

A Love Story

MANDARIN IN MANHATTAN: Further Translations from the Chinese. By CHRISTOPHER MORLEY. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1933. \$2.

Reviewed by SIMEON STRUNSKY

ONE of the great love stories of our time is that of Christopher Morley for the city of New York. It has all the elements that enter into a grand passion. It has sincerity, simplicity, disinterestedness, duration; and almost best of all, it warms the heart of beholders. Morley's love for New York, and particularly for New York County, must now be twenty years old. It sprang into being apparently the moment he landed here from Oxford in the year before the war. There was a brief Philadelphia interval, but it was a change of

skies, not of the heart. The flesh may have been with the Curtis Publishing Company in Independence Square. The spirit was with the streets of Manhattan, its bookshops, its delicatessen stores, its embryo Morning-side cathedrals, its Riverside Drive squirrels, its crowds, its overheard phrases and overlooked store signs and blazons, its cops, its children, its litter, its blue skies, its shoe-shine parlors, its opportunities for puns that are sometimes inspired and sometimes just terrible, its tall buildings, its free lunch counters, its newspapers, its Commencement orators, its filling stations, its green oases of graveyard in the heart of the Financial District, its commuter, its food markets, its publishing, its buses, its Summer students, its Tennessee and Oklahoma, its pa- its garment workers both of the Left Wing and the Right Wing, its neighborhood banks, its fortune-telling weighing machines.

For twenty years and in many volumes of fiction, essay, verse, and free rhythms like the present *soi-disant* Chinese musings, Morley has loved the multitude of external ordinary things that make up New York to those of us who also love her. Some of us may find the Mandarin part of the book not much more convincing than the independence of Manchukuo, but who cares as long as that old Mongolian fraud carries a warm, understanding New York heart under his padded robe? People who know their New York in terms of the smartest places where to eat and the latest prominent faces at first nights, people who travel in New York by taking a taxi from West Fifty-second Street to Sutton Place, know a different city from the one we know who travel in New York by Subway and by "L," and walk long distances on her sidewalks. The might and the melancholy of New York is in Morley's greeting to the crowd in the Subway car,

*You, and you, and you, seen only once
Good-bye forever and good-luck.*

The lines have a deeper feeling than many of the elaborate cards of identity by which Morley's prime favorite, Walt Whitman, tried to make himself one with the crowds of Manhattan. Plainly you love a city and a people if your eyes are always picking up things like this about them, from the Sixth Avenue "L."

*At Bleecker Street I pass through the olive
oil region,
And at the curve below Eighth Street
Am startled at the admonition to Jews and
Gentiles
Carved on a church.
Near Fourteenth I find Squirrel Bellies
and Paws,
At Twenty-eighth, Candies and Sugar
Plums,
At Thirty-second, All You Can Eat, 60c,
And at Thirty-ninth, Gainly Hats. . .*

By a man's preoccupation with such simple everyday externals you may tell whether he really loves the city in which he lives and the people in it, or whether it is another one of the mammoth literary

symphonies in the French manner that set out to "capture" the soul of a city in a dozen volumes and many thousand pages. We have had our own experiments in cramming 102 stories of New York height and seven million of her people within the dimensions of a politico-economic thesis, "Manhattan Transfer" or "Union Square." We have our own neat tailor-made formulas that give you the soul of New York in twenty-four hours or a dozen people dining at eight. This business of getting at the mass soul usually results in putting souls into things that really have no life, like a lot of Soviet tractors, or in taking the soul out of things that have life, like a stretch of New York City blocks at night in an unfashionable district. Volumes of sophisticated introspection on Park Avenue pent-house terraces will hold far less of New York than Morley has seized in five lines:

*Out for my evening stroll
I discovered on
Eighty-fourth Street
A power-house,
quietly humming to itself,
And though I lived near-by
I had never known it was there.*

This is external and yet alive. But if you insist on the inner life of modern man in New York and its urbanized suburban zone,

here he is, reduced to the core of his modern being:

*I sit here tonight
Fortified in my own particular silence.
Donny, the sheep-dog, lies in the next room,
And sometimes, when he stirs,
The tinkle of his license tag
Seems, for the dreadful tithing of a second,
The preliminary tocsin of a telephone call.
In that bursting schism of the mind
My whole wary garrison leaps furious to defense
And my walls bristle with armored paladins
Ready with reasons why I shouldn't do
Whatever it is
Whoever might want.*

The scene is probably a suburban home in near-by Long Island. But the essence of New York is in this telephone which has bound humanity so closely together that people have been forced into looking upon each other as *prima facie* intruders.

