

would be impertinent of me to say anything in praise of it. I have read many appreciations of it, and I think everything has been said but one thing, and that is that it is eminently readable. I should not mention a merit that is so obvious except that many great books do not possess it. It is the greatest gift of the story-teller and one that Arnold Bennett had even in his slightest and most trivial pieces. The success of "The Old Wives' Tale" came slowly. I think I am right in saying that it was reviewed favorably, but not with frantic eulogies, and that its circulation was moderate. For a time it looked as though it would have no more than a *succès d'estime* and be forgotten as all but one novel out of a thousand are forgotten. By a happy chance which would take too long to narrate "The Old Wives' Tale" was brought to the attention of Mr. George Doran who had bought sheets of it; he forthwith acquired the American rights, set it up, and launched it on its triumphant course. It was not till after its great success in America that it was taken over by another publisher in England and attracted the attention of the British public.

For many years, what with one thing and another, I do not think I met Arnold, or if I did it was only at a party, literary or otherwise, at which I had the opportunity to say no more than a few words to him; but after the war and until his death I saw much of him. Much has been written of him during these later years and I have little to add. He was become a great figure. He was very different from the thin, rather insignificant man, looking like a city clerk, with his black hair plastered down on his head, that I had known in Paris. He had grown stout. His hair, very gray, was worn much longer and he had cultivated the amusing cock's comb that the caricaturists made famous. He had always been neat in his dress, disconcertingly even, but now he was grand. He wore frilled shirts in the evening and took an immense pride in his white waistcoats. He had related the story of a picnic I took him on while he was staying with me in the South of France. On a storm preventing us from leaving the island on which we were, he took stock with his humorous detachment of the reactions of the various persons present to the slight danger we found ourselves faced with. He did not say that the women were all in pyjamas and the men in tennis shirts, duck trousers, and *espadrilles*; but that he, refusing to permit himself such *sans gêne*, was arrayed in a check suit of a sort of mustard color, wore fancy socks and fancy shoes, a starched collar, a striped shirt, and a foulard tie; and that when at six next morning we all got home, bedraggled, unshaven, and looking like nothing on earth, he, in his smart shirt and neat suit, looked, as he had looked eighteen hours before, as though he had just come out of a band-box. To the end of the experience he remained dignified, self-possessed, good-tempered, and interested.

But it was not only in appearance that he was a very different man from the one that I had known in Paris. I dare say it was all there then and perhaps it was only my stupidity and youth that prevented me from seeing it. Perhaps also it was that life had changed him. I think it possible that at first he was hampered by his extreme diffidence, and his bumptiousness was a protection he assumed to his own timidity and that success had given him confidence. It had certainly mellowed him. He had acquired a very sensible assurance of his own merit. He told me once that there were only two novels written during the last thirty years that he was confident would survive and one of these was "The Old Wives' Tale." It was impossible to know him without liking him. He was a character. His very oddities were endearing. Indeed it was to them that the great affection in which he was universally held was partly due, for people laughed at foibles in him which they were conscious of not possessing themselves and thus mitigated the oppression which admiration for his talent must otherwise have made them feel. He was never what in England is technically known as a gentleman, but he was not common any

more than the traffic surging up Ludgate Hill is common. His common sense was matchless. He was entirely devoid of envy. He was generous. He was courageous. He always said with perfect frankness what he thought and because it never struck him that he could offend he never did; but if, with his quick sensitiveness, he imagined that he had hurt somebody's feelings he did everything in reason to salve the wound. His kindness glowed like a halo about a saint.

I was surprised to see how patronizing on the whole were the obituary notices written at his death. A certain amount of fun was made of his obsession with grandeur and luxury, and the pleasure he took in *trains de luxe* and first class hotels.



SOMERSET MAUGHAM

He never quite grew accustomed to the appurtenances of wealth. Once he said to me, If you've ever really been poor you remain poor at heart all your life. I've often walked, he added, when I could very well afford to take a taxi because I simply couldn't bring myself to waste the shilling it would cost. He admired and disapproved of extravagance.

