

The BOWLING GREEN by Christopher Morley

The Trojan Horse

VII. Dichotomy

I'VE eaten, thanks, says Uncle Pan (complete with monocle) as he takes a chair in the apartment on Epsilon Street; where Cressida and Antigone are just finishing lunch.—I had a sandwich at the office. Well, my dear, I think I may say we had a good press. The interview with Miss Lyde has had a very satisfactory effect.

Definitely, Cressida says; perhaps with a little whiff of irony. Pandarus cocks his eye at her watchfully. He does not always know quite how to take her.

Your dignified behavior, he continues, was all the more favorably noticed by contrast with Princess Cassandra's deplorable outburst.

Since you've come just at lunch time, I suppose you're looking for a snort.

Just a trivial one, he agrees. He doesn't really want it, but he sees she is in a captious mood, and thinks it may help.

We're glad of an excuse, says Antigone as she makes the necessary preparations. What a morning!

How do you mean?

All the sacred cows have been calling, Antigone explains. Queen Hecuba, Lady Helen, Andromache, Creusa. They came to congratulate us on our patriotism.

PANDARUS—Excellent. That shows the power of the press.

CRESSIDA—They all brought their knitting and settled down for a good palaver.

ANTIGONE—If the Greeks can be beaten by gossip, they're certainly licked.

CRESSIDA—It was rather embarrassing, we didn't have any knitting that looked at all patriotic.

ANTIGONE—I was working on a girdle, I had to try to turn it into a muffler.

CRESSIDA—Women ought not to do so much knitting; it gives them double chins.

PANDARUS—It's looking down all the time. They should look up.

CRESSIDA—At a man, I suppose.

ANTIGONE—They get double chins on their minds too.

PANDARUS—Yes, it's terrible what life does to women.

CRESSIDA—You've been noticing it for years, haven't you.

Pandarus realizes that he's not going to get anywhere on the line of banter, so he wisely takes a drink instead. Cressida and Antigone suspect that this is his way of conceding the first round, so they feel better too. The three lift a silent toast to each other, the underlying sentiment of which, whether expressed or divined, is "To hell with Sparta."

I admit the patriotic ladies must have

been rather trying, says Uncle Pan. But they're useful as a social backstop.

They're so gruesomely earnest, poor dears, murmurs Cressida. They've got prickly heat about the affront to the goddess of Wisdom. They say she's gone over to the Greeks, the way Daddy did.

It's not impossible, Pandarus admits. But remember we still have Aphrodite on our side. Generally speaking, I think she's more useful than Pallas.

You're just arguing from your own experience, says Antigone.

I'm sorry you're both so flippant. (Pandarus is just a trifle peevish.) What I'm trying to tell you, Cressida, I think you should get out more. You need social diversion. You don't want to be an introvert.

How do you know we don't? What is it?

People who stay at home and think about themselves until they get morbid. It always makes one feel better to get out and compare yourself with other people.

That's all right for domineering creatures like you, Uncle Pan. I just don't feel gregarious.

Well, it's too bad. I suppose I made a mistake. But I can still cancel the order. What do you mean?

Get Madame Iris on the phone, I'll countermand it before it's too late.

Madame Iris, they exclaim! The dress-maker?

I'm afraid it was a liberty, he says. I told her to come up and take your order for some new clothes; as a present from me.

Pan, you darling! You old rogue, what are you up to now? You know you ought not to do that sort of thing.

We'll take it out of the War Chest. It's strictly a military measure. It's not good for morale to have the two prettiest girls in Troy shut themselves up like nuns.

Darling (Antigone to Cressida) did you notice, they're wearing a new kind of tunic, with a smooth shoulder: I saw one at the Palladium.

And the highlow waist, finished off with a peplum!

In Persian rose, and a yoke at the hip! It seems a pity to cancel it, he says, pretending to reach for the telephone. Quietly but firmly they push him back to his seat.

When's she coming up?

Some time this afternoon. I told her not until after the parade. The street will be so crowded.

Parade, here?

Yes, didn't you know? The Boulevard's torn up, so the troops will go by here on their way to the field. There's a big push scheduled this afternoon.

Poor fellows, I wish we could do something for them.

Give them a wave from the window. That's better than knitting those horrible socks.

Uncle Pan refreshes his drink. At last he feels he has the conversation under control.

You know, he says, we not only got a good press on our Palladium appearance, but we made a conquest. Quite a remarkable one; a young man of considerable importance. He saw you at the service and was completely smitten.

