsie books in French version, with a dash of Gallic wit and "chic," of course.

When he speaks of painting M. Sachs is on surer ground. But what young man of his generation in Paris did not set himself up as an art critic? With my own limited acquaintance in Paris, I can recall fifteen or twenty young men of letters, all of whom talk "texture," "line," "values," with the same glibness, and they are none of them, so far as I can tell, in any sense his inferiors at the ancient "racket."

But in truth it was a heroic decade, that of 1918 to 1928 in Paris, when Americans of literary and artistic pretensions came steaming across the ocean in boatloads to drink the intoxicating liquors of a new renaissance, only to find that the influence of their country had preceded them in the A. E. F., in the Chaplin films, in the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright; when the Dadaists held their explosive *soirées* at cafés, theatres, or on the streets, and in general made mock of patriotism; when the Surrealists further thumbed their noses at the bourgeois; when Rimbaud and Lautrémont were first discovered; when Gide's "Faux-Monnayeurs" and Proust's epic first appeared, when the great painters began to carve out their empire, and the great *couturiers* to amaze the world. That story is still to be told; but it will be told not in the accents of a M. Maurice Sachs.

Matthew Josephson was one of the Americans who lived in Paris during the "decade of illusion." He is the author of "Zola" and "Portrait of the Artist as American."

In "Psychology of Sex," by Havelock Ellis, Long & Smith have put out a single volume summarizing the topics discussed in the earlier seven volumes bearing the same title which have been available to professional people only. Since the publication of these studies, Havelock Ellis has gone right on thinking and reading every study that has been made of marriage and sex. He knows all about Freud and he has had time to sift, digest, and get into perspective many of the psychoanalysts' "new discoveries." For the student, the greatest value of this book will lie in finding in one volume a critical discussion of the conclusions of Freud, Katherine Davis, Robert Dickinson, G. Hamilton, Krafft-Ebing, and Hirschfeld. With the mass of material scientific and otherwise which is flooding the market, such a résumé and critique is most needed.



YEATS AT PETITPAS, 1910. By John Sloan (Whitney Museum of Modern Art)

## By Bus Through Bohemia

GARRETS AND PRETENDERS: A History of Bohemianism in America. By ALBERT PARRY. New York: Covici-Friede. 1933. \$3.50.

Reviewed by MALCOLM COWLEY

IN the first two sentences of this book, the author misconstrues his subject. Mr. Parry says, "American bohemianism, so gay and mellow and, in its later stages, so respectable, began with a tragedy. It began with Edgar Allan Poe." But when was Bohemia mellow, even in its cups? Why should Poe be chosen as its American first-citizen? It is true that he drank frenziedly, took laudanum, lived in poverty and dreams; strangers picked him from the gutter in a last fit of delirium tremens. "He was born and he died a bohemian, his whole life the truest picture of that phenomenon at its rarest and best. Poe was not a self-conscious protestant. . . . There were no kindred souls to understand his pain and his desire to soar above it." But it has always seemed to me that "solitary bohemian" was a contradiction in words. And self-consciousness in rebellion is precisely the quality which stamps the Bohemia of modern times and distinguishes it from the Grub Streets which preceded it through the ages.

The bohemian way of life is almost as old as recorded history. It occurs in any civilization as soon as men are able to earn a precarious income by writing, painting, or corrupting the young with new ideas; it marks the formation of an intellectual proletariat. Socrates was a bohemian in this general sense; so were the Sophists who preceded him and the Alexandrian poets who followed. Before Poe was born, there were Americans who lived in a bohemian fashion—as, for example, his mother, the roving actress. But modern bohemianism is something more complicated: it is not only a way of life, but also a philosophy, a ritual and a myth. The philosophy was furnished by the Romantic movement and especially by its poets—Byron, Musset, Baudelaire. The ritual of light love and laughter was recorded, the myth was created and rendered glamorous, by Henry Murger in his "Scènes de la Vie de Bohème." Not until these later elements were imported from Europe—not until life, philosophy, ritual, and myth were combined and consciously followed by a circle of writers and artists—could it be said that a Bohemia existed in the United States.

