

this unnautical statement being that "oar" is to rhyme with "therefor." Æschylus never turned his pilot into an oarsman. He wrote "rudder." Such carping criticism apart, one cannot escape the fact that if one must rhyme as well as translate, some attention must be diverted from the translation. But Professor Murray is thinking only of commending Æschylus to the reader by what he elsewhere calls the rhyme's ringing quality.

The rich rhyming speech of the great Victorian poets is always in his ears. It makes him fear that Antigone will sound bald and unbeautiful to English readers when Æschylus makes her say:

No one shall ever thus decree for me.  
I am a woman and yet will I make  
A grave, a burying, for him—  
Carry the earth in my cloak's linen fold  
With my own hands to cover him.

The swift words are turned into smooth-flowing rhyming couplets:

Let none believe it! I myself will lay  
His limbs in earth, and, woman though  
I be,  
Heap o'er him the grave's covering  
canopy.  
Aye, though I find but what these hands  
can hold  
Of earth within my mantle's linen fold.

Few translators are long-lived. It has been truly said that the translations of former generations are from a dead language into a dead language. We need some one to do for us today what Professor Murray once did with such notable success. He made Greek live for his contemporaries. But another idiom is needed now for that miracle. Only let the new translator take to heart the words of another true Grecian, Gildersleeve, that a translation can be only an etching of a great painting, "and, in the Muses' name, do not color an etching."

Edith Hamilton, author of "The Greek Way," has translated the "Agamemnon" and "Prometheus" of Æschylus, and "The Trojan Women" of Euripides, the last commissioned by the Theatre Guild.



"MR. PIXLEY IS OUR VERY FOREMOST AUTHORITY ON SOCIALISM, MUSTEISM, LOVESTONEISM, AND MICKEY MOUSE."

Drawing by Gardner Rea, from "Redder than the Rose."

## Heat Lightning on the Left

REDDER THAN THE ROSE. By Robert Forsythe. New York: Covici-Friede. 1935. \$2.

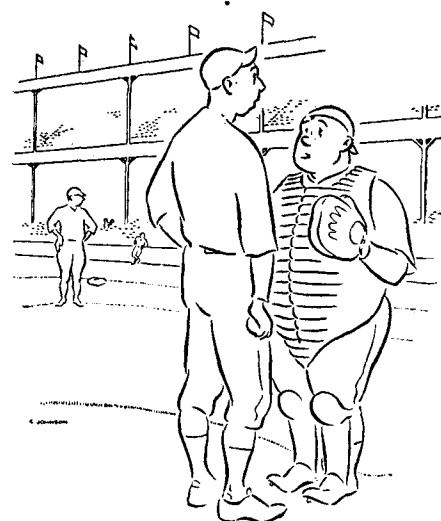
Reviewed by WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

I HAD better list immediately what I don't like in this book by a new satirist of the Left. First, why doesn't he write under his own name, if he's such an Admirable Crichton? It is more important that a convinced Communist write under his own name than that a convinced Republican or Democrat do the same thing. Otherwise there is a suspicion that one is running with the hare and hunting with the hounds.

One finds out quickly enough the people Mr. Forsythe dislikes. Sometimes they are people almost everybody dislikes, like William Randolph Hearst; sometimes they are considerable human beings, like Henry L. Mencken; sometimes they are old Aunt Sallies and tarbabies or people toward whom Mr. Forsythe wishes to prove himself superior (since you can be just as much of a snob, if you are a radical, as you can if you are a conservative); and sometimes this writer's satire is entirely justified, and his suppressed rage admirable. Also he can write cleverly and often be amusing.

He doesn't convince me that communism is the best way out of a bad mess; but his attitude is simply, toward all his readers who may not agree with him, "Of course, you're an idiot, but some day you may see the light!" Nor is such an attitude anything new. It has been Bernard Shaw's for a lifetime.

