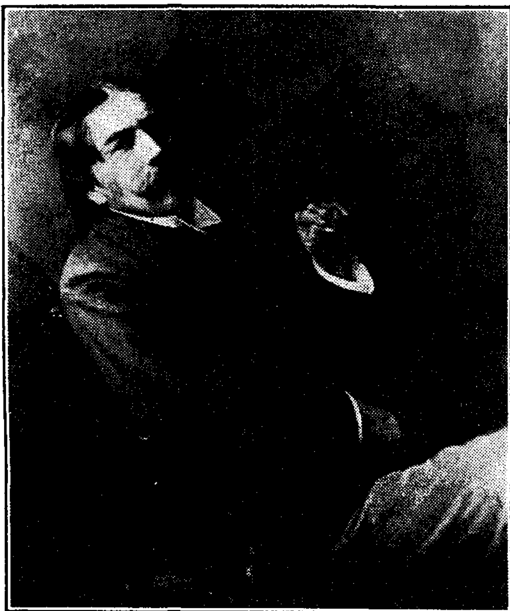
Veblen, on the other hand, had the more original mind. Veblen not merely introduced new data into economics: he also established a new point of view and a fresh set of evaluations. While Sombart was writing (during the World War) a lamentable little tract about *Händler und Helden,* Veblen was developing that brilliant study of imperial Germany which explained, among other things, how such perversions of scholarship as Sombart's treatise could come about. Veblen's thought was like an x-ray which penetrates a hitherto opaque organism and alters one's whole picture of its internal structure. Above all, he was the economic pathologist, who traced back to their sources in history the derangements of function and organ that are visible in our present economic order. No one knew better than Veblen the tumors and cancers that have eaten into the economic tissues of our civilization; and no one, incidentally, offered a better prognosis of our diseases.



THORSTEIN VEBLEN

It is in comparison with Marx that the weaknesses of Veblen's withdrawal and impassivity and discreet protective coloration come out. Here one wishes for a deeper interpretation of Veblen's personal life, for his shrinking from the biological tasks of maturity by avoiding parenthood may have had something to do with the arrested development of his thought, which never made the full circle from theory to action. If Marx made the mistake of overemphasizing the dialectical immanence of social change, as if history inevitably followed the pattern of Hegel's Absolute, Veblen made the mistake of overemphasizing the effect of external and environmental changes, and of making the role of the group the passive one of en-registering changes; hence he at times overweighted the educative effect of the machine process on worker and engineer.

Marx and Engels, with their faith in an organic world of thought and action, and with their skepticism of the sort of science that was conditioned by the inhuman industrial system of our times, were closer to human values—and so closer to a clue to human actions—than Veblen was. As a result, there was something flimsy, and even jerrybuilt, in Veblen's economic and political proposals at the end of the war, when he at last cast discretion and reserve to the winds. He was the victim of a lifetime's inhibitions: the dispassionate analyst who discussed socialism without ever once letting his students know definitely on which side his sympathies were, was incapable of building up a new center of faith; and for lack of it, he was forced back into a naive acceptance of the ideology of the engineer. He surrounded that acceptance, however, with judicious reserves, and he did not live to see it caricatured in the more juvenile schemes of the technocrats who proposed to cast aside the complex social and human elements they could neither understand nor control by their familiar methods.

Atlhough Veblen's personality gave his thought no implement of action, that personality is itself a very positive one, and the series of books that began with "The Theory of the Leisure Class" and reached a climax in his unique contribution on "The Nature of Peace" must give him a high place both in our general literature and in economics. It remains for us who have absorbed the essence of Veblen's thought to draw the conclusions, to make the plans, and to move toward the appropriate actions.

Lewis Mumford is a contributing editor of The New Republic *and a writer of distinction on matters esthetic and technical. Among his recent books is "Technics and Civilization."*

New Yorkers in Connecticut

WEEK END. By Phil Stong. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company. 1935. $2.