The criticism to which he devoted much time during his later years came in for a good deal of adverse comment. He loved his position on *The Evening Standard*. He liked the power it gave him and enjoyed the interest his articles aroused. The immediate response, like the applause an actor receives after an effective scene, gratified his appetite for actuality. It gave him the illusion, peculiarly pleasant to the author whose avocation necessarily entails a sense of apartness, that he was in the midst of things. He read as a man of letters and whatever he thought he said without fear or favor. He had no patience with the precious, the affected, or the pompous. If he thought little of certain writers who are now more praised than read it is not certain that he thought wrong. He was more interested in life than in art. In criticism he was an amateur. The professional critic is probably somewhat shy of life, for otherwise it is unlikely that he would devote himself to the reading and judging of books rather than to stress and turmoil of living. He is more at ease with it when the sweat has dried and the acrid odor of humanity has ceased to offend the nostrils. He can be sympathetic enough to the realism of De-foe and the tumultuous vitality of Balzac, but when it comes to the productions of his own day he feels more comfortable with works in which a deliberately literary attitude has softened the asperities of reality. That is why, I suppose, the praise that was accorded to Arnold Bennett for "The Old Wives' Tale" after his

death was cooler than one would have expected.

Some of the critics said that notwithstanding everything he had a sense of beauty and they quoted passages to show his poetic power and his feeling for the mystery of existence. I do not see the point of making out that he had something of what you would like him to have had a great deal more of and ignoring that in which his power and value was. He was neither a mystic nor poet. He was interested in material things and in the passions common to all men. He described life, as every writer does, in the terms of his own temperament. He was more concerned with the man in the street than with the exceptional person. Everyone knows that Arnold was afflicted with a very bad stammer; it was painful to watch the struggle he had sometimes to get the words out. It was torture to him. Few realized the exhaustion it caused him to speak. What to most men was as easy as breathing, to him was a constant strain. It tore his nerves to pieces. Few knew the humiliation it exposed him to, the ridicule it excited in many, the impatience it aroused, the awkwardness of feeling that it made people find him tiresome; and the minor exasperation of thinking of a good, amusing, or apt remark and not venturing to say it in case the stammer ruined it. Few knew the distressing sense it gave rise to of a bar to complete contact with other men. It may be that except for the stammer which forced him to introspection Arnold would never have become a writer. But I think it is not the least proof of his strong and sane character that notwithstanding this impediment he was able to retain his splendid balance.

"The Old Wives' Tale" is certainly the best book he wrote. He never lost the desire to write another as good and because it was written by an effort of will he thought he could repeat it. He tried in "Clayhanger," and for a time it looked as though he might succeed. I think he failed only because his material fizzled out. After "The Old Wives' Tale" he had not enough left to complete the vast structure he had designed. No writer can get more than a certain amount of ore out of one seam; when he has got that, though it remains, miraculously, as rich as before, it is only others who can profitably work it. He tried again in "Lord Raingo" and he tried for the last time in "Imperial Palace." Here I think the subject was at fault. Because it profoundly interested him he thought it was of universal interest. He gathered his data systematically, but they were jotted down in notebooks and not garnered (as were those of "The Old Wives' Tale") unconsciously and preserved, not in black and white, but as old memories in his bones, in his nerves, in his heart. But that Arnold should have spent the last of his energy and determination in the description of a hotel seems to me to have a symbolical significance. For I feel that he was never quite at home in the world. It was to him perhaps a sumptuous hotel, with marble bathrooms and a marvellous cuisine, in which he was a transient guest. For all his assurance and his knowing air I felt that he was, here among men, impressed, delighted, but a little afraid of doing the wrong thing and never entirely at his ease. Just as his little apartment in the rue des Dames years before had suggested to me a role played carefully, but from the outside, I feel that to him life was a role that he played, and with ability, but into the skin of which he never quite got.

Although Your Thought

By JANET PIPER

ALTHOUGH your thought lies in my open hand,
Transparent, plain, for all the world to see,
Being not you, and lacking the true key,
Still I may never wholly understand.
"I am the corn, you are the chickadee
Picking me up. And will you eat me, mother?"
Here is a simple game like any other,
And in it mind's implicit mystery.
Time is my enemy, I am aware,
And there are subtler foes lurk in his train.
This is my certain best, this now and here;
So I am prey to sharp and sudden fear,
So I am stabbed with immemorial pain,
Kin to all mothers, lovers, anywhere.

Bridges to the Unknown

(Continued from preceding page)
in statistical research, amassing mountains of facts within the framework of no consistent theory at all; you have brilliant improvisers and critics like John Maynard Keynes, with special hobbies; you have students of institutions and students of economic history—many of them able in their lines, but producing very little net result. What has been most lacking recently is the economic philosopher, the political economist in the old sense, who is able to take statistical facts, theories, knowledge of institutions, and an understanding of all the relevant social sciences, and, with a judicious mixture of intuition, weld them into a consistent view of affairs which is somehow applicable to the current situation, somehow capable of being tested by experience.