He takes a good poke at the English, as Shaw has done so continuously. He is jocular about the Roosevelts—and somehow seems just a trifle less bright and dapper for being so. He finds a lot more



"SOMEHOW I DON'T FEEL THAT ALL THE EYES OF THE NATION IS ON US THIS SEASON."—Drawing by Crockett Johnson, from "Redder than the Rose."

significance in Mae West than most of us would be inclined to grant her. *Ex cathedra* pronouncements are frequent stumbling-blocks for his alertly stepping prose. In "Speak to Me of Love" he makes two statements that do not endear him to me. Audiences that come in late have caused me to gnash my teeth quite as much as Mr. Forsythe could ever have gnashed his, but when he says, "My only pleasure was in kicking a gentleman as he went by and accepting his apology for his clumsiness," I am quite on the side of the gentleman. It doesn't make me burst into a loud guffaw. Then he tells us that Mlle. Boyer comes of a poor family but is at no pains "to disguise the fact of her lowly origin." Neither are a great many of our movie stars. So what? "There is every indication that she views her admirers among the socially favored with something less than reverence." That last should count a mite for Mlle. Boyer when the Revolution comes!

You see, there is a little too much of the eternal Puritan about Mr. Forsythe to please me altogether. You may not find it so. After all, this country, in spite of being (in my opinion) a swell one, is also one of the most preposterous lands in the world, full of plenty of horrors as well as plenty of excellences. I am all for a wide distribution of Mr. Forsythe's book, just as I am for all books of American self-criticism. If the American people developed their sense of humor enough and got mad enough they could do a tremendous lot without any revolution at all. There is nothing funny about Mr. Forsythe's championship of the oppressed. It does him infinite credit. And plenty of things happen constantly in the length and breadth of our dear land of which we should, as a nation, be heartily ashamed. At some of these things this author takes a swipe; and he's no fool.

There you have my *pro* and *con* on "Redder than the Rose," which, by the way, strikes me as a most amusing title.

# The BOWLING GREEN by Christopher Morley

## Picking Up Corn

THE BIG TOWN: New York Day by Day.  
By O. O. McIntyre. New York: Dodd,  
Mead & Company. 1935. \$1.25.

WHEN I'm low in mind, or feel any sort of spiritual ullaage, I have an unfailing consolation. At any rate, I say to myself, O. O. McIntyre likes my stuff. And How. He's often astonished his many readers by the warmth of his compliments to me in his newspaper column ("New York Day by Day," in the *New York American* and syndicated in many other papers). And I daresay I never should have been so unmannerly as to mention the matter or seem ungrateful to my most appreciative client except that Odd has now collected a lot of his columns into a book. My unsuspecting colleague Mr. William Rose Benét gave it a handsome blessing in this Review on June 15. "Put this book in your bag when you're going away for the summer," said W. R. B. "He has developed considerable nimbleness in phraseology."

No; the thing to put in your bag if you want to get Odd McIntyre's stuff before he writes it would be the poor old Bowling Green itself. I don't want to seem selfish if Mr. McIntyre needs to divot the Green now and then for his newspaper syndicate; I've run a daily column myself and I know it's a tough job. But when he gets into the bookshops then I feel a certain sense of trade honor involved. I take books fairly seriously and like to see others do so. Who steals my purse—you know the old line. And "phraseology" happens to be my profession.

Even so I would be indolently and placably amused, and remain silent, if Mr. McIntyre didn't make such talk in his book about the value of candor and frankness. All right, let's be frank. I work hard over my stuff, and if people are going to read it I'd prefer them to get in the SATURDAY REVIEW (or my books) under my own name than in the Hearst papers under his.

About fifteen years ago, when the Bowling Green was a part of the reputable old *New York Evening Post*, an out of town reader sent me a little story clipped from a hinterland paper. It had been lifted (almost without change) from my column and transplanted into the then just beginning McIntyre syndicate. It was a description of a somewhat flamboyant horse-enthusiast seen on the way to Belmont Park. I reprinted the two pieces in parallel columns, under the caption *We Must Both Have Seen The Same Man*. Shortly afterward I received a letter of

apology from Mr. McIntyre, saying that it was a regrettable error on the part of his secretary.

