

The Singing Puritans

THE PURITANS AND MUSIC IN ENGLAND AND NEW ENGLAND. By Percy A. Scholes. New York: Oxford University Press. 1934. \$8.50.

Reviewed by CARL ENGEL

EVER since Adam and Eve got the first dispossession notice, their progeny has striven to regain entrance into the ancestral home. These efforts, vain though stubborn, have led to the strange notion, entertained by a good many people, that the surest access to a heavenly paradise is by way of hell on earth. Their faith in compensation, personal and everlasting, is absolute. It helps them to regard the vicissitudes encountered in this "vale of tears" with equanimity, even with cheerfulness, except that cheer is so apt to degenerate into unseemly mirth. To avoid this danger, they are at pains to surround their life of virtue and purity with an air of dignified gloom and to fortify themselves behind self-denials and discomforts.

No fault could be found with such views or practices, were it not that those who hold them or indulge in them are recurrently beset with the urge of making everyone else share them. This frequently leads to unpleasantness. The would-be-reformers and the not-to-be-reformed ruffle each others' temper. They malign, if they do not kill, each other. And thus the men and women, whose strict tenets earned them the proud appellation of Puritans, have come in, from time to time, for some unmerited slander. Particularly the Puritans who settled in New England during the first half of the seventeenth century and their descendants have long, and not unjustly, enjoyed the reputation of having been intolerable prigs and tedious killjoys. But along with deserved opprobrium there has been a good deal of excessive vituperation. Among it is the general and now ancient accusation that the Puritans loathed and prohibited all music.

Now comes along an English musician and musicologist, Dr. Percy A. Scholes, who has probed deeply into the saga of "The Puritans and Music in England and New England." At last the true facts are laid bare. Dr. Scholes, in giving us what he modestly calls "a contribution to the cultural history of two nations," has written the most exhaustive and yet comprehensive book on a chain of interrelated subjects, each one of which has been responsible for a considerable literature. The list of works consulted and actually cited by Dr. Scholes in the course of his book covers fifteen and one-half pages and comprises about 750 titles; it goes back to original documents and scrupulously distinguishes between the genuine and the spurious. When the sifting is done, Dr. Scholes comes to the only possible conclusion, namely that "most or all evidence to the effect that the Puritans objected to music evaporates when carefully examined."

Dr. Scholes subjects to a rigorous inquiry the ordinances of early New England dealing with dancing. Here also the picture he unfolds, based on first hand material, is far less grim than the one universally accepted as true. Life in the colony was not joyless, wholly ruled over by narrow-minded and jaundiced bigots. "Dancing, yea though mixt" went on merrily. Before Increase Mather's death, his son, Cotton Mather, was taking dancing schools for granted in the education of well-bred children. Dr. Scholes adduces even one example of a "dancing minister"—Timothy Edwards, father of Jonathan—at whose ordination "a dance was held at his house!"

The only real concern of the Puritans seems to have been that music and dancing should not detract from the observance of church duties or lead into immoral conduct. In this respect they did not differ from other religious sects, past or present, which aimed, or aim, to combat the natural inclination of mankind toward laxity of morals and abuse of pleasures. Dr.

Scholes exclaims: "The more I study the Puritans the more I am at a loss to find their Puritanism!"

That Dr. Scholes took up the study of Puritans at all, was owing to some references to their reputed peculiarities that he read in a recent book by an American writer. These references were in line with a common belief, held by the majority of authors dealing with the period and the subject. A notable exception was that great American scholar and sagacious musicologist, Oscar G. Sonneck, who in his "Early Concert Life in America" (1907) had expressed the hope that the time would come when "some historian" would "unearth and collect the data pertaining to our musical life before 1700" and would expose as fallacious and ridiculous the accredited opinion that Providence had been prompted "to send to our shores, out of all the millions who inhabited Europe, just those few thousand beings who had no music in their soul." This historian's advent we can now hail, and we applaud the thoroughness, the brilliance with which he has blasted that old fallacy. It was eminently gracious, and proper, that Dr. Scholes should have prefixed to his book a dedication to the memory of Mr. Sonneck's. And the father of American musicology would have been the first to acclaim the English colleague to whom we owe the definite and complete clarification of a badly gnarled and knotted question in our own musical past.

