

The Saturday Review

of LITERATURE

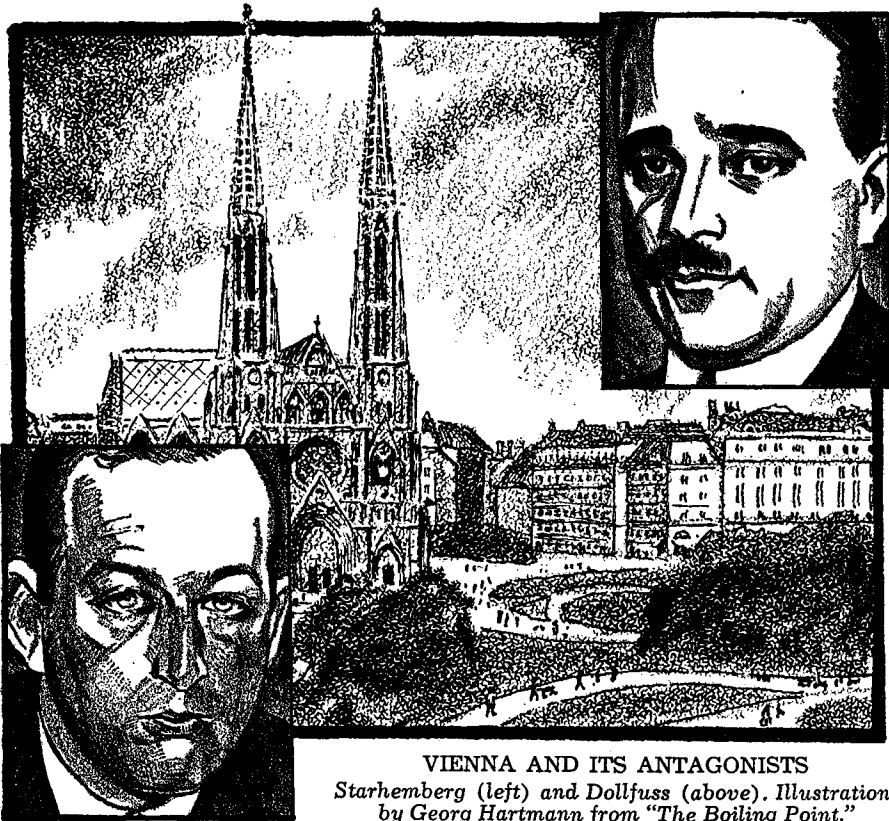
EDITED BY HENRY SEIDEL CANBY



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VIENNA AND ITS ANTAGONISTS
Starhemberg (left) and Dollfuss (above). Illustrations
by Georg Hartmann from "The Boiling Point."

The European Pot

THE BOILING POINT. By H. R. Knickerbocker. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1934. \$2.50.

Reviewed by DOROTHY THOMPSON

THIS would have been a better book if it had been written by Frank Simonds.

It might also have been a better book if it had not, originally, been written by Mr. Knickerbocker for the dailies of William Randolph Hearst.

And, finally, it would have been a better book if Mr. Knickerbocker had never read Time.

I think of Mr. Simonds, recalling an article which appeared from his pen weeks back in the *Atlantic Monthly*, and which seems in recollection to have said in the space of three or four thousand words rather more than this whole book does on the same subject. Mr. Simonds, I think, would never have begun smugly with the observation that "one way to answer [the question: Is War Coming?] is to speculate about it at home. Another is to go to the seat of these numerous European conflicts and investigate them on the spot." Mr. Simonds knows that in a journalist's equipment his head is more important than his feet. He, too, went to Danzig, the Polish Corridor, and the Balkans, but he also went to history. One need not speculate at home, but one can often think at home, long and quietly over information which one may or may not have gathered for oneself. And in any case the answer to the question of this book is certainly not going to be arrived at by asking it in every chancellery in Europe. The interview, I have always thought, is one of the more meretricious forms of journalism. Mr. Knickerbocker has been seeking to gather up pearls of wisdom from every chancellor or governor from Danzig around Europe to London, and all of them say just what you would expect them to. Mr. Knickerbocker hands out these statements with a fine impartiality, and, too often, with an irritatingly straight face. Does he, for instance, really think that the balderdash talked by Regent Horthy of Hungary is in the least

(Continued on page 751)

Thomas Mann's American Address

The speech of Thomas Mann which follows was an informal address given at the testimonial dinner in New York in honor of his fifty-ninth birthday. Beneath its genial courtesy, however, are to be detected those ideas and ideals which have made him a figure in world literature, and his novels real syntheses of the times. We are glad, therefore, to be able to publish it substantially entire, as he delivered it upon the evening of June 6.—THE EDITORS.

