

The BOWLING GREEN by Christopher Morley

Catalogue of Pleasures

IT is a long time since we offered a catalogue of our simple pleasures. We believe that in spite of much annoy, failing teeth, and an imminent income tax, the psychic balance sheet shows a substantial credit on the jocular side. In proof of same we offer a few items of pure and disinterested delight. For instance:—(1.) Hearing the voice of Hilaire Belloc on the air the other evening in Rudy Vallée's program. Mr. Belloc neither knows nor cares, why should he, but that positive, mocking and faintly irritable tenor has endured in the cochlea of our inner ear ever since (at least 25 years ago) we heard him give his superb lecture on Rabelais at Oxford. Particularly the semi-Gallic flutter of his r's—like the

silken, sad, uncertain
Rustling of a purple curtain.

We (damn we) I liked his threesome uses of the Pen: as a weapon of attack; as amusement; as an implement of salvation.

I thought I knew my Belloc pretty well, but only the other day Geoffrey Gomme (of Edgar Wells's fine bookshop) introduced me to a collection (Cassell, 1931) called *A Conversation with a Cat, & Others*. In this little book (has it been published here?) are some pieces of Mr. Belloc at his best. I turned almost in fear to the one Geoffrey Gomme had most praised, *The Death of the Ship*. I knew it would trouble me; it did. It describes the end of his sturdy old *Nona*. From that you can fall back on *A Guide to Boring* which is a *rafale* of laughter.

There is a great deal I should like to say about Mr. Belloc, but I fear to bore him. I was pleased to hear him pay tribute to Max Beerbohm. Belloc himself has received the greatest compliment paid to writers of our time: parody by Max. (See *A Christmas Garland*.)

When H. B. was here about fifteen years ago he was desperate to find a pipe tobacco to his taste. He may be again. I introduced him to *Serene*: he might like to be reminded.

(2.) A word to Mr. Vallée, who had some of his boys sing a madrigal about "*Gentlemen-songsters (!) out on a spree, Baa, baa, baa,*" etc. You might remind your listeners that this has been rehashed from Kipling.

By the way, Chapter VIII in Kipling's

Something of Myself is a Must. Particularly this: "*When your Daemon is in charge, do not try to think consciously. Drift, wait, and obey.*"

(3.) There's a grand snowfall on the ground this morning. I've been waiting all winter for an excuse to remind you of Chapter VIII in W. H. Hudson's *Idle Days in Patagonia*, "Snow, and the Quality of Whiteness." That chapter, which discusses the effect of whiteness on the mind, takes you back to *Moby Dick*; not a bad place to be taken.

Among writers about Nature, I am glad to see some revival of interest in Richard

rather as an outcry of Fascist patriotism?

(5.) The greatest triumph of the Holmes-Watson mythos is that it has even got into *The Lancet*, the world's premier medical journal. Mr. P. M. Stone, a Baker Street Irregular in Waltham, Mass., sends me the *Lancet* of Dec. 26, 1936, which prints an article ("by an Occasional Correspondent") *Was Sherlock Holmes a Drug Addict?* This takes the line that Holmes's behavior shows none of the unmistakable signs of cocaine poisoning; that the wrist-scars were make-up, a form of practical joke at Dr. Watson's expense. *The Lancet's* correspondent concludes with "unfavourable reflections on the professional competence of Dr. Watson."

I wish I had quit reading *The Lancet* at that point, but I went on into some of the clinical matter, and identified a lot of symptoms. Unquestionably I have arthritis, cystoscopy, chronic nepotism and intermittent nephalism.

(6.) In *Literary Appreciations* by Princeton's well-loved emeritus, Professor George McLean Harper (Bobbs-Merrill) I found an interesting essay on William Watson, so much of whose verse has (when met unawares) the classic symptoms of longevity. Professor Harper tells us that Watson lectured in the U. S. in 1912, and quotes from his discourse:—

"We have amongst us the critic with a bee in his bonnet, the critic who finds that it pays him to have a bee in his bonnet, since brilliantly unsound criticism is often more readable than criticism which is unbrilliantly sound."