I'm not interested.—How do you know?

He told me so.

Wasn't that rather indiscreet?

I'm afraid I wormed it out of him. He didn't mean to tell, but he was in such a state he didn't realize what he was saying. It was quite pathetic because he's never had anything to do with women before.

That's what we need, more men like that.

Of course I shall respect his confidence. Quite right.—Who is he?

He's written some poetry about it, really quite unusual. He gave me some of his manuscripts to look over.

Uncle Pan slyly takes the papers from his pocket and glances at them. I'm glad the arts keep alive in war-time, he says. Yes, some of this is excellent. It's a pity it's too personal to be published.

Did you want us to criticize them for you?

Why my dear child, he protests, I wouldn't dream of violating a pledge. You see, they have his name on them. But I'll read you one, if you like. This one is less emotional, more in the humorous vein.

And, assuring himself of their close attention, he reads:—

I saw no merit in the scheme

Of Nature's primitive division:

Though sex, they told me, was supreme,
I held it always in suspicion:

It seemed too gross, too much imbued
With propagative purpose crude!

But now, O palinode, confess:

Dichotomy proves more appealing,
For since I saw you, loveliness,

I have a wholly different feeling:

To my astonishment intense,
Biology makes better sense.

Magnificent is Nature's plan,

Provocative, ingenious very,
To make a woman and a man

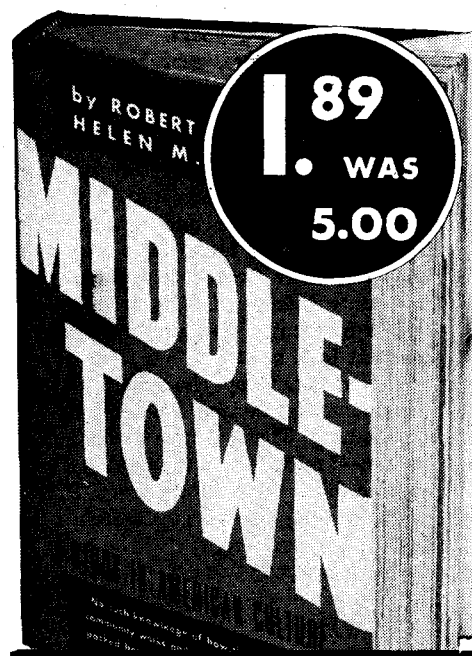
So mutually necessary:

Let Beauty flourish her allures—

I am, appetitively yours. . . .

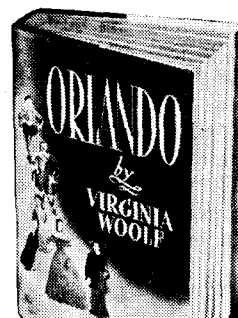
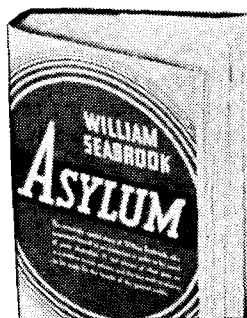
CRESSIDA—There are a lot of words

(Continued on page 14)



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The Trojan Horse

(Continued from page 12)

there I don't understand. What's dichotomy?

PANDARUS—Hm, well, it's a philosophical term. I wonder if I can put it so you'd understand it.

CRESSIDA—If that's what it is, better not.

PANDARUS—No, no; he only means the fundamental antithesis of gender.

ANTIGONE—How philosophers love to beat around the bush.

CRESSIDA—I bet you wrote it yourself.

PANDARUS—Absolutely not; cross my heart.

CRESSIDA—Whoever wrote it, he has a sense of humor.

PANDARUS—That's only a defence mechanism to conceal how deeply he feels. In the other poems he lets himself go.

CRESSIDA—They always do, sooner or later.

I wish we knew Uncle Pan's retort to this; but their talk is broken by the sound of a bugle, marching feet approaching, and a ruffle of drums. Here come the soldiers, Antigone cries, and they hurry to the window. Uncle Pan is very zealous, motioning the girls forward so they can see. Antigone needs no urging, she waves a scarf and shrills with enthusiasm; Cressida, more reserved, holds herself a little backward. Splendid, splendid, says Pandarus, you're going to get a fine view. By Jove, a smart-looking lot, aren't they? A military band, breaking into the full blare of the Trojan anthem right in front of the house, drowns his further comment, but we can see him gesticulating and shouting in Cressida's ear. Like most of those past the age of front-line service, military music gives him an ecstasy of fervor. Cressida, to her uncle's dismay, seems rather grave, even a little saddened by the spectacle.