I HAVE never before made a speech in English and should have sufficient reason to be afraid of so hazardous an experiment. This is decidedly a critical moment in which I rise to do so; and yet I have scarcely been able to wait for this moment and for a long time have yearned for it. My thanks must of course pass first of all to the initiator of this personal meeting of ours and this entirely lovely festivity: my courageous American publisher, Mr. Alfred A. Knopf. It was a thought full of feeling and imagination on his part to set the publication of the English edition of my new novel for the anniversary of my fifty-ninth birthday and invite me here for it—the thought of a man who would not be so good a publisher if he were not at the same time himself something of a creator.

The man who addresses you, ladies and gentlemen, is one who depends on solitude and seclusion, on a quiet and even attention to his own tasks; therefore not of a particularly sociable nature. For that reason, however, he loves people and knows how, or rather hopes, to ally himself to them by means of the quietest and most personal pursuit of his calling; and if he must even, above all, fulfil the duties which the intellect has laid upon him, so is it then the wish of his heart to please people, to earn their gratitude and, if even at times by melancholy means, to increase the extent of joy on this earth. As an entirely unknown young man, I wrote these lines down (I just came across them recently in an old copy-book) in which

(Continued on next page)

The James Family

BY RALPH BARTON PERRY

WILLIAM JAMES, the philosopher and psychologist, and Henry James, the novelist, have been familiar to the reading public of Europe and America for forty years, and have long since established themselves securely in the history of science and letters. Since their death there has been a progressive discovery of the James Family. First it was discovered that William was the brother of Henry and Henry the brother of William. Then the publication of their letters, together with the Introduction to the letters of William by his son Henry, and the reminiscent volumes, "Notes of a Son and Brother" and "A Small Boy and Others," by the novelist Henry, revealed the parents, the younger brothers, and the sister. In C. Hartley Grattan's "Three Jameses," together with the researches of Professor Harold A. Larrabee of Union College, the elder Henry took a place beside his two famous elder sons, and his father, the elder William, Albany millionaire and founder of the American branch of the family, emerged from obscurity. And now the two latest volumes* give new and substantive importance to the elder Henry and to his daughter Alice, while at the same time enlarging and clarifying the picture of the family group as a whole. Thus two distinguished individuals become a dynasty, with a William and a Henry the First, a William and Henry the Second. Two separate outcroppings have been connected and followed to the surface until they are seen to form an extensive vein of the same rich ore.

The elder Henry James was born in Albany in 1811 and died in Boston in 1882. His life and thought throw a vivid light on economic and social conditions in Albany in the 1820's and 30's, on the history of Union College, on the conflict at Princeton and elsewhere of orthodox Calvinism with advancing liberalism, on the intellectual life of New York City in the 1840's, on the spread in America of the cults of Swedenborg and Fourier, on Emerson and Transcendentalism, on Brook Farm and its prototypes, successors, and reverberations, on Greeley, Godwin, Ripley, Alcott, Thoreau, Dana, Dwight, Channing, Margaret Fuller, and other writers and reformers of this prophetic age,—on Carlyle, Maurice, Sterling, Mill, and other British contemporaries. James was in the thick of these movements and their representatives were his friends and acquaintances. He was not, however, merely a man of his times. He had his own unique experience, his own hard-worn truth and his own message for mankind. His books were obscure and soon forgotten. The echoes of his brilliant talk died away and his letters were hidden in family archives. His "Literary Remains," edited by his son William in 1885, appeared too late for contemporary interest and too early for retrospect. But now in Professor Warren's volume Henry I definitely emerges, in his own right and in something like his true proportions.

