

Strong Words for Weak Spirits

A NEW DEAL IN LIQUOR—A Plea for Dilution. By Yandell Henderson. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1934. \$2.

Reviewed by H. V. KALTENBORN

WHEN a distinguished Professor of Applied Physiology talks about liquor we should attend for the sake of our stomachs. Particularly when the learned scholar wants us to drink and is only concerned lest we drink unwisely. Professor Yandell Henderson of Yale hurls a polite curse at prohibition even as he cries out for "A New Deal in Liquor."

His subtitle, "A Plea for Dilution," at once explains his message and his purpose. He warns us not to drink our spirits "neat." Straight whiskey is habit-forming and physically injurious. Highballs are harmless, always assuming that they are "really high." The good professor has no hope of our ever becoming a nation of wine drinkers. That is probably why, as a practical man, he is willing to accept the highball, although he does make a plea for strong wines to replace the potent cocktail.

When you read such a sentence as "Spirits are more destructive to physical man than morphine or cocaine" you may be shocked. But Professor Henderson proves his case. For good measure he adds in an appendix the frightening effect of ardent spirits upon body and mind as delineated by Dr. Benjamin Rush of Pennsylvania University over a century ago.

How then are we to deal with the liquor problem? Repeal has not solved it. At present we forbid all alcoholic beverages in some states and cities and permit all alike in others. It is estimated that two-thirds of the "hard" liquor drunk in the United States is of illicit manufacture. This despite the fact that four-fifths of the people of the United States live in the temperate zone, where the climate is such that the production of wine is not only possible but profitable. The professor, however, is not a wine drinker. He is a beer drinker. The beer which Professor Henderson approves, are disappointing. Repeal has also done little to improve liquor quality. Yet it is pleasant to hear from Yale's physiological expert that the very best whiskey is more injurious to the body than bathtub gin. Those who refuse to pay high prices for old whiskey can also take comfort in the fact that young whiskey, which means cheap whiskey, may not taste as well but is less rather than more injurious.

Professor Henderson contends that it was the stranglehold secured by the brewers and their tenants the saloon-keepers that turned the majority of our people against beer and forced us into prohibition. The noble experiment might have succeeded if the Volstead Act had fixed five percent instead of one half of one percent as the legal alcoholic content. "If fourteen years ago, instead of prohibition we had put a tax of \$5 a gallon on whiskey it would have produced more temperance, more revenue and less bootlegging." It was Professor Henderson who originally declared 3.2 percent beer non-alcoholic and who was thus partly responsible for the happy beer era which preceded repeal.

Today the saloon is back, together with many of the pre-prohibition evils. Even in the District of Columbia from which a model liquor statute was expected, Congress has restored the saloon. It has also placed the same tax on the alcohol contained in non-intoxicating beer as in highly intoxicating liquor.

Professor Henderson's program to promote temperance is simple. Since liquor addicts are developed only by drinking beverages of more than fifteen or twenty percent alcoholic content he would encourage mild drinks and discourage strong drinks. He would not permit liquor to be sold over the same bar with beer. He would lower the tax on beer and increase that on whiskey. He would add to the tax law this sentence: "diluted spirits shall be considered to be wine," which would cheapen the harmless high-

ball. He would impose the strictest regulations to govern the sale of the "narcotic" liquors and leave almost unregulated the sale of milder beverages. He wants the government to differentiate between whiskey and beer as it differentiates between tobacco and cocaine. He would weaken cocktails or replace them with reinforced wines by tax differentials.

At present we are making the mistake of encouraging legal distillers to drive out bootleggers with the result of increasing the number of liquor addicts. "The only real advance toward the solution of the liquor problem lies in gradually diminishing the appetite for liquor."

My only quarrel with the Yale professor is that he underestimates the role wines and particularly native wines can play in the promotion of temperance. California and other states are already producing wines of excellent quality which only need to become known to be widely appreciated.

Professor Henderson's book should help us to a fresh start in solving a problem which has only become more apparent because of our experience with both prohibition and repeal.