Poe had been dead for eight years when the first American Bohemia was established in Pfaff's beer saloon, under the sidewalks of lower Broadway. Henry Clapp, an editor and mild socialist, reigned there as "king" and Ada Clare as "queen." Their titles implied no liaison between them: but each had made a journey to Paris, and each had separately conceived the idea of founding a smaller, brighter Latin Quarter in New York. Mr. Parry devotes four chapters, the most interesting in the book, to the fortunes of their project. Only one genius came to sit in Pfaff's saloon, and Walt Whitman deserted it early in the Civil War. There were several men of talent in the circle, but most of them either died young and tragically or else—like William Winter,

Bayard Taylor, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, and E. C. Stedman—they became respectable businessmen of letters. The first Bohemia died in the early seventies, and was not resurrected until the "Trilby" craze swept the country in 1894.

To this phenomenon, Mr. Parry again devotes several chapters. He is a diligent historian, a collector of gossip, a searcher through the files of forgotten magazines. He tells about the appearance of bohemian groups in Boston and San Francisco, the publication of "bohemian" magazines in Troy, N. Y., and Fort Worth, Texas. He tells about the expatriates who wrote for the *Yellow Book*, and their successors who wrote for *Broom* and *This Quarter* and *transition*. He traces the history of the Dill Pickle in Chicago and of the Provincetown Players, and carries down his story to the death of Hart Crane in April, 1932. It is as if we were being taken for a tour of Bohemia on a rubberneck bus. The guide calls out the landmarks through a megaphone, piling word on word and fact on fact in a style no sharper than an old shovel. He exhibits the full circle of bohemian life: its three o'clock of talent, its six o'clock of hunger, its nine o'clock of orgy, its suicides at midnight, but he shows us only the face of the clock. He never takes it apart to tell us how it ticks.

Malcolm Cowley, an editor of *The New Republic*, is completing a book on "The Lost Generation" of 1920-30 Bohemians.

## Ennis on Water Color

MAKING A WATER COLOUR. By GEORGE PEARSE ENNIS. New York: Studio Publications, Inc., 1933. \$3.50.

Reviewed by CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

THIS honest and helpful book by Mr. Ennis, the president of the American Water Color Society, should be of value and inspiration to the amateur. It is boldly modern in tone. The implements of the art, and the various stages of water color procedure, are simply described and illustrated with admirable photographs. It is one of *The Studio's* excellent "How to Do It" series, which deserves the highest praise. There are also sixteen superb reproductions of famous water color masterpieces from the eighteenth century to now. They include Girtin, Turner, Cotman, Peter De Wint, Sargent, McBey, Brangwyn. Each one is analyzed and commented on by Mr. Ennis. It is a beautiful book.

Mr. Ennis is not only a talented brush but a canny teacher. He did not intend it so, but (since all the arts assimilate) his terse remarks might well serve also as an essay on literary composition. The methods and strategies of the painter have strong analogies for the writer. In mere selfishness, and for my own memorandum and instruction, let me condense Mr. Ennis's argument. See if it does not offer suggestion to the tasks of fiction.

Water color is swift and immediate in its expression of the artist's emotion. The worst fault of beginners is the desire to copy nature slavishly. Before you touch color to paper you should consider composition and selection carefully. Define the shapes. Plan dark and light masses.

Then (1) lay in the dark masses, with a full brush. "Only in this manner can you secure a rich bloom." The dark masses can be made vibrant by flushing rich colors together. Add last the color required to dominate the mass.

(2) After establishing the dark colors, develop the middle plan. Keep white and brilliancies to the last. Area of white paper held in reserve "is a safety hold on the picture." (Yes, this is wisdom.)

(3) The final vital stage is to express your high lights: sunshines and shimmers. Sky; foreground; summing up.

