

## Hell on Earth

*MY NAME IS MILLION. Anonymous.*  
New York: The Macmillan Co. 1940.  
268 pp. \$2.50.

Reviewed by FAY GILLIS WELLS

FOR the illumination of those of us who live in "Paradise," all questions pertaining to Hell on Earth are answered in "My Name is Million," which vividly and indelibly reveals the every day routine-of-living under modern catastrophic war conditions.

It is not the objective, factual writing of a newspaperman conscious that he is in the midst of Polish history. It is written solely from the personal, emotional viewpoint of innocent victims of aggression. "Bombed and shelled and machine-gunned out of their homes by the Western barbarians, they had dragged themselves hundreds and hundreds of miles, enduring every kind of progressive wretchedness and horror, only to fall into the hands of the barbarians from the East . . ."

When the Germans blitzkrieged Poland in September, 1939, the author, an anonymous Englishwoman obviously trained in the use of words, was living in Warsaw with her husband, a Polish officer. The author, whom I shall call "Million" for lack of a better name, claims that her haunting story of those last horrific days of Poland is no different from millions of other stories that could be told, hence the title of her timely and significant book.

On their flight from Warsaw, Million and her husband, whom she refers to as A., were run down by a lorry filled with high explosives which had swerved to avoid being hit by a bomb. Million was hit in the head by five shrapnel splinters from the bomb, driven six hours in the explosive-filled lorry to a hospital where a dresser operated on her wounds with a razor blade and a blunt pair of scissors, disinfected them with a bottle of iodine, and closed the holes with five steel stitches. Then they were shunted back and forth from one section of Poland to another, not knowing where they were going, bombed and machine-gunned so often they became bored, burned and parched by the sun in the daytime and frozen by the penetrating cold at night.

They became inured to filth, obscenities, and misery. There were moments when they envied those who were allowed to die." A wholesale massacre would have been merciful. But nobody then took the trouble to massacre them, and, "as they were alive, they had to act." As Million so pertinently points out, the oppressed have been deprived

of every kind of human right "except the right to suffer, which no tyrant up to now has ever tried to take away."

But in all those months of hopeless, terror-filled wandering, it wasn't the struggle for existence they minded as much as it was Time. Time that turned the minutes into hours and the hours into Eternity—"Yesterday seemed like a hundred years ago"—so that one lost all track of Time except the unavoidable minute of the present. "Getting through Time was like trying to



swim the Dead Sea. We did the most incredible, fantastic things."

"My Name is Million" is written in two parts. The first deals with the fall of Warsaw and the escape of Million and A through the surges of lost humanity to safety at K., the Great House in Polesie. But fate had just begun to play with them. Six days after they arrived at K. the Russians started their drive westward to free the Polish peasants from such tyrants as the Mistress of K., who had rebuilt the Great House after the Bo'shevik invasion of 1920, and whom they didn't bother to kill because they didn't feel she was worth a bullet. This second part of the book is particularly dramatic reading, perhaps because it is so simply presented.

Million doesn't know why she still lives, unless she was meant to tell the story of the refugees of Poland, which is also the story of the victims of ruthless aggression all over the world today. And for the benefit of the smug who still believe "it can't happen here," Million, by the simple expedient of telling her compelling story proves that "Anything, I have found, can happen to anybody."

"My Name is Million" is absorbing required reading for everyone. It is not pleasant reading, but neither is the world pleasant today.

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## The Iron Voice

*SUMNER TODAY: Selected Essays by William Graham Sumner, edited by Maurice R. Davie. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1940. 194 pp., with index. \$2.50.*

Reviewed by PALMER HARMAN

WILLIAM GRAHAM SUMNER was born with no ifs, ands, or buts in his mouth and he never acquired any. Planting himself squarely upon the "laws" which gave certainty to his universe, he translated into social theory a harsh Darwinism which, lifted out of its biological setting, was already held in suspicion by less dogmatic thinkers. The sixteen essays, addresses, and fragments included in this collection, issued to commemorate Sumner's centenary, set forth the main features of his philosophy (excluding the formal sociology) in its magnificent assertiveness. There is irony in reading, after more than thirty years, these pronouncements of a man who was sure he was right. No more audacious politico-literary plagiarism was ever committed than that by which the New Deal prostituted the meaning of "The Forgotten Man," the first essay in this book.

Yet while it is easy to smile at Sumner's dogma, nobody can smile at Sumner. His stature was greater than his systematic thought. He is still significant, in spite of his belief that monopoly should not be attacked, that protective labor laws were an evil, and that the natural way to dispose of the submerged classes (composed of the vicious and the nincompoops) was to let them starve. His belief that nothing can be given to anybody without taking an equivalent away from somebody else reveals his complete inability to grasp the difference between man in isolation and man in organized economic society.

If a social prophet waits long enough he is almost sure to be right in some of his main conclusions, regardless of how he arrived at them. This has happened to Sumner, and this is why his essays make stirring reading today. When enough damaging things have been done to organized spirit and enterprise, it becomes true that nothing can be given to anybody without taking away as much, or more, from somebody else. Liberty for the individual, the fundamental point of Sumner's system, is once more essential after the state has folded its children too long and too tightly in its sheltering arms. The "iron voice" of the Yale philosopher, calling for acceptance of the hard way and a realization of the eternal relationship of sweat to its reward,

was needed in this year 1940 to offset the sentimental chant of the ham-and-egggers and of the choristers of the more abundant life.