Professor Warren has performed a difficult task with honesty, understanding,

and high literary craftsmanship. He has not yielded to temptation. It would have been easy to make his subject merely interesting, for the elder Henry James was a wit and a "character," who lends himself readily to fragmentary citation. It would have been easy to treat him with indulgent derision, for he was extravagant and often fantastic in deed and utterance. But Professor Warren has seen beneath the external manner of the man and has felt the deeper pathos of an earnest and brave spirit, who suffered from a conviction which he could not adequately utter, and from a love of fellow-men which exposed him to perpetual wounds. The writer has had the patience and erudition to go beyond James's rhetoric and theological verbiage to its core of philosophic truth,—to the humanistic supernaturalism, the reforming rejection of reform, the mystical anti-moralism and optimistic Calvinism, which make it so original and at the same time so significant of the development of American thought.

The second of the present volumes, on "Alice James," consists of two parts: "Her Brothers," an Introduction written by Anna Robeson Burr; and "Her Journal" written by herself. It would have been more accurate to have named the first part "Her Younger Brothers," for attention is focussed upon Garth Wilkinson James, who was called Wilky, and Robertson James, known familiarly as Bob. The former was two and the latter three years younger than Henry, who in turn was one year younger than William. Both of these younger brothers appear in William's letters and in Henry's autobiographical writings: Wilky distinguished by his "preference for ingenuous talk, his drollery, his candor, his successful sociability, his genius for making friends"; Bob by "the vivacity of his intelligence, the variety of his gifts, his admirable talk, charged with natural life, perception, humor, and color." In 1859 the two boys were taken by their father to Concord and enrolled in the school of Frank B. Sanborn, thus deepening and extending to the second generation the old friendship between the elder James and Emerson. Wilky and

This Week

HOXSIE SELLS HIS ACRES

By CHRISTOPHER LA FARGE

Reviewed by William Rose Bennett

THE PROVINCIAL LADY IN AMERICA

By E. M. DELAFIELD

Reviewed by Amy Loveman

ONE HAPPY JEW

By NAT J. FERBER

Reviewed by Michael Gold

THE ROAD LEADS ON

By KNUT HAMSUN

Reviewed by Grace Frank

THE THOMAS MANN DINNER

Pictures by ROBERT DISRAELI

THE BOWLING GREEN

By CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

Next Week or Later

THE BERLIN DIARIES

Edited by DR. HELMUTH KLOTZ

Reviewed by Oswald Garrison Villard

* THE ELDER HENRY JAMES. By Austin Warren. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1934. \$2.50.

ALICE JAMES. HER BROTHERS. HER JOURNAL. Edited by Anna Robeson Burr. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co. 1934. \$2.50.

Bob were distinguished and in some measure divided from their elders by two facts. In the first place, they joined the army of the Union and were fired with its ardors. In the second place, their history is a record of frustration, despite traces of the same family genius which led to success and fame in the cases of William and Henry. There is, furthermore, a clear connection between "the first place" and "the second place." Both Wilky and Bob were casualties of the Civil War, through wounds and sickness, through the sacrifice of their youth, through a resulting spirit of restlessness and discontent, and through the romantic abolitionism that led them to unsuccessful ventures in Florida after their discharge from the service.

This picture, although already known in its outlines, has been amplified and vivified by the present book, which serves furthermore to accentuate the loyalty and affectionate solicitude with which in after years both William and Henry followed the vicissitudes of their younger brothers' more precarious fortunes. As to William and Henry themselves, little is added save a fine letter from William, written in 1880, in which he meditates with characteristic gratitude and reminiscent understanding upon the self-sacrificing love of his parents. The author's further attempt to interpret the expatriation and vocation of Henry in terms of "fear" together with a nostalgic and self-compensating envy of the more heroic role of his younger brothers, is a distortion and over-simplification which can serve only to belittle those whom it is designed to magnify. It must be added that this portion of the book is also marred by carelessness and mistaken emphasis in matters of detail. Thus, for example, it would be difficult to make a more inaccurate statement about William James than the following: "In 1868 the young psychologist received an appointment to an instructorship at Harvard, and from then onward became a prominent figure of that university." The fact is that William James became "instructor" for the first time in 1873, and a "psychologist" (as well as a biologist and philosopher), let us say, in 1875. His "prominence" might be dated from 1885. In short, that part of the present book which treats of Alice James's "Brothers" affords a striking contrast with the careful scholarship and mature judgment which distinguish the work of Professor Warren.