The Passion to See

(Continued from first page)

buccaneer; Tasman and his fellows, "more workaday than heroic, more competent than brilliant"; the fanatic Guiros, in whose mind "the southern continent had come to annihilate all other desires. It was his life. Other things existed only as obstacles; he suffered them with the patience of a martyr; he transcended them with a martyr's death." Finally, Cook, greatest of all, a "genius of the matter-of-fact," in whom, "to a passion for science, there was added a passion for the ways of civilization, the story of their voy-

ages is but half told unless it be brought into relation with the currents of history—wars, changes in world trade and the policies of nations, progress in religion, science, and technology. With a fine sense of proportion, Beaglehole supplies the background of larger events and movements that alone renders a chronicle of discovery fully satisfying to mature and thoughtful minds.

"The Exploration of the Pacific" deals with the period from Magellan to Cook,—

primarily with the exploration of the ocean and its islands rather than of its shorelines. The central theme is the search for the great Southern Continent. "Earth Conquerors" deals with nine explorers—Leif Ericsson, Marco Polo, Columbus, Cabeza de Vaca, Magellan, Bering, Mungo Park, Burton, and Nansen. The sub-title might well have read "The Lives and Achievements of Nine Great Explorers." All may not agree with Mitchell's criterion as to what constitutes pre-eminence in an explorer. The reviewer, for one, would be inclined to include Captain Cook and Doughty of Arabia among the great. What, to Mitchell, especially distinguished the nine men whom he selected was a passion for the geographically unknown, believed to be purer and less defiled by other motives

than the desire for fame or wealth. The reviewer, however, is inclined to include Captain Cook and Doughty of Arabia among the great. What, to Mitchell, especially distinguished the nine men whom he selected was a passion for the geographically unknown, believed to be purer and less defiled by other motives than the desire for fame or wealth. The reviewer, however, is inclined to include Captain Cook and Doughty of Arabia among the great. What, to Mitchell, especially distinguished the nine men whom he selected was a passion for the geographically unknown, believed to be purer and less defiled by other motives than the desire for fame or wealth.



DON CRISTÓBAL COLON

Columbus as presented in "Earth Conquerors"

betook itself to strange shapes, to the likeness of the City of God [Cabeza de Vaca]; to the likeness of a mental refuge from a half-integrated self [Burton]; to the likeness of the realm of icy knowledge [Nansen].

The discerning reader may miss in some of the passages in this dramatic volume that deal with controversial matters, that quality of exactness, that tendency to understatement, and that close discrimination between assertions capa-

ble of proof and those based on mere hypothesis which mark the work of the critical scholar. Try for example, with map and Yule's text before you, to unravel Marco Polo's route as Mitchell describes it from Acre to Armuz and you will see what is meant. Wineland the Good is too confidently placed near Buzzard's Bay and there is too definite assurance that pre-Columbian civilizations in America were directly influenced by wanderers from west

of the Pacific. If, however, glamour, romance, originality of thought and phrase, and poignant characterizations are what one seeks, this book provides them in full measure. To Mitchell the Norsemen were "brutish and desperate and implacable bands of pirates"; Eric the Red was a gangster-leader; Columbus was "the attractive, if mendacious poet, the sincere explorer." The reviewer, however, is inclined to include Captain Cook and Doughty of Arabia among the great. What, to Mitchell, especially distinguished the nine men whom he selected was a passion for the geographically unknown, believed to be purer and less defiled by other motives than the desire for fame or wealth.

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Thirty-Four and Thirty-Five

BY LEONARD BACON

THANK God we happened to survive!

Thank God the year is o'er!
All hail to Nineteen Thirty-five!
Thumbs down on Thirty-four!
Let the trumpet sound and the slow drum pound.
Go fire his three rounds blank.
That he did not see us underground
We've only luck to thank.
I'll masquerade as Mackworth Praed*
With such small art as I may,
And like him deride what shall betide
Or what happened yesterday.
For this is clear, it would appear,
(So overgods forecast)
That the character of the coming year
Will be very much like the last.
For Washington will be over-run
With experts as of yore.
And no new thing will be under the sun
Precisely as before.
The conservative will assuredly give
The radical dirty looks.
And the N. R. A. will be a purée
That has spoiled too many cooks.
And the labor-leaders will tell the go-getter
With his back against the wall
That "half a loaf is certainly better
Than never to loaf at all."
And the bears will sell for the fall, the slob,
While the lean bulls gibber and curse,
And knaves will be paid for undone jobs
And poets for underdone verse.
And tyros will fumble at the lyre
And gossip and discuss

* The reference is to Winthrop Mackworth Praed's "Twenty-Eight and Twenty-Nine," written in the last century.