Reviewed by L. CABOT HEARN

MR. STONG has established his reputation as a trenchant and humorous novelist of Iowa where he was born and spent seventeen years on his father's farm. He has also been a Middle-Western teacher and a New York journalist. Now he has bought a farm in Connecticut and settled down there. It is natural therefore that his new novel should have Connecticut for background, as Stong is one of those genuine people who writes of what he knows at first-hand. The present story moves rapidly through several days of a week-end during which a houseparty of curiously assorted people works out various destinies. The people have been brought together by a hostess who, at the age of thirty-three, unmarried, is trying to find out just what she has missed in life and why. Flora Baitsell is a fine woman who has attached to herself a somewhat effete young man, who has played at being a big-game hunter, one Willis Craig. He isn't her lover, but she doesn't mind people inferring that, because she doesn't wish to be thought a dried-up virgin. She once nearly married Karl Huhn, who is one of the guests, with his wife Janet, who is superficial and infantile and pretty and cares most, really, about her five little pug dogs, "a flat-faced assortment of incest." Other guests are Bill Taylor, who drinks heavily, though bitterly brilliant and devilishly intuitive concerning human beings; Vera Leddering, a "good scout" and frankly out to get a husband; the quiet investment banker, Adam Jones, and the girl he picked up on the boat, a cagey and really warm-hearted chorus-girl who goes by the name of "Ginger"; Jenkin Mallory, a Southerner, who likes to think of himself as a Lothario; and the Abbeys, husband and wife and scientists, a very well-drawn modern couple, wedded not only by their love for each other but by their work as well, and significant of this day and generation. They are seriously academic and yet, underneath it, innocent and as devoted in their love for each other as two children. The others are various kinds of what one calls, for want of a better term, sophisticates; yet their essential infantilisms and their various ways of messing up things are beautifully brought out, all under the prowling and sardonic eye of Bill Taylor, a man of great natural abilities who is nevertheless hovering upon the edge of dipsomania.

I don't have to tell you, I suppose, that Mr. Stong writes well. Even in the servants of the house, the French cook and the Finnish maid, he creates convincing characters; and his quiet and sometimes unusually quick and subtle humor plays lambently upon the whole spectacle. There is tragedy in Flora's situation; there is swift, stark tragedy at the end in the passing of Adam Jones. There are reassortments of the couples, except for the Abbeys, who are distinctly in the wrong pew, yet learn much from their brief sojourn with the other presumable adults. Mr. Stong has all the occupational details of his characters' lives at his fingers' ends, and they are a varied group. He also knows his Connecticut as though he were a native. He is a highly intelligent man of swift observation. Nor is he a brittle writer. There is an element in his work of warm sympathy. His writing is crisp, and he can handle a group. I am no fisherman, but to me his elucidation of the various incidents of the men's trout-fishing, the morning after their arrival, seems masterly.

He cracks the veneer of New Yorkers and decidedly gets under their hides—of the type of New Yorkers who think they are intensely civilized and advanced. The comments of the red-head, "Ginger," on the group in which she strangely finds herself, are illuminating, without the usual smart-cracking of Broadway. Her *alter ego* is also deliciously presented.

Bill Taylor is not a character one easily forgets. Karl, to me, sometimes gets a little out of focus. And in the end? Jenkin delivers the last word, "I assure you that in six months they will all be unhappy again." They probably will. But meanwhile we have observed them under Mr. Stong's microscope, and I, for one, have enjoyed the process.

Gypsy Blood

THE LOADED STICK. By Naomi Jacob. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1935. $2.

Reviewed by LOUIS J. HALLE, JR.

IN reviewing this book one is tempted not to damn it with the praise it merits, but, rather, to reverse the model and praise it with faint damnation. It is a good novel, ably written, and as such deserves the complement of a more captious criticism than should be accorded a lesser work. For, since it is so good, it should have been better. The ease of the writing and the smoothness with which the material is unrolled makes one doubt that the author's reach has done full justice to her grasp.

The setting is on a farm in Yorkshire, and the story spans three generations of farmers whose lives are given up to working it. Always the land is represented as a jealous mistress, withholding her goods at any sign of neglect or unfaithfulness, and claiming all the attention of those who would possess her. The conflict comes when Jasper Howe marries a wandering gipsy girl whose heritage of independence she passes on to his children. The tug of the land is strong, but so is the tug of the rootless and irresponsible life which they inherit. In the end it is the land, with her stringent demands, that triumphs, but she proves herself a generous victor. After Jasper's daughter, Paris, has sacrificed love and companionship, and all the common joys of living, to restoring the neglected farm left by her father, she finds them again in the person of young Oliver Lewis, whose heart has been won by her heroism. The gipsy blood has been tamed, and, though the requirements of the land are still paramount, Paris is no longer alone in her task of providing for them.