The second part is another matter. The editing leaves no ground for complaint unless it be the extreme meagreness of the explanatory notes, and the "Journal" speaks for itself. Alice James was born in 1848 in New York City. After a severe illness in her sixteenth year she never recovered her health. She suffered from rheumatic gout, spinal neurosis, nervous hyperæsthesia, and finally cancer, of which she died in 1892 at the age of forty-four. The last seven years of her life were spent in or near London, in divers cottages and lodgings, where she was protected by the unforgetting, unintrusive watchfulness of "Henry the Patient," her "Primrose Knight," and the understanding companionship of her friend Katharine P. Loring. She was already bed-ridden when she came to England. "If I can get through the day, scribbling my notes, and able to read the books that belong to me, in that they clarify the density, and shape the formless mass within, life seems inconceivably rich; full of l'allégresse de la certitude acquise." The "Journal" covers the years 1889 to 1892, and during the last fifteen months its author was compelled to dictate to Miss Loring. Pain was a daily companion, death an early acquaintance and a late friend. The material of the "Journal" consists of the incidents of this contracted existence, what people said to her and she to people, what people said to her of other people, what she read, what she felt, and what she thought. With this slight material, and within this narrow frame, she achieved the miracle of living, —not only to herself but for posterity.

Hitherto Alice James has been known as the object of her brothers' love—of Henry's devoted loyalty, of William's teasing fondness, and of the respectful and chivalrous tenderness which she evoked in both. These brothers, life-like and unmistakable, pass frequently across the

pages of her "Journal." But it would be a mistake to regard it as a mirror or register of external events and persons. It is essentially a revelation of its author, a world illuminated by rays which radiate from its centre. That centre, the soul of Alice James, is not easily characterized. She had poetic sensitiveness, both to the outer world of nature and to the inner world of memory and reflection. "Confronting the landscape in the morning leaves me without further resistance . . . The beauty tires me more than the chair, which only shakes the muscles, while the former stirs unfathomable depths." "Anatole France says somewhere, 'Tout vaut mieux que de s'écouter vivre'—which is not to be denied surely; but if destiny, Anatole, offers you no other opportunity, you will find that, if you lend an indulgent and imaginative ear, you may strike, even from that small keyboard, all the notes of melody, comedy, and tragedy." Alice had her brother William's effervescence and relish for nonsense, together with Henry's quick apprehension of the deep serio-comic meaning of concrete human situation. She was humane like her father, but her critical powers were never suspended. There was a "hard core" of intellect within her sensitive surface and a cutting edge to her wit. She could feel scorn. "Noblesse oblige" doesn't seem to be the performance of noble deeds, but the doing of ignoble ones with social impunity, and with an increase, personally, of your snobbish pretensions."

The world of Alice James was a tragic world, but it was a "world pour rire." She saw this world from a sofa, but her vision was acute. Thus she saw the Emperor William (displacing Bismarck) as "this whipped syllabus of a young man rushing it,"—"more completely under the illusion of his own individuality and absolutely remote from the possibility of taking his relative measure than any known contemporary quantity." She pitied mankind, but always with a slightly derisive and belittling intonation. She was unwilling to be herself pitied by others or to be caught (by herself) pitying herself. She defied pain. "By taking a very small dose of morphine . . . I was able to steady my nerves, and experience the pain without distraction; for there is something very exhilarating in shivering whacks of crude pain which seem to lift you out of the present and its sophistications." Having what is commonly called courage, she received compliments. "I make it a rule," she writes, "always to believe the compliments implicitly for five minutes, and to simmer gently for twenty more; that ensures a solid gain of twenty-five minutes out of twenty-four hours, in which one is in peace and charity of all mankind." But she feels this to be a weakness: "Which of us has not given, within, a faint paralytic smile over her 'courage,' however careful her vanity may have been not to dispel the superficial illusion."