Life in Old Russia

THE RUSSIAN JOURNALS OF MARTHA AND CATHERINE WILMOT. Edited by the Marchioness of Londonderry and H. M. Hyde. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1934. \$9.50.

PRINCESS DASHKOV was an enterprising and interesting lady of Catherine the Great's time. She helped in the coup d'état which made Catherine Empress, was president of the Russian Academy, a friend of Voltaire and Diderot, and wrote several plays. She met the Misses Catherine and Martha Wilmot, ladies of an Anglo-Irish family, at one of the European watering-places, and invited them to visit her in Russia. They undertook the journey from Ireland to Russia during the Napoleonic Wars, spent several years there, and thanks to their distinguished connections, met and saw pretty much everybody and everything from the Court and Kremlin down.

Their diaries and letters home, previously in the possession of the historian, W. E. H. Lecky, and after his death, deposited in the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin, are now published for the first time. They are leisurely but lively impressions of an age in which people took time and care in such writing and they give an intimate picture of polite life in the Russia of 1803-1808 as seen by two vivacious young Westerners who were charmed with much they came across and yet always conscious of an Asiatic strangeness—and savagery—underneath the Frenchified surfaces of the upper-class Russia of that day.

Aristocratic Century

THE AGE OF REASON. By R. B. Mowat. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1934. \$2.50.

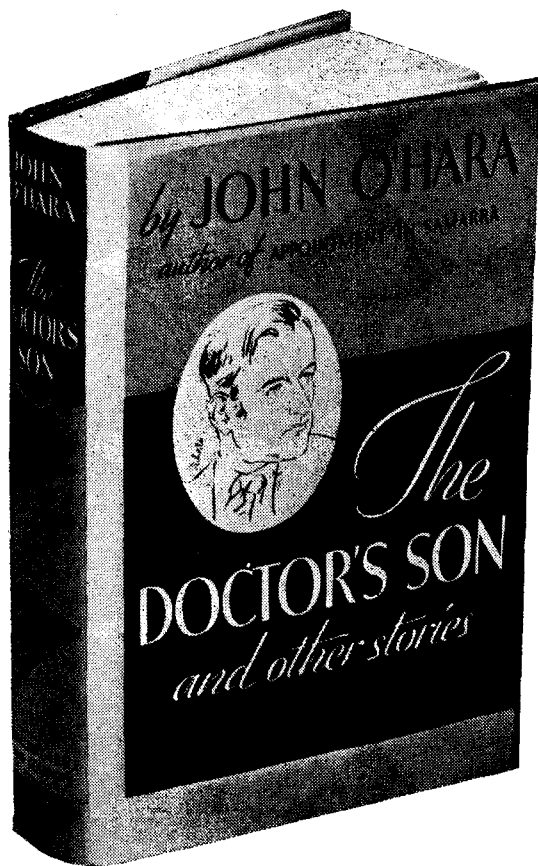
Reviewed by DAVID OWEN

PROFESSOR MOWAT'S thesis can be briefly stated. In the Continental eighteenth century he discovers a historical period ready for rehabilitation, an age that has suffered at the hands both of moralists and historians. Exemplifying some of the most admirable of qualities—tolerance and cosmopolitanism, to mention two of them—the men of the eighteenth century were well on their way to solving the problems of society. Their slow but steady advance was abruptly cut off by the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, which afflicted Europe with a hypertrophied nationalism and induced, at least in England, a premature industrial development. The age was neither decadent nor stagnant. Rather was it a summation of pre-industrial culture, a fruitful equilibrium between town and country, classicism and romanticism, philosophical utopias and "spotted actuality."

