

## Through the Nose

(Continued from first page)

thermore, it has been inevitable that the performance of this financial and management function should gravitate to the financial associates of the company. Having once landed there, it has also been inevitable that the control over the reorganization should follow into the same hands—inevitable, not only, as Mr. Lowenthal points out, because the tradition established in the law was made out of comparable situations, but also because the event of insolvency is usually known far enough in advance for the insiders to make adequate preparation and thus outdistance possible rivals; because the security lists are generally available only to the insiders who may therefore with dispatch solicit deposits and obtain substantial percentages of security holders before the opposition is able to organize; and because courts have been reluctant to take an active part in the formulation of reorganization practices and policies.

With the courts in the passive role, the battle of private interests has been waged in a relentless and costly manner. The strategy and tactics are beautifully unfolded by Mr. Lowenthal. He shows how the cost of the battle which is waged is paid by the investor—by the investor who cannot, and who probably never can, act for himself. Mr. Lowenthal does not show an alternative system but points out the evils, prominent or latent, in the old system. The book challenges attention to those weaknesses and in so doing becomes the most constructive piece of thinking in the field of corporation finance.

Mr. Lowenthal builds his story on official documents and on testimony and arguments before the Interstate Commerce Commission and the courts. High spots of testimony are often quoted. There is at all times a clear separation of reported facts and events and the author's viewpoint or criticism of them. Thus the book is remarkably clean of distortion. And so clearly does it sharpen issues that on the basis of the data submitted supporters of the system could prove the opposite of many of Mr. Lowenthal's conclusions.

Much that is related about the St. Paul is obsolete since the enactment of the amendments to the Bankruptcy Act relative to reorganization of railroads. Under those amendments the courts and the Interstate Commerce Commission move into a position of dominance and at last by legislative mandate have it in their power to change the whole tenor of railroad reorganization. Yet, as noted above, Mr. Lowenthal's indictment is not of the St. Paul, or of railroad reorganizations particularly, but of the system. That system is in general as applicable to reorganizations of industrial as of railroad corporations. In fact, in many reorganizations not so much in the public eye as railroads the weaknesses portrayed by Mr. Lowenthal in the St. Paul are magnified a hundred times. The racketeering which has gone on in many lesser reorganizations make the St. Paul procedure look like the model of efficiency, righteousness, and virtue. And judged on the basis of the system employed the St. Paul reorganization was probably one of the best to date. But there can be no doubt that the system involved needs serious and radical overhauling in the direction of providing fair and adequate representation for all conflicting interests, of supervising the constitution and conduct of committees, of regulating fees, of affording investors protection at the time of the formulation of the plan rather than years later, and of separating the banker's function of rendering financial advice from the function of promotion.

But these ends will not be reached overnight. Meanwhile, billions will be refunded; hundreds of committees will be formed; dozens of reorganizations will be accomplished. In that process the investors will continue to pay—many, dearly. That is why every investor should read this book, though it may make him slightly jaundiced. He may not fall into as kindly hands as those of the bankers in the St. Paul. Though he is to a great extent helpless, the more he knows the less easy will it be to lead him to the slaughter.

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# The Messianic Muckrakers

THE ERA OF THE MUCKRAKERS. By C. C. Regier. Chapel Hill, N. C.: University of North Carolina Press. \$2.50.

Reviewed by JOHN O'HARA COSGRAVE

FUTURE historians in plotting the emergence of a civilization in the United States will have in Dr. Regier's "The Era of the Muckrakers" a useful record of one of its more significant passages. In retrospect the place of the movement in the formation may appear nearer foundation than is now suspected but that it amounted to a definite contribution they are bound to allow.

This is a painstaking and accurate account of the origin and growth of the types of periodicals that arose in the late eighties and nineties of the nineteenth century, especially those that burgeoned into prominence and influence in the twentieth. The background of change, unrest, and agitation which they articulated, and the mechanics that made large circulations possible, are clearly set forth. F. A. Munsey

for private speculation and oppression. In a way this was lay-preaching, but the theology was realistic, stimulating to the patriotism and the moral sensibilities of citizens relaxed in the shambles of material development.

Shortly thereafter appeared Lawson's "Frenzied Finance" in *Everybody's*, a dramatic, first-hand exposure of stock skulduggery. His characters were the high priests of the social order whom he paraded as freebooters and thimble riggers in a narrative so vivid and picturesque that it captured national attention. The story belonged in a genre far different from the more sober case-handling of McClure's, but it complemented and indeed derived part of its credibility from the work of Tarbell and Steffens.