It is impossible to apply any adjective to this clear-seeing, self-knowing individual without feeling that she has already thought and passed beyond it. One must say that she was brave, witty, sensitive, penetrating, magnanimous, and at the same time realize that she is outside the judgment,—making it herself and in that very act transcending it. The last word would be "detachment," were it not for the fact that in the very nature of her case there can be no last word.

Ralph Barton Perry is professor of philosophy at Harvard University, and editor of two volumes of William James's essays.

Thomas Mann's Address

(Continued from first page)

Elizabeth Barrett Browning speaks of the happiness of those,

... who sit alone
On winter nights by solitary fires
And hear the nations praising them
far off.

That seems to me the ideal situation in its mixture of aloofness and union with the world. The spiritual love of fame was confided to me early when the first signs of sympathy on the part of far-off foreign people in my work reached me, when my works began to be translated into European languages and even into exotic idioms; then I was dreamer and poet enough to make an exciting adventure for myself out of a fact which has become so usual in modern life, an adventure that had much of the enchantment and happiness of first love.

Strangely enough it was the War which considerably furthered the spiritual

interchange among the nations, their inquisitive cognizance of one another—in spite of all the intensification of national feeling. One of its very diverse functions was to bring people nearer together, to make the earth smaller, and more intimate; and I, for my part at least, have to date at about the time of its conclusion, my closer contact through the medium of my works with the outside world—with America, too, yes, above all, with Americans. From your

country I have received the loveliest letters of my life, documents of a human warmth and a frank responsiveness which are very dear to me. That my work should have given me the privilege of gaining friendship and affection in this country, in the human reality of which I now see myself placed, was a deep joy to me; for once again and to a special degree it meant for me the accomplishment and realization of a fellow-feeling.

From the intellectual life of America, lasting impressions were made upon my youth. Emerson's Essays, the short stories of Edgar Allan Poe, the lyrics of Walt Whitman, the humorous works of Mark Twain—all these I cannot think away from my literary education; and later I followed with admiration the growth of your social novel in the work of men like Dreiser, Upton Sinclair, Dos Passos, and Sinclair Lewis. I wouldn't know which European dramas I should prefer to the daring pieces of O'Neill, or what modern art of story-telling should please me more than that of the wonderfully new books of Ernest Hemingway which flash with the charm of art and life.

But let us not speak only of literature. Let us talk about American humanity as a whole, in its union of virility and its love for peace. That is what always attracted

me the most directly. Following Goethe's example, I, too, am a man of peace. I abominate war, I see in militarism the most superficial, the most antiquated, and the most hopeless form of heroism, and I am convinced that today the spirit of the world shows other ways to the heroic instinct of the male. It was the athletic pacifism of America which always had something deeply refreshing for me and aroused my hope for humanity.

In us Germans there has already been implanted through Goethe an envious admiration for the rational freshness and the pioneer-like spontaneity of the American genius, which means such a tremendous vital advantage over the heritage of Europe with its memories and its load of feelings which it drags along with melancholy and which handicap its life.

Amerika, du hast es besser
Als unser Kontinent, der alte;
Hast keine verfallenen Schlösser
Und keine Basalte.

That has meaning today as it did in Goethe's time. Some of us in old Europe have the feeling our world is being ruined through misplaced and exploded ideals and that nothing is as necessary for it as a complete recovery from the no longer heroic but wretched and ruinous intoxication of the past. Don't say that it is unbecoming of an author to call for temperance. It was Goethe who, for fifty years, wanted to forbid his countrymen from saying the word "gemüt" (feeling); and with this thought in mind, and with the same hopes as we have today, he looked over to this great colonial nation of the white race on the other side of the ocean.

The hopes of which I am here speaking are the hopes of humanity, that is, for mankind and his future. I believe that behind the contemporary moral confusion and restiveness of western man there is quietly being prepared a new humanism, which will perhaps determine the general feeling for life sooner than we can today imagine it. It will have little similarity to the humanism of past epochs; and one could scarcely reproach it with estheticism or colorless optimism. Having gone through much that no earlier humanism knew, deepened through all the forward steps and advances which we have seen the knowledge of mankind make in the last decades, it will, so it seems to me, unite understanding and courageous clarity with a commanding veneration for the idea and religious mystery of mankind.