That the century produced a fine blossoming of aristocratic culture cannot be doubted. It was a cosy, cultivated, aristocratic society, which believed in Progress and sensibly left the business of war to professionals. Nor was the old Régime itself, if one can believe recent studies, as rotten a political fabric as republican historiography would have us think.

What bothers me is not that Professor Mowat has painted a glowing picture of the century for which he has such genuine affection, but that his composition is so lacking in draughtsmanship. To put it bluntly, he has avoided most of the difficult subjects which are essential to a fair estimate of the century. There are accounts of the enlightened despots, sketches of those picturesque scoundrels Casanova and Cagliostro, and entertaining chapters on the salons, the opera, and the academies. The treatment of the benevolent despots, of Frederick the Great especially, is disappointing. Professor Mowat's conclusion that "Frederick was a bad man, absolutely without moral scruple" is reminiscent of the wayward authors of "1066 and All That" who found that monarchs fell easily into two classes, Good Kings and Bad Kings. A just emphasis is given to the cosmopolitanism of the century, when to be an intelligent member of the upper classes was to be a citizen of the cultivated society of Western Europe.

But a survey of such subjects, even though we add to them chapters on prisons, the peace movement, and religion, does not lead to such conclusions as the author draws. Nowhere, for example, is there an attempt to gauge the condition of the peasants or to test the validity of state economic policies. If any class was proving itself a dynamic force, it was the bourgeoisie. Yet, of expanding commerce and the interests of the men who were guiding it one gets only the feeblest inkling. "The Age of Reason," as an analysis of a period, cannot be compared with such a study as G. N. Clerk's "Seventeenth Century."



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The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	Crime, Place, Sleuth	Summing Up	Verdict
THE THIRD OMNIBUS OF CRIME Editor: Dorothy L. Sayers (Coward-McCann: \$2.50.)	52 contemporary short stories, 21 of detection and 31 of horror. Selected and prefaced by the Queen of Goose-flesh.	Superb collection. No shopworn antiques, new vivid stuff. Perfect editor. Sure destroyer of sleep.	Nightmares
MURDER CUM LAUDE Joel Y. Dane (Smith & Haas: \$2.)	Trio of super-grisly campus killings lead Sgt. Hartly to death's door before he gets his man.	It's a darn good yarn that keeps the Honorable Court up until 1.55 a.m. to finish it.	Summa cum laude
THE ELEVENTH HOUR J. S. Fletcher (Knopf: \$2.)	Cathedral verger slain, ancient jewels vanish, various clerics held suspect while Camberwell and Chaney snoop.	Absorbing story moves steadily against lovely cloistered background with logical sleuthing and end that lives up to title.	Excellent
THE PAPER CHASE MYSTERY A. Fielding (Kinsey: \$2.)	Counterfeiters, stopping at nothing, murder 3 in Switzerland and London and Inspector Painter just saves No. 4.	Action runs quickly enough with required measure of thrills, but casual nature of whole thing is disappointing.	Only fair
THE BRAIN TRUST MURDER "Diplomat" (Coward McCann: \$2.)	Big Brain Truster loses head (literally) at Washington party, but Dennis Tyler keeps his and country is saved.	Gore-bespattered mixture of voodoo, intrigue, gossip, and trick sleuthing which doesn't quite convince.	Shocker

The new novel by the author of "Look Homeward, Angel"