During Mr. Morley's connection with the New York Evening Post, Simeon Strunsky was editor of that newspaper, and is now an associate editor of the New York Times. He is an author and columnist of note, and, like Mr. Morley, a lover of New York, as his "Belshazzar Court" shows.

Pity the Farmer

THE FARMER IS DOOMED. By LOUIS HACKER. New York: The John Day Co. 1933. 25 cents.

THIS is one of the best of the John Day pamphlets. Mr. Hacker, who is co-author with Professor Kendrick of Columbia University of "The United States since 1865," argues that it is the historic destiny of America, both as a creditor and industrial nation, to follow the path entered upon by England when the corn laws were repealed in 1846. American finance capital, he says, must inevitably reach out to develop China and South America. This will incur interest charges for the South Americans and the Chinese, and the only way to pay us will be in goods and services. Our manufacturers, too, says Mr. Hacker, must export their surplus finished stocks, or see their profits dwindle and their plants lie idle. An export of finished goods will mean more necessity for repayment—which also must be in goods and services. What more logical than to expect the righting of the balance of trade by admitting to this country cheap foodstuffs and raw materials? Finance capital and the manufacturers, Mr. Hacker says, will prove too strong for the Borahs, the Norrises, and the rest of the sons of the wild jackass.

The Green Pastures of Holland

AN INDISCREET ITINERARY. By HENDRIK WILLEM VAN LOON. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company. 1933. \$1.
LETTERS FROM HOLLAND. By KAREL CAPEK. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1933. \$1.50.

Reviewed by ALFRED VAN DUYM

PERHAPS there is no country in the world today—unless it be the much advertised South Sea Islands—where one would be more likely to forget the turmoil and vexation of the modern world than Holland. Baudelaire alluded to it in his "Invitation au Voyage" three quarters of a century ago and van Loon and Capek follow suit. They do, however, differ in their approach.—Baudelaire in one of his milder moods as a spleen stricken idealist, Capek as an artist and ardent horticulturist, van Loon as a historian and patriot—in the best sense of this today often misinterpreted term.

Let me say from the outset that both books are eminently readable and that of van Loon downright inspiring. Capek has a tendency to wander from his subject, but van Loon sticks to the matter at hand and I have seldom found a small book more packed with information.

There is an almost eternal quality about Holland as there was about Greece, with this difference, that when we visit modern Greece we wander among the ruins of classical Greece, while the Holland of today is still throbbing with the life of its golden century. There are whole parts of Amsterdam, for instance, which are almost wholly identical with the Amsterdam of Rembrandt's day. Some of the most modern architecture of the Holland of today has many of the features of the architecture of yesterday. The home in Holland still means home and that is where the greater part of the Hollander's life is lived.

Then of course there is the eternal struggle with the sea and the preponderance of water over all the other elements. Capek devotes some of the most subtly humorous pages of his book to this. At this point I am very much tempted to quote him, but I am afraid there is no

Loon's other books slightly irritating to the better informed. It would be vain to compare the two books. Capek paints inimitable word pictures which can only be described as Capek-esque. His characterizations of the outstanding qualities of the Dutch are more witty than true, and the scalpel which he applied so neatly to the



THE TOWER OF HAARLEM—Van Loon

English and the charming little bouquets which he threw so deftly to the Spanish are rather absent from this somewhat hastily written booklet on the Dutch. True, he loves their paintings, he has a keen appreciation of their flowers, but it seems to me that he saw only in part. Of course it may be that I feel unduly nationalistic. Even so, van Loon's is much the better book on Holland.

Needless to say the illustrations contribute immensely to the charm of both books and in this respect Capek may have the edge on van Loon. However, if you intend to visit Holland or gather an impression of this calmly fascinating from your armchair, do not fail to read both these books. There is only one country within my knowledge which excels them. That is Karl Scheffler's "Holland" and that I think that the better on account of its length.

Lorenzo in Chaos

LAWRENCE AND BRETT. A FRIENDSHIP. By DOROTHY BRETT. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company. 1933. \$3.

Reviewed by ERNEST BOYD

IT is not with any desire merely to make a feeble pun that I have chosen this title for a review of a book about D. H. Lawrence. From the spate of biographical and critical studies which have been issued since his death, the one fact which seems to emerge is the chaotic nature of Lawrence's existence and of his relations with women, especially with the three, Dorothy Brett, Mabel Dodge Luhan, whose "Lorenzo in Taos" started the ball rolling, and Catherine Carswell, author of "The Savage Pilgrimage," who have been vying with one another in proving that each alone understood the Master. One man, it is true, Mr. Middleton Murry, has attempted to say his word in this Thesmophoriazuse and has been roundly abused for his pains. His "Son of Woman" was the first in the field, and so excited the ire of Mrs. Carswell that Mr. Murry had to compel the English publishers of "The Savage Pilgrimage" to withdraw the book in order to delete passages which he considered libellous. Meanwhile, in England Mr. Murry has returned to the subject of Mrs. Carswell and her book, in "Reminiscences of D. H. Lawrence," which will presumably be issued over here for the edification of the faithful.

