

overstressed, sound. Whitman failed to destroy in his caution one quotation, and a key one, from "The Countess of Rudolstadt," written in his own hand. He has paraphrased passages from that chapter, and the confident assertion of Trismegistus that he speaks for a new religion of man has a close relation to the new confidence and enthusiasm of Whitman which makes "Leaves of Grass" so different from his earlier work. And there is abundant evidence that he went out of the straight path of truth again and again in order to prevent snoopers from discovering that he had been reading and borrowing as well as doing in the years just before his great book appeared.

But it is hard to escape the conclusion that theatrical old Walt would have been obscenely pleased by Miss Shephard's book.

Do I contradict myself?

Very well, then I contradict myself,  
I am large, I contain multitudes.

All this pother to discover that, like many a good medium, he would fake whenever he needed to fake. And yet I do not mean to belittle the usefulness of the book. It does not in my judgment, and I have read the Epilogue to "The Countess of Rudolstadt" with great care, prove that Whitman's consecration of his as yet unaroused spiritual energies to the cause of the love of man for man, was dependent upon the transcendental story in that book. There is too much about equality and too little about love to sound more than ten per cent Whitmanesque, too much masonic mysticism and advocacy of violence. A spark passed there; but there was an even fatter spark, as Miss Shephard partly admits, from Emerson. The discovery does, however, give a possible explanation, though some of the argument sounds like a detective story, for one line of Whitman's clowning. And it knocks in the head (if that is important) his boasts that he drew for the "Leaves" only from life.

In short, this is a more important contribution to biography than to literary criticism. Whitman's next biographer will have to take account of and reweigh Miss Shephard's discovery. By that time, I have little doubt that there will be still more evidence that the consummate egoist lied about his independence of the world's store of culture. Most self-styled independents do. But we who, in spite of our great admiration of Whitman, have always thought that there was some humbug in his cosmos, now have another duplicity to chuckle over. But grant the faker and the showman in the ample genius of Walt, and it does not seem quite so serious as Miss Shephard seems to think.

# Lion-Hunting for Radio

HELLO AMERICA! By César Saerchinger. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1938. \$3.50.

Reviewed by EUGENE LYONS

WHILE reporting the London Naval Conference early in 1930 for American newspapers, César Saerchinger saw a radio microphone for the first time and felt as though he had confronted his Fate. A few months later he was appointed European representative by the Columbia Broadcasting System and thus became "the first foreign emissary of radio." The following years were crowded for him with pioneering adventure in radio journalism and radio showmanship—the two overlap and blend—as he labored mightily to haul great personalities and great events within earshot of radio listeners in America.

His book, "Hello America!", is an exciting and intelligent record of that intense experience. Its primary interest for the average reader will be in the fascinating gallery of celebrities that Mr. Saerchinger offers: rulers, statesmen, intellectual big-wigs, religious leaders. He exhibits them with a keen eye for dramatic effect, and mostly in their humanly defenseless moments in front of a radio "mike." The two people with the largest curiosity appeal for the American public when Mr. Saerchinger began his career as transoceanic impresario were the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VIII), and George Bernard Shaw. He "bagged" the Prince quickly enough, partly by accident. Shaw eluded him for more than a year, but finally fell, in a broadcast on Russia in which he delighted Americans by addressing them as "you boobs, you dear old boobs."

With that, Mr. Saerchinger writes, "the last of the intellectual Big Game in the British Isles had been bagged. My eyes began to drift to wider fields." The hunting was no less arduous and no less thrilling on the Continent, and he carries the reader through the triumphs and heartaches and competitive struggles of his years. The Pope, Leon Trotsky, President Masaryk, Gandhi, Amelia Earhart, dictators and democrats, conferences, wars, great sports events: Mr. Saerchinger caught their reflections in his microphone, so that his book of staccato reminiscences sums up the highlights of these years.

Beyond that, however, he conveys effectively the significance of radio as a new journalistic medium and as a force for great good and even greater evil in international relations. Radio was hailed



JACKET OF "HELLO AMERICA"  
Showing Edward VIII, Mussolini, Shaw, Trotsky, Hitler, Baldwin, Princess Juliana, and Pope Pius XI.

as the instrument by which "nation might speak peace unto nation," but the things it speaks are as often war and hatred as peace and love. Chemistry gave the world poison gas along with its civilized gifts, and radio is giving the world poison propaganda along with culture and a sense of human neighborliness around the globe.

Mr. Saerchinger is convinced that radio has advantages over ordinary newspaper reporting. It brings people and events to the far-off audience more vividly and directly than any newspaper dispatch can do. His accounts of radio journalism in recent years—in Ethiopia, at the Olympic Games, in the Spanish civil war, etc.—indicate the potentialities of this new supplementary type of reporting.

That development should underline, for Americans, the importance of maintaining the independence of radio broadcasting. In the light of radio's growing importance as a news channel, it is essential that our concept of freedom of the press be extended to include radio.

Genuine transoceanic broadcasting is only about eight years old. It is characteristic of our blasé age that already we accept this modern miracle as casually as we do the telephone or the airplane. It is not the least of the many virtues of Mr. Saerchinger's fine book that it makes us keenly aware of this youngest of our scientific miracles. After reading "Hello America!" one will never again listen in on Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, or South America without a thrilling sense of the magic of the achievement, and without a deep appreciation of the labors of men like Mr. Saerchinger who carry through such broadcasts.

