

field, Lascelles Abercrombie, or only faintly heard-of, such as Edwin Arlington Robinson and William Butler Yeats.

She lived an interesting, creative, sometimes tempestuous, much-traveled, seventy-six years of life on very little money, and died the death any poet might envy: on an excursion to the Inca ruins at Cuzco in Peru, she insisted, at her age, that she was capable of the ascent on foot. The altitude and exertion hit her heart. Born in Chicago, inspirer of genius, perhaps a genius herself, valiant sponsor and fighter for the poetic principle in life, she died in the high Andes.

Unfortunately her autobiography is, I fear, only a "source book." Perhaps it was begun too late. The narrative is without verve or color; she had met nearly everybody in the world of arts and letters, but she had forgotten what they were like. Occasionally she used a happy descriptive phrase, like "the somewhat battered physical beauty of George Sterling," but, in the main, the book is static and tedious. It will be consulted rather than read—for items of information such as, for example, that Joyce Kilmer got six dollars for "Trees" from Miss Monroe, that being the price he set on it. Kilmer was a poet who prided himself on having a hard business head.

Moments of Life

A PURSE OF COPPERS. By Sean O'Faolain. New York: The Viking Press. 1938. \$2.50.

Reviewed by KATHARINE SIMONDS

THIS new book of Mr. O'Faolain's is a collection of "moments of life" rather than of short stories. The Ireland from which they are drawn is neither that of the traditional jolly rogue with the ready tongue, nor that of the traditional soft-voiced book; it is that slatternly, decaying, infuriating, and yet charming Ireland of which Buck Mulligan, in "Ulysses," speaks so bitterly. The people are the wrecks of a "broken world." They have talents which elsewhere would guarantee them respect and self-respect; here they are shadows.

Even men of genius cannot escape the gentle corruption; they too are caught as in an invisible spider web, enmeshed in the inertia of the provincial, which is the regional without hope. They seek one another out, these bored souls, and "feed on one another without pleasure, like leeches."

Though the characters are carefully and deftly drawn, it is this broken world itself which principally emerges from the book. Only Pat Lenihan, the born genius "whose life like all the others, came to nothing," is likely to be remembered as a person. For the rest, it is the mood that persists, compounded of the smells of stale beer and peat smoke, the look of the Georgian mansions subtly turned slum, and, above all, the luxurious misery of an unrebelling self-pity.

Duhamel's Family Chronicle

THE PASQUIER CHRONICLES. By Georges Duhamel. New York: Henry Holt & Co. 1938. \$3.50.

Reviewed by THEODORE PURDY, JR.

EVER since the war, Georges Duhamel has been steadily turning out a volume of work respectable both in quantity and quality, and including all the usual forms: fiction, drama, essays, criticism, what the French call *reportages*, and even a poem or two. He has never known sensational success, nor attracted much attention outside France save for a brief moment in 1931 when he wrote a few harsh words about America which offended the more sensitive local patriots. But his career has been a triumph of literary diplomacy, for he has succeeded in keeping in the good graces of the liberal critics of such groups as the *Nouvelle Revue Française* without offending their more conservative colleagues. As a reward, he was elected to the Academy in 1935, and welcomed under the celebrated cupola by M. Henry Bordeaux in unusually flattering terms. Even if his work never quite sets the Seine on fire, it is safe to say that his is a first-rate reputation in France today.

"The Pasquier Chronicles" contains a new English translation in one volume of all five parts of Duhamel's best known work of fiction. Strictly speaking, only a third of the book is new in English, the rest having been published in another translation some years ago. At that time this delightfully penetrating study of family life received scant notice in America, probably because, though superlatively French, it lacks the exotic atmosphere still demanded by many American readers from foreign books. The two main themes are universal: money troubles in our everyday life, and the philanderings of a debonair, incorrigible *père de famille*—M. Duhamel's best character creation, incidentally. There is nothing in this likely to shock us at this late date,

though it is apparent that men manage these things better in France than here, where Mme. Pasquier would have been in Reno before the end of the first volume. And there are many other themes of interest in the story—Joseph's business activities, Cécile's unusually believable musical gift, the effect of recurrent family crises on young Laurent. No one who reads through the book will be likely to deny that they are well studied.

Unfortunately, the two new portions of the story do not contribute anything calculated to rally readers to M. Duhamel's book. A moderately effective picture of Joseph grown rich and entertaining his family at a new château occupies most of "La Nuit de la St. Jean," with a few romantic complications added for good measure. The final section is devoted to Laurent's attempt, with his friend Justin Weill, to set up a minor Utopia of the arts in a Paris suburb. This material is not of great interest to American readers, and it is disappointing to find the Pasquiers in the background throughout. There are signs that the author has not yet finished his saga, however, and no doubt these episodes will eventually fall into place.

The entire cycle constitutes an excellent picture of French middle-class life and character, but it is not full of obvious glamor, nor in any way strange to us. Its very Frenchness is at once its strength and, from our standpoint, its weakness. Those who expect pepper from Gallic pens will of course be disappointed in a book mostly given up to sober descriptions of a perfectly nice housewife worrying about family finances and the escapades of her husband. But for those who are inclined to wonder about the home life of people glimpsed in the charging omnibuses or leisurely Métro trains of Paris, M. Duhamel should be required reading. The flavor of his work may not appeal to the American palate at once, but like that of chicory in coffee, it is apt to grow on one.



FROM THE JACKET DESIGN OF "THE PASQUIER CHRONICLES"

Home of Lost Causes

A MIRROR TO GENEVA. By George Slocombe. New York: Henry Holt & Company. 1938. \$3.

Reviewed by
PRINCE HUBERTUS LOEWENSTEIN

THIS new book by the author of "The Tumult and the Shouting" will be of considerable interest to American readers who want to know how that American child, the League of Nations, developed after having been deserted by its legitimate parent.