(7.) More than a bee, a wasp, was in the bonnet of the anonymous English poet who wrote some verses which have been privately circulating since a recent constitutional episode. Omitting a stanza which deals with unimportant personalities they are reported thus:—

Rat Week

Where are the friends of yesterday
That fawned on Him
And flattered Her;
Where are the friends of yesterday
Submitting to His every whim,
Offering every praise of Her
As myrrh
To Him?

They found Her conversation good,



SPANISH CONCEPTION OF SHERLOCK HOLMES
(From *El Vendedor de Cadáveres*, one of the innumerable spurious stories about S. H. published in Spanish.)

Jefferies. I attribute this partly to some good things said about him by Donald Peattie in his delightful *Almanac for Moderns*. I shall never forget my excitement, at the age of 21, first reading Jefferies' *The Story of My Heart*, a hot summer day, in a railway carriage between Royston and London. That book should be read young if possible.—I feel a kind of concern about Jefferies who gave me exquisite pleasure when I was young and excitable; he was less than 40 when he died and has been dead now fifty years.

(4.) The Bowling Green is perhaps incubating a serial feature which might oppress its readers for a considerable time; therefore I try to work off now a number of miscellanea which have interested me. E.g., a photo, shown me by Helen Galland, of the Italian freighter *Achilles Lauro*. Painted across the forward bulwark of her boat-deck is the Horatian line COELUM NON ANIMAM MUTANT QUI TRANS MARE CURRUNT. This tickled me at first, as evidence of loyalty to the classics; then I wondered, is it intended

They called His Majesty "divine"
 (Consuming all the drink and food
 They burrow and they undermine),
 And even the most musical
 Admired the bagpipes' horrid skirl
 When played with Royal cheeks out-
 blown
 And Royal feet tramping up and down.

Where are they now, where are they now,
 That nameless, faceless, raucous gang
 Who graced Balmoral's Coburg towers,
 Danced to the gramophone, and sang
 Within the battlemented bowers
 Of dear Fort Belvedere;
 Oh, do they never shed a tear?
 Oh, do they never shed a tear
 From swollen lids and puffy eyes,
 For that, their other Paradise?
 How far it seems from here, how far—
 Now home again
 In the Ritz Bar.

Oh, do they never shed a tear
 Remembering the King, their martyr,
 And how they led Him to the brink
 In rodent eagerness to barter
 All English history for a drink?

What do they say, that jolly crew?
 Oh . . . Her they hardly knew,
 They never found her really nice
 (and here the sickened cock crew thrice);
 Him they had never thought quite sane,
 But weak, and obstinate, and vain;
 Think of the pipes! That yachting trip!
 They'd said so then ("say when, say
 when!")—
 The rats sneak from the sinking ship.

(8.) Colleges and railroads are both special interests of mine, but a booklet published by a railroad company in honor of the college it serves is something new. The C. B. and Q. recently printed a pamphlet celebrating the centennial of Knox College (Galesburg, Illinois) and recalled interesting episodes of their mutual history. Particularly an incident quoted from Earnest Elmo Calkins' article on *The Genesis of a Railroad*. It appears that though the pioneers of Knox had struggled earnestly to get the railroad to their settlement (in 1854), they were horrified by one unexpected circumstance:—

When on the first Sunday the passenger train arrived and left according to its week-day schedule, guardians of the Puritan Sabbath were too surprised and shocked to register their indignation. The following Sunday, in the lead of a considerable crowd, a tall commanding figure in a long, frock coat, advanced upon the fire-breathing monster, its steam up, ready to draw a string of box-like wooden cars Chicago-wards.

Before the conductor could shout his "All aboard," the tall figure raised his hand and ordered the engineer to take his smoke-belching steed back to the roundhouse.

"Who are you to give me such orders?" demanded the engineer.

"I am President Blanchard of Knox college, and again I order you to take that engine to the roundhouse and not run this train on Sunday."