How to attain their heart's desire
By gelding Pegasus.
And we'll see the rise and fall of schools
Of pervert and bawd and bore.
And it will be clear that only fools
Will mock Victorians more.
There'll be stories of idiot dereliction
In language inexact.
And fact will be exposed for fiction
And fiction exposed for fact.
For ours is a world parvipotent
Full of pretence and fraud,
Where it seems the Spender is never spent
And the Auden is never awed.
Let 'em play with their sherds and their
cockle-burrs
And posture and piffle and press.
And some day leave off diapers
With the prospect of success.
And authors older but little wiser
In Babylon will babble.
And we'll buy bad grammar from Theodore Dreiser
And affectation from Cabell.
While over in Europe the caldron guggles
And Germans and Serbs and Turks,
With a lively sense of approaching struggles,
Get ready to shoot the works.
And each dictator over his crater
Will look sicklier and littler.
And I'm much mistaken if sooner or later
Some blighter doesn't get Hitler.
And Maynard Keynes will cudgel his brains
New doctrine to disgorge.
And there'll be disasters in aeroplanes
And memoirs by Lloyd-George.
And the Fenris-wolf will be ready to pup
When the April buds appear.
And Stalin will shoot some kulaks up
That he forgot last year.

And Anti-Semites will make a noise
And there'll be weeping in Rama.
And they'll try to hang the Scottsboro boys
In the State of Alabama.
And there will be a scandal in France
And parliamentary devices
That will not alter the circumstance,
When the scandal swells to a crisis.
And a thousand demigods will decline,
Devoured by their father Chronus,
While Congress plunges into a fine
New nose-dive over the bonus
And the Senate will rightly be held up
To popular derision.
And England will lose the America Cup
By a New York Club decision—
And women of means in the magazines
Will look far worse than all wet,
And distinctly duller in full-page five-color,
For a nation-wide cigarette.
And the stupid pageant will stagger and reel
And the veil of the Temple be rent.
And Lippmann will make his votaries feel
Almost intelligent.
And virtue and honor will still be drugs
In a market of tipsters and cranksters
And gangsters will trust to machine-gun-slugs,
And Politicians to gangsters.
And one good thing may the fates contrive,
Though much of their work miscarries:
In "Thirty-five, whether dead or alive,
May Miss Stein return—to Paris.
But the world will go wrong for the weak
and the strong,
And high-minded ideas abort,
And satirical song will be cut too long
And never be cut too short.

Loose Sallies of the Mind

AT THE SHRINE OF ST. CHARLES: *Stray Papers on Lamb Brought Together for the Centenary of His Death in 1934.* By E. V. Lucas. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1934. \$2.

DERBY DAY AND OTHER ADVENTURES. By A. Edward Newton. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1934. \$4.

THE HALCYON ERA: A Rambling Reverie of Now and Then. By Lord Ernest Hamilton. With Twenty Illustrations in ColloTYPE by A. K. Macdonald. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1934. \$3.50.

