

## Greyhound of Heaven

THE FIRST BUS OUT. By Eugene Löhrke. New York: D. Appleton-Century. 1935. \$2.

Reviewed by L. CABOT HEARN

I'M not going to repeat here one statement the publishers make on the front jacket-flap of this novel; but it was a mistake to make it. If it wasn't, they shouldn't accuse reviewers of giving away novelists' plots. The statement they make, in italics, is likely to spoil a particularly good climax of the author's.

But I could see from the jacket-picture that this bus was not the ordinary bus, to Greenwich, Bronxville, Washington, or what have you. No, this bus was obviously akin to the ship in "Outward Bound," to Walter de la Mare's "The Last Coach-Load," and to other conveyances on the metaphysical rampage.

Mr. Löhrke knows the whole atmosphere of actual bus-riding at night, every sensation of that hurtling progress on a long-distance "greyhound." His short novel is atmospheric or nothing, and the envelope of the story is satisfying. The glimpses we have of the various lives involved cannot be said to be quite as satisfying, not that they are not good as far as they go but that they do not go far enough. We are left at the end with quite a lot of questions on our lips. Those lives seem to me tantalizingly like the streamers of colored paper that in some barber-shops serve to indicate that the electric fan is actually functioning. They blow out in the wind of the bus's—and story's—speed, and terminate suddenly. Perhaps one has enough of the scaly Budd Dwyer, whose life was, after all, singularly uncomplex; but Joe Schiavoni "steals the show" from Mr. Mole, in his redundant sinisterness; and Anna Roehm is another novel in herself. I should like to have those two in two separate novels. Maybe, after all, I am merely complimenting this book. But I should rather have it complemented.



EUGENE LÖHRKE

A novel was recently reviewed in *The Saturday Review*, March Cost's "The Dark Mirror," that appeared to take a group of people and put them through the paces of their pasts, not to say transport them into the future. There was a novel, also, by a young Englishman, not so long ago, called "Delay in the Sun," that dealt with a lot of tourists in a Spanish town—this time after the bus had deposited them and gone on. This multiplex presentation of character within a short period of time seems to have become quite the rage.

As to the mysticism of "The First Bus Out," the present reviewer may merely be childish, but he was not satisfied by being cut off in mid-flight. To do that satisfactorily the implications made by the author would have to be a deal more profound and startling than are Mr. Löhrke's, clever as he is. "Outward Bound" "got somewhere," in a more satisfactory way, even though the end was left in doubt—as must all supramundane endings be. One thing I think would have improved "The First Bus Out," and that would have been more actual clash between the passengers. At that, this is an unusual yarn, and brief and easy to read. It's a good book for the bedside lamp—and then you go to sleep and dream the rest of it—but be careful how you carry on with that bus!

## Southern Testament

90° IN THE SHADE. By Clarence Cason. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press. 1935. \$2.50.

Reviewed by JONATHAN DANIELS

WHETHER wants a picture of the South must remember, as Clarence Cason remembered when he set about to "psychograph" it, that Stark Young and William Faulkner have walked the same streets in Mississippi. But certainly no Southerner nor any sensible human being anywhere supposes that either of these two have undertaken to see or write the region whole. Lost as they and so many other Southern writers have been in the extremes of sweet, lost elegance and unsweet present decay, there was plenty of room between them for a man who loved the South and hated ugly things in it to seek to see and show both sides of the street and the whole South that stretches back from both sides in beauty and evil, loud ignorance and civilized, if sometimes complacent, intelligence.

Clarence Cason loved the South as a man can love a region without being blind to its ugliness and, if he was not wholly successful in distilling the ultimate essence of the region, he made no pretense at doing so. Wisely he expressed his realization that no last word can be quickly said about an area in which grace and beauty persist despite the ugliness of new and careless industrialism, the polit-



CLARENCE CASON

ical buffoonery of Bilbos, the viciousness of loan sharks, the lethargy of the intelligent, and the terrible man-animal-mob cruelty of lynching. Mr. Cason hated these ugly things as no man foreign to the South could hate them despite the fact that, in the too little known tradition of high civilized Southern conversation, he could talk—and write—about them not merely with condemnation but also with wit. He could love, hiding his anger in a graceful verbal facetiousness, a country which discouraged white immigration in the booming America of the eighties and nineties because there were already present in the South more white folks than the Negroes could support.