If there is trouble in parts, lay it aside—or remove the offending part by sponging. Purple is the only color difficult to remove. It stains and holds on like grim death.

A water color must be painted without fear or favor, directly, lusciously, with a dripping, flowing color. To falter is to fail.

One could have a happy summer studying and imitating Mr. Ennis.

## Biology for the Layman

THE SCIENCE OF HUMAN REPRODUCTION. By H. M. PARSHLEY. New York: W. W. Norton & Co. 1933. \$3.50.

Reviewed by S. ZUCKERMAN

THE main difference between popular science and the science of scientists, so some cynically minded experimenter once remarked, is that popular science is as a rule better written. The generalization is perhaps not so accurate as it is striking, but in so far as it suggests that a popular exposition of scientific matter can be both entertaining and sound, it is unreservedly borne out by Professor Parshley's new book, the purpose of which is the presentation of enough facts about the physiology of reproduction not only to satisfy the layman's curiosity, but also to provide him with a biological basis for an intelligent attitude to sexual problems. That Professor Parshley has been able to do his task so frankly is due mainly to the post-war slump in sham sexual values, and to the general recognition of the prevalence of sexual skeletons in many of society's apparently well-ordered cupboards. That he has been able to do his task so well is due to the fact that he is versed in the latest developments of his subject. There are places, it is true, where investigators would be inclined to disagree with him, but in most Professor Parshley could cite chapter and verset from fairly recent scientific studies to support his views—even though his authorities would not be acceptable to his critics. But so it always is when an expositor draws together the criss-cross threads of a rapidly growing science.

The book is wide in scope and well illustrated. It introduces its main subject with a chapter on the sexual and reproductive processes of the invertebrate and lower vertebrate world, and after a discussion of the anatomy of cell division and of genetics (which includes a very readable account of sex-linked inheritance) passes on to analyze the sex act. From this it proceeds to consider such subjects as the human sexual cycle, pregnancy, embryonic development, and the internal secretions that help to maintain the sexual and reproductive mechanisms. The concluding section is concerned with sex traits in childhood and adolescence, with population and eugenics, and with the biology of socio-sexual behavior. In these more general chapters, Professor Parshley effectively demonstrates his rational appreciation of the social problems he considers, and the majority of his views can hardly fail to find sympathy with those of his readers who are not biased at the start by one or other of the more vulgar and irresponsible attitudes of mind that try to pass under the name of public decency.

It is questionable whether or not an understanding of the bio-chemical basis of sexual activity will eliminate some of life's needless tragedies, and save us from "painful and unnecessary errors of ignorance." The physiological basis of digestion is generally recognized, in some places even regarded as a matter not unfit for drawing-room discussion. Yet people still overeat and get sick, while others are confirmed drunkards. Still, if intimate knowledge about the physiology of sex does not cure the world of its emotional sexual troubles, it can undoubtedly provide it, as Professor Parshley hopes, with a basis for an intelligent attitude to sexual problems. His book is an admirable source of information on a very important and difficult subject.



Since the temperature dropped about thirty degrees the last time we announced

## COOL READING

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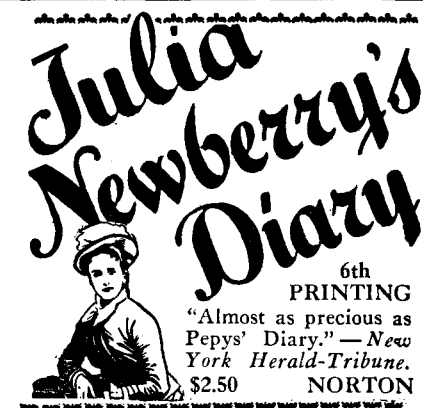
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NORTON

# The Reader's Guide

Conducted by MAY LAMBERTON BECKER

Inquiries in regard to the choice of books should be addressed to MRS. BECKER, c/o *The Saturday Review*. As for reasons of space ninety percent of the inquiries cannot be answered in print, a stamped and addressed envelope should be enclosed for reply.

