

ment of spirit and endurance that characterize those tales we know so well of American pioneering.

Which brings us to a consideration of one of the book's most interesting phases. To the reader who has learned of Jews from literature, these Jews clearing the Emek will seem strange and different. For the novels of past centuries have treated solely, and naturally so, of the Jew dispossessed of his land, of history's orphan, the nervous and fearful wanderer. He has been a familiar character indeed, intellectually introvert, psychically and psychologically marred, quick-talking and -moving, uneasy, complex. He has been so in books by Asch himself, and by most others from Eugene Sue to Ben Hecht. But not so here. What is the difference? To find a parallel for these calm, strong-minded, full-spirited Jewish pioneers we will have to go back to the chronicles of the Bible, telling of the first days, when Jews tilled their own land and were a whole people. The pages of "Song of the Valley" ring with shouts of that old joy, as they dredge the swamp and hew the wood, and with the pounding of feet as they dance with linked arms and sing of Israel, not the lament but the pæan. The parable is clear and needs no further elaboration. It may be that Palestine is yet to be the seat of a further despair; but such a book as this one of Asch's tells us eloquently why it has been a dream so patiently clung to, and how it may be in fact the simplest healing for an old sickness. I do not think it can be doubted that "Song of the Valley" will stand very high among Asch's works, a pure, lyric song as perfect in its way as the symphonic "Three Cities."

Magazines under Goebbels

(Continued from page 4)

of a month, translations of five English works are mentioned, three volumes from various Scandinavian tongues, one from Hungarian, as against a single work from French—one of Vercel's—and none at all from Spanish or Italian.

At this point an anomaly appears. One would expect to find literary criticism in pretty bad shape, weak and spineless after being deprived of many of the touchstones which are commonly applied to works of the intellect, and violently divorced from a considerable portion of the world's cultural heritage. The actual result has been to sharpen the edge of criticism, for the moment at least. Deprived of all other weapons, the German critics have been using those of pure esthetics with a freedom and vigor quite foreign to any preconception.

"No, this will never do," says a typical review roundly of a new novel by an author high in the approval of the great propaganda ministry—a book which might be really valuable to that ministry. "Certainly there ought to be a fine book on the naval side of the war. Just as

surely this is not it. The book is disorderly, rhapsodic, and not even well informed." Now these are pretty hard words to use about one of the pet poodles of the regime in power, but apparently the censorship passed them through all right, and there has been no word of any comeback, since the criticism was made on purely esthetic grounds.

The same quickened and in a sense purified esthetic interest is observable in the art magazines. Never have they been so numerous, so popular; never has even Germany, the land of good reproduction, filled them with better prints, or better art criticism. Such art magazines as *Deutsche Kunst*, the *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Vereine für Kunstwissenschaft*, and the quarterly (in spite of its name) *Münchener Jahrbuch der Bildenden Kunst* would be a credit to any country; they have all been founded since the coming of the Hitler regime. The same period has marked the extension from the quarterly into the monthly field of *Kunst-Rundschau* and increases in number of pages and in the excellence and number of color prints in the older art magazines such as *Form und Farbe*, *Belvedere*, and *Graphische Kunst*, not to mention the great development of *Gebrauchsgraphik* into a magazine of advertising art with international status. It is quite possible that in the case of the graphic arts this flareup in the periodicals reflects a genuine and permanent movement. There seems little reason why it should not, since the graphic arts, essentially non-political, do not have to bear the same burdens as writing. On the literary side, however, the matter is a little more dubious in spite of the present general excellences.

German periodical literature has a good deal to say on the esthetic side at the present moment, but we have always been told that a literature which is not free to express the individual's reaction to his economic and political surroundings, as well as that to other individuals, inevitably runs out into preciosity. Certainly the disease appears already to have attacked the technical press. Those fine monthly reviews from Vienna which had so much to contribute in the fields of biology, psychology, anthropology, and medicine, have either disappeared, or appear indeed, but filled with reprints from foreign periodicals or absurdly explosive denunciations of inferior races. Or they carry hair-raising articles like that in *Archiv der Gesellschaft für Rassenbiologie*, justifying the bombing of civilians on medical grounds, since it bears most hardly on the weaklings who least deserve to survive. Perhaps the answer is that art makes a willing prostitute, while science can be bought to no service but that of truth.

