

the Critic. Brown the Lecturer is something a little different. To begin with, it is not easy to understand the purpose of these animadversions. The volume begins with a rather extensive discussion of "Playgoers Good and Bad." Since the theatre is and always has been a metropolitan institution, and since it offers a range of entertainment as wide as the artistic distance between Minsky and Meierhold, one would suppose that there could scarcely be such a thing as a good or bad playgoer; in the United States a good playgoer is a New Yorker who has bought a seat to a production appropriate to him, a bad one is one who has not.

There follows in the Brown book a progression of discourses on the inevitable limitations of library playgoing, the unreality of even the most realistic theatre, the need for subtle plotting, the special literary requirements for writing stage dialogue as opposed to novel dialogue. From time to time Mr. Brown brightens his texts with modest but welcome rays of original thought. Elsewhere, however, there is a most mournful burden of borrowings, references, and attributions. Mr. Brown's hours on lecture platforms have evidently encouraged him to adopt one of pedagogy's most tiresome practices. In "The Art of Playgoing" he quotes or alludes to no less than fifty greater and lesser authorities at least once, including Shakespeare, Maurois, and Mrs. Lindbergh. To establish the assertion that "writing for the theatre is set apart from other writing," he draws upon Aristotle, Goethe, and Elmer Rice.

The volume contains a number of safe and sane definitions. What it has to say seems sound enough. But the point is, for whom is the book intended? Any serious theatregoer surely need not read a series of well documented platitudes to help him enjoy the theatre. More likely, the book will find a place for itself as a solid little packet of theatrical commonsense for students and the young.

A Wistful Hero

NO HERO—THIS. By Warwick Deeping.
New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1936. \$2.50.

MR. WARWICK DEEPING has inured his public to wistful heroes who are the soul of honor and who, in consequence of leading with their chins, very often get it in the neck. Stephen Brent is no exception. Reluctantly enlisting, he reluctantly served the British Army as medical officer throughout the world war, first in the Near East, later in France. He was often frightened, he was often brave, he often missed his wife Mary very much, he occasionally had impulses to be unfaithful to Mary but always overcame them. He went on leave, then back to the line; then he went on leave again and then he went back to the line. Though such monotony has to be accepted in life, it is hard to accept it in a novel.

The Danish Solution

DENMARK — THE COÖPERATIVE WAY. By Frederic C. Howe. New York: Coward-McCann. 1936. \$2.50.

Reviewed by AGNES ROTHERY

AMERICANS—eager to know, but rather reluctant to study, all schemes of betterment—subject themselves readily to being "made conscious." We have been made "speed conscious" and "roofing material conscious" and "B. O. conscious," and if we are not now made "coöperative conscious" it is no fault of Frederic C. Howe's last book. Not that one can swallow "Denmark—The Coöperative Way" in one gulp and hope it will somehow do the business. This contribution to the literature of co-operation by the Special Advisor, Office of the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington, one time Commissioner of Immigration in New York City, does not claim to be a panacea. While addressed to the general reader, it is complete with facts and figures for the serious student.

All the Scandinavian countries, with their small, homogeneous, and well educated populations, understand and apply the principle of coöperation not only in buying and selling, in manufacturing and processing, but in distribution and transportation, housing and banking. However, none of the others has carried agricultural coöperation to such lengths and into such detail as Denmark, and Mr. Howe's book is most valuable when concerned with this phase of the movement.

In Denmark "in the middle of the last century, forty-two per cent of the farmers were tenants, while fifty-eight per cent were free-hold owners. Today farm tenancy is in effect at an end." A system of adult education has so enlightened a peasantry formerly timid and ignorant, that today they are admirable farmers, alert salesmen, and a political power which knows how to make its vote felt.

The Danish farmer produces dairy goods of superlative and uniform quality. He gets his pigs slaughtered at a local coöperative slaughterery, his butter made at a local coöperative dairy, and his eggs handled by a coöperative egg expert, so that he, and not the middle man or the speculative agent, gets the profits. (In 1933 in the United States of the consumer's dollar the processor received sixty-nine cents and the farmer thirty-one.)

It is not only in setting forth many such explicit facts but in drawing a parallel between them and the present condition of agriculture and the farmer in this country and Denmark that Mr. Howe's book differs from its predecessors.