Reviewed by H. W. BOYNTON

As editor of a complete set of Charles and Mary Lamb, Mr. Lucas found the usual assortment of loose ends that would not be let alone when the main task was done. He has been at them off and on ever since, and here are notes on his finds and findings. Some of them have to do with certain of Lamb's intimates whom we have known mainly through his letters: Randal Norris of the Inner Temple, kindest of men, mourned by Lamb as "the last to call him Charley"; Crabb Robinson, a man of parts best remembered as Lamb's friend and correspondent; Tom Manning of Cambridge who inspired, and vied with, many of Elia's most whimsical letters, and Martin Burney, Fanny Burney's nephew, ingenious and lovable, of whom both the Lambs "were very fond." We need to know all we can about these people, for the light they reflect on their friend's personality. Other names we pursue for the mere sake of running down a chance allusion in some letter or essay of Charles or Mary. Who was "my cousin the bookbinder," once mentioned by Lamb in a letter to Coventry Patmore? Who was the "Hell-Fire Dick" recalled by Mary Lamb as one of the notabilities of Cambridge? Who was that masterpiece of female ugliness Mrs. Conrady? And Mrs. Battle of hearth-and-whist fame? And Captain Jackson of the Bath Road? Also there are less personal matters to be pondered, as, What became of the figure of the winged horse that stood in Lamb's childhood over the entrance of the Inner Temple? And just when was it that Lamb made his famous after-dinner speech consisting of the one word "Gentlemen!"? (Mr. Lucas says it was "praise enough to be called gentlemen unqualified, by such a judge.") If these items are but vestigial toe-joints of genius, they have their value for the enthusiast.

So also, if ruefully, are to be accepted Mr. Lucas's fresh scraps of evidence about the weaknesses of Thackeray's "Saint Charles," his bibulousness, his lapses into mere horseplay and facetiousness, his nervous ineptitude with children.

Johnson's definition of the essay as "a loose sally of the mind" suggests well enough the kind of thing thrown off from time to time by that jovial collector and crusty commentator, A. Edward Newton. He has made himself acceptable to a considerable audience as a gossip of lively spirits and engaging manner. He knows a great deal about first editions and the collecting thereof, and can be amusing about that rather special form of sport. He knows nothing whatever about horses or horse-racing and can be equally amusing about them. And whatever his main theme he can blandly abandon it to give or to repeat his bankers' (adverse) opinions of American politicians, "a lot of crooks," of the "group of ignorant and wicked men who call themselves bankers," or of "Democracy, that horrid farce which thoughtful men fear." Mr. Newton finds much more to admire in England than in these States, and quotes with gratification somebody's remark that London is his "spiritual home." As a true Johnsonian he is a sound Tory and reactionary, and proud of it. Even the figure of a Hearst in his Californian paradise assumes a sort of majesty, for does he not represent Propriety and Power? The American chapters in the book, his accounts of travels in the West and far West, are notably feeble in comparison with the English and European notes. For these papers as a

group, we must take them or leave them as the "loose sallies" of a man of leisure who can afford a testy manner and cannot conceal a twinkling eye. The concluding papers on the Brontës and their country show how well this light essayist can do at a more orderly sort of writing.

Lord Ernest Hamilton's "rambling reverie of now and then," as the subtitle hath it, offers a fresh bundle of notes on the Victorian era by a survivor. He is a younger brother of the Lord Frederick Hamilton who has written several books of Victorian reminiscence in heavier vein. Lord Ernest writes with ease, with the slightly conscious nonchalance of rank, with the indulgent mockery of one who looked on the later years of the "Midvics" with the eyes of a younger generation. The early contempt he felt for the prohibitions and hypocrisies of the time may have been less summary than time makes it out. For all his man of the world acceptance, he looks on modern types and ways with some distaste and bewilderment. His memory of the past, as with most contemporaries, is a mixture of apology and regret. He smiles at the Victorian maiden, her obligatory demureness, her tiny accomplishments, her rigid chaperonage, her favorite "tales of romantic and well-muzzled love." But it is clear that she keeps for him a charm in no way equaled by the "Daphne dear" whom he apostrophizes as the typical young female of the jazz age.

For its good humor and the slight flavor of elderly doggishness observable in the above-quoted passage, the book is more readable than most effusions of the kind. Its illustrations in colloTYPE are delicious.

Information, Please!

(Continued from first page)

my friends at one time or another, and I, at least, am loyal), by voluntarily declining upon journalism, have abdicated one very important part of their job. They used to be nurseries and laboratories of decent prose. Solid reputations were often made, first of all, in the serious periodicals. One long-past year, when we rented a cottage from friends, we found the walls of the study lined with large volumes—bound files of the *Atlantic*, *Harper's*, *Scribner's*, and the *Century*. We had, in those volumes, ample reading for the whole summer. Indeed, I think the shelf-space could not have been better filled. Does any private person bind and keep those magazines now, I wonder? I doubt it, unless habit in some cases is overpowering. Nothing but style, quality, literary virtue, can prolong timeliness, and make the writing of yesteryear immediately interesting. If the year 1900 is readable, and the year 1930 is not, there is a reason.