Mr. Tugwell is one of those who have been hammering away at this larger construction, and he also happens to be at present in a position to exert some influence over action. His book is full neither of facts nor of examples nor of intricate special theories, but of penetrating observations in the generalized, conceptual language of the philosopher. Almost at the beginning of his essay he recognizes that "we conspicuously lack the mental qualities necessary for looking facts in the face," and that "the reforms we need most are of these sorts which lie in our thinking and our loving." The scholars "are dominated by a conceptual analysis which stands in contrast to the instru-

REXFORD GUY TUGWELL
Courtesy of Harris and Ewing

mental projection we need." They attempt to derive causal relations from the past.

We think we cannot see ahead until the exploration of causes is complete. We therefore cannot act. For causes require a long time to appear. . . . The liberty of scholarship is limited by conventional method, not, as is sometimes suggested, by sinister pressures from the outside. It is because there is so little imaginative feeling for implication in the academic mind that it remains so relatively useless in the crises. . . .

What is needed is "to seize on probabilities in the future and advise action with relation to conditions they impose."

His own estimate of these probabilities and his advice for action comprise most of the book. They arise from the major premise that we are committed to machine technology. What are machines, fundamentally? They are devices for relieving men of work. It is a backhanded view to suppose that they must be condemned as causes of unemployment. We really want unemployment at irksome labor. What we require is interesting and pleasant occupation. When men are substituted for machines, the men suffer. The problem is to substitute machines for men as rapidly and extensively as possible, to let the machines furnish us with necessities of life more easily than we could do it ourselves, and to free our time for inventive, creative, flexible pursuits, for acts that we are better fitted to do than are machines.

Why do we not do this? Because we have not adapted our ideas to the inherent necessities of machine technology. If a man cannot get a living by having a job, we deprive him of income, and think he ought to be so deprived. But the fact that

he has no income deprives the machine of use. On the contrary, we ought to think that our task is to keep the machine busy in order to provide the man, not necessarily with a job, but at all events with an income of useful goods.

The thesis is worked out in considerable detail. Machines, to be used most effectively, tend to be used in series, eliminating hand labor at every possible step. They lead to vertical combinations among industrial units, to large associations, and intricate industrial arrangements. These great groups and aggregations we vainly persist in regarding as if they were competitive individuals, or at least as if they ought to be. We fail to recognize that, within the group, freedom of the old sort has disappeared. And we also fail to recognize that as long as the groups themselves retain the "freedom" to act as if they were competitive individuals, they obstruct and cancel out one another to a great extent, and thus fail to produce the social benefits which, inherently, use of advanced machinery ought to bring. What control we exert is mainly for the absurd purpose of preventing control. We go on the theory that economic conflict, sometimes regulated to be sure, will serve social ends, when we are actually making use of a technique which demands, not conflict or even regulated conflict, but integration and intelligent direction.

There are, of course, conflicts not only among industries, trades, and competitors, but among occupational groups having different status in the scheme. What possibilities of help or hindrance are there in these groups? Mr. Tugwell recognizes the old antagonism between "capital" and "labor," but he recognizes many others as well. The workers have never, as a whole, become conscious of class conflict in the United States, and such sections of skilled labor as have become organized have frequently espoused reactionary policies. The workers as a whole stand to benefit immensely from an increase in social efficiency. Could they only realize the fact, industrial democracy, in alliance with technicians, might apply strong pressure for the needed action. Technicians ought to want more and better use of machines, but they have not, as a group, become conscious of their role. Owners, as such, are losing their power over industry through their separation from active management. The place of profits in our economic organization frequently stands in the way of that reduction of prices which would make possible full utilization of machinery. Nevertheless, heavy investment in machinery, with its enlargement of fixed overhead costs, makes industrial management seek larger markets as a means to profit as well as the lower wages and higher prices which, while increasing the margin of profit per unit, render impossible larger markets and the reduction of unit overhead costs. "Reality is spotted."

The role of government, which has been conceived as non-interference except for negative regulation to prevent abuses by private interests, must be changed in order to be compatible with the general assumption that government is in a large way responsible for social welfare. If non-interference tempered with regulation had been successful in producing social welfare, there would be no objection, but it has not been successful, and we are coming to see that it cannot be. We need "some kind of compulsion to efficiency, to adhere to a common purpose."

