



The Pulitzer Prizes

IN the opinion of *The Saturday Review*, this year's Pulitzer awards have on the whole gone to distinguished books. There will be few to quarrel with the choice for fiction. "The Yearling" has many first-rate qualities: an insight into the mind and emotions of a boy which must be unique among novels written by women; a nostalgic charm which comes off the book like mist from the Everglades; a feeling for nature and animals that is not infected by sentimentality; a moving narrative motivated humanly and not melodramatically. Mrs. Rawlings

writes within the limitations of her own observation and background; "The Yearling" is a minor masterpiece, its author not yet a major novelist. But of the major American novelists thus far neglected by the Pulitzer judges (notably Ellen Glasgow, Ernest Hemingway, John Dos Passos, John Steinbeck), only Dos Passos had a novel published in 1938, and that was "U. S. A.," the one-volume edition of three novels which had appeared separately in previous years. Some critics would have preferred to see the award go to "All This, and Heaven Too," by Rachel Field, but this is a preference by taste rather than by values. Elizabeth Madox Roberts's candidate, "Black Is My Truelove's Hair," is not another "Time of Man," and James T. Farrell marked time in "No Star Is Lost."

In biography the choice of Carl Van Doren's "Benjamin Franklin" is unexceptionable. It is only unfortunate that another excellent biography, Philip C. Jessup's "Elihu Root," should have been published the same year. Another unexceptionable choice is "Abe Lincoln in Illinois," by Robert E. Sherwood, for drama. "Abe Lincoln" is a distinguished and moving play. If it owes some of its power to its subject matter, it does treat a familiar subject with originality; if it is better in production than in book form, that is a tribute to Mr. Sherwood's skill in writing for the theater.

Allan Nevins, writing in *The Saturday Review*, called 1938 "another thin and

disappointing year in American historical writing, the second in succession." It is not surprising that the history award should have gone to a dark horse. But Mr. Mott's "History of American Magazines" is a dark horse of considerable girth and by no means without personality. An invaluable compendium of information for the literary as well as the historical student (now that scholarship is increasingly occupied not only with the literature of the past, but with what the public used to read), Mr. Mott's volumes offer to the general reader a colorful and informative browsing-ground. If "The History of American Magazines" is more interesting to dip into than to read consecutively, that is the limitation of its subject matter.

But if 1938 was not a good year for history, it was for poetry. John Gould Fletcher has undoubtedly deserved Pulitzer recognition for many of his achievements in the past. However, we have no choice but to revive the annual battle-cry of these columns, and protest once more that Robinson Jeffers has been neglected. The number of minor poets who have won Pulitzer Prizes in years when Jeffers had books in the field is a serious reflection on the standards of the poetry award. Archibald MacLeish also had two distinguished books out in 1938, but at least he has once been a Pulitzer prize-winner (for "Conquistador").

Nomination for next year: John Steinbeck's "The Grapes of Wrath."

The World of Tomorrow*

BY BABETTE DEUTSCH

NOW, preparing the Fair, they speak of tomorrow.
They cross striped trouser-legs, one lifts his chin
(The iron jaw under the velvet skin)
From a formal collar. The throat as a tower
Of ivory was Solomon's fine thought,
Who dealt in ivory, and in spices and hides,
Gold, silver, pomegranates, and what besides
Could be shipped f.o.b., having been bought
Cheaply, to sell at what the traffic would bear.
They speak of tomorrow, building alabaster
Towers, but in the brief splendor of plaster,
Bold ramps jutting on the empty air.
O gaiety of blue and orange domes!
Miracles of speed and magnitude,
The eyeless windows, the synthetic wood,
The metal easy-chairs, the bright-glass homes!
Pennants ballooning, color everywhere,
The booths, the bands, swing-music, souvenirs,
The tricks of chemists and of engineers,
The crowds that taste and try and push and stare,
Grasping at tomorrow, which is not to be seen
Even with television or the electric eye,
Or spun from the smashed atom or announced by the lie-
Detector, or any yet more marvellous machine.

* (The Academy of American Poets is conducting a national poetry contest to select the official poem of the New York World's Fair, 1939. The subject of the poem is *The World of Tomorrow*. According to the rules of the contest, the poem must be consonant with the spirit of the New York World's Fair, 1939.)

Tomorrow will come, naturally, like death
(Old-fashioned death: we have refused to import
The clever Japanese or the noisy Italian sort).
Oh, it will come more quietly than a bud from its sheath.
It was prepared before and after the Flood,
In Egypt, and in Rome; some think Richelieu
Put a jewelled finger on it, and Metternich too
Would have played obstetrician if he could;
But tomorrow is not in the hands of a man or a nation,
Though it has been shaped by Moscow and Madrid,
And all that we left undone and all that we did,
The late sleep, the paid kiss, the hands in the golden basin.
This is not quite what they mean, these gentlemen
Planning the Fair, eager to promote trade,
Make friends, make money, make what can be made,
Mapping a new world with a streamlined pen.
They are deceived; we know it otherwise,
The familiar features that we cannot place
(O in what mirror have we met that face?)
We know this world, the craters of those eyes.
How shall we bear their look?

How shall we bear
The rowdy jazz, the laughs, the jolly fun,
Or the polite pose of deafness to which we run
From tomorrow's image and tonight's despair?