I shall be told that authors and editors were differently situated before the war. Especially, I shall be told that advertising has fallen off and that budgets are slim. I think all that does not touch my question. My question is, and remains: do most magazine readers (you understand that I am not speaking of weeklies, the women's magazines, or the pulp products) really enjoy what editors are giving them? Does no large number feel, as I feel, that newspaper supplements and books hot from the press exist to document them on economic and political matters; that when they take up a magazine they want something besides Hitler and hogs? Do they never mutter "ripeness is all," and fling the magazine down unread? Editors, remember, are not giving us journalism because they personally prefer it: they are giving us journalism because they believe we prefer it. Do their readers prefer it, is what I sincerely desire to know. If they do, the editors are justified. (And if they do, it is a blackish outlook for American letters.) I do not care to believe that

readers prefer journalism until I have it from the readers themselves. That is why I crave the doubtless unattainable poll—a plebiscite, I confess, more vitally interesting to me (for every social and psychologic reason) than the one presently to be held in the Saar. But the magazines, alas! are more likely to report to me about the Saar than about American taste.

I have been referring chiefly to the essay. Fiction and poetry used perhaps to seem more important, even in the balanced ration of a monthly. As poetry, however, has usually to wait on considerations of space and make-up, and as America has (to the best of my belief: I may, of course, be wrong) only one considerable poet now living, the matter of magazine verse need not be contemplated at length. Periodical fiction means either the short story or the serialized novel. The serialized novel appears less and less in the old-line magazines, and very likely for good reasons. I can think of one reason, myself: that the full-length novel runs through eight or ten issues, and that editors, with their eyes strained for "news," do not like to mortgage that space ahead. The short story is going through an orgy of experimentation that makes any particular example a gamble. Besides, when a young writer has once made a short-story reputation, he is likely to be bribed by the illustrated magazines or by Hollywood. So we will leave fiction and poetry to one side, and consider only the essay—and that briefly. For I am not expounding: I have twisted myself into an interrogation-point.

The average man, we said, wants "dope" more than ever, since the war, and editors tend to think that he wants it exclusively. All good art is, in one sense, "dope." It conveys, that is, authentic information. But Arnold or Pater or Max Beerbohm or W. C. Brownell or Agnes Repplier conveys information in one way, and an Associated Press despatch conveys information in quite another. While we live in this world as citizens, we must not confess to being tired of facts: but we may, respectfully, be tired of facts raw, unpondered, unalchemized. One may not

unless its bearing is made known. No fact, indeed, is worth anything—even in a murder trial—without its accurate interpretation. The perfect essayist could write a good essay on Hitler or on hogs, and I should be enchanted to read it—but he has not done it yet, and I am not yet enchanted.