Fletcher Pratt is the author of "Hail, Caesar" and "Ordeal by Fire," and co-author of "The Lost Battalion." His latest book is "Secret and Urgent," a study of codes and ciphers.

Musical Life in America

AN AMERICAN MUSICIAN'S STORY.

By Olga Samaroff Stokowski. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1939. \$3.

Reviewed by IRVING KOLODIN

AS the previously published volumes by Geraldine Farrar, David Mannes, and Daniel Gregory Mason testify, this is an open season for reminiscences by American musicians. The right of this author to inclusion in such a circle is secure on both counts, for she was a Samaroff before she was a Stokowski and a Hickenlooper before she was either, an admired pianist before she became a pedagogue. Not the least entertaining section in the book is that which describes the transition from Hickenlooper (first name not specified) to Samaroff, at the insistence of the manager, Henry Wolfsohn, before her debut concert in New York, thirty-five years ago.

Those who might regard this as a source-book on the volatile and unpredictable conductor whose name Mme. Stokowski still bears (though a divorce and another Mrs. Stokowski have intervened) will not be gratified, for their relationship is recounted almost casually. Mme. Stokowski is concerned with other and more important business. Her book has a theme—the change that has come upon American musical life since her early days as a student in Texas. More particularly, the improvement in educational opportunities which no longer makes imperative the "finishing" in Europe which was customary in her day.

A good deal of this is signified, in her statement of the case, by the emergence of such institutions as the Juilliard Foundation and the Curtis Institute. However, when Mme. Stokowski cites the first piano faculty of the Juilliard—Ernest Hutcheson, Alexander Siloti, Josef and Rosina Lhevinne, Carl Friedberg, and James Friskin—she does not point out that she is the only American in this group, and that the students have merely lost a boatride, for each member of the group, in another day, would have been found in Berlin, Baden-Baden, St. Petersburg, or London.

Since Mme. Stokowski has been, at various times in her career, student, concert pianist, music critic, pedagogue, and music educator, the experiences she has to recount are no less varied than they are numerous. However, there is a curious mingling of sophistication and naïvete in her reactions, as when she says (apropos of advertising on the radio): "Many of those who criticize or ridicule the custom would soon forget their objections if they could earn the fees that are paid to performers in the American commercial hours on the radio"—as if that reduced the validity of such objections! The writing is sufficient to the purpose, though no great inducement to the reader.



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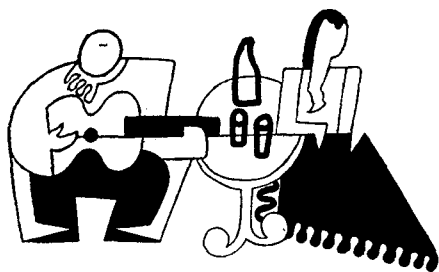
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Binyon's Dante

DANTE'S PURGATORIO. With a Trans-
lation by Laurence Binyon. New York:
The Macmillan Co. 1938. \$2.50.

Reviewed by LEONARD BACON

IT has been pointed out before that Mr. Binyon is a scholar, a gentleman, and a poet in the highest and best sense of all three of those much misused words. For various reasons which will easily occur to the most casual reader, the "Purgatorio" presents many problems to the translator which he hardly encounters at all in the "Inferno." It is hard enough to render the close-wrought logic of St. Thomas in prose. It is the very devil to do it in acceptable verse. And one might say it was wholly impossible to achieve poetry in the connection, if Mr. Binyon's performance were not there to give such a statement the lie. No verse translation is closer to the meaning, the spirit, and the form of its great original than this version. The reviewer knows what this compliment means and utters it with complete conviction.