Look, look, he cries as the band fades off; there's Hector, he's the head of the whole regiment, the best soldier we've got. He's been through it all right; you can see it in his face. He's the only man who can really stand up to Achilles. Yea, Hector!—And his shout is caught up and reverberated by the crowd in the street below.

They say he's been wounded in seventeen places, Uncle Pan says with awe.

Goodness, says Antigone pertly, I didn't know men *had* so many places. Hurray, Hector!

Uncle Pan ignores the cheer. There's Aeneas, he points. A man with a future, he'll be heard from one of these days. The son of old Counsellor Anchises, you know. A good fighter. Yea, Aeneas!

And Paris! I guess you know *him* by sight! He has an air to him, hasn't he; see how he always wears his helmet tilted, it looks rakish. I think myself he does it because his hair's going a bit gray on one side. He's earned it, I bet. A man

who acts as judge in a beauty contest is just hunting for trouble.

Who are these two honey-bears, laughing and talking together? asks the impressionable Antigone.

A couple of bad boys, says Uncle Pan. Those are Deiphobus and Antenor. Grand fighters, and afraid of nothing, but if one of them takes off his hat to you on a dark night, call the Travelers' Aid.

They're popular though, says Antigone. Listen to the cheer they're getting. I like them, they look like sweet potatoes. Hulloo, you bad boys, she shouts. Her words, perhaps fortunately, are lost in the noise of the populace outside, but both officers recognize something amenable in the timbre of the cry, and identify its origin. They look up; Deiphobus salutes with a wide grin, Antenor carries farther still with a slow lingering wink. Young Antigone burns a clear flush of surprise. Cressida feels the instinctive hackles of sex pringle up her nape. She knows—or remembers—that old insidious come-on stare, the fighting taunt of another enemy.

Uncle Pan, leaning far out to watch the army flow by, does not notice. He never supposes himself to miss anything, but this he does not see. How can he guess it is partly Cressida's reaction against the brute impudence of that look that makes her sensitive to something so different a moment later? He is studying the moving lines, a river of bronze with floating plumes, and lusted with sun on spear-points. He cries out in a different tone:—

Here he comes! Here's the boy I cheer for! The youngest officer in the regiment, and going to be the best in the whole army. Only got his commission last week, and look how he sits that horse! That's a soldier for you. He's been sick too, but he's going out for duty just the same. Hurray, hurray, attaboy Troilus!

The cheer is taken up by the crowd with such vigor that Troilus himself is startled and looks up. He has taken off his helmet in the heat, and there is boyish grace on the clear brow and head of damp curls. The face, a little thinned by recent grievance, is brownly pale; then, as he sees Pandarus, darkened by quick blood. He recognizes Cressida, standing behind her uncle; sees her oblivious to the nudging chatter; meets her steady, curious gaze. Slowly his face drains of color, there comes upon him an unconscious intentness. It is as if he strives to memorize something he may never see again; or gropes in mind for a rhyme that does not exist. It is as if he is fallen asleep as he rides, and the moment a dream, prolonged and unchangeable for ever.

Troubling and yet serene, the appeal of such unmarred quality in a boy, when perceived by ripened woman. It pierces to her earthbound necessity, her kindness both protective and passionate; stirs the bitter sweetness of all energies un-

used. She is barely older than he, but aware beyond her years.

Still he wonders, searches her with eyes. In sudden uncalculated impulse, in warm pity and astonishment (few women ever meet so honorable and unselfish a look) Cressida seizes flowers from a bowl at hand, and flings them out. Moving in trance, he leans far and catches them. But one falls; the horse shies and stumbles; the rider braces to tighten reins, and canters forward. The troop breaks rank a moment, closes up, passes on; he does not look back.

Who was that boy, she asks.

Pandarus is amazed. Didn't you hear me shouting! That's Prince Troilus, that's the one—I mean, that's the one's got more stuff in him than all the rest. Priam's youngest son. Believe me, there's a boy that's a born soldier.

She is watching down the street, where the sunburned men are turning a corner. A pair of shoulders, still identified, stiffen and square themselves; releasing a mood, preparing for decisions.

What a pity, she says. How lovely they are, it's a shame to see them wasted.