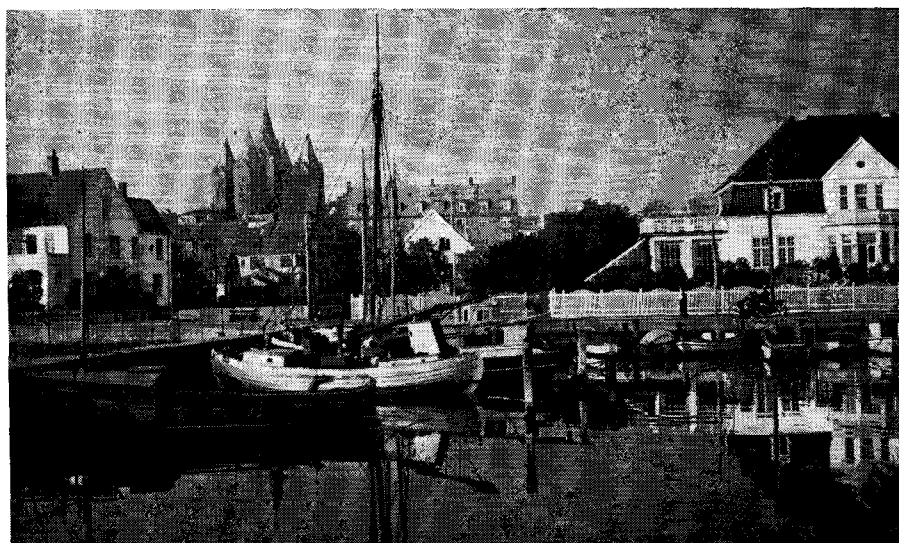
A constitutional monarchy — which is in reality a social democracy — where there is no destitution and no illiteracy, where the population of 3,600,000 are all of similar racial tradition cannot serve as a model for our huge and amorphous republic. But simply because we are of vast dimensions is no reason why cattle should be "shipped half way across the country to be killed and then shipped back again to the place of their origin to be consumed." "The fact that there are eighty-five slaughter houses in a country . . . but twice the size of Massachusetts and one-twentieth the size of Texas is indicative of the fact that slaughtering is an industry easy of decentralization."

After dealing with agricultural questions Mr. Howe comes to political problems.

There is [he observes] the same reason for the farmer to enter politics in America as there was in Denmark. There is the same necessity for home ownership; for the ending of farm tenancy; for cheap and sympathetic credit.

Democracy in Denmark is economic rather than political, and coöperation, according to Mr. Howe, is Denmark's answer to fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, communistic Russia, and capitalistic America.

Agnes Rothery's book on Denmark will be published in April by the Viking Press.



KALUNDBORG, A HARBOR TOWN AT SEALAND.
Reproduced by courtesy of the Swedish-American Line.

Familiar Things Made New

THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ROMANTIC IDEAL. By F. L. Lucas. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1936. \$2.50.

Reviewed by LEONARD BACON

IN spite of the fact that Mr. Lucas's book is a collection of critical essays, it is delightful reading. The work is full of fact and opinion clearly and imaginatively presented. And one hardly knows what to praise more highly, whether lucidity of thought or aptness of illustration. Since the present reviewer sixteen years ago took up the grisly task of "noticing" books he has seldom had a pleasanter opportunity. He and many others must be enchanted by a professor who is also a poet, by a bookworm who before your very eyes is transformed into a luna moth. Everything about the man and his book engages and attracts. There is hardly a page where he fails to remember Samuel Johnson's aphorism, which he quotes with appropriate approval, about making "new things familiar or familiar things new." Strangely mingling grace and fire he has vitalized shopworn and desiccated terms and connected them with ideas that are vivid and alive.

In six chapters and an epilogue ironically addressed to "reviewers and others who may find the book too long" (this reviewer did not find it so) Mr. Lucas has defined Romanticism, written its history, and foretold its future. He has further examined Coleridge as a critic, and in his remarkable fifth chapter he has dealt with the weakness of an unromantic time. A sixth section on Romanticism in the Real World is more prolix and less impressive than the others. But I am willing to forgive him that in consideration of his other benefits towards me.