The death of Mr. Cason, almost simultaneously with the appearance of his book, made it a sort of testament to his South. He left to other men like himself in the South "their choice of courses":

they may either exist in complacent dreams, hoping that they will not too soon be cast from their beds by a sudden rocking of the earth beneath them; or they may resolve to wrestle with substantial problems with all the strength and skill at their command, inspired by another kind of vision—one which leads them to hope that the present and future of the South may yet prove worthy of the glamorous reputation of the ante-bellum years.

That choice remains to be made, but it is good to have a book that presents it intelligently and bad to lose an author who could write it. The South needs more such writers as Mr. Cason to look at the South neither as angry Puritans, writing of an impure and imperfect South with all the detailed violence of a backwoods evangelist describing sin, nor as the earlier lazy literary cavaliers, who refused to see any vestige of loan sharks or pellagra in the jessamine-scented moonlight, but as men who can see beauty and hate evil on the same street in the same South where both do in truth exist.

Jonathan Daniels, editor of the Raleigh News and Observer, is himself a Southerner by birth and training.

# The BOWLING GREEN by Christopher Morley

THE ANONYMOUS *Gourmet's Book of Food and Drink* (Macmillan, \$2.50) contains much fine manly stuff about the pleasures of the table and the bar; it is well worth adding to a selected shelf near the sideboard. What is quite unusual in a British work, it actually gives a respectable instruction for Mint Julep, without the heresy of pounding or crushing the mint—which is an abomination. The julep recipe given by “Gourmet” is that of Captain Marryat who is always supposed to have made the drink known in Britain. It is the Georgia formula, which equals cognac with peach brandy. This the Bowling Green does not personally approve; the blend of peach and mint flavors seems to us too dulcet or feminine.

It is well known among those who take juleps with due seriousness that Bourbon whiskey is the rear end, the transmission and the differential joint of the julep that travels far.

ON THE SUBJECT of Cheese, “Gourmet” is on firmer footing, and knows his stuff. He gives some valuable suggestions for travellers who want to sample the noble Stilton cheese in its own home. Stilton, he tells us, came originally from Melton Mowbray, but was made famous by the Bell Inn at Stilton. “The great sign of the Bell, in solid copper, still hangs from the wrought iron stays over the central door.” Perhaps some travelling client who motors up the Great North Road this summer will stop at Stilton (on his way to Peterborough Cathedral, perhaps, and after visiting the John Bunyan region at Bedford) and send us a photo.

Excellent fellow, “Gourmet” understands that the only way to eat really good Camembert is with a spoon; though he says that an artist friend of his has solved the problem by using a small trowel-shaped palette-knife.

I deplore his referring to the proud old *Mauretania* as a “boat.” How many years must we wage war on this horrid error? “Boat” means small craft; lifeboats, tugboats, any sort of subaltern vessel. The *Mauretania* was a ship. To call the *Normandie* a “boat” (as we just managed to stop a radio announcer from doing the other day) would be like calling The White House a kennel.

SPEAKING OF the *Normandie*, F. C. H. and I were lucky enough to be aboard the *Alice M. Moran*, my favorite tugboat, when the great French liner came up New York Harbor on her second visit. No matter how many photos one has seen of her, to realize her extraordinary size and shapeliness you need to be on a small boat down close to water-level. The white V-

shaped streamlined bulkhead above her fo'c'sle, intended to split wind-pressure, pleased me; it looked exactly like a snow-drift that has been carved prow-shape by a gale.

As a ship, anything of such dimensions seems to me fantastic excess; as a phenomenon she is thrilling to observe. (Will they find some way of abating the enormous quantity of smoke she exhales?) Captain Tony Huseby, master of the *Alice M. Moran*, was in charge of docking her, and had gone aboard at Quarantine. So Bill Banks was at *Alices'* wheel, and this time, instead of chasing under her stern we were promoted to the bow.