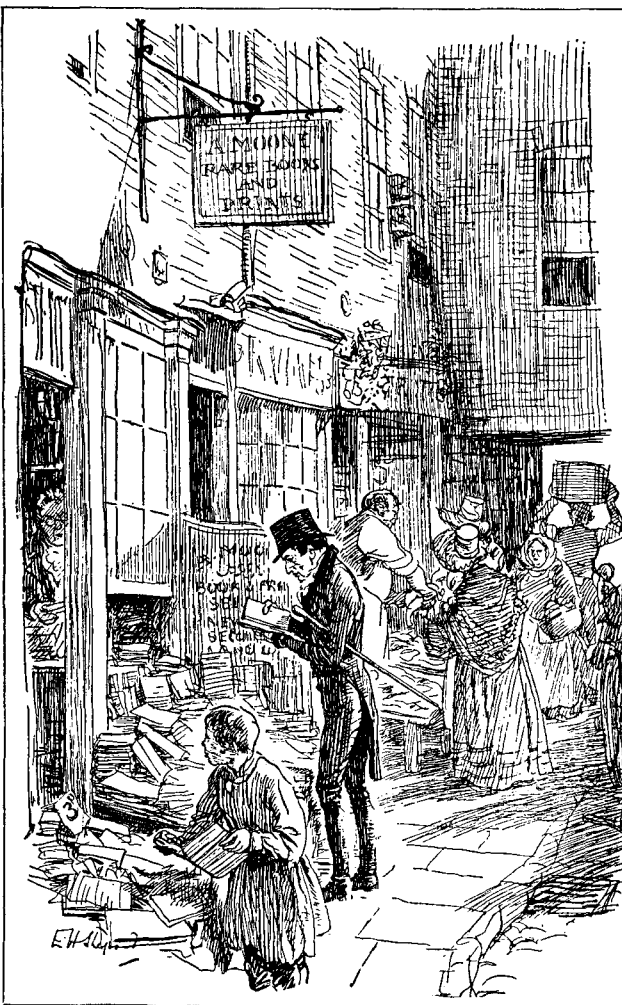
"When the mind of man looketh upon second causes scattered, it may sometimes rest in them and go no further," said Bacon, himself no mean essay writer. "To see life steadily and see it whole" is the counsel of perfection a great Victorian essayist gave himself. That is, indeed, a counsel of perfection; it is not intellectually easy to see life steadily and see it whole. The attempt to do so, however, will prevent any writer from offering us mere unappraised facts. It will keep alive in him a sense of values so that he will try, at least, to see his facts in their due proportion and perspective; will force him to decide whether his facts are symptomatic, and, if so, of what. He will bring the past to bear on the present, he will find the right analogies and make the right syntheses. In other words, he will write an essay, not an article. I know of almost no essayist who has not at times written articles rather than essays; but if he is a good essayist, he knows the difference between the two. "I sell not bread, but yeast," says Unamuno; and the proper essay starts a process of fermentation within the reader's mind. The proper essay is not a table of facts to be committed to memory; it goes beyond facts as the writer sees them, to truth as he sees it.

The young writers who are practising fiction need not, perhaps, despair. They have the pulp-magazines, which apparently nowadays can make reputations; can at least give an author a springboard whence he can leap into book publication and best-sellership. The pulp-magazines, with their low literary requirement, are a poor and perilous substitute for the serious monthlies. I repeat: I think the latter are abdicating a responsibility in at once narrowing their fictional hospitalities and lowering their fictional standards.

Perhaps the short story—which was at its best in America—would not have sunk to its present low estate if the more dignified editors had not lost interest in it—"sold" as they have been to the news idea. One must admit that much of the newer and younger fiction is not especially suited to their pages, and they may be bewildered. Personally, I regret this state of things. I like good short stories—I should hardly be a good American if I did not—and I miss them from the monthlies where I used to find them. The young practiser of fiction, however, is not absolutely homeless. It is the young essayist who has no place to lay his head.

We are all hedonists, I suspect; and what I resent is having (outside of bound volumes) nothing but newspapers to read. A person of my age looks forward with dread to the extinction of the serious magazines. If the intelligent young liked the monthlies this way, I should feel it my duty to be silent; but apparently the intelligent young do not read them at all, and are therefore no guarantee of their future. Am I facing a day when I can buy myself no pleasure for thirty-five cents? When there is no worthy printed matter to be had between three cents and two-fifty? When I must be surfeited with information and starved of knowledge? When the camera shall have displaced the brush, when everything shall be stated and nothing shall be pondered? And—this is all my question—is no one, except me, going to regret it?

Katharine Fullerton Gerould has contributed stories, essays, and verse to magazines, and is the author of a number of books, among which may be mentioned "Valiant Dust," "Conquistador," "The Aristocratic West," "The Light That Never Was," and a volume of essays, "Modes and Morals."



CHARLES LAMB IN SOHO

Drawing by E. H. Shepard, from "Everybody's Lamb," reproduced for the centenary of the great essayist.

weary of truth, but one may weary of news. One may even want to throw Hitler and hogs into the ash-can. . . . A critic once said to me, concerning a well-known expert, "X— is an excellent reporter, but he has no general ideas." No first-rate essay was ever written, I suspect, into which the writer put, if only by implication, less than his whole knowledge of life. Special information, even, is of little use unless it is accurately related to its larger context, to the course and flow of human history,