NAOMI JACOB

The novel has great pace and does not falter in its movement. The scene is ably presented and set before the reader with economy of description. The characters are drawn with sure, clear-cut strokes. Perhaps, however, it is the very ease with which she handles her material that betrays the author into dealing with it too lightly. Her characters, though firmly drawn, are glossed over, their complexities simplified, and their transitions effected with too little effort. Miss Jacob's talent is so sure that she can afford to be more careless than writers of less ability, but one wonders what would be the product if she set herself to do full justice to it. Until she does she will probably continue to write novels which, like "The Loaded Stick," may, at least, be recommended as thoroughly competent fiction.

Portrait of a Barmaid

THE PLAINS OF CEMENT. By Patrick Hamilton. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1935. $2.50.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

I AM genuinely fond of Mr. Hamilton's now completed trilogy of tragi-comedies of little people in London, featuring a public house known as "The Midnight Bell." This pub lent its name as title to the first novel, and the second, "The Siege of Pleasure," dealt with a girl who took to the drink too amiably for her own good. Now the third of the short novels gives us the romance of Ella, barmaid of "The Midnight Bell."

I suppose I am fond of Mr. Hamilton's stories because his humorous depiction of character reminds me a little of Dickens, particularly in the present book; and I derive somewhat the same enjoyment in reading of his people in their particular milieu that I did in reading of the earlier Mr. H. G. Wells's draper's assistants, and of "Kipps" and "Mr. Polly."

It seemed to me that in the first book, this writer got very well inside the mind and soul of a young waiter, desiring a little life, who fell in love with and idealized a girl of the streets. Now he gives us the complete train of thought of an appealing barmaid in the course of her courtship by an elderly gentleman she believes to be quite wealthy. There is not so much more than that to the book, though there are, of course, its minor climaxes, and the tragedy of the situation concerning "Bob"; yet I was absorbed in Ella and her Mr. Eccles.

Mr. Hamilton knows the essential hopelessness yet the pale aspirations of the stratum of which he writes. He knows their preconceived notions about life, their uncomplaining acceptance of the English caste system, their private self-respects and rules-of-thumb in regard to existence, their romantic flights, their fundamental decencies, and all their harassments. And while perceiving the tragedy latent in their lives, he can also write of them with a quiet but to me delicious humor. I hope he will go on writing about them. I am what they call a "fan" of his.

I should not call Mr. Hamilton a first-rate novelist—yet. But he has a style. When you hold his handful of characters up against the God's plenty that Dickens gave us, with his incredible fecundity of invention, Mr. Hamilton is nowhere. (Mr. Hamilton, incidentally, is a good deal more mordant than Dickens usually was, and he is not a caricaturist.) And yet this young English writer has made a worthy place for himself in contemporary fiction. He has been mentioned with a passing glance toward Thomas Burke of Limehouse. But he does not tend toward melodrama as does Burke; and so far his range is a good deal narrower. It will certainly, however, repay you as a reader to visit his "Midnight Bell" near Oxford Street and the Euston Road. Mr. Arthur Morrison never did a vicinity, or the inside of a bar, better than Mr. Hamilton. And, along with his portrait of Ella the Barmaid, in this book, Mr. Hamilton's portrait of the perpetually "What-what?"ing Mr. Eccles will long remain in my mind.

If you will have heresy, I liked this novel a lot better than I did "Goodbye, Mr. Chips." I think it more moving, and I am more deeply drawn to its main character, Ella. Ella, without knowing it herself, is really a most noble girl; and her amiable conversation pleases me greatly.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Bowling Green

XII. Industria Peruana

I PAUSE here and ask myself awkward questions. What, of such jumbled memories, are most important to retain? And can there be the slightest value in such chancy superficial glimpses? The other day, a cold winter evening, I met by chance on Long Island a fellow passenger from the *Santa Maria*. He was no longer the bronzed vacationist, he looked pale, rather fiscal and downtownish. We spoke casually, of Guayaquil. "It all seems like a dream," he said.