I SAID I was sailing on the *Bremen*, adding hastily, "Tourist, of course." The professor put a finger to his brow. "Didn't someone tell me," he mused, "that there used to be another class, once?"

However, Tourist on the *Bremen* has class enough for me. The agency booking me was desired by the line to assure the "distinguished writer and critic" that all things would be done to smooth the crossing of this surprised person. The cubicle to which I was entitled enlarged to something nearer a skating-rink, my reservations were happily preadjusted, and the Commodore's Secretary saw to it that I saw the ship. It appears that some time ago—no later than the first year of the *Saturday Review of Literature*—I had answered, as Reader's Guide for a high official of the line, a question relayed from China and involving a certain amount of research. It was all in the day's work and the matter had dropped clean out of my mind, but the line remembers like elephants.

The work of the Commodore's Secretary might well be brought to the notice of travellers with some special purpose in view. She turned out to be Dr. Gertrude Ferber, whom I had already met when she was prominent in work for international relations and in the Youth Movement. If one is interested in orphanages or archaeology or workmen's housing or any subject calling for investigation on the spot, she will see to it that he has the right letters of introduction. If someone else in his line is travelling in another class, she will give them a chance to meet one another—and on a modern liner this means something. The only ship with such a service is the *Bremen*, but I am told it has worked so well there that it may be extended.

A mid-ocean wireless said walking would begin at Southampton; it really did at Romsey, to let me revisit a certain Saxon rood, last visited in 1925. Since then a hunting-lodge of King John has come to light; for the last few hundred years it has been nestling at the heart of a block of workmen's cottages. These they peeled off and cleared away down to the original inside and outside, to find the former impulsively decorated by knights of the period. These stalwart guests used the plaster wall as a sort of impromptu guest-book and scratched upon it with hunting knives the coats of arms and godly mottoes serving them for signatures. Also one of them had made a profile picture of King Edward complete with crown and beard, rather in the manner of H. G. Wells in "Boon."

But for the next four days kings were as naught to this department. We were walking in Somerset, which in early June turns every stone wall into a rock garden, sets meadows shimmering with tall buttercups, carpets the paths thick with daisies, sends white spray foaming to the tops of may-trees, and turns to crimson the vast shade of nut trees rising from the streams. Everything is rich, kind, and mellow, from the buzzing speech, thick as honey, to the cheese that rightly gives a name to the Cheddar Gorge. And then, after a pause for breath and blisters, we were on the road again for the Whitsun holidays, starting from Peterborough with a group of young and stalwart experts on early ecclesiastical architecture. This was my first real hiking—the rules of the Society for the Extermination of Luggage had so far prevented me from carrying a pack—and I am now in a position to state that the short cuts to the best ecclesiastical architecture are over ploughed fields. I am also in a position—with my hand on my heart—to state that Heaven hath not anything to show more fair than these three bright days I was permitted to tag along upon this charming expedition. Anyway, not anything to show me. Should anyone want the itinerary of this trip, I will send also the titles of books to be read beforehand or taken along. For this was no random roaming, but a trip cannily arranged by the young leader to alternate rapid walking with leisurely inspections of cool parish churches, steadily rising in beauty to the heights of Fotherghay and Warmington and rounded at the close by Peterborough under the moon.

So I have yet to find what changes, if any, have come over the face of London since last year. All I have seen in town are the two Brontë plays now running:

Clemence Dane's "Wild Decembers" and Alfred Sangster's "The Brontës." From their respective receptions it might be thought that our Miss Cornell had bet on the wrong horse, but I believe she has chosen the better play. Mr. Cochran took it off at the end of its first week, but the star (Miss Diana Wynward of the screen version of "Cavalcade") put it firmly back again at her own charges, and the audience gives it every night a determined half-dozen of curtain calls. Miss Dane makes "Wild Decembers" follow the facts at almost every point, even of speech—which makes it the more distressing to Emilians that it should fall into the heresy that Bramwell had anything important to do with "Wuthering Heights." Mr. Sangster, who acts the father's part in his own play, not unnaturally makes the Reverend Patrick pedal-bass of his composition. Miss Dane's central figure is Charlotte. But somehow, in both plays, Emily runs away with the show. The stars must give thanks every night after the third act, that the nineteenth century had not conquered tuberculosis.

