

## Wild Oranges

GOLDEN APPLES. By Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1935. \$2.50.

Reviewed by HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

THESE is a tenderness in Mrs. Rawlings's novels of the Florida orange country that may outlast the psychopathic hate with which other Southern writers have lifted the despised Cracker into literature. Her books explain, what is a mystery in others, why the poor white loves his soil, why, indeed, he is worth writing about at all except as a psychological phenomenon. Florida, a country made distasteful by its advertising, becomes again in her stories the land that stirred Bartram's imagination, and through him Coleridge. The hammocks, the lakes, the rivers, the ibis, are an atmosphere, a spiritual environment, beautiful, difficult, inescapable, like the so different Wessex of Hardy.

And, with no trace of sentimentality, she has a gift for the idyllic. Her Luke and Allie, orphans left on their own resources in the wilderness, are like the strong sour fruit and delicate blossom of the wild orange. The sap of the wild hammock runs in them also. The bloom and frost and recovery of their dangerous contacts with life are part of a rhythm of nature which the orange tree knows.

This novel has a theme much more metaphysical, and incidents more melodramatic, than this cycle of nature, but it is the brother and sister, the sun and frost, that make it good. Tordell, the remittance man from England, who comes to live with them on his family's land where they have squatted, is an interesting variant of the villain seducer who learns through his own mistakes what it is to have a heart. Dr. Albury, who compensates by good deeds for spoiling his half-



MARJORIE KINNAN RAWLINGS

mad son, Camilla who fights for her great orchards like a mother against the kidnapping frost, and the Crackers of the settlement, are right enough. And they all serve to expound the thesis of the novel, which is that not even love can protect against injustice and frustration, but only the sense that vitality goes on past the individual, past the hope, and past the defeat, making experience still worth while for the strong-willed, clear-sighted, who have escaped. It is a sound thesis, yet I could wish that Mrs. Rawlings had not labored it. It is implicit in Luke who, after his sister's death in a premature confinement, takes a poor-white half wit to wife so that his bodily needs will not interfere with his passionate will that sweet oranges shall grow upon the stubs of the sour wild orange of the wilderness. It is implicit in Allie, with her hair like fur and her tawny skin, fragile, unblaming, a willing sacrifice. The "furriner" and the orange people from the planted lands, and the metaphysics of love and compensation, cumber a story which so long as it is simple is superb.

## The Prosperity Era

FORTUNE. By Robert Reynolds. New York: William Morrow & Co. 1935. \$2.50.

Reviewed by HOWARD MUMFORD JONES

THIS is a novel in which three or four characters are discriminatingly depicted, a novel from which a certain number of beautiful prose passages could be extracted, and a novel out of which various informal essays on nature, fecundity, American social progress, and other topics could be taken without damage to the story. One of these characters, Jim, the workingman, I should single out for special praise, nor are the members of his family without merit, being sharply realized and sympathetically drawn. Unfortunately Jim appears only at intervals, the larger portion of the book exhibiting life among the well-to-do in the Prosperity Era, with the usual complement of fornications and adulteries which have become standard in describing that remote epoch. Mr. Reynolds is an honest, if uneven and occasionally imitative, craftsman—in which connection one notes a dedication to Thomas Wolfe, "my generation's treasure." This infelicitous phrase is the measure of Mr. Reynolds's uncertain style. If he is capable of lyrical prose, he is also capable of such a sentence as: "Soon, all through the great house it had begun to be what many of the guests called 'a swell party'; that is, the music, the chatter, the dancing, and the drinking were being merrily done."

Apparently Mr. Reynolds's intention was to present on two levels the fortunes of modern Americans in a New Jersey manufacturing city, one level being that of the workingman's family and the other



ROBERT REYNOLDS

Pinchot

that of the country club set. For me the country club set lacked interest because I have met most of them before. But this seems not to have been all of Mr. Reynolds's artistic purpose. He also tried to give a changing panorama of the town over a period of years. As a result, there is no natural center, no focus to the book.