Mr. Slocombe has known all the greater and lesser figures of post-war politics, and in his book re-enacts the great drama of the last twenty years, the end of which is not yet written.

After the death of millions and the international anarchy of the World War, it seemed for a time that humanity had finally realized the necessity of a new unity for which the best in all nations had longed. As far back as 1795, the greatest German philosopher, Immanuel Kant, had outlined a world republic of constitutionally governed states to insure peace and justice for all. He had emphasized that, as long as irresponsible rulers were in power, the danger of war would always exist, and that respect for the constitution and administration of other states was a premise to sound national and international life.

Nevertheless, a "prophet"—as Mr. Slocombe calls Woodrow Wilson—from across the seas was needed to bring back to the Old World, where it had once originated, the gospel of universal brotherhood. In spite of the deep respect which Mr. Slocombe pays to the founder of the League, he spares no words to deplore Mr. Wilson's surrender to the demands of France by which the ex-enemy powers were to be excluded from the privileges of the new faith. Where a new order of universality was to be created, the Covenant became an integral part of the treaty of Versailles which Germany had to accept at pistol's point.

How the League, in spite of its early disloyalty to its principles, rose to be the instrument of world conscience, is the most valuable theme developed in Mr. Slocombe's book. Once again the great figures of the new order, Sir Austen Chamberlain, Aristide Briand, and Dr. Gustav Stresemann are conjured up—that unique triumvirate of which the partners had been separated by origin and political upbringing until they joined hands for a common goal. Under their leadership, Poincaré's Ruhr invasion—worse than a crime, a blunder—was liquidated, and when Germany in 1926 finally

joined the League, a new Europe seemed at hand. Stresemann's conception of a new era, laid down in the Locarno treaty, where international arbitration was to replace guns and poison gas, would have been impossible without the League.

One does well remember that all essential parts of the Versailles treaty had been abolished in Geneva, that ante-chamber to the United States of Europe, before the world again had recourse to the policy of blackmail and armament race.

Mr. Slocombe is well acquainted with the atmosphere in the Geneva couloirs and conference rooms. Herriot and the late Ramsay MacDonald, who after the Ruhr adventure had been the Castor and Pollux of the new sky dawning over Europe, are not less familiar to him than President Benes, "the Statesman of Europe," or General Smuts of South Africa, the eternal optimist, still optimistic years later, when the National Socialists had scrapped much of the work of Geneva.

I liked also Slocombe's description of Litvinoff, who in 1927 proposed the abolition of all armies, navies, and air forces. And of Laval, the man whose knowledge of Abyssinia was no compliment to the geography taught in French schools. Or was it not only his geography? I remember the Abyssinian delegate who stayed with me at the Hotel de Russie in Geneva and who would, if it had been possible, have grown paler as each day passed that he could not reach the French delegation over the telephone—their line being too busy with calls from Mussolini.

We do not know yet whether Mr. Slocombe's "Mirror to Geneva" is the final reflection of an irreparable failure and the interlude between two wars. At the very moment, Mr. Slocombe says, when the League had moved into its new palace and the Council took seats under the heroic compositions of the great Spanish muralist Sert, showing the liberation of mankind from tyranny, intolerance, and injustice, General Franco was beginning his long assault against the Republicans of Madrid and the legions of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy were being landed in the ports of Spain.

Centuries seem to have elapsed between the period covered in the earlier chapters of the book and our own day, when the

name of Stresemann, the liberator of Germany from foreign troops, is defamed in his native country.

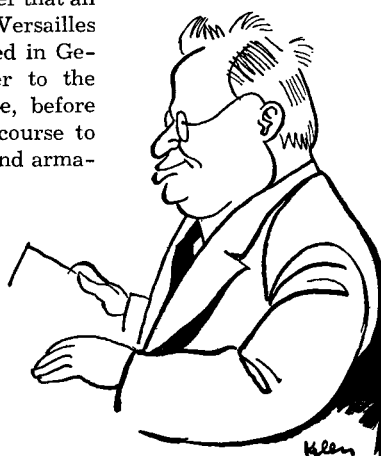
Yet, says Mr. Slocombe, and I agree with him, though the heroic days of the League have passed, there is still some hope. The peoples are represented there, a vast and invisible audience. The very fact that the air of Geneva enables four to five hundred journalists from all coun-

tries to exchange their views, makes Geneva still a factor of world importance. Their voice affords a comparative protection to the small nations, and the day may yet dawn when it is felt again that the security of the world is proportional to the security the world gives to the smallest among its countries.

Geneva, like Oxford, Mr. Slocombe thinks, has become the home of lost causes.

But can a cause be entirely lost which is founded on the idea of organized humanity, the only conceivable basis of a future to follow after the present nightmare of general lawlessness has been overcome?

Prince Hubertus zu Loewenstein, a prominent German exile now in this country, has just published his autobiography under the title, "Conquest of the Past" (reviewed on page 7).



LITVINOFF



BRIAND

Spring at College

By HELENE MAGARET

OH merrily the redbirds sing,
And merry is the lark!
Put on your Sunday suit and bring
Your Phyllis to the park.

For everywhere the lovers now
Are sprouting with the grass,
And lazy catkins on the bough
Lean down to watch them pass.

Goodbye, my friend! May one romance
And spring do you no harm,
With all the young ones out to dance
And Phyllis on your arm.

But as for me . . . I do not care.
I'll take my book and say
Five conjugations, lest I hear
The music down the way.

If anyone should ask you why,
The seventh time this week
Be friend enough to tell a lie
And say, "He's learning Greek."

But if you see her, take her hands
And move some paces off,
And whisper, "No one understands
How sick he is with love."