

Running with daily traffic.
 Or the steelworkers of the American
 Bridge Co.,
 Under the curving girders of their peri-
 sphere.
 These are poets too; as Spender said
 "They left the vivid air signed with their
 honor."
 I don't have to go to books to find poetry:
 I see the jaded loins that hunt the end
 seat in the subway;
 The catbird in her bathing pan;
 And, mummied in dust of gold,
 The dead moth on my table.
 The carpenter who built this table
 Did a better poem
 Than anything written on it.

Picture-Making

THE FUN OF PHOTOGRAPHY. By
 Mario and Mabel Scacheri. New York:
 Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1938. \$3.50.

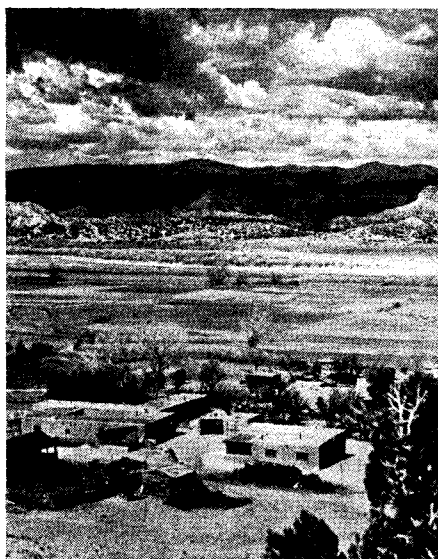
Reviewed by ROBERT DISRAELI

WE certainly would have studied this book twenty years ago and thereby avoided many mistakes and fumbles during our neophytic days of camera work. But alas! such books were not printed then.

In our milk and mush stage of photography, three types of books for photographers were published. There was the elementary technical book for the amateur, written evidently by publicity men for camera manufacturers, who guaranteed that if you followed their instructions there would always be something on the negative. The chief lessons of these books were that you must always have the sun over your shoulder when clicking the shutter and if you approach an object nearer than six feet it will be out of focus. The second type of book prevalent in those days and still too prevalent



Photomontage—"Swing It . . . Proposed lines give energy and pattern to the picture. . . ." (Pictures and captions from "The Fun of Photography.")



"This picture says that the Pueblo Indians lived an ordered, serene life. . . It makes its point . . . in spite of unsound composition."

today was the highly intricate gadgeteer book. It detailed precisely, with diagrams and formulas, what happened when you used a thousand different lenses with a thousand different cameras. This appealed mostly to that rare bird and pest, the philosopher of the technique of the camera. A third type was the esthetic, mooning, arty book on photography. Photography was an ART that required for its lofty cause the dignity of grey beards.

Here then is the fourth and newest type of photographic book: "The Fun of Photography." It is a happy book, written gaily and instructively. It makes no pretenses, and tells the amateur not how to take pictures, but how to make them,—the difference between clicking a shutter and knowing what you want.

The authors plunge immediately, at the crack of the pistol, into the problems of photographic composition. They do not tell you about it, but actually take your hand and lead you to a farm, to a night club, to a street market, and they show you that composition is primarily a simplification of the subject to be photographed.

A chapter on portraiture pithily takes the veil of mystery off that subject. The chapter on candid photography reveals a dark secret to the amateur that candid shots are normally not so candidly made, that a really good candid shot requires more than a miniature camera and fast pan film. The simple instructions for enlarging, plain and fancy, are excellent. A few developing formulas are given—sufficient for anyone. Among the many other subjects about which the authors write is a chapter devoted to your vacation and what to do about it. An illustrated treatise on selling pictures closes the book.

If you are tired of getting uninteresting pictures of Aunt Susan, better yet, if you are tired of shooting Aunt Susan, put your three-fifty on "The Fun of Photography" and come home a winner.

The Essays of an English Liberal

PERSONS AND PERIODS. By G. D. H. Cole. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1938. \$3.75.

Reviewed by CRANE BRINTON

DIMINISHING returns must have begun conspicuously in the choice of titles for collected papers when a man as ingenious as Mr. G. D. H. Cole—in collaboration with his wife he is the author of several first-rate detective stories—has to content himself with a title like "Persons and Periods" when he is getting together some odds and ends for publication. Perhaps shortly some clever person will give up, and publish a book unblushingly and accurately called "Collected Papers." Mr. Cole is in this volume mainly concerned with economic and social history and theory in England from Defoe to the Webbs. Defoe, Cobbett, Robert Owen, Rousseau, Marx, William Morris, Henry Ford, and the Webbs are his "Persons," and they occupy about two-thirds of his book. Essays on towns in eighteenth century England, on London's place in English economy for the last two centuries, on land and water transportation in eighteenth century England, and on legislation against radical activities in England just after the French revolution, are his "Periods." The papers here reprinted are, then, broadly in the fields of social and economic history and what—though there is no good term for it in English—may be called intellectual history.

In the first field he has in this volume little new to say. He writes, as he almost always does, clearly and persuasively, and in his account of the repressive legislation of 1794-1819 he marshals information nowhere else so neatly available. But the essays in this field are all purely expository and informative, at the level of a good encyclopedia or a text-book, and in this form and context are merely scrappy.