Even in his theories with which time has dealt unkindly, Sumner has his disturbing contacts with contemporary thought. He saw that the modern world was headed for disaster because of its explosive mixture of stern personal liberty with feudal dependence, and his prediction of a blood-bath in the twentieth century was a stroke of intuitive genius. His errors still point to live issues. Because his "science" was precise and infallible, he had no hesitation in applying it to public policy and in prescribing what ought to be done. The economists of today, their faith completely shattered, are frantically trying to disclaim all responsibility for policy. They are inclosing themselves in an arid scholasticism which is largely concerned with regurgitating the materials of formal logic and deductive method. Sumner accepted the risk of being mistaken; many of his successors are in danger of being ignored.

The publishers of these selected essays have been conscious of their current significance and have appended comments by business men, writers, and scholars. Most of these critics are rather amusingly cautious, as though they feared that their subject would blow up in their hands. Professor William F. Ogburn makes a brief but discerning comment on the Yale sociologist's contribution to modern science, and A. G. Keller, in a reminiscent sketch, pays tribute to the modesty and the open mind which underlay the aggressive utterance. Sumner's ideas were no mere vaporings of a cock-sure doctrinaire. The "brute bulk" of the materials which he gathered would have overwhelmed a lesser man.

## ANSWERS TO LITERARY QUIZ

1. "The Ancient Mariner," by Coleridge.
2. Dr. Heidigger, in "Dr. Heidigger's Experiment," by Hawthorne.
3. Nestor, in "The Iliad," by Homer.
4. "Barbara Frietchie," by John Greenleaf Whittier.
5. Father Perrault, in "Lost Horizon," by James Hilton.
6. The Old Man of the Sea, in Sindbad's fifth voyage, from "The Arabian Nights."
7. Mr. Wemmick (The Aged P.) in "Great Expectations," by Dickens.
8. Count Dracula, in "Dracula," by Bram Stoker.
9. "She," by Rider Haggard.
10. The Struldbrugs, in "Gulliver's Travels," by Swift.

## Men and Morons

WHY MEN BEHAVE LIKE APES AND VICE VERSA. By Ernest Albert Hooton. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1940. 234 pp., with index. \$3.

Reviewed by HOMER W. SMITH

THE world chaos of today is due to the debased intelligence of the mass of "civilized" men and to nothing else. Having gained such control of natural resources that their subsistence is well nigh effortless, their biological fiber has been rotted by inertia and indolence until degenerative behavior is the rule and not the exception. The cultural causes of human atrophy are machines and public charity. A few can produce all that their fellowmen need for living, while the majority starve or subsist wretchedly on public charity, having no purchasing power. Even those who work are stultified by the effortless, thoughtless, monotonous attendance upon machines. Why should inventors attempt to build robots when machines have already made psychotic robots out of millions of human animals?

An enormous surplus of have-not, human robots gaze with hatred upon the lucky masters of machines, the manipulators of wealth and goods; and with envy upon the rotting excess of food and products which they need and cannot purchase. We do not tamper with inalienable right to reproduce their miserable kind, but we are forced by the threat of desperate revolt to do something about their vital necessities—so we resort to sweet charity—a soothing syrup which salves our consciences and dopes the economically helpless into submission.

Medicine has contributed to the production of a degenerate species, even though its ways, like the streets of hell, are so beautifully paved with

good intentions. It knows enough to keep diseased and debilitated men alive, but not enough to cure them. It saves millions of lives, most of which are not worth saving because they are inferior in body and in mind. Even if society could tolerate the burden of supporting hundreds of millions of patched-up cripples and invalids who have become casualties through war and the ravages of infection, it could not withstand the economic drain which results from breeding of the constitutional inferiors, hereditarily diseased, feeble-minded, and insane. Some clauses in the oath of Hippocrates ought to be as dead as the worship of Dionysus. It is the same sentimentalists who send the flower of human stock into battle to die, and feel righteous about it, who demand that physicians save the lives of idiots.

The present war is chargeable in great part to the democracies, who did nothing about the post-Versailles economic situation other than to expand public charity, increase or establish unemployment dole, and dispense patriotic and ethical platitudes, allowing themselves to be weakened by socialistic and communistic incompetents who preached economic and personal equality and worshipped the democratic mean of worthlessness . . .

Such are a few of the opinions, briefly paraphrased, which Hooton expresses in the introduction to his book, which is aimed primarily at the vital questions, Are men necessarily intelligent because they are men? and Are all men equally intelligent? He who answers yes may be dismissed as wholly unintelligent. He who answers no, and is content to let the matter rest there, is (one presumes Hooton would say) in quite the same basket. How about senators and bankers, Irishmen and Slavs, criminals who variously prefer murder, theft, or rape, how about the Mongoloids, the Nordics, the Germans?

Hooton, who is Professor of Anthropology at Harvard, approaches his subject along the biological road: the biological relations of the primates, the psychology of the great apes, the paleontological evidences on the evolution of man, and the basis for the classification of mankind into races and various smaller groups. Then he treats the alleged differences in intelligence in primary races and secondary groups, and the supposed correlations between intelligence and social adaptability. He has himself made notable contributions in the study of the intelligence of criminals and he reviews at some length the questions of anthropometry and morality, in criminal groups as a whole as well as in those convicted for special offences.



Ernest Albert Hooton