The book is really noble. Again and again Mr. Binyon reaches magnificent English verse, poetry in its own right, and for long and beautifully sustained passages. The dignity and splendor of what is certainly a difficult poem stand out. You cannot miss them. Love's labor has not been lost. It is fun to praise such a book.

It is not such fun to carp, but some little must be ventured in that way. I am very much mistaken if in the whole "Divine Comedy" there is one such scrofulous rhyme as Mr. Binyon permits himself to perpetrate on every other page. I know there is not in all Dante one line of the limping scazon breed, such as Mr. Binyon, following the error of the moderns who see a grace in the blunder of Donne, has introduced again and again. Ben Jonson, it will be remembered, said that "Donne for not keeping of accent, deserved hanging." And Mr. Binyon, apparently seduced by Mr. Pound, has gone the limit to deserve it.

A succession of tercets like the following would make Dante fall as he fell after the vision of the lovers of Rimini.

The planet that promoteth love was
there,
Making all the East to laugh and be
joyful,
And veiled the Fishes that escorted her.
I turned to the right and contemplated
all
The other pole; and four stars o'er me
came,
Never yet seen save by the first people.

One must have a subtle ear to be satisfied when the final syllables of "people" and "joyful" are expected to chime with each other and with "all." Mr. Binyon ought not to do it. My curse on Mr. Pound and the inventions he has found out.

This is Mr. Binyon at his theoretic worst, and it is unfortunate that the passage is on his first page. The places where he has covered himself with glory outweigh all his concessions to the spirit of perversion. Anyone who rises to the height required in Canto XXX when

Beatrice drops her veil, may be permitted a few idiosyncrasies. The rendering of the whole speech from "Guardaci ben! Ben son, ben son Beatrice," and the divine simile of the snows in the Apennines which follows it, seem to me the summit of what translation can do. All caviling aside, this version of the "Purgatorio" is the work of a poet not unworthy to know greatness.

A Century on the North Atlantic

RIVALRY ON THE ATLANTIC, 1839-
1939. By Commander W. Mack Angas
(CEC) U. S. N. New York: Lee Fur-
man. 1939. \$3.50.

Reviewed by ROBERT G. ALBION

THIS book is essentially a story of the perfection of the marine engine on the North Atlantic shuttle, and therein lies its unique contribution. If it were simply another story of the development of the Atlantic liner, there would be no real need for it. Maginnis and Fry both wrote good accounts forty-odd years ago; Lee, Bowen, and Babcock brought the story up to date with readable volumes early in this decade. Machinery was the one thing that made the steamships distinctive: the other essential features of the transatlantic run, such as line organization, fixed sailing dates, and competition for the first class passenger trade with speed, size, and luxury, had all been introduced by the New York sailing packets before the *Sirius* and *Great Western* made their famous crossings in 1838.

Commander Angas, who belongs to the Civil Engineering Corps of the Navy, knows his marine engines well. Between his simple, clear-cut descriptions and his illustrations, even the unmechanical layman gets a pretty clear idea of how things worked, all the way from the side-lever engines of the early wooden paddle-wheelers to the powerful turbines of the *Queen Mary* and the *Normandie*. The treatment of the story is not uniform. The earlier portion follows the familiar, conventional accounts fairly closely, and better ship pictures could have been found for illustrations. With the giant *Great Eastern*, a half century ahead of her time in size, the author hits his stride, devoting more than a fifth of his book to the huge ship which was a marvel in engineering even though a complete failure financially. The wrecks of the *Collins Arctic* and the *White Star Atlantic* are described in detail. The book definitely improves in quality in the later period; the engravings, too, are better than those in the earlier part.

Three features open to criticism may not be primarily the fault of the author. Only in their more generous moods will publishers consent to much of a bibliography; here there is none at all. More unpardonable is the absence of an index. The period of "1839-1939" in the title seems an unfortunate effort to bring the book up to the minute; the year 1838 marked the clean-cut beginning of the story, whereas the following year had no particular significance.