Sensational in themselves, these series were eminently corrective, for they stripped the predatory interests of their masks of respectability and conferred an education in current business practices on magazine readers. Disclosures were con-



is disclosed as the pioneer progenitor of the type, but as dividing primary honors with S. S. McClure and J. Brisben Walker. They were not competitors but synchronous percipients of the same opportunity drawn into different phases of its field. Each had a genius of his own, was quite inexplicable and uncomfortable to live with.

It is not shown nor could it be proved very well that in publishing the Tarbell Standard Oil story McClure and his associates were consciously crusading. But magazines must reflect the spirit and movement of their period and the stuff was in the air. Joseph Pulitzer and Hearst were busy launching their thunderbolts against plutocratic profiteering, and the scandals of municipal misgovernment had become notorious. Exposure was no novelty, but exposition of the bearing of such malpractice on national interests as a whole, was. Where McClure's scored was in the creation of a technique that lifted the subject matter of contention from the cockpit of local politics into the realm of ethical principles. The malodorous incidents of the Rockefeller career were generally familiar. Miss Tarbell briefed the case magnificently and laid it before the High Court of public opinion. Thereby, the magazine was identified as a national forum. In Steffens's "Shame of the Cities" series it was shown that the root of corruption was the indifference of peoples to government and that institutions designed to protect interests in common, in the absence of their vigilance, had been converted into instrumentalities

firmed by the Hughes insurance investigations which were contemporary with their publication. Yet, in looking back, I sometimes wonder if their sins were not often as much "news" to the sinners as to those who read about them.

There were zealots in the movement, of course, but no prima donnas. One recalls among the more effective contributors Ray Stannard Baker, Samuel Hopkins Adams, William Hard, Harvey O'Higgins, Woods Hutchinson, and Gareth Garrett. Upton Sinclair, Charles Edward Russell, David Graham Phillips, and E. P. Connelly were more militant campaigners. Verdicts were discounted, of course, but seldom a question was raised as to the disinterestedness of the proponents. It was a renaissance of sorts as well as an audit. The pure food laws and the Drug Act derive from this period, and in it the foundations of women's suffrage and workmen's compensation laws were laid down. Never was more knowledge diffused and digested than in the brief duration of the service. McClure's, the *American*, and *Everybody's*, at the top of their strides, were exemplars of magazine editing.

This work may fairly be said to have raised the wind that filled the sails of contemporary reform. It renewed and refurbished the sense of citizenship and strengthened and implemented the efforts, in particular, of Roosevelt and La Follette in Congress. To deny the values it rendered because the appetite for its pungen- cies failed or because the race is still unredeemed, is childish. Cultures are cumulative. The battles of today are being

waged on the ground the muckrakers reclaimed. Many of the precautions that Lawson devised for his withheld "Remedy" to protect the public against financial depredations are in the new securities act and the Glass-Steagall banking bill. He did not disclose them for the reason that the understanding of financial processes then current was not keen enough to induce or enforce their application.

Muckraking was ended when exposure became a prescription for manufacturing magazine circulation. Like the skyscrapers and hotels of New York it was put out of business by overproduction. There's nothing so tedious as too much calling-attention-to-evil at the same time. Probably a saturation point had been reached before circulations began to wane. The fanatics contributed by their excesses. *Hampton's* recklessness especially diminished its prestige. It was a poor day in any of the big magazine offices on which someone did not turn up with a wrong that needed resistance.

Dr. Regier says in concluding his excellent accounting that conditions in this country today are very similar to those of thirty years ago, corruption as wide spread and big business as predatory, and that the field for more and better muckraking is open for the taking. But it is now an old story. We know the worst. And with Congress thundering in the index and the Morgans at the bar, with Roosevelt re-vamping the Constitution and the gold standard abated, what fare could a magazine offer in competition with the sensations provided by any daily paper's first page?

A quarter of a century crowded with events and inventions has elapsed since the height of the muckraking era and experience and information do alter mental patterns by filtration if not through acquirement. For relief of today's complexities yesterday's nostrums are useless. If again I had a hand on a magazine helm I'd try pioneering in new quarters. Reversing the prevailing currencies of cynicism and derogation to restore confidence in human nature and values, might be a source of circulation. The optimistic appeal has lost none of its old cogency, even if captains of industry no longer serve as exemplars for youth. Coöperation is on the way in. Furthering and articulating its courses would be service. The principles of atomic physics might be profitably applied to the reorganization of human relations. Laissez faire is unknown among the protons and electrons that balance each other's charges more equitably than so far we've learned how to. An astrophysicist turned reformer might shortly have us all by the ears à la Lawson, Tarbell, or Steffens.