Government must supplement whatever forces there are in private industry which work in this direction; . . . it must modify its suppression of monopoly where these suppressive efforts interfere with planning for equilibrium. In doing this, it is said, it need not neglect the protection of workers and consumers; indeed, this protection is the reason for a change of policy. It must, for instance, require that wider planning and closer integration among businesses shall not result in so limiting production as to restrict consumers' access to goods. It must also require that working standards and wage levels shall be protected.

Furthermore, our system is so closely interdependent that "piecemeal regulation tends to widen" and "some effort at really national planning becomes a practical issue immediately upon consideration of any planning at all." The govern-

ment's function is therefore also to relate separate industrial plans to planning for the whole economy.

The main requirements in such an effort seem, to Mr. Tugwell, control over the allocation of capital, control over prices, encouragement of the integration of industry, and protection of unprotected interests, such as "weaker businesses, consumers, workers, farmers, and technicians." We need control over the investment of new capital, not because there is too much capital equipment all told, but because there is too much in the wrong places, and too much relative to the ability or inclination of the consumers to buy the specific products. An industry which is over-equipped relative to the existing market for its product at the existing prices often cannot reduce prices because of the necessity of paying fixed charges on the idle overhead. If its capital equipment had been smaller, its prices could have been lower, and in the end its equipment could have grown larger, and grown with greater regularity. Control over prices must be exercised to prevent monopoly from applying its own price control in the interest of a few; it must be a system of price control rather than a series of scattered and uncoordinated controls such as are so justly attacked by the theorists; and it must be used to further efficiency. Integration of industry is necessary for making control effective, but it cannot come merely by removing the anti-trust laws, it must be encouraged in a form such as to aid efficiency.

Mr. Tugwell outlines broadly a specific proposal for action to accomplish these ends, which there is no space here to describe. In doing so, however, he emphasizes that in any such attempt we can learn how only by trying, and it is not so important which planning scheme is adopted as that some sort is tried. Here, as elsewhere, he believes we need an attitude of tentativeness and experimentation.

There will be bitter criticism of this point of view from many quarters. The two opponents having the most intellectual solidity are those to the right and the left. On the one side, it will be said that what we need is not to go forward, but to go back, to establish laissez-faire. Conceptually, the economic world of Adam Smith could work beautifully; its theory has been brilliantly elaborated. But this world cannot now be reestablished, if only because modern technique makes it impossible. On the other side is the equally logical theory of the Marxists, who say that no such scheme can be worked as long as there are private capitalists and as long as these capitalists are seeking profit. The only road to successful social planning, they contend, is by proletarian revolution. This thesis has still to be tested, and apparently we are not very close to its testing. In spite of all the brilliant destructive criticism of the Marxists, and in spite of the severe breakdown of capitalism, they have not been able to show us a successful proletarian revolution in any advanced capitalist economy. The working class simply does not behave according to their formula—not yet, at any rate. In the meantime, experimentation of the sort suggested by Mr. Tugwell seems to be in the direct line of history. He is, apparently, reading economic determinism better than the orthodox economic determinists. If the planning experiment is as disastrously unsuccessful as the Marxists and the classical economists alike predict it will be, they will have a chance to contend for dominance of the succeeding stage of history.

A Spiritual Stock Exchange

PROBLEMS OF PROTESTANTISM. By LEWIS GASTON LEARY. New York: Robert M. McBride & Co. 1933. \$2.50.
RELIGION TODAY. By ARTHUR L. SWIFT and others (a Symposium). New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co. 1933. \$2.50.
INCREASING CHRISTHOOD. By ROBERT NORWOOD. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1933. \$2.
THE ELEVENTH COMMANDMENT. By FRANCIS NEILSON. New York: The Viking Press. 1933. \$2.50.

Reviewed by P. W. WILSON

TO read these books on religion is like turning on the radio. The microphone gathers the many voices of history and psychology, economics, dogma and ritual, myth, miracle and magic into a confused uproar of speculation that suggests a spiritual stock exchange. In the final volume of the late Dr. Norwood—a saintly soul impregnable to the distractions of the mad world around him—all the voices join in one to bless the sacred name.

No Council of Nicea has ever been so ecumenical in its range as this. To one

book alone, entitled "Religion Today," no fewer than fourteen men of influence, Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish, have thoughtfully contributed, and all the volumes are enriched by quotations which express more than the single mind of the author. It is thus by the intellect of the race that the "challenging enigma," as Dr. Arthur L. Swift calls it, is under somewhat bewildering solution.