The book, ladies and gentlemen, whose appearance in English is the occasion of my visit here, will perhaps some day be paid the tribute of being recognized as a symptom of this new developing humanism. It is a picture book and a story book of mankind. It has its roots in the sorrows and stirring adventures which have been our lot these past twenty years, in the peculiar new and burning interest which is the product of these sorrows; the interest in the problem of mankind, in his place in the universe, his long-forgotten past and enigmatic calling. When I dare to hope that this book will also find in America sympathetic friends, I do so with the conviction that there is reserved for the American genius which with such judicious resolution is trying to master the economic and social difficulties of our time, an important, yes, a decisive role in the revival of humanity. "God's Own Country" it has been called at times with patriotic fervor. Let me raise my glass with the wish it will some time also have the honorary title of "Man's Own Country."

Love, the Usurer

By GEOFFREY DEARMER

LIGHTLY, Oh Usurer, and without misgiving
From the heart's store we paid and like one man;
To pay was easy whilst our friend was living,
But it goes on, your fixed instalment plan.
Our little friend is dead. His trivial habits
Are trivial now no longer. He has gained
Something he lacked when after rats or rabbits
When the earth sang with smells and it had rained.

Oh Usurer, why grant us no release,
Can he for whom we sorrow benefit?
To love is to court grief that will not cease,
Oh Usurer, what is the sense of it?
We could not possibly be paying more
If he'd had longer legs and less than four.

A Fine Novel in Verse

HOXSIE SELLS HIS ACRES. *An American Novel in Verse.* By Christopher La Farge. New York: Coward-McCann. 1934. \$2.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

HERE is a notable narrative poem. We haven't had any too many of them in America. The brother of the accomplished novelist and Pulitzer Prize winner, Oliver La Farge, has proved himself in this poem capable of sustaining a long flight in varied verse and of telling a thoroughly interesting story with well-conceived characters and an intimately known background.

The terrain of Mr. La Farge's poem is southern Rhode Island. The native owner of a large piece of land decides to sell it for semi-suburban development. The property around him is partly owned by people from the city who live in Rhode Island during the summer. We have the natives constituting one faction and certain city people the other. That is the foundation of the story.

Mr. La Farge is an architect and painter, and so far as I know this is his first venture in the field of poetry, though his command of rhythms and metres would seem to indicate that he has for a long time been a practitioner of verse. In certain passages, frankly, I find the influence haunting him of Stephen Vincent Benét's method in "John Brown's Body," even though the two narratives are so very different in intention and content. I do not, however, wish to overemphasize this slight resemblance, in occasional cadences and in one particular characteristic metre, which metre is, after all—as are all metres—the property of any poet who can use it well. Mr. La Farge has many cadences of his own, and some of his variations from his fundamental blank verse have great aptness, force, and beauty.

Mr. La Farge's cast of characters is an unusually interesting one: the Walter Hoxsies, cousins, living for years as man and wife without benefit of clergy; the city Herendenes, feeling more strongly about the land being given over to intruders than do the natives themselves; young Mary Herendene, wife of Francis, and her affair with Perry Metcalfe; Asa Congdon who loved Letty Hathaway who loved none apparently but a dead man who had married someone else, yet is



CHRISTOPHER LA FARGE

found at the end with Francis Herendene's picture clasped to her dead breast; Annabel Williams, the cripple, who loved her cousin, Perry Metcalfe; old Mrs. Slocum, the gossip—particularly in their tangle of loves and desires, these people emerge into definite and ironic reality. They are also presented with a sympathy that unfolds the innermost recesses of each nature. As one reads, for all that the selling of land is the centre of the story, even the elder Ellen Herendene's fierce feeling about the land, even Annabel's pitiful love for it, fade beside the clash of emotions

of the lovers, Mary and Perry, the tragedy of Letty as so masterfully described in Part Three, and the interplay of various thwarted loves. The book becomes increasingly rich with life, and the drama in its culmination is convincing.