What, one may well ask, is all this potter about? Save for "Son of Woman," none of these books makes any pretense at a rational estimate of Lawrence or a critical estimate of his position as a writer. Why, then, this flow of otiose reminiscence and recrimination? The authors themselves would doubtless answer, in that hyperbolic style to which they are accustomed, that Lawrence was such a Godlike personality, such a heaven-sent

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THE HOUSE OF REMBRANDT
By Hendrik van Loon

room to do this. However when he says "Holland implies water. Holland implies flower-beds. Holland implies pastures," he gets at the very roots of Holland's existence.

The most striking feature of modern Holland, both authors agree, is the bicycle. That has been the great mechanical contribution to the happiness of the Dutch. Next to windmills and flower-beds there seems nothing as universal to the Dutch as that contraption which most other nations until just yesterday had put on the scrapheap with the advent of the automobile.

Hendrik Willem van Loon, if not as witty, looks deeper into the character of Hollanders. In his astonishing little book he packs all the information one needs for a successful trip through Holland. It is compact without ever being dry. At the same time there is a warmth of feeling, an understanding which makes it much more than a simple travel guide. Capek's Holland is more Capek than Holland. Van Loon's Holland is van Loon and Holland inextricably bound up. Seldom has this versatile author shown a more profound understanding of his subject.

There is also none of the talking down to his audience which makes some of van

Lorenzo in Chaos

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genius, so marvellous and unparalleled a figure in English literature, that no detail of his life, however trifling or ignoble, no weakness nor petulance nor affectation, should go unrecorded. I am afraid that it will be impossible for most people with any sense of humor and proportion to accept this view of the matter. D. H. Lawrence was not the transcendent hero and darling of these ladies' daydreams. If he were the greatest modern English novelist, his memory would be ill-served by these three volumes of reminiscences. As it was, his harassed and morbid existence could ill afford to be exposed to the hysterical championship of such friends as here reveal their petty egomania and vain hallucinations.

If there was one thing more than another which a man of Lawrence's peculiar temperament needed least, it was the constant society of people as unbalanced and as pathologically self-conscious as himself. On the evidence of his biographers, after his earliest years, he never saw any other kind of people. So far from trying to save him from his friends, everybody seems to have conspired to throw him perpetually out of one frying-pan into another fire. Each of his lady biographers fiercely resented the other, and all united only when confronted by the inescapable legal and physical fact of his wife, who appears to have been, with Tony Luhan, the only sane and normal person in Lorenzo's chaos. If there are to be any further volumes of this kind about Lawrence, let us hope they will be written by Tony Luhan and Frieda Lawrence. "Love amongst the Neurasthenics" might well be an appropriate title.

Out of this ceaseless stream of trivialities, these stories of sulking and bickering, it is hard to determine which incident best illustrates the insensitive humorlessness of the would-be guardians of Lawrence's integrity. Perhaps the choicest example is the story of the dinner party at the Café Royal in London, when Lawrence became very drunk, vomited over the table, and fell into a stupor. The Honorable Dorothy Brett and Mrs. Carswell discuss this disgusting incident with almost religious reverence, while Mrs. Luhan, who was not present, gives it the honor of an inaccurate footnote. Mrs. Carswell even goes so far as to recall the Last Supper in connection with this charming feast, and when Lawrence was frogmarched up the stairs to his flat, she adds that her brother "saw clearly before him St. John and St. Peter (or maybe St. Thomas) bearing between them the limp figure of their master." There is much dispute between the Brett and Carswell ladies as to which of them smoothed Lawrence's moist brow, but both give accurate accounts of the dresses they wore at the party.

While Mrs. Carswell is chiefly concerned with Lawrence in England and her squabbles with Mr. Murry, Mrs. Luhan and Miss Brett concentrate upon the lamentable Taos experiment. The essence of that story, as they tell it, is that Lawrence, trying to get away from everything (ostensibly), surrounded himself with bores of every description on a ranch in New Mexico, and was the centre of a fierce triangular struggle between his wife and the two handmaidens of his genius. One may learn without astonishment that Lawrence was frightened by Mrs. Dodge's unmade bed and her lack of clothing, that they all got on each other's nerves, that sometimes Brett was the only woman in the world, sometimes Mable, but that there was always Frieda. Why any man in his sane senses should elect such a life remains a mystery, which only a psychoanalyst would care to unravel. Mrs. Luhan just says, "I willed him to come." Which, obviously, settles it.