Or one might revert to religion in which a revival is overdue. The decalogue needs revising in the terms of our own generation, the cardinal virtues redefined, heavens and hells brought up to date. Destinations have faded—no one knows nowadays where lies the racial future—why not restore the eternal verities to discussion? Not according to orthodoxy, of course, but by reexamination of premises.

Curiosity in human being remains unabated. Life is still the most intimate of our concerns, the richest field for conjecture. The capacities of man require better specifications than biology offers. Psychologists are no nearer to a solution of the mystery of personality than they were in the pre-Einstein period. A sign of the times is that Jeans and Eddington are turning to metaphysics. An appetite for fodder of this kind may be awaiting supply.

Matters of the kind are within the editorial purview if one knows enough to go after them. They can be popularized by fresh technics. The possibilities of readaptation are indicated by the success of *Time* and the *New Yorker* in what had seemed to old professionals exhausted or overpopulated publication areas. Perhaps the opportunity will find its McClure and he a staff as enlightened and alive as his predecessor's.

John O'Hara Cosgrave was editor of *Everybody's Magazine* during the palmy days of muckraking. He is reputed to have rewritten Tom Lawson's "Frenzied Finance" for publication.



# The BOWLING GREEN

## Geography

THIS was an expedition to study Geography. There were no plans and no preparations other than to pack five small suitcases (one apiece) and Scally's plaid overcoat (Scally is a cocker spaniel). After a long winter in town the Family had a desire to see how mountains, rivers and roads fit together in the great jigsaw puzzle of New England.

Everyone has his chosen way of escaping from New York City by car. The Geographer, who had not done much driving for quite a while, was anxious to avoid heavy traffic. The path chosen he calls Goat Boulevard. (The vehicle in question is the kind whose name seems to mean a smallish goat.) Amsterdam Avenue up to 155, then the Harlem River Speedway, cross by the 207th Street Bridge, Fordham Road to Webster Avenue and up Webster past the Botanic Garden and Woodlawn Cemetery. Thus you reach the Bronx River Parkway and are safe. The Geographer does not assert this route as ideal, but he once found himself taking it and he sticks to it. The quickest issue of all is the George Washington Bridge into New Jersey, but it's a roundabout way of getting to Connecticut. The winding Bronx River Parkway lures you on and on until you find yourself at the enormous Kensico dam and reservoir. Then comes the village mysteriously named Armonk which apparently also has a reservoir of another sort. A roadhouse out that way somehow got me on its mailing list, and I long received agreeable passport cards vouching me for refreshment, which I never had opportunity to enjoy.—I'm afraid my study of geography is all involved with purely personal associations. Anyhow, after Armonk you steer for Bedford Village and Cross River. By the time you reach Koch's Log Cabin you'll be fit for hot dogs and beer, and within easy reach of the country where they eat doughnuts for breakfast.

In driving from New York City into Connecticut you may avoid the Boston Post Road, or you may avoid Danbury; it is almost impossible to avoid them both. The number of signs pointing to Danbury finally coerces you. I was glad we went through that Hatter's Castle, for I think it was near there we saw Venus Brothers' Garage. After one experience trying to drive a heavily loaded car over the forest trails near Mount Equinox, this time I was minded to follow valleys. The chief feature of our geography lesson, I think, was the importance of rivers. I know them largely by their appearance on the road-map given away at Socony filling stations. The General Drafting Company, publishers of those Socony charts, deserves a handsome credit for a good job of drawing and printing. Until we have touring maps (like Bartholomew's) showing differences in elevation by different colors, a study of the river systems is the only way to guess the lie of the land. The children vote for Gulf filling stations because the Gulf issues a comic paper once a week, but I am generally faithful to Socony as I think their maps are more explicit, better for the meditative tourist who likes to avoid the main highways occasionally. But almost all filling stations are places of cheer; some day they will find their Chaucer. As Titania remarked with truth, in the middle ages pilgrims got their refreshment and succor at monasteries; now they find it at gas depots. In their priestly smocks the service men look more and more like monks; the bright pumps and oil-bottles shine like altars and holy vessels. As we have said before, this is the true wayside shrine of the American folk, and all it needs now is some form of pious ritual.

Perhaps it is wise not to be too systematic about one's gas. By the time the Little Goat had been on the road several days,

picking up fuel wherever it seemed convenient, her tank was filled with a chance mixture of Socony, Gulf, Shell, and Imperial Three Star from Quebec. (The filling station Frenchman at the top of that steep hill at Levis, across the river from Quebec, told me he had never heard of Socony, which pleased me.) It must have been something like O. Henry's *Lost Blend*, a chance elixir not to be discovered again. Certainly the engine liked it: how she roared through those lonely woods of Maine.