There is a definitely realized atmosphere, a picturing of the Rhode Island countryside, that furnishes a unique background for the book; the scene deeply penetrates one's consciousness. One feels that this southern Rhode Island of Mr. La Farge's has characteristics that distinguish it from any other part of the country. He imparts the unique savor of it, from the blue of the Nyas River to the look of "a tupelo tree that was like an oak," and the speech of the natives.

When one examines closely the language of the poem one sees that to its virtues as narrative are not added those sharp felicities of phrase, that miraculous manipulation of words, that constitute major poetry. There are merely approximations. But, after all, much has been accomplished. This is an unusual book.

The European Pot

(Continued from first page)

important? Presumably he does. At any rate, he tells you that the Hungarian regent lives in a palace splendid, wide, high, and big as a mountain. It isn't as big as a mountain. It isn't even as big as the little hill it stands on, but let that pass.

The most interesting part of the book is not, of course, what Regent Horthy says—or Benes, or Jeftitch, or King Alexander—but what Mr. Knickerbocker himself thinks and says. But very little of the book is devoted to this.

Originally it was a series of newspaper articles—one of the series which began with "The Red Trade Menace," in the *New York Evening Post*, and which have made Mr. Knickerbocker renowned on two continents. (He is really renowned. His books on Russia were best sellers in Germany. I saw them and his German book everywhere, a year ago in Italy, and the thin, pale, incredibly youthful-looking young American with the fiery hair is a European celebrity.) The book shows its origins. It is not held together by any intrinsic argument, but by a series of date-lines, marking Mr. Knickerbocker's energetic peregrinations, and constantly he is straining to attract the reader's attention. He uses the : What is This! Aha! Who approaches? Lo! technique. I find this irritating in a newspaper, and exasperating in a book. It is as though in every chapter (once a newspaper story) Mr. Knickerbocker was forced to remember that he was competing for the reader's interest with the Dillinger case, or the latest torch murder, and must begin what he has to say by ballyhooing its contents.

He borrows from *Time* the habit of mixing up the completely trivial with the serious, as though the fact that Mr. Dollfuss of Austria is the youngest and smallest chancellor in Europe measuring not quite five feet in his stockings is in any way pertinent to the fact that he has recently slaughtered several hundreds of Social Democrats. In Mr. Knickerbocker's reports, it almost seems to justify it.

If I give way to irritation, it is because I believe that Mr. Knickerbocker has many of the qualities of a first-rate journalist. He is intelligent. He is untiringly energetic. He has a commendable passion for accumulating accurate facts. It is only regrettable that he seems to think that the lack of any philosophy of history or of politics is identical with objectivity. The question of whether or not there will be war in Europe, within foreseeable time, cannot be answered by mere reporting. It demands a careful analysis of historical and political dynamics. Mr. Knickerbocker is capable of making this analysis, but he does not do so. He runs about and interviews people, most of whom, as he perfectly well knows, are unimportant factors in the answer to the question. He tells us, for instance, writing of King Alexander: "The Serbs know more about

war than any other people in Europe." Now, now, Mr. Knickerbocker, exactly what do you mean by that? You mean, I presume, that the Serbs are a simple war-like tribe, to whom some form of fighting comes naturally. It is a non-sequitur to say that because of this fact the opinion of their sovereign on all-European problems is particularly valuable.

Mr. Knickerbocker is as aware as you or I that the question of a European war will not be settled in Danzig, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, or Sarajevo, whatever crises may arise there, and will not be determined by any Gombos, Benes, or Alexander. He knows it, and he tells us so, eventually, but first he wants to drag us around Europe with him. He devotes considerable space to the question of aggressors, and to the non-aggression pacts, although I think that he would agree that this business of the aggressor is a red herring. There is at present no body, and no mechanism in existence, which could adjudge to the satisfaction of Europe who was the aggressor in any dispute, and each nation would decide for itself according to its own interests. If Germany continues to re-arm without the agreement of the former allied powers in violation of the treaty, France and her allies have excellent juridical grounds to consider this an act of aggression; if France should apply military sanctions against Germany to enforce the treaty, Germany and her allies, if any, would certainly make out a strong moral case for representing this as an act of aggression. And the League of Nations

would not be able to decide between them. Mr. Knickerbocker devotes no space at all to the evolution of the League, which is necessary in a thoughtful book on this question. Eventually he agrees that the question: Peace or War? will be settled—as the last war was—in London. But when he analyzes the situation of Great Britain versus the continent he is hasty and superficial. London, we learn, is alarmed

—no news to anyone—and we get the impression that the coming to power of Hitler has had a definitive effect upon British policy, diverting it from an increasingly pro-German to a strongly pro-French orientation. I myself see few signs of this. Indeed, the very latest events seem to speak otherwise.