It is not, I believe, a great mystery that certain types of women are inevitably attracted to men who are in the public eye, writers, artists, actors, and so forth. In vulgar parlance, they develop a "crush," at which the wise are wont to smile and shrug their shoulders. With a sense of humor and reality people manage to face these experiences and survive them, otherwise, an endless pother ensues about

nothing. These books about Lawrence are the first specimens which I have encountered of the "crush" as a form of literature. Such effusions usually take the simpler form of "mash notes," and are duly consigned to the wastepaper basket, or are used as evidence in the divorce court, by wives who like their husbands to be "famous," but cannot stand the irrelevant byproducts of fame. If Lawrence had been a male movie beauty, and had these narratives of plate-throwing, both literal and metaphorical, been served up as fodder for tabloid newspaper readers, both subject, authors, and audience would have met on their appropriate level.

If the admirers of D. H. Lawrence are satisfied with these tributes to his memory—and apparently they are—far be it from one who takes a far less exalted view of his talents to become indignant. To be frank, such books as Mrs. Luhan's, Mrs. Carswell's, and Miss Brett's fill me with laughter. In his lifetime, as I have said, nobody could save Lawrence from his friends, and since his death nobody can



D. H. LAWRENCE
Drawn for The Saturday Review
by Sheilah Raleigh

save him from his biographers. Mrs. Luhan, however, quotes an unfinished article of Lawrence's which deserves wider notice as a genuine statement of his impression of New Mexico:

It is all rather like comic opera played with solemn intensity. All the wildness and woolliness and westernity and motor-cars and art and sage and savage are so mixed up, so incongruous, that it is a farce, and everybody knows it. But they refuse to play it as farce.

These volumes are farce, but the authors have refused to write them as farce. *Risum teneatis?*

Perfumed Pages

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were served on four aloes-wood trays, laid out on a high sandal-wood stand. The mats were dyed to different tints of wistaria color and embroidered with a pattern of wistaria-blossom. The dishes were silver, the cups of crystal, the bowls of lapis-lazuli;

when we see the Court in a ferment over the "Second Princess's Putting on of the Skirt"; when the Imperial Literary Banquet, the composition of elegant poetry, and the playing of the zither become cardinal elements in politics, we find ourselves in a Never-Never Land which enables us to forget Fascism, the monthly bills, and controlled inflation. We enjoy Murasaki, to a great extent, for the same reason that scullery maids and shopgirls enjoy reading about movie stars and duchesses. A common psychological link binds Lady Murasaki to Ethel M. Dell and Elinor Glyn.

This, however, is purely accidental. Fifty years from now we may have contrived to solidify and organize our society to such a degree that we shall again crave the Gothic touch in literature. Even then, one feels, "The Tale of Genji" will survive to hold the interest and affections of our fascinated or technocratized descendants, for Lady Murasaki's touch—irrespective

of the form and underlying philosophy of her work—is both intensely human and intensely wise.

She wrote, one feels, for a Cant clique, a microscopic cluster of artificialized humans in a remote and unfamiliar land hundreds of years ago. Yet her brush was too sure, her intuitions were too well-founded, for her work to pass the way of the "literary"; she is a great humanist in spite of her cleverness and of her humorous poetical allusions.

This present volume is a gem of literary portrayal of human character. In outline it corresponds to the Western "triangle"—except that in the society of which she writes neither chastity nor physical fidelity were of great importance. The heroine, Ukifune, is the illegitimate daughter of old Prince Hachi. Her mother has established her in the house of Kuzeri, wife of Prince Niou, one of the Emperor's sons and a direct descendent of Genji, the legendary Great Lover. Prince Niou takes after his amorous grandsire, so Ukifune is removed from temptation. Kaoru, the putative but not the actual son of Genji, is a high Court official, married to the Emperor's second daughter. Kaoru has been tragically in love with Kuzeri's dead sister, and when Kuzeri hinted that Ukifune resembled his dead love, Kaoru promptly made the girl his mistress.