Of Time and the River



Photograph by Ossip Garber

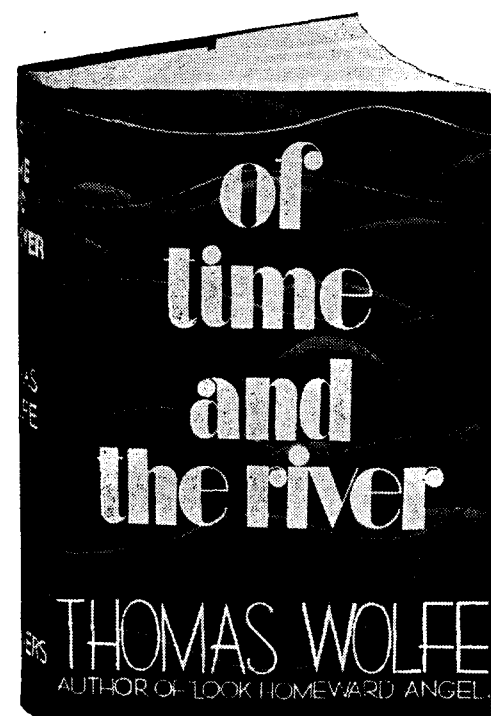
by
Thomas Wolfe

This "Legend of Man's Hunger in His Youth" may well be called an American epic. It could be written about no other people or country — from the day when Eugene Gant leaves his Southern home for the great cities of the North, to the time when, in a French town, he feels the resistless call of the great sprawling land from which he had fled.

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Liberal's Progress

A MAN OF PURPOSE. By Donald Richberg. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co. \$2.

TENTS OF THE MIGHTY. By Donald Richberg. Chicago: Willett, Clark & Colby. \$2.50.

Reviewed by R. GATEWOOD

IT is said of Disraeli that statesmen thought he was a good author, while authors felt he was a sound statesman. A future generation may pass some such judgment on the literary works of Donald Richberg, who has achieved a unique position in American politics. His specific task is a huge one: to coordinate the various political and economic measures of recovery. These policies are still undetermined, but their background is clearly set forth in his novel, "A Man of Purpose" (first published in 1922 and recently reissued) and his brief autobiography ("Tents of the Mighty," 1930), both written before any but a few progressives had any thought of a New Deal.

Two central themes form the basis of the novel: the emotional perplexities and political adventures of a young lawyer in the Middle West. Harassed by domestic affairs and fascinated, at different ages, by three types of women, Rodney Merrill pursues the phantom of social justice throughout an era where ruthless methods conspire with vested interests to reduce the right of protest to a mockery. As an individual, he is restrained in his desires by a natural idealism and a disinclination to harm the home he had labored to establish securely. As a citizen, his gift of service to his community is rewarded by his nomination to conduct a futile race for the Republican Governorship of Illinois. In both cases, it is "serve or suffer" consequences which will ruin the fabric of an abundant life.

As the book purports to be compiled from papers which arrived "the day after Merrill's disappearance," there is no definite solution of the plot; neither, though it deals with industrial problems, is the book a "proletarian" novel. It is rather an attempt to express the essential difficulties which were current in the post-war period in the relations between individuals and between groups. The main characters are vitally portrayed, however, and there is an unmistakable veracity in the delineation of political situations.

Mr. Richberg learned much from his fight on the Chicago utilities, as legal ad-

viser to the first Progressive Party, and as counsel for the railroad unions. During these years, he dealt with many prominent men, whose silhouettes he has sketched into the story of his life with more than usual insight: Insull, La Follette, Roosevelt, Wilson, and others. The reaction from the self-sacrifice of the war years did not avail to curb his interest in work that was "worth while." Acting as adviser to the Supreme Court on the valuations of the railroads before the Interstate Commerce Commission, he further familiarized himself with the urgencies of conciliating divergent economic groups, and, as chairman of the Resolutions Committee at the Progressive convention of 1924, he wrote parts of a platform which are true prophecies of actual legislation; furthermore, unlike his defeated hero, he was able to embody part of his purpose in a concrete achievement: the Railway Labor Act of 1926.

