

life of the nomads, the market-place of Mekka, and the solitude of Mount Hira. It is hardly critical, and is not meant to be historical. For one thing, Essad Bey surrounds Muhammad with the miraculous phenomena which the prophet himself disclaimed. He concludes that the political unity of Islam has disappeared in the upheavals of the modern age—Mustafa Kemal dealing it a mortal blow. As a vital force, he believes, it survives unchanged—under the leadership of Ibn Saad, *imam* of the Wahabites. His narrative is colorful and absorbing, all the more so because it wanders like a true nomad from academic highways.

Harold Lamb is the author of "Genghis Khan" and "The Crusades."

Alligators Take Notice

SWING THAT MUSIC. By Louis Armstrong. With an introduction by Rudy Vallee. New York: Longmans, Green & Co. 1936. \$2.50.

Reviewed by ROBERT A. SIMON

SWING music, once the casual delight of café patrons, has become a solemn Topic for Discussion. Learned fellows compose formidable treatises about hot licks and jam sessions, and in one such thesis it is stated that "Louis Armstrong is not only a genius in his own art, but is one of the most extraordinary creative geniuses that all music has ever known."

One ought, therefore, to approach the autobiography of Louis Armstrong with awe—but Louis, who doesn't mind referring to himself as "Satchmo" (authorized contraction of "Satchel Mouth"), doesn't always expound his art as heavy as well as hot. His story, "Swing That Music," considers his career once over lightly, sketching his progress from the Waif's Home in New Orleans to his present deserved international eminence as the greatest trumpeter in Swingdom Come.

Every alligator (this, according to a convenient glossary, is "a non-playing swing devotee, a listener") will devour the book, and ponder its occasional esthetic commentary, which includes the observation that "until swing music came, America had no music it could really call its own." Non-alligators who aren't so churlish that they dismiss truckin' as truck, will find it fascinating because most of it is shop talk by a man who knows his business.

"Swing That Music" has a "Music Section," edited by Hugo Gerlach, in which the technical details of the art are reprinted briefly. And finally, there is a printed demonstration of swing tactics. There are moments of Kicking Out ("very free, enthusiastic improvisation": glossary) in the writing of the book and in its musical nomenclature. But the alligators won't mind.

Super Camera-Man

AS I REMEMBER. By Arnold Genthe. New York: Reynal & Hitchcock. (A John Day Book.) 1936. \$5.

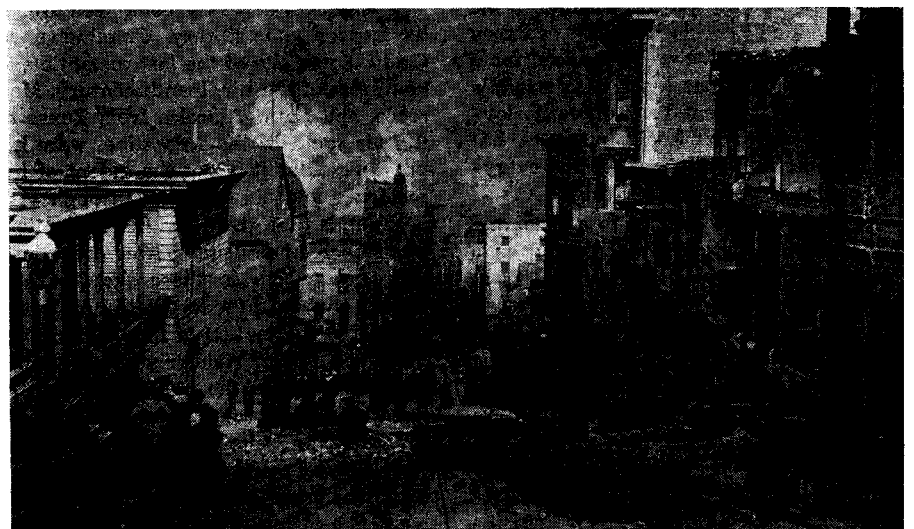
Reviewed by WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

DR. GENTHE and the present reviewer have at least one thing in common: we both loved the old San Francisco before the Fire. The *hochwohlgeborene* Genthe, indeed, found in California his second native land, and became an enthusiastic American. Equipped with a superlative education, and destined for philology, he came to the United States as tutor to a rich boy, and while prowling in San Francisco's Chinatown first became interested in making a record of what he saw by means of the camera's eye. At that time nothing existed but badly colored postcards of Chinatown. The Herr Doktor's method of catching a person when he least knew he was being photographed was developed through dealing with the superstitious and wary Chinese. In the San Francisco fire he lost every possession, save his Chinatown pictures stored with a friend, pictures of which Will Irwin had prophetically said, "You really ought to keep these plates. . . . Some day the whole city will burn up. There'll never be another Chinatown like this one, and you have its only picture record."

Today Arnold Genthe stands high in his adopted profession of photography. He was one of the first to try the Autochrome process invented by the Lumière brothers of Lyon and held the first exhibition in America of color photographs. It was from pictures taken by him that the *American Magazine* printed the first reproductions of color photographs to appear in any periodical. But aside from color work, Dr. Genthe—who had originally wished to be a painter—developed the skill of a true artist with camera in-

stead of brush. Look only at a few of the profuse illustrations of this book: the glorious one of Anna Pavlowa dancing, which she called not a photograph but a miracle; a view of the inland sea of Japan that has all the quality of a genuine Japanese print; the extraordinary earthquake pictures; the modern torso that is living sculpture, and the American girl's profile that might be that of the Venus of Milo; the face of the great Isadora, Edna St. Vincent Millay and the Spring tree—and no less remarkable in its own way, the portrait of John D. Rockefeller. That gives you but a slight idea of the pictorial riches of this book. It is also a record of friendships with some of the most brilliant people of our day. Bernhardt, Pavlowa, Isadora, Terry, Duse; making the pictures that first secured an American contract for Greta Garbo; Mrs. Fiske and Sothorn and Marlowe; Frank Norris, Mary Austin, Jack London, and George Sterling, among California writers; the youth and beauty of San Francisco—for Dr. Genthe (no less than Ziegfeld) has, in his different manner, always glorified the American girl! One of the finest pictures in the book, however, is of an elderly New Orleans "Mammy," a striking character portrait.

This autobiography is entirely urbane, and it does not tell any tales out of school. But its anecdotal matter is none the less rich and satisfying. To me not least among its charms were the initial chapters on Dr. Genthe's family, upbringing, and education in Germany; also his account of the Bohemian Club of San Francisco in its early days and of the Carmel I myself knew "before the sealers came." The book of a man conventional and yet bohemian, of one kindly and sympathetic, of an observer never bored, and of a true servant of beauty!



SAN FRANCISCO: APRIL 18, 1906.

Photo by Arnold Genthe, from "As I Remember."

The BOWLING GREEN by Christopher Morley

Notes on the Road

On a Fast Train Through Arkansas

"ANYONE seen my Shakespeare book around here?" These words, in a rich Texas intonation, were hardly what I expected. The book, a little green college text, was lying beside this chair in which I sit at the tail of the observation car; and the Shakespeare reader is one of the Texas football squad now homeward bound from defeat in Minnesota. But they tell me they scored more points against the Gophers than all other teams put together (this year). The episode pleased me, for I felt that I also had been scoring some points for Shakespeare on the side. At Lynchburg and at Greensboro I hardily persuaded members of the faculty into impromptu Elizabethan charades; and at Duke University we had a special adventure. A London bookseller's catalogue had just reached me, offering for sale the rare volume *Of English Bodies*, 1657, written by Shakespeare's son-in-law Dr. Hall. The Friends of the Duke Library grew enthusiastic when they heard about this, and we cabled for its purchase. I've been on the road ever since, so I haven't heard whether we landed it; I hope so.

I write under difficulty, and hope this may be legible. Yesterday before leaving Lynchburg I was given a hasty glimpse of lovely hills, a broad view banded with indigo cloud-shadows and a golden treasury of autumn color. The name *Step-toe*, glimpsed on a real-estate poster in the hotel, seemed to take me back to the days of George Washington; as indeed had the enchanting unspoiled architecture of Salem College. Those tawny roofs of old Moravian tile were as beautiful as anything of the kind anywhere; what an odd contrast to the readymade Gothic of Duke.