Niou also fell in love with Ukifune and carried on a clandestine intrigue with her in the "love-nest" which the sentimental Kaoru had established outside the capital at Uji. Kaoru discovers the intrigue and becomes intensely jealous. Between her two lovers, Ukifune is driven to despair. She attempts suicide but is rescued and becomes a nun. The tale ends with Kaoru's discovery that Ukifune, who has been mourned as dead and whose apparent death has contrived to clear the domestic atmosphere of both Kaoru's and Niou's households, is still alive. Kaoru makes half-hearted efforts to reestablish contact with Ukifune, but he is frustrated by his own jealousy and the poor girl's hysterical revulsion against all sentimentality and love affairs.

The triangle which Murasaki reveals is a subtle contrast between the literary, sentimental type of lover and the Lothario type. Kaoru loves Ukifune primarily because he was in love with the dead Age-maki and because Ukifune resembles the lady of his frustrated dreams. Niou loves Ukifune as an innocent and intense amoralist. To him it is enough that she is desirable and a woman. Ukifune gives Kaoru her respect and affection, but she gives Niou her passion, according to the ancient alchemy of love by which one can give only what one receives. So it is that Kaoru is shocked to learn of her intrigue with the amorous Prince:

He had always thought her a singularly gentle and affectionate character, inclined perhaps to lean on him almost too much. And all the while these unpleasant cravings were going on. It was disgusting. She was obviously the sort of woman who could not exist without a love for a single day.

Murasaki was evidently attempting to portray the introspection and indcision of one who was not descended from Genji with the straightforward ardor of one who was—but she has succeeded, almost despite herself, in creating characters and a situation which are universally true.

"The Bridge of Dreams" thus, rather remarkably, combines the qualities of a book for the times and a book for all time. To the many who seek release from the toils and troubles of an unreasonably disordered world, it offers escape on the gossamer-wings of a darting, dragon-fly type of art into a world where matters of ritual, ceremonial, artistic refinement and affairs of the heart are all-important. And to those who delight in the skilful portrayal of human character and of human moods and emotions, it offers the incomparable pen of a clever and discriminating student of humanity. "The Tale of Genji" is thus doubly a classic and entitles its author to the much-abused title of genius.

John Carter, who has found time despite his duties in connection with the State Department for writing several books, was at one time assistant editor of the "New York Times Book Review."

Books in the News

ANDRÉ MAUROIS, whose light and lucid mind can be found playing over everything in the universe if you watch it long enough, has come to this country to study the "brain trust." He plans to converse with Messrs. Tugwell and Moley in Washington, D. C., and he has read with interest Walter Lippmann's most recent speech about the feasibility of a planned national economy. Lest M. Maurois go into the matter "cold," *The Saturday Review of Literature* offers him a bibliography of the planners' literature.

First, there is John Dewey's "Individualism New and Old" (Minton, Balch), which M. Maurois has probably read. This was one of the first of the straws in the wind blowing towards national economic planning. But if M. Maurois really wishes to get up a proper background, let him go way back to W. J. Ghent's "The Next Step: A Benevolent Feudalism," published circa 1903 by the Macmillan Co. Macmillan, since that first essay on the implications of national planning, has rather hogged the market for books on the subject. They have published George Soule's "A Planned Society" and Stuart Chases's "A New Deal." M. Maurois will find fit meat in both these books. If he reads Rexford Tugwell's recent "The Industrial Discipline and the Governmental Arts" (Columbia Univ. Press), he will merely be getting from a "brain trust" what others who aren't brain trusters have written a year or so back. Before he goes home, M. Maurois ought to journey up to New Milford, Conn., to converse with Charles A. Beard, who has written extensively on planning for the American industrial machine. And while he is in Washington, he might drop in on Jay Franklin, whose real name is John Carter, and who has his own ideas on the subject.

Other "brain trust" literature to be absorbed includes "The Modern Corporation and Private Property" (Adolf Berle and Gardiner Means). Macmillan publishes this book, too. Perhaps the best thing M. Maurois can do is to get his name upon the Macmillan free list. To achieve this, he probably would have to write a book himself for Macmillan, but if the book is on the "brain trust" Mr. James Putnam would most certainly be willing to read the manuscript with a view to publication.

Conditioning the Future

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icence in the endurance that makes war possible.) But you can show him its incidence on the civilian population, its aftermath of economic disaster and political embroilment, its futility as opposed to the dramatic quality of pacific achievement. But this is a big task. It needs the best talents of the best writers, the backing of peace organizations, the production of work that will convince the commercial producer of its business possibilities. Noel Coward pointed the way to successful propaganda in his "Cavalcade." There ought to be a thousand ways of advocating peace which would be, like his, at once entertainment and effective education.

The Saturday Review of Literature

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GEORGE STEVENS
WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT
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