The whole thought of Mr. Lucas's book springs from his definition of Romanticism. Without adopting blindly either the hypotheses or the slang of European psychologists, he has looked them over with a wary eye and held fast to that which is good. And he has found something which looks real to me and not a bit like those tissues of rhetoric "that confuse the thought or conceal the lack of it" in so many of his predecessors. One finds it refreshing to read in connection with a subject hitherto so foggy: "It is not so much its logical definition as its psychological basis that really matters." This does not mean that he has gone off the deep end into what no one understands very well, or that he is wandering in the labyrinth where the thread of Ariadne breaks just as one hears the first bellow of the Minotaur. But it does mean that he has recognized the existence and the importance of uncharted regions of

the mind. For Mr. Lucas Romanticism becomes "the liberation" of the subliminal and the instinctive as opposed to two other parts of our natures, one of which is concerned with what is fact, while the other is concerned with what is fitting. Let us call them Realism and Classicism. Mr. Lucas sees in all men and all times a sort of triple conflict between the sense of dream, the sense of fact, and the sense of what is socially desirable, a conflict bound to end in temporary disaster, when, as today, any one of the three momentarily triumphs. If this idea is not wholly new, at any rate he has stated it convincingly and it leads to diverting deductions, as for instance that Mr. T. S. Eliot, protest he never so loudly, is a Romanticist naked and unashamed. When did the man who with more than mercurial thievishness wrote

Defunctive music undersea

cease to depend on the liberation of the subliminal and instinctive?

I may have wronged Mr. Lucas who very likely might not allow the illustration. Passing from the definition to history and prophecy, he continues to be remarkably entertaining and delightfully informing all over a subject when most writers only succeed in distilling the essence of ennui. He shows us Romance in Greece and Classicism in England. He shows us resurgence and breakdown, decadence and germination. And never once is he deceived by the vices of Coleridge and the virtues of Baudelaire. And in dozens of places he has made this reviewer feel as if scales had fallen from his eyes.

Nor for one can I be angry at his capacity to mock where mockery is asked for. Mr. Ezra Pound is beyond doubt a poet who ought to be, and I think will be, remembered. No one but a fool would deny his lyrical power, even if the notes are few. But Mr. Pound "sporting a little Greek," Mr. Pound seven months gone with parthenogenetic didacticism, Mr. Pound as the dogmatic instructor of feeble-minded youth, Mr. Pound as the pedantic managing director of the mortuary of esthetics, is precisely the intellectual tatterdemalion he appears when Mr. Lucas has got through with him. Not for nothing has Mr. Lucas written: "How many modern poets have sunk to become critics and never risen again!"

And that goes for a greater than Mr. Pound. Coleridge as a poet needs no more defense than a fixed star. But in other connections he seems to have possessed but one qualification, a vocabulary which

he enjoyed using. For my sins I have read too much tosh on the distinction between fancy and imagination not to enjoy Mr. Lucas's dialectic destruction of the Palace of Romantic Criticism. On strict grounds it may not have been worth doing. But it may help to prevent the repetition of the kind of lectures which I once unfortunately had to take and later, more unfortunately still, to give.

Not the least of Mr. Lucas's virtues is the courage with which he has reaffirmed the old truth that behind every great work there must be something more than personality, however necessary personality may be. The thing that Aristotle called *ethos* has got to be there. It need not be a religion, or a moral code, or even that odd thing, a philosophy, but there must be something greatly extra-personal, a high general sentiment, a healthy species of cosmic consistency. All the grief and emptiness of our unconscionably clever artists and poets can be traced to their lack of an *ethos*. Homer never thought at all of the *ethos* which he had, but it thunders in his every hexameter. Your contemporary, on the contrary, never thinks of anything except the *ethos* he hasn't got, in whose place he has substituted Economic Determinism,

Anglo-Catholicism, Surrealism, or what have you. And dear God! what grating and whining! Yet it is impossible to attribute our troubles to lost faith, for men have found it only rarely, or to changing standards, for standards have always had a way of changing, or to war, for men have always been acquainted with strife, or to capitalism and communism, for Cæsar and Spartacus knew them for com-

monplaces two millenniums ago. But if the *ethos* has been lost, if, as the Greek said long since, there is no "reconciliation between me and not-me," then we must expect weakness and despair and tall talk about trivial techniques until the *ethos* is found again.

I hope I have given the reader some idea of the charm and energy of Mr. Lucas's book. Any one disposed to discount my enthusiasm is at liberty to do so. Nevertheless I am glad that a clear voice has been lifted against well established nonsense. That it should be a Cambridge Don who has let the strong air and bright sun of intelligence into the musty attic is strangely satisfactory. Not all of them do that kind of thing. But were Mr. Lucas ten thousand times a don, it is glorious to come on a man who knows and loves literature as it should be known and loved, in whose ears Homer chants and Dante intones, whose wit is just and apt, whose learning is never tiresome, who sends you rushing to the library to read and to reread the great works of time.



F. L. LUCAS