Her uncle is a little puzzled, and offers no answer. He makes his adieu promptly; says he must get back to the office.

(She is not good at accounting for herself; even to herself. It would not even occur to her to try. Yet I wish she and Uncle Pan might have been alone together, just then, for a little while. Pandarus, with all his mischief, is always glad to lay aside chaff; he is easy to tell things to. O, when the moment arrives to confess, how often is the right confessor there also?)

Well! (says Antigone when Pan is gone). A lot of excitement for Epsilon Street! Do you suppose they'll march by here every day?

Cressida does not seem to be supposing anything.

I better clear away lunch, Antigone goes on. The dressmaker may get here. Darling, think of having some swell clothes. We've been old maids in lavender such a long time. Are we lavender or are we lysol? It *would* be nice to fascinate somebody again. Wouldn't it?

Maybe, says Cressida slowly. . . . If you can do it without being fascinated back. . . . Hand me the dictionary.

Antigone does. Cressida looks something up; from the part of the dictionary she opens it might be "dichotomy."

Antigone continues gaily:—

Let's get all tinselled up and go to Sarpedoni's. I'm fed up hearing about Man in the Abstract. I'd like to see a few actual samples. . . . Say, look: Pan forgot his friend's poems, he's left them here on the table. I suppose it wouldn't be right to look at them?

She starts to unroll the papers.

Give them to me, says Cressida quickly. I'll take care of them.

(To be continued)

"Mac is a swell guy!"

—REX STOUT

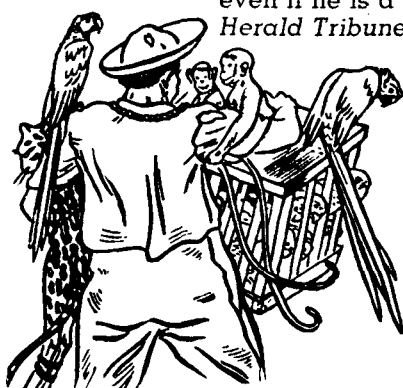


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Explorers of the Mind

(Continued from page 4)

five when he was suddenly superseded in his position as Director of the Museum of the City of New York, of which he was the founder and in which he had invested the most intense interest and affectionate enthusiasm. Plunged into a depression he spent three years in the wealthy and efficient Bloomingdale Hospital (now called the New York Hospital, Westchester Division). With a style trained by much writing and lecturing, he writes ramblingly, humorously, sometimes cantankerously, with an eye for the picturesque and entertaining episode. If my allusion to "La Cathédrale" conjured up a picture of Mr. Brown as a Huysmans or a Psichari I have misled my readers. Yet all through the joking the affection for the hospital is evident; it won Mr. Brown's heart. And his joking does not conceal the suffering.

In contrast to Mr. Brown, "Jim Curran" was a young, only sporadically successful, business man. Disappointments and frustrations massed against him and by the time he was thirty he was definitely pathologically depressed. Stays in bad, somewhat disreputable, sanitarium were more harmful than otherwise; finally his mind found itself, or as he prefers to say, was restored, after three years' stay in an excellent state hospital. His story is sober and simple, and as Elsa Krauch tells it, the literary effect depends on the realistic massing of detail, so that the comparison with Arnold Bennett is quite fair. Indeed, Elsa Krauch supplies the ideally suitable style for the book, simple, sober, and modest as the story it tells, and astonishingly convincing in its description of "Jim Curran's" feelings. Instead of the racy extraversion of Mr. Beers, or the humorous spice of Mr. Brown, it is the absorption in the narrator's moods that infallibly holds one's attention.

But there is no doubt in Mr. Brown's mind or in "Jim Curran's" of the role the hospital played in their return to health. The patient of Bloomingdale and the patient of the unnamed state hospital are both grateful, and considerate in their judgments of the often irksome regulations and routine. Whether it began in the basket weaving at Bloomingdale or in the potato peeling at the state hospital, both show that it was their interest in the hospital and what it had to offer that replaced the gloomy absorption in their own states of mind. The doctors in both books are minor characters—passing smiles and handshakes—in fact mere impersonal organs of the hospital. The "transference" is to the hospital, and sensing this the narrators set it up as the chief character of their book.

Certainly psychiatric hospitals, private or state, are better than they were when Mr. Beers wrote. But certainly too Mr. Brown and "Jim Curran," on their discharge, found that their friends con-

sidered them merely persons who had been ill. There was no "stigma."