Our anatomy of rivers was quite simple. The Connecticut, faithfully pursued, will take you all the way up to the Canadian border; the Kennebec will bring you a good part of the way back again. Of course we added certain ribs and parallels. After crossing those beautiful Connecticut ridges at Newtown (a village one loves at sight) and Middlebury, the Naugatuck valley leads you up toward Winsted—a town as oddly mixed in character as were its eccentric news dispatches in the old *New York World*. Above Winsted the lovely Colebrook stream winds you well into Massachusetts. Then again crossing comfortable hills you come down to the Connecticut valley at Northampton. We had had some notion of taking another look at Blythe Mountain, Vermont, but this time we were searching still bigger hills. Blythe (aged 10) was consoled by taking her collecting-case and butterfly net. In the fields above Northampton she pursued various moths which were put to sleep in a glass jar with fumes. The qualms of her family were allayed by her assurance that this was important for science. Hearing her allude to cyanide I was alarmed. "What have you in that jar," I asked. "Carbena," she said, and added serenely, "carbon tetrachloride."

Northampton and Amherst were peaceful in the calm sunshine of Independence Day. Literature was forgotten: I should like to have seen Emily Dickinson's home but never thought of it until now. The Lord Jeffrey Rabbits amused us in Amherst, and we found the "Candlelight Den," on the road to Sunderland, an agreeable place for lunch. At Sunderland we countered the strong New England influence by getting gas from Mr. Toczydlowski. In Brattleboro, in honor of Rudyard Kipling, I bought a road-map of Vermont.

But we didn't stay in Vermont long. It was an afternoon that called for swimming and we saw Lake Sunapee on the map, colored a delicate blue. We crossed the Connecticut at Bellows Falls, and leaving the fine profile of Ascutney on our left, we bore away from Claremont along a river called Sugar. The first view of Sunapee is a bit disconcerting, but some exploring brought us to Elm Lodge at George's Mills, a friendly and comfortable place, in time for a swim before supper. I remembered that my last previous swim had been in the Pacific at Palos Verdes.

But I was speaking particularly of rivers. It was fine at Franklin, N. H., to meet again an old friend, the Pemigewasset—just before it joins the Merrimack if I can trust cartographer Socony. In the Pemigewasset, 33 years ago (at North Woodstock) I had my first real swim—I mean lifted my feet off the bottom for the first time and realized that it could be done. It was a glorious afternoon as we drove up that noble valley, with the shapes of the Franconia Notch growing larger—that exquisite mountain profile which, once impressed on the mind, never quite fades from memory. As we went north from Winnepesaukee, the various peaks, Whiteface, Moosilauke, Kinsman, Lincoln, Lafayette, gradually shift in perspective, fall into position, take the stance they had so long ago. Not far from the Flume there's a place where the mountain stream

pours down in a flush of cold foam, polishing a basin of pink granite. I recollected from childhood the rounded cheeks of those fawn-colored rocks, the chill breath of the stream mixed with balsam smells. Doesn't it make you hungry for maple sugar? California friends are eloquent—and justly—of their high glimpses; yet let's not be too humble about our own White Mountains. We paused, of course, at the Great Stone Face, which reminded me to send a postcard to my publisher. PARK HERE FOR OLD MAN, says the sign. The children were specially pleased that their first view of Mount Washington showed it veiled in cloud, which made it seem incredibly tall.

At the very pleasing town of Colebrook, N. H., where the Farmers & Traders' Bank gave me \$27 Canadian for 25 U. S. dollars, I was surprised to find a Mt. Monadnock rising nearby, across the river. I had thought of Monadnock as being farther south. There is evidently a professional mountain-rivalry between the two neighboring States, for the druggist said, "Oh, that's only the Vermont Monadnock. The real one's down near Peterboro, in New Hampshire." I looked them up in Socony, and truly the southern one has 26 feet advantage. But we did not stay to argue the point, for now a fine clear morning tempted us to make a bold strike for Quebec. A clear morning which was deceptive, for late that afternoon on the hills above Valley Junction, P. Q., we ran into as sharp a squall as one has any need for. The rain, driving across an open car, was blinding; if it had not been for a covered bridge, which gave opportunity to draw breath and rub eyes, we might well have been ditched. I had forgotten that the Province is famous for lively thunderstorms. But the earlier and more agreeable impression, after the courteous welcome of the Canadian customs, was the brilliant colors of wild flowers in the open fields—buttercups like fields of golden cloth, and daisies and paintbrush. If you drive that way I commend lunch at the little hotel in Sawyerville—"Meals 50 cents; Beer and Wine." I remember the fried turkey and the Black Horse ale. And Canadian ales, unlike our own, are guaranteed to be not less than a given alcoholic content.