I take it from the dedication that Mr. Reynolds is a follower in fiction of Thomas Wolfe. "Fortune," however, seems to illustrate the defects rather than the virtues of "Look Homeward, Angel," and to exhibit the genuine anarchy into which the novel as a form has fallen. Besides the confusions already noted, one finds that the book is crowded with characters—so crowded, indeed, that I finally gave up in despair the task of keeping them sorted out.

Were "plot" still regarded as a fictional essential, these innumerable characters might have been grouped in significant relations about central figures, when, though the groupings might have been slightly artificial, their relations with each other and with the movement of the book might have been clear. Had Mr. Reynolds consistently determined to present his episodes by either the scenic or the panoramic method, we might have had less "richness," but the book would have developed greater significance.

The reply will be that contemporary fiction is trying to mirror the tumultuous and unorganized stream of existence, and for that reason "plot" and "structure" are hindrances. But the retort is equally deadly that art—even the art of fiction—cannot exist without organization. I pay tribute to Mr. Reynolds's vitality, but I think it should be made to march towards a goal, not merely expand like a balloon. He has the romantic sense, but not the romantic pattern. It is not enough to adventure into the jungle; it is essential also to return.

Howard Mumford Jones is professor of English at the University of Michigan.

# A Completely Civilized Man

DWIGHT MORROW. By Harold Nicolson. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1935. \$3.75.

Reviewed by FRANZ SCHNEIDER, JR.

A BIOGRAPHY of Dwight Morrow by Harold Nicolson should be an outstanding book; and the present volume justifies this expectation. With his customary literary skill, Mr. Nicolson tells the story of this truly amazing man who struggled for an education and then went on to extraordinary achievements in law, finance, and diplomacy, and to become what Nicolson calls "a model for the completely civilized man."

Born in Huntington, West Virginia, in 1873, Dwight Morrow grew up in Allegheny, Pennsylvania. He was one of eight children; and the income of his father, a school teacher, never exceeded eighteen hundred dollars a year. After finishing public school, and being deprived of a West Point appointment that he had won, the boy escaped from the cramping atmosphere of Allegheny to the beauty and stimulus of Amherst College, to which he remained devoted throughout life. Seven years later he graduated from Columbia Law School.

Morrow's success as a lawyer was rapid. His intelligence, industry, and charm impressed all. When he was still in his early thirties, his senior partner, John W. Simpson, was able to tell the young man's father that, "Mr. Choate, Mr. Root, and I have the reputation of being the best corporation lawyers in the city of New York. Your boy is better than any of us."

Becoming a partner in J. P. Morgan & Co. in 1914, when forty-one, his sphere of interest, activity, and influence was greatly increased. His contacts now were international as well as national. He became a recognized authority on finance, economics, and the organization and administration of business. After we entered the World War he went abroad and served with the Allied Maritime Transport Council, again making a great impression in both London and Paris.

Morrow was a leader in the issuance of the great post-war reconstruction loans. He took Cuba under his financial tutelage, arranged two reconstruction loans, and secured important financial reforms.

When his college friend, Coolidge, became President, Morrow's political prestige was augmented. He headed the Aircraft Board, and the unanimous report he secured from the Board again added to his reputation. The story of Morrow's success as Ambassador to Mexico is familiar to the public and is well told in this biography, as is the less well known story of extraordinary achievements at the London Naval Conference in 1930. His reluctance to enter the Senate and the

reasons for his silence during his first session there are accurately set forth. The book then passes on to the tragedy of his death at the age of fifty-eight.

Nicolson has succeeded well in describing Morrow's mind and method of work; and in recreating the extraordinary attractiveness of his personality. Morrow loved problems and approached their solution on a factual basis, preferably following the historical method. He was a great reader and a great student. His industry and his patience were prodigious. Nicolson refers to the perfect balance between his imagination and his reason.

Another of his great qualities was his liking for and understanding of people. Nicolson properly emphasizes and re-emphasizes his tolerance and magnanimity. His transparent honesty and sincerity won over the most sceptical. He continually led people to higher ethical ground.