But sometimes I've wondered whether he hasn't still got the same secretary.

I don't see the *New York American* regularly, but I can't resist picking it up now and then in train or subway just for the fun of seeing what little notion of mine O. O. has taken a fancy to. For a

while I pasted them on slips of paper, checking them up with their sources; but it was a nuisance to have to hunt through my old stuff in search of some half-remembered phrase. And whenever I felt my bile beginning to rise there would appear some remark in O. O.'s column as to what a remarkable writer I am. To which sort of hush-compliment I'm pococurante. (A useful word, Odd.)

### Let's try parallel columns:

#### "THE BIG TOWN" (1935)

- P. 13:—Chirping like an insect obligato on a summer night.
- P. 25:—There is a specious legend that wine, no matter how long casked, remains always en rapport with its native vineyard. When vineyards flower each year, the barreled vintage fumes and bubbles. A chemical heredity.
- P. 41:—T. E. Powers's dove of peace eggs in Bryan's hair.
- P. 59:—No opiate is so deadening as memory . . . the despair of anxious thought.
- P. 61:—floating for an instant in the public eye like a smoke ring and sifting apart.
- P. 79:—an old silver-shingled barn, lilac-bowered cottage. . . .
- P. 79:—Off in the car for a green escapade.
- P. 75:—that I kept so many balls in the air at the same time seemed incredible . . . dispersing vitality . . . writing demands singleness of purpose . . . the late Joyce Kilmer wrote vicariously and feverishly until he went to war. . . .
- P. 118:—Merrick's Conrad in Quest of his Youth felt antiquated at 37.
- P. 136:—The late red-haired Steve O'Grady. . . Immediately he wrote the editor: "Herewith my resignation to take effect the day before yesterday."
- P. 138:—A star danced and under it Betzi Beaton was born.
- P. 191:—The Irving Berlins seemed especially animated. Maybe a new song theme blowing across the latitudes.

#### "JOHN MISTLETOE" (1931)

- P. 110:—That extraordinary insect obligato of summer nights.
- P. 440:—After a wine has been barrelled it is still en rapport with the vineyard. When next year's flowering comes on the vines, the liquid in the cask stirs and fumes and scintillates by some chemical heredity.
- P. 173:—the cartoon of Mr. Bryan with the Dove of Peace's eggs nested in the upward-curling thatch of his back hair.
- P. 39:—A sweet and dangerous opiate is Memory . . . the bliss of anxious thought.
- P. 39:—floats an instant in the mind like a smoke-ring, then spreads and thins and sifts apart.
- P. 276:—the lilac still grows; the old silvered shingles on barn and out-houses. . . .
- P. 404:—A green escapade from town.
- P. 165:—Joyce Kilmer having set the record for keeping innumerable balls in air at once. . . Kilmer fled from it into the lurid single-mindedness of War.
- P. 350:—Leonard Merrick's *Conrad in Quest of His Youth* . . . his hero who thought himself so elderly was actually 37.
- P. 214:—Steve wrote . . . "Herewith my resignation to take effect day before yesterday."
- P. 358:—[re Shakespeare!] There was a star danced and under that was he born.
- P. 121:—rumors of a new poetry blowing across the latitudes.

There are more, that I haven't taken the trouble to run down. But there are other books besides *Mistletoe* that Mr. McIntyre occasionally reads.

#### "THE BIG TOWN"

- P. 126:—Thoughts while strolling: Those windows of cashew nuts make a fellow want to sneeze.
- P. 67:—I used to go to that corner and bestow an affectionate self-approval.
- P. 134:—Thoughts while strolling: Paradoxical name for a bank—The Midland Marine.

#### EX LIBRIS

- Human Being*, p. 65:—cashew nuts—a name that made his nose tickle.
- Ibid*, p. 2:—that tone of affectionate approval which does us so much good when self-administered.
- Mandarin in Manhattan*, p. 83:—The Midland Marine Bank (surely a paradox).  
(Continued on next page)