The New Books

(Continued from page 5)

fashionable attribute is his determination to get blood from a turnip, or an affirmative and fertile meaning out of negative, infertile material—to take the measure of life in terms of a character whose existence is a walking, posturing death. And the unfashionable attribute is his devotion to whatever way of saying a thing will make it submit to the most possible saying. His pages run to such festoons of elaboration and loops of parenthesis as we seldom encounter in Anglo-American fiction the hither side of Henry James. As a result you are left with the feeling that he has wrapped up in 100-odd thousand words a subject which he might have unwrapped for you in sixty or seventy thousand by spending more of his own time and tissue to save yours.

Gone With the War

THE LAST ROMANTIC. By William Orton. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1937. \$2.50.

Reviewed by EDITH MIRRIELES

MR. ORTON'S book is not a novel. It is neither autobiographic nor yet commemorative of any given individual. It is the biography of, almost the funeral oration upon, a dead time. Michael, the representative of that time, born in the late nineties, is the son of an English shopkeeper. He goes to chapel, goes to school, lives over the shop, moves presently along with his mildly prospering parents to a separate house. As he grows up, he makes a series of half-hearted attempts at establishing himself in life, each attempt self-defeated. Finally, his gusty adolescence barely behind him, he is killed on the Western Front.

But the circumstances of Michael's life have only as much to do with this story of him as the circumstances of Paderewski's having had a piano had to do with his playing. Michael's actual life consists of his observations, his reading, and, drawn from these two sources, his puzzlements, his emotional acceptances and rebellions. Wistful, restless, bookish, sensitively artistic without as yet being creatively so, he sets down in his diary a record which is less a record of himself than of his epoch. Michael's world was one in which he could observe cause and effect; cause and effect were there to be observed. As a result, whatever his irritation or inquisitiveness over some of its aspects, the world itself he rested back upon with security. His conviction of the ultimate kindness of Providence, his "sense of the potential sacredness of things," his moments of "curious, aching ecstasy" and still more his pleased acceptance of the importance of these moments, his unconsciousness of economics except as a title in some college catalogue—by all of these the reader knows

him not for the last romantic (romantics are blood brothers to the phoenix) but for that early self of a whole generation which, exposed to shellfire or remote from it, failed in either instance to survive the Marne.

The closing chapters are less satisfying than what precedes them. In its entirety, however, the book justifies the label under which the publishers present it, "A Selection of the Discoverers." It is likely to be rated as a discovery by many of its readers.

A Woman Doctor's Odyssey

A WOMAN SURGEON. By Rosalie Slaughter Morton. New York: Frederick A. Stokes. 1937. \$3.

Reviewed by MABEL S. ULRICH, M.D.

THE writing healers, whose first public idol was the irrepressible Munthe, have all been men. Enter now a woman surgeon, Rosalie Slaughter Morton. In romantic adventure Dr. Morton can compete with the best. Born in that most romantic state, Virginia, she seems to have missed none of its traditional perquisites. But also in her blood were the chromosomes of an amazing number of medicine men, and in obedience to their genes she went up to Philadelphia and studied to be a doctor.

Having graduated with honors, armed with letters to almost everybody of any scientific or social importance in Europe, she sailed away to take her graduate work in the clinics of Germany, Vienna, Paris, and London. Back in New York she was at once successful in building a practice, and for the brief interval of a most romantic marriage she reveled in all the femininity of her Southern upbringing. After the death of her husband she plunged into the work of organizing women physicians for public health education, went to Labrador to help Grenfell, and when the war broke out insisted upon being sent to Serbia because it was the "underdog" of Europe. In Serbia she helped establish the American Women's Hospitals, was repeatedly decorated for distinguished service, and determined to bring back to America an army of young men and women for an American education. When her book ends, she is practicing her profession in Florida.

That Dr. Morton has had a grand, busy, and useful life no one can deny, and after reading her story all women must admit that she has added much to the lustre of feminine accomplishment. And yet it must be confessed that she left this feminist reviewer bothered by mixed emotions. One cannot but wish that she had caught from some of her wonderful predecessors, Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell for example, more of the humility and objectivity which are the mark of the greatest of the followers of Aesculapius, male and female alike.