And dreams are difficult to hold. What would an Ecuadorian remember of a day spent on our Long Island shore? And would it tell us anything helpful? If I should ask one small girl who was with us what comes to her mind she would say, probably, the burros and little black pigs running about the outskirts of the town. Searching my own skull, perhaps I find some special suggestion in those volumes of Dickens translated into Spanish. Or the crowds gathered along the Malecon as we went back to the ship. A parade was preparing; we had seen groups of children lining up to march with decorated floats. Señor Don José Maria Velasco Ibarra, the new president-elect, was about to arrive from somewhere by plane, and the town was turning out in his honor. For them also a New Deal was beginning.

☙ ☙

So this evening you are going down the Guayas River inhaling the musk of warm equatorial forest; the next morning you are at anchor off a barren coast of cliffs and sand with winter in the air. During the night you have come to that westernmost shoulder of South America (Cape Blanco) which with comely symmetry is so nearly opposite the easternmost bulge on the Brazil side. Just about there you meet the cold water of the Humboldt current. One of my unfulfilled intentions all autumn has been to drop in at Alfred Paine's Salt Water Bookshop and learn something about Alexander von Humboldt. You hear his name often enough along the West Coast. The swimming tank is quite a different place from now on. No matter how often you were told at home that August would be winter below the equator, in the swelter of New York and Panama and Colombia you couldn't quite believe it. Yesterday you were buying Panama hats in Guayaquil; today you're hunting for an overcoat or your warmest sweater.

The red and white flag of Peru is up on the foremast; rolling in a moderate swell, *Santa Maria* drops her hook towards a steep gravel bluff where a long barracksy bungalow is evidently the bachelor club the oil men have spoken of with sportive affection. (The Madhouse they call it.) Whatever you expected in your first glimpse of Peru (I don't quite know what I did expect), Talara is probably quite different. Certainly I had never heard of it before, nor had a good many geographers. I didn't even know that the great Peruvian desert (which runs all the way along the coast to about 30 degrees south) is rich in oil. In a certain atlas I have, published 1917, oil is not even marked on the economic map of South America. But Talara is a petroleum faucet and nothing else. The wells themselves are inland, invisible over the rim of the desert plateau that closes the view. Somewhere in there too, I was told, are marshes of pitch, used by Pizarro to caulk his ships. But by now the oldtimers on board are telling you so many good yarns that you are wary. The skipper has brought out the excellent old Bostonian anecdote about the man whose beans were cooked upside down; and the chief officer has advised you to watch the anchor very carefully when it comes up from the mud because once it brought up a gold doubloon.

I don't suppose there's a word in the gazetteer that has richer or more romantic sound than Peru. And it was somehow appropriate that in this chilly, bleak, ugly desolation men were obviously as busy as Pizarro in getting out wealth. Sandhills, pipelines, boxes of canned oil and gasoline going down a conveyor into a lighter; a big Danish tanker (*Anna Knudsen*) waiting to be filled. These small darkish men in overalls along the pier, running trucks of oil, stacking piles of cases, were they the descendants of the Incas? But it is better not to speculate on the ethnic map of South America. That way lies incredulity.

☙ ☙

Talara, a company town of the International Petroleum outfit, is evidently young and strictly business. Terraced up the bluff, with neat bungalows and surprising little green gardens irrigated on sand, are the homes of the officials. The native quarters are down below; there is a market there which some female passengers visited and returned with earthenware dolls and jugs and shrills of enthusiasm. I was content with a scramble up the hillside to a powdery plateau where one looked over the cold gray ocean. A big surf was creaming across the wreck of a barge. In a row of snug little cottages with flowers, kiddie kars and babies, International Petroleum wives looked out speculatively on the little group of tourists. The green funnels of *Santa Maria* must cause a twinge of homesickness sometimes. There was an oil man from Oklahoma who was going inland, to some of the wells, for a two-year stay. He looked a little grim about it, but seemed to be sniffing the oil-strong air with familiar pleasure. Certainly Mr. J. and his friends returned to the bachelors' club in a mood of jubilee; but then as accountants they would not be there long. On the hillside we encountered a whiteish dog with one haunch poised in busy friction. There, said the experienced Mr. H., is your first Peruvian dog, in a characteristic attitude. Nor is it only the dogs, as we had opportunity to learn later.