These great attributes were reinforced by wonderful personal charm. He was the gayest, wittiest, and most entertaining of companions; even his periods of abstraction, when he perpetrated marvels of absent-mindedness, were endearing.

There is also, it seems to this reviewer, a tendency to overemphasize Morrow's occasional dissatisfaction with his legal and business career and his occasional inclinations toward teaching and the academic life. People of perception and reasonable strength of purpose usually do what they like best. Dwight Morrow was a man of action and strong will; to an unusual degree he did what he wanted. Certainly, few men were as happy in their daily work as Dwight Morrow.

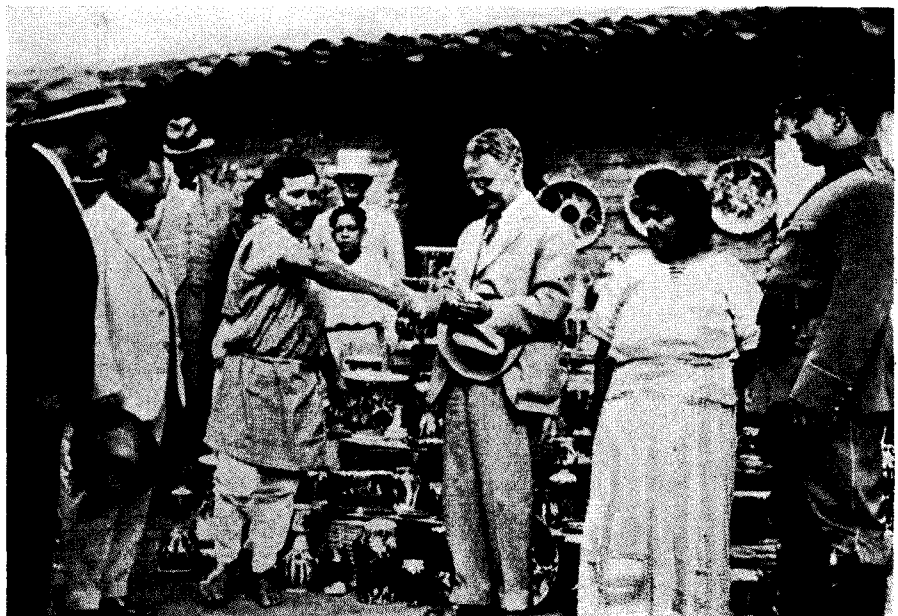
The book has the usual number of minor inaccuracies. The account of the "rescue" of W. C. Durant suffers from

condensation, and the statement that he was unaware until November 18 that his difficulties called for urgent solution must be accepted with reserve. The same applies to the statement that Morrow was shocked by Calles's treatment of his legislature and judiciary in the oil settlement. Again, the "Consultation Pact," which Morrow is stated cautiously to have evolved, was suggested to him by modest George Rublee.

Mr. Nicolson also writes that on Morrow's return to Mexico just before successful conclusion of negotiations for the religious settlement, he brought back with him in his private car, Monsignor Ruiz, the Apostolic Delegate, and Archbishop Díaz, and that he housed them secretly in the apartment of his Naval Attaché. Actually the prelates boarded the train at St. Louis, and slept in the ordinary Pullman. Mr. Morrow invited them into his private car for meals, but carefully detached his car at El Paso and spent a night there so that the prelates would enter Mexico separately.

To this reviewer, the chief inadequacy of the book arises from Nicolson's tendency to skip rather cavalierly over Morrow's legal and business career, including the thirteen thrilling years as a Morgan partner—years in which his constructive genius first found free scope. This may arise in part from an understandable tendency to slight what does not interest or is not understood. In the present instance, it also seems to arise in part from a disposition to regard law and business as somewhat lower forms of human activity. Nicolson also raises the question of who was the better economist by referring to Morrow's "laissez faire philosophy which he had derived from a too uncritical study of William Graham Sumner."

*Franz Schneider, Jr., was at one time financial editor of the New York Evening Post, and later of the New York Sun.*



DWIGHT MORROW IN MEXICO