The impresario is unimpressed,
Delighting in his triangle and sphere,
Blocks of a nursery world he can build here
To cheer the mob who all hope for the best,
And think of the future as something on which to borrow,
Not as the glory for which the world was made.
Nor do we think of it so, who are ashamed and afraid
Now. Preparing the Fair, they speak of tomorrow.

Letters to the Editor: *Health Insurance in Europe and America*

"American Medicine Mobilizes"

SIR:—Dr. Mabel S. Ulrich thus questions . . . Mr. Rorty's "propaganda" when . . . Mr. Rorty 'proves' with quoted figures that thirty per cent of our indigent population do not receive adequate medical care, implying that this is because they can't purchase it, we have a right to know that no less a health authority than Dr. Haven Emerson has sharply challenged the careless methods employed by the investigators for the quoted survey. . . ."

It is almost a trite consideration on my part to remark that authorities in every branch of medical welfare have lauded the work of the President's Committee on Medical Care, to which Mr. Rorty referred (see quotations in the Committee's publication, "The Nation's Health," 1938). What is much more to the point is that, among other surveys, the very highly regarded Committee on the Costs of Medical Care, which conducted an outstanding piece of work, found equally significant results. After laborious, painstaking research they were able to report that "each year nearly *one-half* of the individuals in the lowest income group receive no professional medical or dental attention of *any kind*, curative or preventive." (Final Report of the Committee, 1932, page 9.) Does Dr. Ulrich seriously question the "implication" that the reason thirty per cent of our indigent population do not receive adequate medical care is because they can't purchase it? But even among families with low or moderate incomes "two to four per cent *each year* [of the families] will require medical treatment the cost of which will be beyond their means or which they will be able to pay only with difficulty." (See Publication Number 25, The Committee on the Costs of Medical Care, page 14.) The figures I am quoting were not gathered in the depths of any depression; they were taken in 1928-29!

Dr. Ulrich points to the fact that "even among those who have an income of three thousand dollars or more, only seventeen per cent seek a doctor when ill." But it is precisely such facts that argue for a compulsory system of health insurance. It is this very refusal of people to take upon themselves the responsibility for providing themselves with physicians that causes the community to suffer, and has forced the countries of Europe to institute a system that protects them against the ravages of disease that thrive on the carelessness and irresponsibility of the human race.

Dr. Ulrich, of course, raises the old battle-cry "bureaucracy." It is indeed amazing how people can resort to such a line of attack when we have before us the tested and tried example of workmen's compensation, which incidentally itself involves medical relationships. Unemployment insurance and old age pensions schemes can be expected to be perfected by the time and experience that operates on all social planning. The British Medical Association, forced for twenty-one



"You can't put it down. Every chapter ends in the middle of a sentence."

years to endure the "bureaucracy" of a national scheme of health insurance, not only brought in a laudatory report of the system, but actually asked for its further expansion. (See both the Report of the British Medical Association to the Royal Commission on Health Insurance, page 34, and The British Medical Association's Proposals for a General Medical Service for the Nation, 1933, page 31.) Every scheme ever introduced in this country for a system of health insurance (Model Bill of the American Association for Social Security and Senator Capper's bill especially) bends over backward in allowing the physician complete freedom in the discharge of his medical services. That such freedom can be afforded is adequately demonstrated both in the operation of doctors under our workmen's compensation laws and in foreign states. (See *Health Insurance with Medical Care*, Orr and Orr, 1938.)

AUSTIN D. GOLDMAN.

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Sockalexis

SIR:—Of course Brother Benét is kidding. He knows *Sockalexis* was an Indian ball player of the nineties whose career was allegedly shortened by addiction to beverages stronger than malted milk.

WILLIAM O. TRAPP.

New York City.

"Discovering Long Island"

SIR:—There is an implication in the review of William Oliver Stevens's "Discovering Long Island," which appeared in your April 22nd issue, that this book was planned to take advantage of the general publicity about the World's Fair. While it is hoped that many visitors to the Fair may become aware of the charms of Long Island through reading this book, it was not planned as a guide book for such readers only. To the contrary, it belongs to a group of books which Dr. Stevens has been writing and which in-

cludes to date volumes on Nantucket, Annapolis, and Williamsburg. The chapter on the World's Fair was included because no discussion of Long Island at the present moment can overlook that phenomenon. This chapter was placed at the end of the book, however, where it may be easily dropped, if and when the Fair ceases to be of interest.

RAYMOND T. BOND.
Dodd, Mead & Co.

New York City.

"Ordeal"

SIR:—An everyday housewife and mother with, I suppose, an average mind insists upon stating it is her earnest belief everyone should not only read "Ordeal" by Nevil Shute but digest it as well. The author, with his vivid and true pen, escorts people like her behind and beyond the sensationally exciting headlines of today's newspapers; he puts thoughts they ordinarily wouldn't possess into their heads; and he leads them serenely, without alarm, to the practicality they surely must be armored with in the near future.

"Ordeal" is a great, constructive illumination.

LILLIAN FOGLER BARRINGTON.
Great Neck, N. Y.

Finley Peter Dunne

SIR:—I am making a study of Finley Peter Dunne and the influence of his writings upon contemporary politics and political journalism. I would appreciate hearing from persons having biographical material concerning Dunne, as well as from his former associates who have useful memories. Of course I am especially interested in letters, but clippings and even references to published items that I may have overlooked would be welcome.

ELMER ELLIS.

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