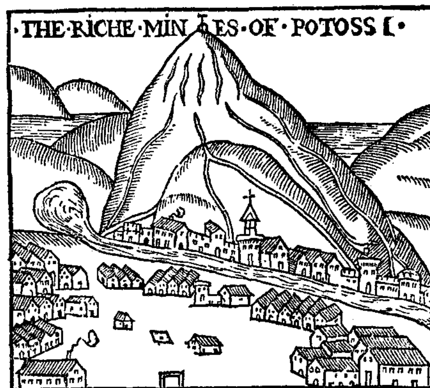
A look into the factory as we went by showed innumerable bright cans being filled with oil, boxed and stencilled INDUSTRIA PERUANA. This somehow amused me because I divined that even behind the busy Canadian boys who seemed to be running the show the really serious Inca was probably Mr. Rockefeller. It had struck me, studying the maps, that Ecuador is shaped exactly like a slice of mince pie, and I heard of some Northamerican Jack Horners who were doing an excellent job of plum-picking in that sector. The shape of Peru is different but certainly the plums are there. From the first crude glimpse of that extraordinary country, and with always increasing emphasis, the most casual observer is aware of its astounding possibilities of wealth. Even the bowels of birds have turned into cash. I refer of course to those islands, whitened with guano, which shine like icebergs farther down the coast. The steamers, with decent respect for capital, give those crags a wide berth and refrain from whistling, not to alarm the birds.

☙ ☙

I do not often envy accountants, but those travelling oil-auditors must have an interesting job. They are in a very ancient tradition, too. There was a peaceable expert in figures, one Augustin de Zarate, a Castilian comptroller, who was sent to Peru (after Pizarro's assassination) to try to straighten out the colonial accounts. In so doing he found himself dangerously involved in the civil wars of the time, and had the good sense not to write down his full reports until he was safely home. As Prescott pleasantly paraphrases him, "those do wisely who allow their accounts of their own times to repose in the quiet security of manuscript, till the generation affected by them has passed away." So his history was first published at a safe distance—in Antwerp, in 1555; it did not appear in Spain until 1577. And browsing through an old catalogue of Maggs Brothers in London I find a facsimile of the title-page of the first English edition, in 1581. It shows a drawing of "the ritche mines of Potosi"; you must remember that the "Peru" of the sixteenth century included a good deal of what we now call Ecuador, Bolivia, and Chile.

No, the barrens of Talara are not beautiful; they are very different from my vague recollection of Frank Stockton's old yarn—was it *The Adventures of Captain Horn?*—which I think gave me my earliest notion of the Andean coast. But they are unquestionably rich; in the complicated web of economics I now realize that those very sands probably paid for a delightful and luxurious lunch I enjoyed a year ago with an oil magnate in Toronto. And if the great scheme ever goes through which I heard mentioned in Lima, of a new trans-Andean railway from Sechura Bay, Talara will be in strategic position. Students of the mountain contours told me that from Sechura, not very far south of Talara, is the easiest route to wriggle through the great cordilleras; by a tunnel 30 miles long (they said) the Andes can be pierced without going much higher than 4,000 feet. (Or something like that; I made no notes; don't hold me responsible.) If you can once break through those 150 miles you're on the Marañon river; which farther down changes its name to the Amazon. Once you've seen the Andes you don't talk lightly about breaking through them; but if I were a youngster with economic prescience I'd be tempted to hang around Sechura Bay and think about it. A Pacific outlet for the whole Amazon Basin!

THE
DISCOVERIE AND CONQVEST
of the Prouinces of PERV, and
the Nauigation in the South
Sea, along that Coast.
And alsoof the ritche Mines
of POTOSI.



Imprinted at London by Richard Ihones. Febru. 6. 1581.