# Comic Genius of Music

*ORPHEUS IN PARIS: Offenbach and the Paris of His Time.* By S. Kracauer. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1938. \$4.

*LA VIE PARISIENNE, A Tribute to Offenbach.* By Sacheverell Sitwell. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1938. \$1.65.

Reviewed by MARCIA DAVENPORT

JACQUES OFFENBACH, as all the world knows, was a Cologne-born German Jew who carried his unique musical gifts to Paris as a starveling boy of fourteen, and remained to become the most authentically Parisian of Second-Empire Boulevardiers. The two gentlemen who have had the apparently simultaneous idea of writing about Offenbach, in new books just published, have not succeeded in submerging their native personalities nearly so well as their subject did. Not that they should; but neither the carefully embroidered, vignetted British prose of Sacheverell Sitwell, nor the solid, sociological German scholarship of S. Kracauer has produced much vitality in a portrait of the composer himself. Mr. Sitwell's book is not intended as more than a fragrant tribute to the man he calls the comic genius of music, blended into a colorful and nostalgic backdrop of that fantastic era of Paris. Mr. Kracauer's book is clearly the result of protracted study and analysis; of detailed and painstaking research, and of a highly enlightened mind.

Especially at this time, no observant writer could discuss the turbulent second half of the nineteenth century in Europe without taking fullest cognizance of the deep social significance of the violent political currents which swept the world.

Mr. Kracauer does this, keeping constantly before his reader the basic forces of social evolution which brought about the present French Republic, and stressing the "dictatorship" of Louis Napoleon as one of its compelling elements. Above this foundation he rebuilds the Paris of that age; the glittering, heedless, vicious, money-crazy Paris of the new industrialists, their cronies, and their courtesans; the Paris of the Boulevards, of the theaters, and of stupendous carousals. His book is richly peopled, in greatest detail, with these personalities. No available minutiae in anecdote and description of these fantastic men and women appears to have been overlooked, for which reason the absence of such intimate details in respect to Offenbach himself is quite startling. It is possible that the abundant source material does not yield any such first-hand memorials of Offenbach, and that is a great pity, for Mr. Kracauer's book only misses in that respect being a remarkable piece of work.

Offenbach's music is the accompaniment. There the writer comes into his own, with a notable comprehension of the very real contribution made by this lovable eccentric to the permanent literature of music. One finds the greatest satisfaction in the entire reading in the author's graph of Offenbach's career. The early painful hardships and obscurities, the first and then the subsequent successes, the incredible triumphs of "Orphée," "La Belle Hélène," "La Vie Parisienne," and "The Grand Duchess of Gerolstein," the breathless pressure of work, at the behest of public taste, which resulted in a total of one hundred operettas, written at dizzy speed and under every sort of condition, auspicious and disastrous, from adulation to bankruptcy.

Then the saddening and inevitable decline; the displacement of Offenbach, father of the operetta, by Strauss, its Viennese godfather, and finally the extraordinary story behind the creation of "Les Contes d'Hoffmann," Offenbach's sole grand opera. Mr. Kracauer's research is so painstaking and so authoritative that his omission of the majority of weird anecdotes that have grown up around "Les Contes d'Hoffmann" leads one to concede that most of them must be apocryphal, however picturesque. Finally, the pathetic death of Offenbach, only a few weeks before the première of the work into which he had poured his last ounce of life, makes a memorable (and typical, in musical annals) conclusion to a rich and fascinating book. If this book lacks almost entirely the personal touch of intimacy with Offenbach, the man, and his wife Herminie, it lacks little else to make it valuable to anyone concerned with opera. It is profusely illustrated with contemporary prints and caricatures, and it contains a useful and complete bibliography, as well as an index. Mr. Sitwell's book, on the other hand, like his other writings on music, is frankly the gesture of an intelligent dilettante.

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## On the Battlefields

*JOURNEYS BETWEEN WARS.* By John Dos Passos. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company. 1938. \$3.

Reviewed by GEORGE SLOCOMBE

MR. DOS PASSOS'S epic "Three Soldiers" had something of the excitement of emotion remembered in the tranquillity of a hall bedroom in New York. The rich panorama unfolded, the fireworks filled the sky, the air of the quiet room was acrid with the smell of burnt powder, but the mind of the man who sat before his typewriter was still, orderly, and contemplative, that of a sad, unresentful Homer.

In "Journeys between Wars" the Homer has become Odysseus. The pag-eant is there, but the writer is no longer serenely objective. The poet has become wanderer. The names of his voyages, cities, companions, roll off his tongue and are expectorated like sunflower seeds. Spain in 1919 and 1920, when a younger and more eager Dos Passos saw Don Quixote in every lean Spanish philosopher and Rosinante in every starved Spanish mule. Constantinople in 1921, when Mustafa Kemal was busy revitalizing the corpse of the Ottoman Empire, and the capital of the dead or exiled Sultans was full of Russians, Greeks, Armenians, British Intelligence officers, and American newspaper correspondents. Angora, Teheran, the Arabian desert.

Mr. Dos Passos's tales of the desert re-



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BACCHANALE FROM "ORPHÉE AUX ENFERS." From the painting by Doré.