So you must imagine the picture: this enormous hull coming centrally up stream, beheld of all beholders; rather like Shakespeare arriving at a congress of English teachers. Every eye within gaze of the North River was attention. And the *Alice* far down below the steep flare of the *Normandie's* tall side. As we looked up, there was a cheerful little French boy leaning from a port, chanting to himself and evidently in proud spirits. We called to him, waving salute; but he was feeling too boyishly biggity to pay much heed to the lowly tugboat. A small spoof seemed in order. We put on (or tried to) a look of puzzled but interested curiosity, and shouted up:—

“Comment s'appelle le grand bateau?” (*Bateau* is to *vaisseau*, in French, as *boat* to *ship* in English.)

The lad was smart; he saw it was a jape, and smiled, without answering. But an excitable Frenchwoman at an adjoining port could not control herself. “Tell him, tell him,” she ejaculated to the boy in rapid French, “he doesn't know the name of the ship.”

Still the youngster grinned and forebore, but the lady was hooked. What, she thought—not to know the name of this magnificent vessel, this empress of longitudes, the world's hugest ship? She screeched out wildly:—

“Mais c'est la Normandie, alors!”

We gazed up gratefully and took off our hats.

“Merci bien, Madame . . . voici *Alice M.*”

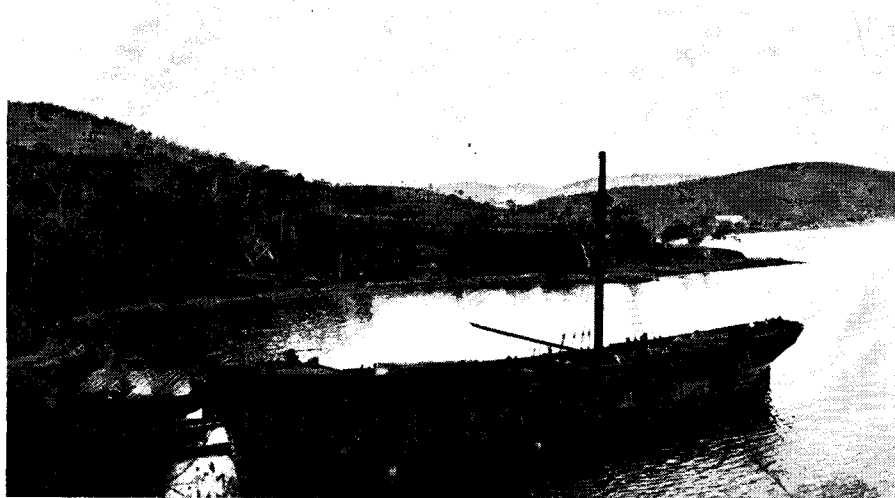
WE SPOKE of this being the season to read Walt Whitman. My friend Walter Palmer of Chester, Pa., going through family papers, found a passage in his father's diary describing Walt Whitman's funeral. This is of great interest to me as showing the impression made by Whitman on his own time. Walter Palmer, though only a very small boy at the time, remembers how moved his father was when he returned home after the service.

From the diary of Thomas Chalkley Palmer, March 30, 1892:—

“Today I attended the funeral of Walt Whitman in Camden, and heard the eulogies of Dr. Brinton, Robert Ingersoll and others upon the departed. The funeral services were held at the tomb in Harleigh cemetery. The weather was mild and pleasant. About a thousand people were present. . . . With considerable difficulty, I managed to get near enough to hear most of what was said.

“Dr. Daniel G. Brinton made a strong address, tho it was cast in rather flowery language. It had evidently been carefully prepared, yet it was not lacking in spontaneity and eloquence. ‘His voice sounded above the heads of great men and over the roofs of the world,’ said the doctor.

“Ingersoll's address was, of course, the event of the day. It is far from being the



THE LAST OF CONRAD'S "OTAGO"