☙ ☙

That sandy coast is not beautiful in a close-up, but it shows marvelous opal and tawny lights from shipboard a few miles out. As cold morning mist gives way to brilliant sun, mountains of unbelievable jagged shapes appear. The long beach abuts on steep lionskin slopes. Behind are range on range of fantastic notched and tilted cockscomb profiles in deepening tints of umber; turning blue and pink in afternoon. The whole dazzling shine of the Pacific seems fractured in prism colors on those horrific sierras; and then, behind them, disclosed in partings of crystal cloud, greater mountains still, lonely and appalling. Whatever you say of them can give no suggestion of their cruel and beautiful completeness. They give the passer-by an exquisite pleasure, because they are so safely far. With something of relief you see them fade into the dusk; you take to the smokeroom to practise your newly learned Spanish toast, *Salud y Pesetas!* More human, more encouraging, are the Peruvian lighthouses twinkling in the dark; you take a line between them, Lobos de Tierra to port, Lobos de Afuera to starboard. The Wolves of the Land, the Wolves Outside. Avoid them both!

(*To be continued*)

Christopher Morley.

Navies of the World

SEA POWER IN THE MODERN WORLD. By Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond. New York: Reynal & Hitchcock. 1934. $3.

Reviewed by Robert G. Albion

WITH the approaching expiration of the Washington naval arrangements, this book makes a timely appearance. Less objective and less impartial than Mahan, Sir Herbert presents in detail the point of view which the British are carrying into the naval parleys. That view is frankly reactionary. Admiral Richmond analyzes—and regrets—the qualitative and quantitative changes which have taken place in the navies of the world during the last half century.

Part of the blame for Britain's present naval problems is charged to the phrase "Influence of Sea Power," popularized by Mahan with his first and greatest book in 1890. That phrase, according to Sir Herbert, induced several nations, which did not appreciate the real significance of Mahan's thesis, to build bigger ships and bigger navies than were really necessary or justifiable under the circumstances.

Mahan's conclusions were drawn mostly from the wars of the sailing ship era. Admiral Richmond shows that in its fundamental features, sea power has not changed. It still consists of keeping open one's own lines of communications for troop movements, supplies, and general commerce, while preventing the enemy from doing likewise. The instruments of sea power, however, have changed. The days are long past when nations fought sea battles with standardized units—the "seventy-fours" — which changed little from decade to decade. Richmond argues that the 10,000-ton battleships of a half century ago would still be large enough to fulfil all their necessary functions if no one had built larger ones in the meantime. The "bigger and better" mania, however, has pushed the size of the capital ship up to 35,000 tons or more, with little increase in usefulness to offset the tremendous increase in cost. The modern naval battle, moreover, is no longer a matter for capital ships alone. Flotillas of destroyers and other small craft are necessary to protect them from the torpedoes of submarines and other destroyers. All craft must also be taken into account, though Sir Herbert feels that they have by no means rendered the battleship obsolete. The cruiser presents a far more complicated problem than its early counterpart, the frigate. Altogether, the 1880's seem to be the last of the "good old days" in the eyes of the British Admiralty.

The quantitative changes seem even less justifiable than the qualitative to Admiral Richmond. Certain nations have built far larger naval forces than their "security" would seem to demand. The book is published in New York and there are no rough phrases about the Americans, but as one reads between the lines, Sir Herbert seems to consider us even worse offenders than the Japanese or the pre-war Germans. He questions why we really need what Wilson called in 1916 "incomparably the most adequate navy in the world." Our naval budget has increased twenty-five fold in fifty years, while the British rose fourfold. Every time another nation has increased the size of its ships or fleets, England has had to keep pace. Richmond argues that the proper basis for a proportional naval ratio would be to build up from the legitimate needs of the smallest maritime nation, rather than to build down from the maximum as was done at Washington.

The sincerity and logic of the admiral's remarks carry conviction. The volume contains much that is pertinent in analysis and fact, but the treatment is too repetitious. The presentation would be improved if the book were half as long and the material better coördinated. By no means the least interesting part of the volume is its attractive jacket, showing the naval bases of the powers and the principal articles of commerce carried along the main lines of sea communication.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED