

on the curious character of the man. He is, according to one of his associates, "the kind of a man who, if he understands what you say, thinks he thought of it himself."

One of his productions was advertised as "the world's greatest entertainment."

"That's the kind of an ad I like. Facts. No exaggeration."

"If you can't give me your word of honor will you give me your promise?" A differentiation characteristic of an environment where ordinarily nothing but a contract is worth anything.

"I'm a fair man. I'll submit anything to arbitration," he said in a dispute over the services of William Anthony McGuire. "But remember, no matter what is decided, McGuire goes to work for me."

Mr. Johnston, with his crisp style and mature humor, gives some shrewd intimations on the solutions of the riddles of this "Spink"—Mr. Goldwyn's customary term for Anna Sten, which well applies to himself. The author's conclusion is that, "Next year is Sam's real silver jubilee. It is something for everybody to get patriotic about. The U. S. A. leads the world by a larger margin in pictures than in anything else, and one of the chief reasons is the Great Goldwyn."

Maine Pioneers

LAND UNDER HEAVEN. By Pearl Ashby Tibbetts. Portland, Maine: Falmouth Book House. 1937. \$2.50.

Reviewed by KENNETH P. KEMPTON

THERE is no artistry in this record of the growth of Aroostook County, but the book has a sturdy quiet charm. It is based on stories told by the author's grandmother, and in the best parts one can all but hear the old woman's voice. The narrative rings sound. This is life as it was fought through (with some unpleasant details of course omitted) in northern Maine a century ago.

The author's honest and accurate prose takes us, from the bloodless timber war of 1839, through forty years of struggle against wilderness, climate, disease, and unscrupulous neighbors, to leave Aroostook with her potato and starch industries established, a thriving community. Along the way Granny remembers a plenty: wild roses in June by the river, the first three bushels of blue noses planted among the stumps and guarded with guns against flocks of crows darkening the sky; Preacher Tucker, who found the rum before the wedding; wolves and catamounts, the first school, the coming of the Portland Transcript and the railroad; the Civil War taking every able man off hard-won acres, the women and children working on and fighting a war of their own against diphtheria. There are other characters in the book, three generations of them, but they are relatively unimportant. The one who matters is Granny. Our protagonist is a group-study, the Maine pioneer.

An Original Travel Diary

JAPANESE LADY IN EUROPE. By Haruko Ichikawa (Mrs. Sanki Ichikawa). Edited with an Introduction by William Plomer. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co. 1937. \$2.50.

Reviewed by FLORENCE AYS COUGH

THE stimulating product of an original mind is this travel diary of a sensitive lady from the land of the Rising Sun. Her husband, head of the English Department, Imperial University, Tokyo, was in 1931-32 elected to an Albert Kahn Traveling Fellowship, and made a journey around the world accompanied by his wife. She, to use her own words, "played the part of a dry-plate behind the lens in the form of my husband, night after night, while he was intent on studying where to direct our focus of inspection for the next day. I sat up and wrote



HARUKO ICHIKAWA

down all the things which had cast their shadows on my mind during the day—a pleasurable task which resembled that of developing photos." The pictures she gives are sharply defined, well composed, clear. The reflections she appends are most unusual. The mind of this Japanese lady is amazingly mature; her point of view is fresh; her comments are tart and comprehending; her knowledge of world history and literature wide and sympathetic.

Mrs. Haruko Ichikawa describes her education: "It is limited to a girls' high school, and if I had deeper knowledge I should have been able to make more interesting observations." Her "observations" and deductions are among the most interesting that I have ever read. The series of pictures she presents, which stretch from North China, across Siberia, through Russia, to France, the British

Isles, Spain, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, and Central Europe, make those stretches of the world live.

In North China, although near her home-land, Mrs. Ichikawa moved among people of a civilization antithetical to her own. She remarks:

Mingling among people of great leisure with extremely strong nerves, I thought of various things. If I had been consulted about starting some educational organization in this country to relieve the people from their ignorance, should I have rejoiced with pure delight? This nation who have not yet got their nerves blistered with the stimulating fruit of the tree of knowledge, seem to be likely to inherit the earth and go on for ever, while the Japanese, Italians, and other Latin peoples go neurotic and mad. Yet as an old, great nation the people show no sign of decadence. They are permanently young, and show the tenacity and suppleness of a perpetually youthful race.

Towards the Russians she feels differently:

They impressed me as being useful men and women, showing their bulkiness, necessary for the founding of a new world order with their strong, big marrow of life. They do not give me the same feeling that the lower classes in China give us, whom we would like to leave as they are without changing them. When we see Russians, we hope that education will spread among them as quickly as possible.

Mrs. Ichikawa found Paris fascinating, and her accounts of the Opera and of the Casino de Paris where Josephine Baker danced transmit this feeling.

Spain, the Spain now vanished, was a thrilling experience. Bullfights were to her "enthraling sport." When swimming against surging waves one feels "high-sounding joy of heart, and that joy I found in this evil scene." The chapter concludes with the prophetic reflection: "But if a day should come when Spain throws away the joy of the bullfight, the seriousness of the revolution would be worth noting."

Haruko Ichikawa is the granddaughter of Viscount Shibusawa, who was one of the first Japanese to go abroad. In 1866 he accompanied Prince Mimu Tokugawa to France. In the suite was a hairdresser from Tokyo who had a violent misunderstanding with a Frenchman. The latter was struck by the orange peel which the hairdresser tried to throw out of the train window: "It was a mistake arising from Tsunakichi's ignorance of a thing called 'glass.' All ended in laughter."

Less than seven decades later, the granddaughter of a man who witnessed this scene comes to Europe with the history and literature of the Seven Seas at her finger-tips. How many European or American high-school graduates could visit Japan, thoroughly informed as to historical and literary backgrounds?

English '37

The Novelist and the Reader: IV

THE most natural way to tell a story is usually the least effective way to write fiction. When you tell a friend an amusing incident of your vacation or, more artfully, an anecdote about the traveling salesman and the farmer's daughter, your instinctive method is one which a novelist usually takes care to avoid. You relate what you did, break off to explain what your wife thought about it, abandon her to describe what the traffic cop had been doing half an hour before, and leave him to bring in the emotions of the bystanders. You do the same with the farmer, his daughter, and the traveling salesman, being careful to make clear what was in the minds of all of them, for the flavor of the story comes from their saying one thing while thinking something quite different. You are the narrator, and it is your privilege to take any position in space that pleases you, or to occupy several at the same time, and to move in and out of the minds of all your characters as convenience may suggest.

Such a method will suffice for a smoking-room story but it is certain to create resistance when it is used in fiction. The imaginary world of a novel is always more or less at war with the common sense world of the reader's experience, but must never challenge its axioms. No one can be in more than one place at a time or learn what is going on elsewhere by any but natural means of communication—and the novelist's abrupt change of scene from Raleigh in Virginia to Elizabeth in England (or from John in this room to Mary in the next) is as unnatural as a magic carpet. The reader is willing to travel that distance from scene to scene, but he is not willing to have one place superimposed on another place in the same scene, even though they may lie naturally only a few inches apart. He cannot look at both John and Mary simultaneously: both optics and psychology forbid. When he is asked to do so, the puppet-strings become visible again and the illusion has been impaired. Again, though in a subtler way, the novelist has come upon the stage.

There is a certain tolerance, or area of indifference, within which this principle may be safely disregarded. It becomes progressively smaller as fiction turns from action to thought and emotion. No one can be directly aware of any thoughts and emotions but his own; he can read his own mind but he can get at the minds of his companions only by interpreting what they do and say. When the reader comes upon a group of characters in a novel, he must identify his perceptions of the group with that of one member of

it, and the novelist would put an excessive strain on his belief by asking him to see the group first as one member does and then, a moment later, as another one does. The least effective scenes in all fiction are probably those in which the point of view, the channel of thought and emotion, changes as the speakers in the dialogue change. The novelist who tells you what Mary said, what she thought as she said it, what John thought as he heard it, and what he therefore said in answer—is employing a device practically certain to defeat his intention. The reader grants that if he were Mary and said what Mary said he might well think what she does, and he could certainly hear what John replied. But he would not, so long as he was Mary, know what John thought; when he is told directly, instead of being led to infer it, he protests. He cannot be in two minds at once.

Hence the narrative device which is more frequently used than any other, the fixation in one character of the point of view from which the scene is observed. The scene (not necessarily the whole novel) unfolds as this character experiences it, and his understanding of it is at least the first step in the reader's understanding. He is the medium through which the scene, with all its implications and significance, is transmitted to the reader. He is the means of perception: the reader's eyes and ears and at least the fulcrum of his judgment. His relation to the events of the novel, or to its principal emotions, may be anything from that of a bystander to that of the central character; but he is the novelist's vicar as an expositor and the reader's medium of engagement with the novel itself.

At the simplest he is a mere conveyor; he need have little more personality of his own than is required for reporting. Yet all the material of the immediate scene, whether unalloyed action or the subtlest and most secret emotions, must be translated in terms of what he does, feels, knows, and perceives. The greater the demands of the scene, the greater need for him to have substance, however, and the more complex the reader's relationship to him. Thus because the character himself has an attitude toward the events and the other characters concerned, his personality adds another dimension to the scene. There is the event itself, there is the other character as he really is—and there are both of them as understood by the characters through whom the reader sees them, as colored by his sympathies and prejudices, the extent of his knowledge and the defects of his intelligence, the eccentricities or in-

sufficiencies of his nature. His deviations or known errors furnish another bearing by which the reader may steer a true course, a fact which provides magnificent opportunities for the novelist. The reader has a dual relationship to the character whose eyes and mind he is using: he in part identifies himself with the character, as he shares his perceptions, and in part uses him from the outside as a point of orientation. This relationship is one of the properties unique to fiction and creates one of the additional levels of significance, besides that of the immediate fact, on which skillful fiction may move simultaneously.

By confining the means of perception to one character the novelist accepts rigorous limitations of his freedom. There are many characters in his novel and they are all important to the effect he is striving for. The simplest of the corollaries that follow is sufficiently complex: he must manipulate the character in whom the perception is fixed so that the story will flow freely, the understanding of the reader will be precisely what he wants it to be, and everything will seem as natural and unforced as if the character possessed the novelist's omniscience. This implies considerable ingenuity in contriving to have the character in the right place at the right time for the right reasons ("plot" in the texts), but what is more important, it implies having the character see, feel, understand, speculate, meditate, guess, be deceived, in precisely the right way to precisely the right degree. It must all be done in character but it must all be done at the behest of the author. He must control every item of the scene but must control it in terms of the character. If John is permitted to see something which not he but someone else would have seen, the illusion is marred; if he is permitted to feel something that John would not have felt, it is destroyed.

John is a limited and fallible being but he acts in place of the novelist, who is

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