Yes, and a visiting American, whose window in her daughter's new flat looked out that night upon the Thames at full tide under the full moon, found herself so involved with Emily and Charlotte and Anne and Bramwell that though she had buried them all that evening one by one, the room and the night were crowded with Brontës all night long. So much, indeed, that she spends next week-end in Brontë country, on Emily's moors.

M. W. F., Bala-Cynwyd, Pa., is interested in a fairly comprehensive study of the origin of words and music of hymns, and in any interesting data concerning the writers. "The Evolution of the English Hymn," by F. J. Gilman (Macmillan), goes back to the first century and traces the origin and history of Christian hymns to the present day; a remarkable work, concise and full. A favorite book of this character, now in its eighth edition, is "The Story of the Hymns and Tunes," by Theron and Hezekiah B. Brown (Long & Smith), and another is "The Hymn in History and Literature," by J. B. Reeves (Century). "Famous Hymns of the World," by Allan Sutherland (Stokes), is another well-known compendium now in a new edition; it gives origins and romances of

familiar hymns and has many new illustrations and a colored frontispiece. A larger volume is "English Hymns, Their Authors and History," by Samuel W. Duffield (Funk & Wagnalls), which gives the first lines of over fifteen hundred hymns, with a sketch of the author and the circumstances of its history and use. Benjamin Brawley's "History of the English Hymn" (Abingdon) considers schools of hymn-writing, their order of development and tendencies, with attention to individual authors. J. Brownlie's "Hymns of the Early Church" is a small and valuable book published by the Oxford University Press. There are many smaller books such as "Twelve Hymns and Their Writers" (Beacon Press), "101 Hymn Stories" (Methodist Book Concern), and "Stories of Hymn Tunes," by F. J. Metcalf (Abingdon); indeed, the H. W. Wilson Company publishes a pamphlet "Index to Stories of Hymn Tunes." And the autobiography of Ira D. Sankey, "My Life and the Story of Gospel Hymns" (Harper) is still in print.

L. C., New York, says "Is there any book on Bermuda suitable to give someone going for a first visit—something short of the grand five-dollar variety and yet a little less formidable than Rider's Guide? Something that will suggest amusing places to look for and give an idea of the history of the island." All this and more is done by "Bermuda Past and Present," by W. B. Hayward, published by Dodd, Mead and costing two-fifty. Costing less than that is Christopher Morley's "Notes on Bermuda," published by Henry and Longwell, 244 Madison Avenue, N. Y.; "Beautiful Bermuda," the sixth edition, published by the Beautiful Bermuda Publ. Co., 54 Morningside Drive, and Bertha March's "Bermuda Days" (Revell). Then if you want a scholarly book, new and comprehensive, there is Henry Wilkinson's "History of Bermuda" (Oxford University Press), which is, as you might infer, not a tourist's guide, and two books for the water-side: "Nonsuch" by William Beebe (Harcourt, Brace), and "Shore Fishes of Bermuda," a field book by William Beebe and John Tee Van (Putnam). The best five-dollar Bermuda book (since these were mentioned) is the one by Hudson Strode published this year by Smith & Haas: "The Story of Bermuda." Its many pictures make it like a travelogue.

L. B., Texarkana, Ark., asks for two or three books of short toasts. "The Toaster's Handbook," "More Toasts," and "Still More Toasts" are published by the H. W. Wilson Company, New York; taken together you get six thousand jokes, stories, and quotations, arranged by subject with cross-references. I found them amusing reading.

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