In these books is reflected the transition from professional altruism to administrative competence, from an emotional desire for "good" government to an understanding of the basic factors in American society, which largely explains the thirty years between Roosevelt's. This spirit is the lineal descendant of a liberalism whose illusions were lost in 1914-1918, but whose desire for a complete faith, with which to interpret experience, has survived unimpaired. It is a belief grounded in a respect for law—which, it may be observed, Mr. Richberg has reaffirmed in a recent interview—not for law as a police power, an absolute, however, but as an instrument of social adjustment. There is, in this viewpoint, no theory of a structure to be imposed upon the mass of citizens: it is empirical in essence, relying on experiment to prove hypotheses. In such a spirit, Mr. Richberg could write in 1930, when prosperity was just disappearing "around the corner":

... in a few thousand years, there will be a world wherein the authority of members of the governing classes will rest upon their knowledge and use of natural laws in creating social controls that cannot profitably be evaded, or modified, or held unconstitutional; and that will operate equitably upon all persons and at all times. ... In such a day there might grow, out of our present spreading commercial empires, a group of industrial republics within our national boundaries, which would so dominate our politics that democratic government might have a new birth in state and nation.

The New Books

Biography

GENERAL GEORGE BRINTON McCLELLAN. By William Starr Myers. Appleton-Century. 1934. \$5.

Unquestionably sound in its scholarship, although perhaps a trifle too much inclined to depend in the Bancroft manner upon the worth of manuscript material to the exclusion of equally valuable data already in print, Mr. Myers's book should take front rank immediately among the personal biographies of American war leaders. It is "primarily a study of McClellan the man" and thus very scant in its accounts of campaigning and maneuvering, even in revelation of the training methods by which McClellan created that superb organization, the Army of the Potomac. Yet the author perhaps does well to eschew the military and to concentrate on the individual. By apparently sound selection from contemporary records, actually preserved and possibly cherished by McClellan himself, Mr. Myers has painted a consistent picture of a man sound in his thinking, undoubtedly loyal in his motives, yet without that saving grace of adjusting logic to actual conditions.

So beset was McClellan with the certitude of his correct thinking, that he was considered impertinent by his superiors and fanatically single-minded by his colleagues. Nor are these occasional outbursts of a mind made frantic by the press of circumstance. As Professor Myers so ably shows, the defects which militated against really superior leadership on the part of this outstanding general, were ingrained traits of character, evident in his youth, evidenced in a multitude of transactions of greater or less importance. Courteous in his manner, sincere in his convictions, "logically right, but politically wrong," McClellan is portrayed as a man who was almost truly great. Not a military or political history, not a mere selective psychograph after the manner of Gamaliel Bradford, this is a true biography. In it its subject lives as truly as if we met and talked with him. And, lest we omit to state so important a point, it is human in its viewpoint and absorbingly interesting.

E. C.

Fiction

MEN NEVER KNOW. By Vicki Baum. Doubleday, Doran. 1935. \$2.

This book may be confidently recommended to servant girls, and more generally to all women who, with less excuse, go to novels for ready-to-wear wish-fulfillments. The heroine is a woman who is presented without any very positive attractions: our chief guide to her appearance is the statement (on the fourth page), "She was not the sort of girl to make a man think at once of going to bed with her—that came later, after the first kiss"; and as a housekeeper she appears to have Dora Spenlow's inefficiency without Dora Spenlow's charm; so that no woman need fear that she is presumptuous in identifying herself with her. But this Evelyn not only has a husband, "a superior kind of judge," and two children, but a lover, a rich American whom she meets casually on Tuesday, who discovers that he is in love with her on the following Tuesday, who asks her on Wednesday to come to Paris for a week-end, and who on Friday welcomes her to Paris; and more even than this, she has a devoted Brangäne of a friend who will cover up her trip to Paris. Evelyn not only does what she wants to do, but she is allowed by her creator to feel herself a rare, almost sacrificial, figure for doing so; the title is explained by her melancholy discovery that her lover "did not seem to have the faintest notion of the tremendous thing it was for her to have left her marriage behind her" (for a week-end). "Men never knew. Not the one you left and not the one you joined." Considering that both she and her friend Marianne were doing a lot of hard lying to keep her husband from realizing the "tremendous thing it was" that she was doing, this seems rather unnecessarily severe at least on the one she left; but it serves to give her readers the pleasure of being misunderstood as well as of committing adultery.