Mostly, however, Mr. Cole is concerned with what the French call *politiques et moralistes*, and here his work was well worth collecting in this form. Mr. Cole is fair in his analysis of the ideas of the men he is studying, and suggestive in his own appearances as a critic. William Cobbett, an old love of Mr. Cole's, is the most striking person in this gallery. Anyone who here happens to encounter Cobbett for the first time will want to get hold of "Rural Rides" or "Advice to Young Men" at once—surely one of the permanent tests of successful critical writing. Oddly enough, with Defoe Mr. Cole seems rather insistently the advocate, if not the whitewasher, which he is not elsewhere in this volume. Rousseau and Marx he treats rather as theorists of the General Will and the Economic Interpretation of History than as human beings. Here he

would seem to have made a good reconnaissance map of ideas so complex and abstract as to offer to the layman a real wilderness. William Morris and Henry Ford he confronts on the issue of the monotony of human labor and its social effects, and concludes that in spite of the Englishman's apparent failure and the American's apparent success, Morris was right. Mr. Ford must learn that "to make men, and not cars, is the supreme task of leadership."

This last will serve to point up what those already familiar with Mr. Cole's professional writings need not be reminded of. He is among the most distinguished of contemporary English "socialists," "Laborites," "Leftists," or, as we strangely say in this country, "liberals." His few pious pages on the Webbs are a work of discipleship. Yet for all his rash hopes in "planning," for all his reluctance to admit the existence of certain inertias in men and society, Mr. Cole contrives to display good-temper, good sense, and good humor, and seems little affected by that moral dyspepsia not uncommon among American liberals. These essays ought to be quite readable even to the most irate and despairing conservative.

Silver in the Golden Age

THE SILVER MAGNET. By Grant Shepherd. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1938. \$3.

Reviewed by GRACE FLANDRAU

IT doesn't seem to me that this interesting and humorous reminiscence is the kind of thing about which one writes book reviews. It may be that I have too solemn an attitude toward book reviews, having had to take a good many myself and without anesthetics. At any rate, they seem too definitely literary to be applied to "Silver Magnet." Emphatically, it is not literary, it is too directly, honestly, vehemently, and often ingenuously, a personal record. It is surprising, too, that it should have just come from the press, as it so clearly belongs, in temper and quality of experience, to a much earlier period; and surprising also, because of the verve and gayety with which it is all set down, that it should have been written not by a young man but by one who reminds us frequently, with much humor and considerable regret, that he is very far indeed from being young. But perhaps when one's youth has been so adventurously and congenially experienced, time is powerless against it.



"The long mule trains . . . carried each month their hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of silver bullion . . ."

Oddly too, this vigorous and very living document is concerned chiefly with a way of life, indeed, with a world, which has ceased to exist. The pre-revolutionary Mexico, the old patriarchal period, a period which still seems to Mr. Shepherd to have been the Golden Age, when, with old Don Porfirio's torn hand on the helm, the country was so pacified and subdued that the long mule trains from the Batopilas mines carried each month their hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of silver bullion many days' journey with no thought of molestation.

Of these fantastic journeys, of all the minutiae of travel in a region that was without mechanical transportation of any kind, of the mining of silver, of life and work, of hunting, drinking, dancing, cockfighting in the remote Batopilas valley in Chihuahua where he spent most of his youth and early manhood, Mr. Shepherd writes well and in great detail.

And with an enthusiasm that becomes at times quite unmanageable. If any of the above subjects interest you, you will not want to miss so authentic and entertaining an account of them as you will find in "The Silver Magnet."

Aeschylus to Menander

THE COMPLETE GREEK DRAMA. All the Extant Tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, and the Comedies of Aristophanes and Menander, in a variety of translations. Edited by Whitney J. Oates and Eugene O'Neill, Jr. New York: Random House. 1938. \$5.

Reviewed by EDITH HAMILTON

"RANDOM HOUSE considers this one of the most important publications it has ever attempted." So the announcement reads which accompanies the two handsome volumes where one may find the whole drama of ancient Greece. Random House has reason to be proud of its achievement. The book is well made in every way: binding, printing, style. It stays easily open at any page, a boon to students of volumes like these, too big to be held with comfort. Such an undertaking, involving so much expense on one side, and so much effort on the other, is a

pleasant thing to reflect upon among the whirl of best sellers. Congratulations are due to Random House and Mr. Oates and Mr. O'Neill.

To this reviewer, however, it is a black mark against the book that the beautiful and distinguished translation of the "Alcestis" by Fitts and Fitzgerald should have been passed over in favor of Richard Aldington's, which has neither beauty nor distinction. Any passage would serve as an example. Where Fitts and Fitzgerald write:

Prince of light,
Have you cause to quarrel with me in
this house again?
Will you corrupt again those rights
That only Hell should use?

Mr. Aldington says:

Ha! Phoebus! You! Before this Palace!
Lawlessly would you abolish the rights
of the lower Gods!

This is a fair sample of the difference between the two versions. Power of poetry is in the one; and only the commonplace—and sometimes worse—in the other.

It is greatly to be regretted, too, that no more than three of Gilbert Murray's translations should have been chosen. Professor Murray's "Seven against Thebes" is one of his best, and superior in every way to Morshead's, which the compilers have preferred. His "Electra," as well, is far above that of Coleridge, selected for this book. Here, too, almost any passage can be cited in proof:

Coleridge: (Electra is speaking)

I am wedded, sir; a fatal match.
Poor is he, but displays a generous
consideration for me.
He has never presumed to claim from
me a husband's right.

Murray:

Stranger, I am a wife—
Oh, better dead.
A poor man, but true-hearted and to
me
Generous.
He hath never held my body to his own.

It is true that all Euripides says in the last line is, "He has never dared to touch my bed," but, if one is to depart from the literal, let it be in Professor Murray's way and not in Coleridge's.

Henry James once said that there were things more important than good taste. Today we hardly need the admonition. Good taste is no longer enthroned. But, whether now or yesterday or tomorrow, it is for the compilers of a volume of poetry, the thing above all others important, the absolute essential.

Edith Hamilton is the author of "The Greek Way," "The Roman Way," and "The Prophets of Israel."