Psychotic fragments of autobiography have been written in earlier times, but usually not frankly as such. Many have been presented not as autobiography at all, but as works of fiction or imagination. The line between autobiography and autobiographical fiction must be very narrow. There is quite a bit of critical-psychiatric literature dealing with the influence of Maupassant's psychosis on his writings. E. T. A. Hoffmann was eccentric enough to have been "Johannes Kreisler." Strindberg certainly put something of himself into his remarkable psychopathic characters. Again morbid mental states of other days were often presented as religious experiences, of which there are numerous examples—those of François de Sales, Swedenborg, and Zinzendorf, to mention a salient few. With the psychotic as with the normal the individual is affected by his age and his milieu. The religious milieu gave form to the psychotic saints; the modern American temper produced Mr. Beers. Mr. Brown and "Jim Curran," had they lived in another day, might have identified themselves with other leaders and other movements; but in this day and time they identified themselves with modern scientific idealism and Clifford Beers.

Why men write books at all and especially of themselves is a speculative topic best left alone, but one point may be made as to the urge to write the story of a mental illness or a stay in a hospital. Illness of any sort is an insult, a blow to narcissism. It makes one know one's limitations and realize that there are powers of death beyond one's control, that set upon one whether one likes it or not. An illness our linguistic usage tells us is an "attack," it is something to fight off or succumb to. At the least it is a humiliation. We are ready to admit superficially that the body is ruled by the laws of cause and effect and of matter and energy. Yet, it has been observed, the ruling idea of the physically ill, which pervades their unconscious and appears in dream and delirium is: there is nothing wrong with me whatever! It is harder to accept deeply the idea that something may be wrong with the mind and that this something is part of the real world. The mind to us is still a good deal of an invulnerable soul, in fact to a German or Frenchman it is still *die Seele, l'âme*. It is natural for us to repudiate the fell clutch of circumstance; it is hard to believe that in the realm of the "mind" we are as we must be and not as we wish. The autobiography is a form of counter-attack. Sometimes the blows are not too well directed, and often enough well-intentioned doctors are prominent among the innocent bystanders, or some scapegoat happens to get most of the punishment. This, to be sure, is not the case with Mr. Brown or "Jim Curran." Their war is against the evil itself and they know their friends. But beyond the utilization of available fight-

ing spirit another motive plays a part. To travel in a strange country is dangerous, and there is one country from which no traveler returns. These narrators traveled a perilous country indeed; their tales of near death and near suicide show what might have befallen them. To write a book is a response of the will to live, a resurgence of the belief in immortality. Men are mortal but a book may be immortal. It is a brain-progeny that means creation and not destruction.

Bertram D. Lewin, M.D., is president of the New York Psychoanalytic Society and on the editorial board of the Psychoanalytic Quarterly.

The Middle Ages

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL HISTORY OF MEDIEVAL EUROPE. By Henri Pirenne. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company. 1937. \$2.

Reviewed by CRANE BRINTON

THIS translation of the late Henri Pirenne's share of a collaborative survey, the "Histoire du Moyen Age," by Pirenne, Gustave Cohen, and Henri Focillon, ought to take immediate rank as the best short work on the subject available in English. Pirenne was in the very top flight of economic historians, and he had the gift, less uncommon among French-speaking scholars than among English, of sound popularization. His own specialty was the rise of towns in his native Belgium, but in this book he ranges skillfully as far as Russia and Byzantium. Pirenne brought to the study of economic and social history the rigorous training in medieval political history he had acquired from the French masters of the last century. He does not hesitate to generalize, but he does so cautiously, and he has the professional historian's distrust of sweeping sociological theories.

His book should be a godsend to the college student seeking to review a major in history, but it has more than the textbook virtues. For the general reader it combines accuracy and, if not romantic interest, at least encyclopedic interest. Here Pirenne expounds his own well-founded notion that not the "fall" of the Roman Empire but the rise of Islam in the eighth century cut Western Europe off from the old Mediterranean economy and reduced it to something like a "natural" or subsistence economy. He then traces the slow re-establishment of trade with the East, and the growth of those cities whose privileged "bourgeois" brought the modern world out of the medieval. Although his main emphasis is on the growth of cities and trade, he gives an excellent account of medieval agriculture, of the role of the Church in the rise of capital and in the improvement of new lands, and of the extraordinary medieval expansion and colonization towards the Slavic East. No one who cares for a realistic view of the Middle Ages should miss this book.