Through the Blue Ridge, en route to Memphis, the weather changed to flurries of snow. The hills, in darkening afternoon, were rich as Paisley fabric. (Here the train pauses at Arkadelphia; behind us I see a wagon crossing the track, drawn by the regional beasts, two mules. What a lot of white mules one sees in the fields along here.) After five successive evenings on the rostrum I felt lonely without anybody to lecture at. There was a lady in the neighboring section who looked as though she would be pleasantly conversable, but she seemed prostrated by some exhausted melancholy and lay all afternoon athwart the green plush seats in the posture of I-am-dying-Egypt. I wondered if she were not perhaps one of the aftermath of Duke-Carolina foot-

ball parties. At Knoxville there was time for a frosty stroll on the platform. I was meditating how unromantic was the name of our car, *McKoskrey*, when I observed that the blind of Lower 6 was slightly raised, and in the aperture a frail white hand feebly and absently toyed at the pane: the languid finger-play of boredom or despair. This, by easy calculus, was the same perishing Elaine. This was as far as my interest proceeded, but those pale distracted digits would make a good beginning for a story.

(Everything is colorful in these November woodlands. We stop now at Gurdon; an engine on a siding is blowing steam, and the vapor irises out into a perfect rainbow.—I suddenly remember that once I wrote a verse which ended

*And I went out in the dark, an' saw
Hidden away,
In a little coupé,
Darby and Joan of Arkansas.)*

I woke at 2.30 A.M., as I often do in sleepers. We were in the region of the T.V.A., and in the washroom I had a cigarette and a chat with the porter. That station was Decatur, he said. Where Ada came from, I suggested, and got a crappley's flash of ivory. He explained to me that Corinth, Miss., is accented here on the second syllable; I'm sorry I didn't think to ask him about the different pronunciations of New Orleans, which often puzzle the Yankee.

At Memphis, a hasty breakfast. The Dixie language is sometimes genuinely elusive to the unaccustomed ear: I asked the pretty waitress for orange juice, coffee, and scrambled eggs. I honestly thought her reply was, "Do you want large or small eggs?" When I echoed this in puzzled consideration she burst into an exquisite capriccioso of mirth. (She had said, large or small *glass*, viz. of orange juice. The man next me at the counter was eating ice cream and Coca Cola for breakfast, so nothing would have surprised me.)

(At this moment there's another caller for "the Shakespeare book," a boy in a brown sweater with the numerals 1939. He says he's got to read some before he gets back to college: so apparently the earlier Shakespearean was an interloper.—Did you see what was in it, he asks.—Yes, I answer: *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, *Henry V.*, *Taming of the Shrew*, and *Much Ado*; published by Scribner's. He looks alarmed.)

In Memphis I see the names of unfamiliar railroads: the Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis ("The Dixie Line"); the Frisco. I discover a 4-cent State Tax

per package of cigarettes. I buy the *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, eager to learn what this ancient city is thinking about—and run chunk upon O. O. McIntyre, Walter Lippmann, Arthur Brisbane. It seems to me a pity when the provincial papers surrender their own local humors and opinions to the metropolitan wise-acre, however eminent.

I wish I could remember the title of the fine novel about Memphis which I read years ago; it described the horror of the ancient yellow fever epidemic. That, and the fact that Max Beerbohm married a lady from Memphis, are the town's literary associations in my mind. Somehow I had expected sternwheel steamers moored along a levee, but from the railroad bridge I saw only a string of barges. Then, with the morning sun behind us, we were hurrying across frosty bottom-lands with willows, poplars, and tulips; cotton fields, and many little "nigro" (so Dixie pronounces it) cabins.

Later, in Texas. I had to break off, for lunch, as the diner was to be cut out at Texarkana. Conversation with my table-mate began badly: I remarked that it seems impossible to get a highball on the train South of the Mason and Dixon line. He eventually revealed himself, after a pleasant dialogue, as a Presbyterian pastor from Hot Springs; and I felt it tactful to explain that my interest in whiskey was sociology rather than dipsomania.

Now, as a new moon floats in the Texas sunset, I sit to consider my geographical gains. It is lovely country in the afternoon sunlight; that gorgeous tree which glows a deep crimson-purple color is a black gum. The railroad company's fenceposts are made of bois d'arc (pronounced *bodark*) which is a very enduring wood. This I learned from the roadmaster or division inspector who was riding on the rear vestibule and dropping off little paper memos here and there for section bosses. The Pullman porter lives in El Paso, and he won't get there until 24 hours from now. His round trip, El Paso to St. Louis and back, is 2715 miles. The car (*Burlingame*) is crowded, and I was wondering how to find space to write these notes. The elderly lady who shares this section had comfortably spread herself and baggage over both seats. By the offer of a bottle of ginger ale I bribed her to sit with another lady just behind, and they are having a grand time together. It appears that they're both Daughters of the Confed'racy bound for a convention in Dallas. One of them even rates some sorority based on descent from the

(Continued on page 16)