And Mr. Knickerbocker completely leaves out of consideration the role of the United States. I agree with him that the realistic prospects of peace for some time to come, albeit an armed and suspicious peace, presume the following program.

England, who above all powers in Europe wants peace, agrees to support France. France agrees to equality of armaments with Germany. Germany agrees not to arm beyond that point. Germany concentrates on her domestic problems. France stabilizes her politics and sticks to democracy.

But the extent to which England will support France and have authority with her depends also upon England's own domestic and economic position and her relations with the rest of the world. Personally I am convinced that nothing would so tend to stabilize world politics as a complete and sympathetic understanding between Great Britain and the United States at this moment. The war debt stands in the way of such a firm understanding, and our failure to take a realistic attitude toward it may very well be one of the most potent causes of a European war if it comes. For it will certainly come unless it is averted—by the one country which should be supported to avert it: Britain. But it is the fashion amongst most American journalists writing of Europe to leave

the United States entirely out of the picture.

Of all the people who talk in this book Mussolini talks the most sense. He does not talk as a fascist but as a *real-politiker* who knows Europe. There are, of course, a great many interesting facts and sidelights, some of them new. Useful is Mr. Knickerbocker's estimate of potential fighting man-power of the continental nations—I cannot remember having seen similar figures anywhere else. They tend to exorcise the bogey of Germany's fighting capacities, even with rearmament, without a great increase in allies.

There is material here for a thoughtful book. It is too bad it is not better used.

Dorothy Thompson is a free-lance writer and foreign correspondent who for several years was chief of Central European Service in Berlin.

Her American Cousins

THE PROVINCIAL LADY IN AMERICA.

By E. M. Delafield. New York: Harper & Bros. 1934. \$2.50.

Reviewed by AMY LOVEMAN

MISS DELAFIELD is the latest in that line of Englishwomen who have crossed the seas to visit the United States and gone home to write upon their American cousins. And if she follows at a long distance in achievement as well as time after such commentators as Mrs. Trollope and Harriet Martineau,



E. M. DELAFIELD

that is not to say that her book is not entertaining reading. It is, and since frankly it is written to amuse and not to instruct, it perhaps is enough that it is sprightly, clever, and outspoken. But we must confess to disappointment that it was not more penetrating. Miss Delafield's slightly malicious humor plays only over the surface; she catches the superficial characteristic, the physical appearance of person or

place, but the criss-cross of traits, the contradictions, enthusiasms, and perplexities that afford so rich an opportunity for the satirist, elude, or else fail to interest, her. What she has given is the journal of a visit to America on which she enjoyed much hospitality, was subjected to the gruelling experiences of a visiting celebrity, and jotted down her impressions with verve, not always with kindness, and rarely with more than average acumen.

Yet it is unfair to take Miss Delafield to task for not having produced a penetrating study when all she had in mind was an impressionistic sketch. For "The Provincial Lady in America" is, entertainingly, what it sets out to be, a diary whose jottings present pen portraits of the literary and would-be literary persons the author met on her visits to New York, Chicago, Boston, and Toronto. To one familiar with the personalities who appear in her pages, the skill with which Miss Delafield seizes upon their peculiarities and distinguishing traits is at once apparent. The publishers, novelists, publishers' agents, the efficient lady who runs the lunches and teas in which foreign notabilities are introduced to their public, are just as recognizable when presented under fictitious names as are the few figures which appear under their own. Her lively gossip about them, spiced with her sense of the ridiculous, provides unfailing amusement. It is like a visit with a particularly vivacious acquaintance whose talk glances from one subject to another, barbed at one moment, good-humored at another, and never hesitant to poke fun at person and situation. A pleasant book for an idle day.