My friend Bill Britton, who drives from Los Angeles to San Francisco (450 miles) between noon and midnight, wouldn't think much of the Little Goat's champion day's run—259 miles from Bretton Woods to Quebec. But with a fierce rainstorm en



CHIEN D'OR (Quebec)

route, over the gravel detours of Quebec, and with a car-full of children, it's plenty. And the day ended with a full moon seen over the St. Lawrence. Much as one has read and heard of that city, it is more beautiful than I had any notion of. And also far more French. Particularly I was delighted by the horse-carts of the boulders which reminded us of old house-keeping days in Normandy—and by a bishop (or a dean?) in gaiters on his way to some morning advowson. He gave me a good appetite for breakfast. Scally, the spaniel, was pleased by the Chien d'Or, on an old unexplained stone now embedded over the post office doorway, with its motto:—

Je suis un chien qui ronge lo (l'os)  
En le rongeant je prend mon repos  
Un tems viendra qui nest pas venu  
Que je morderay qui maura mordu

How good to be reading again tags and affiches in French. *Faites Cesser la Depression*, said one. *Chaque piastre dépensée durant le mois aidera à faire tourner la roue de la prospérité*. Our 27 Canadian

dollars, which went off rapidly on the spin of the wheel, will hardly be noticed by the fiscal experts of the Province; but to us they felt as important as the fly in the old story who sat on the cart-wheel. "See what a dust I raise."

*Shadows on the Rock* by Miss Cather is still well displayed in all Quebec bookshops; it is evidently a steady favorite. I bought myself a French translation of one of E. C. Bentley's detective stories, *L'Affaire Manderson*; then found it was *Trent's Last Case*, which I had read; but I'm enjoying it again in the French version. Of course there is no such thing as what we think we mean when we say a translation. There is no equivalence between two words or phrases in different languages. We should not say that one word in French means a word in English—only that they both approximately render the same idea. Perhaps we should not use the word *translation*, but *version* or *substitute*.—What is the peculiar charm and mystery of the French language that makes each lover of it feel that he, more than anyone else, inwardly perceives and relishes its quirks of suggestion? Of course as long as one thinks of "translating" a foreign tongue one has not even begun to savvy it. The fun begins when one instinctively accepts it in its own words, and does not attempt to transpose them into English. But the psychology of all this is too interesting to be approached in haste. Quebec makes all her official pronouncements in double, both French and English, but you cannot regard either version as a translation of the other. They are two independent approaches to one purport.

I paced a number of toises, as Uncle Toby would say, round the ramparts of the citadel. The re-entrant angles of the moat would please that old amorist of fortification; as also the trim garden of the Garrison Club where the Ladies' Entrance is alongside a lawn ornamented with pyramids of cannon-balls. From the high vantage of the hill there is much to see: the sentry in scarlet coat and busby at the gate of the fortress; wildflower yellow, white and purple; the bigger dandelion globes I've ever seen; and a constant salute of larks. Why is it that nature always makes herself specially charming round any antique monument of man's angers? On the breeze was that specially French savor of burning wood-smoke. Britain has made many mistakes, but her tact in encouraging two different cultures to grow side by side in Quebec might suggest that all those centuries of war were unnecessary. Such a suggestion would probably be amiss. It is dangerous to reason about history, which is a chancy topic. Safer to stick to geography.

Incidentally, confirming the Bowling Green's theory that drinking places are valuable agencies of international conciliation, I note that the only channel of diplomatic exchange between Washington and the Soviets (in negotiating the return of Mr. Mattern) is through Kings' Brewery in Brooklyn.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

## A Sea Captain's Story

DEEP WATER. By Pryce Mitchell. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1933. \$2.50.

Reviewed by CAPTAIN FELIX RIESENBERG

HERE is a seamanlike yarn, the story of a man's lifetime on the sea, man and boy, sail and steam, that carries the reader across the wide oceans with its author. The book is stowed close with great yarns of the sea. For instance, there is the tale of the running down of a small schooner. "The first thing we knew we had struck her amidships and cut her in two. . . . Although we hung around until daylight, none of her crew were found—only some wreckage and a piece of sail." You can add to the story as you go, for Captain Mitchell writes with an objective simplicity, a modest use of his vast experience, that leaves the reader with a feeling of having come upon truth. It is one of the best books of its kind, and deserving the attention of those who love the sea and take pleasure in reading the adventures of a sailor.