For readers who ask more than these vicarious delights, however, Fräulein Baum seems to promise more than she fulfils. The technique is novel: the action covers four days, and each of these days is related from the point of view first of the lover, then of the wife, then of the husband. Sometimes two or all three of these

characters are together, sometimes not; so that in places the same action is related more than once, from different standpoints, explaining the motives of speeches which before were only heard. This, though it runs the risk always of becoming cumbersome, might be an extremely interesting method, rather in the manner of "The Ring and the Book," of revealing character—if there were characters that needed revealing by such complex means; but there are none so subtle in the book.

B. D.

HER SOUL TO KEEP. By Ethel Cook Eliot. Macmillan. 1935. \$2.

The story of Jane Carmon is one of inflexible moral aptness and courage; the first quality is to be found in Jane herself, the second in her foster mother, Lucia Rue. From her childhood, Jane was given no measure of love in family ties. Her parents were restless people; during sojourns in Europe their child was entrusted to other hands. When Jane was twelve she found herself in the home of Mrs. Rue; death had claimed her parents.

The setting is a college town. Jane is now twenty; a young man, an architect, is in love with her. Without proper parental training Jane succumbs to the overtures of a married man. Her life is in the balance: can she withstand the barrage of wagging tongues, can she salvage anything for herself and her unborn child in a world of hypocrites and gossips?

It is at this moment that Lucia Rue displays an instinctive courage and insight which are to save the day; her love permeates the camps of the smug like a wave from the sea erasing footsteps.

In a small college town where everyone's business is public business, Jane Carmen, in her trouble, has need of the extraordinary wisdom and understanding afforded her by her foster mother. Jane, absorbed in her painting, did not bear the full brunt of Society's condemnation; Lucia did. "Her Soul to Keep" is the history of that sacrifice. The novel is marked by a well-handled, sensitive style. It moves smoothly and with a sturdy logic inherent to the story. In it are all the ingredients of a problem novel; that it does not warrant this label speaks eloquently for the sheer good taste of the author.

K. P.

THE ABBEY OF EVOLAYNE. By Paule Régnier. Harcourt, Brace. 1935. \$2.

Although in recent years there has been a distinct tendency in France to break away from the conventions of the novel of sentiment, with its analysis of the eternal triangle, few books have been as free of sentimental complications as Mme. Régnier's "The Abbey of Evolayne." It presents a tense and desperate struggle of emotions, with husband and wife as the protagonists, but the enemy of their marital happiness is a far stronger and more powerful one than the usual Tertium Quid. It is, in fact, no less an institution than the Catholic Church which separates them, and at last causes the unhappy wife to kill herself.

Michel Adrian, a successful Paris surgeon, and his wife Adelaide stay for a few days in the lovely but mournful Ardennes country, near the Benedictine Abbey of Evolayne. Through the instrumentality of a former friend who has become a monk, Michel's faith is reawakened, and he comes to feel a strong desire to enter the priesthood. Anxious to make him happy, his wife convinces herself that she, too, has felt a vocation, and is called to be a nun. Eventually their marriage is dissolved; he enters the monastery, and she a nearby convent. But after a time it becomes evident that her love for him is greater than her vocation. Unable to win him back, and equally unable to endure life without him, the miserable woman finally takes poison, dying after a prolonged agony which is witnessed by her former husband.

While the problems raised by this singularly distressing case are not, perhaps, of general interest, the author has treated her subject with intense logical concentration and much sober power, so that in the end the elements of unreasonable fanaticism are lost sight of, and the husband's abandonment of his wife takes on the significance of true tragedy. This success is the greater in that it is achieved in spite of a good deal of pedantic and precious argument on the part of those concerned. In addition, the fact that the book is entirely devoted to this exercise in the higher theological mathematics,

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