It is a comradeship as generous as the ideal citizenship. The dialectic is not sectarian, not sceptical, not cynical. The aim is to be serenely and politely constructive. But despite all the courtesy, there is excommunication. Modernism, in dealing with Fundamentalists, supplements argument by ostracism. Father Ryan, as a Catholic, is admitted to the Round Table. But no spokesman of similar theology with a Protestant affiliation.

As "advocatus diaboli," Dr. Morris R. Cohen discusses what he calls "the dark side." It is only dark because it is also deep. If one looks at religion merely as a field of study, leading to the formation of opinion, there is, of course, no reason for getting excited about it. Theology is one more current events class. But if religion be a matter of life and death, its "claims,"—like the right of way for fire engines amid the traffic—are "absolute."

Dr. Cohen tells us that "religion has made a duty of hatred," and he is right. Jesus himself said that he came not to send peace but a sword. Yet is it only the dogmatist whose duty includes hatred? The doctor hates, and his lancet is a sword never sheathed.

Surgery in the Middle Ages was cruel. But that was for lack of skill. Today, Torquemada may be no more than a psychologist who tests, not for orthodoxy, but for intelligence. Still, as questionnaires in colleges develop, with physical elaborations affecting eyes, ears, and nerves, time will show whether the holy office of the twentieth century is any more benevolent and any less inquisitorial than the researches of the Dominicans in Spain! It is still early days.

As we follow the fascinating attempt by Dr. Wittels to interpret piety by psychoanalysis, and Professor Hornell Hart's interesting excursion into the never-neverland of psychical research, with other essays on particular aspects of the unseen in life, we are moved to pray for some spiritual Einstein, who will disclose the ultimate formula from which all immediate formulas are derivative; and this is the particular merit of Dr. Leary's estimate of Protestantism. He is not a Ptolemaist, clinging precariously to the circumference of belief and following the planets as wandering stars. He is a Copernican whose

solar system, whatever clouds may obscure our vision of it, has a sun around which to revolve.

In an era of transition, scholarship is apt to be slapdash and slipshod; and Socrates, as critic, has been silenced by the hemlock of sensation. At every point, Dr. Leary has to deal, therefore with assertions that, however confident, have been driven off the truth-standard into what Mr. Keynes would call a managed currency of modern thought.

"Calvinism," writes Dean Inge, in his best Etonian manner, "created that curious product, the modern business man," for which theory, strongly advanced in Germany, there is, according to Dr. Leary, "something to be said." Calvinism and capitalism emphasized the individual. Q. E. D.

But is Dean Inge himself satisfied with his syllogism? Of course not. He recollects the Rothschilds, and how does he account for them? Blandly he incorporates "the Ghetto" in his Calvinism as a source of capitalist instinct!

Did big business start with the Reformation? Did Crassus own silver mines because he brooded over predestination? Were they Calvinists who haggled with Shylock over the ducats of Venice and built St. Mark's? The Fuggers who conducted the finance and commerce of the Middle Ages were not Calvinist nor were the Hanseatic Guilds that patronized the religious art of Flanders. Among modern business men, two stand out prominent. They have been the elder Rockefeller and the elder Thyssen. One is a Baptist who listens to Dr. Fosdick. The other was a Catholic, decorated by the Pope. Capitalism is not Protestant. Capitalism is human.

To be delivered from shibboleths and restored to actualities, that, today, is the need of modernism. Professor Niebuhr recites the dogma that Protestantism is "primarily the religion of the middle class." But in what sense are we to retain the platitude that Protestantism is "the religion of prosperity"—the Church with "cushioned pews" for comfortable classes?

The man with the gold ring was noticed not in the sixteenth century, but in the first, and by St. James. No faith can build up self respect without raising the economic standard of the poor above sub-



"The Resurrection of Lazarus," a fifteenth century icon of the Novgorod school, formerly in the Russian imperial collection. Courtesy Hammer collection.

The Saturday Review Recommends

This Group of Current Books:

WHITE MONEY. By MADELON LULOFS. *Century.*
Life on a rubber planting colony in Sumatra.
THE FLEETING AND OTHER POEMS. By WALTER DE LA MARE. *Knopf.*
New poems by an English writer of grace and distinction.
LOOKING BACK. By NORMAN DOUGLAS. *Harcourt, Brace.*
Mr. Douglas leaps through his visiting cards.

This Less Recent Book:

ENCHANTED WOODS. By HENRY BAERLEIN. *Simon & Schuster.*
An account of a walking trip through Transylvania, humorous and charming.