



Illustration from the "The Wabash," by John de Martelly.

## Hoosier River

*THE WABASH.* By William E. Wilson. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1940. 339 pp., with index. \$2.50.

Reviewed by RICHARD A. CORDELL

THIS volume, which is the eighth of the Rivers of America Series, provides its author (in exile in Rhode Island) an opportunity to compose a lyrical, encomiastic history of his native state. For "The Wabash" is a book about Indiana—its history, its folklore, its people, its products. It does not confine itself to the Wabash Valley proper (almost one-sixth of the book, for example, is devoted to Abraham Lincoln and the Lincoln farm in Spencer County, whose Little Pigeon Creek and Anderson River empty into the Ohio) and almost ignores the fact that Illinois shares the Wabash with Indiana for nearly one hundred miles. Unlike Emil Ludwig's "Nile" and Lengyel's "Danube," which are largely concerned with the streams themselves, "The Wabash" tells of the people of the basin—or of Indiana—and their history.

The relationship of the river to such indigenous products as torrid political enthusiasms, limestone (of oceanic rather than fluvial origin), the Klan, best sellers, etc., is somewhat vague; but there is no denying the importance of the Wabash River and Valley in the Indian and Revolutionary wars, the New Harmony settlement, early transportation, and the type of settler a rich corn and hog country would attract. The author so skillfully confuses *Wabash* and *Indiana* that we read into the book a unity it does not actually possess.

The jaunty vernacular style and

humor of the descriptions and anecdotes, and the breezy directness of the historical narrative (in the manner of W. E. Woodward) are proper to the tempo and flavor of this cheerful book. If there are too many superlatives and exclamation marks, there is no pompousness, no stuffiness. The de Bergerac exploits of George Rogers Clark, the role of Vincennes in the history of the Northwest Territory, the Rappites and Owenites at New Harmony, the struggle between Tecumseh and Harrison, Morgan's raid, the shameful interlude of the Ku Klux Klan, the rise of Beveridge and Debs—the author takes advantage of these colorful incidents and people.

"The Wabash" has two indisputable values. It has considerable historical and sociological value, for already the book is a period piece. The river is no longer navigable; even most of the small pleasure boats of a generation ago disappeared with the mandolin and the phaeton. The Indian and the Klan have departed. The *Ersatz* of the chemical engineer plus high freight rates have all but killed the limestone industry. In an age of standardization only local patriotism could bring forth the assertion that Indiana now towers above neighboring states in her passion for good food, home-spun humor, politics, and literature. Moreover, in "The Wabash," one objective set down by Constance Lindsay Skinner in the original prospectus for the Rivers of America Series is realized: it achieves its moralistic goal of stirring our patriotic affection for our own country. Its reader will be somewhat less abject and awed if or when he finds himself on the banks of the Rhine, the Danube, or the Nile.

## Dr. Cushing's Papers

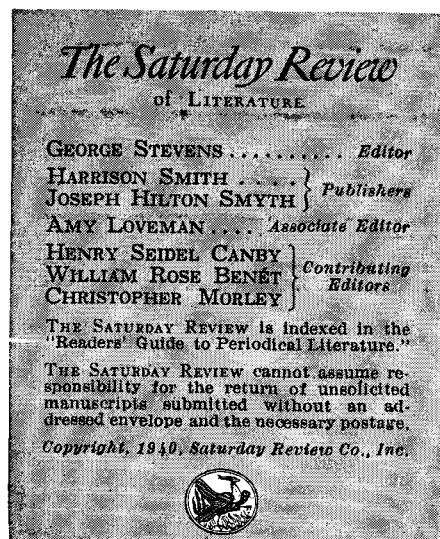
*THE MEDICAL CAREER.* By Harvey Cushing. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1940. 302 pp. \$2.50.

Reviewed by Mabel S. ULRICH

DR. HARVEY CUSHING, perhaps the greatest brain surgeon the world has yet produced, belongs to that god-elected family of scientists in whom scientific genius has been beautifully blended with the artist's gift of expression. Its members in the healing profession are medicine's true aristocrats.

With his "Life of Sir William Osler" and his "From a Surgeon's Journal" Dr. Cushing established his literary status. Before his death last fall he selected and edited these addresses and papers which his executor Dr. J. F. Fulton has now issued as a companion volume to "Consecratio Medici," published first about ten years ago. The present book is divided into two parts; the first seven chapters are addresses delivered at colleges and scientific societies and are concerned with subjects more or less closely related to the medical profession, although in no sense technical. The first of these gives the volume its name and is a review of the perquisites and satisfactions of the medical career for the benefit of Dartmouth students. Dr. Cushing looked askance at socialized medicine, and he tells us why in "Medicine at the Crossroads." The other five are chiefly concerned with phases of medical history; early medical schools, Massachusetts's medical society in the eighteenth century, and so on. Nine brief biographies make up the book's second half. These are attractive sketches of distinguished associates of the author's, of Welch, Halsted, and Councilman of Johns Hopkins, and of other civic-minded gentlemen who have devoted time and money to the culture and advancement of their communities, James Ford Rhodes, Perry Williams Harvey, George Strong Derby.

All in all this is not a very "important" book, but it is a very nice one—the work of a scholar and a gentleman who viewed life with civilized detachment but with the greatest friendliness. Its subject-matter will necessarily limit its appeal to persons specially interested in medical topics and to those who share the author's enthusiasm for the fascinating history of his profession. Together with the simultaneously issued new edition of "Consecratio Medici" it will add distinction to the library of the medical student. It might even help him to realize that the wider his knowledge of the arts, the better his chances for becoming a good and a happy doctor.



## John Buchan

LORD TWEEDSMUIR, known to the literary world as John Buchan, was a phenomenon more Scotch than English, and, one might say, as American as Scotch. A spare figure, a kindly face, a gentle voice, and a warm nature, were inspired by a driving, restless energy, and the kind of ambition that is self-regarding only in an inner necessity for getting things done. Beginning humbly, he gathered laurels as he went, but whether he rejoiced most in his reputation as a historian and writer of fiction, or in his final vicereignty, or in his consummate skill as a trout fisherman, it would be hard to say. Certainly his biographies of Montrose and of Cromwell will endure as long as his tactful and appreciated services in Canada; and if his lighter mystery fiction is not likely to take a place in belles-lettres, nevertheless it has pleased hundreds of thousands. It is rumored that his mystery stories were all written when convalescing from grippe. For only then was his nervous energy geared down to lesser achievements.

My own association with him dates from 1918 when, under the sponsorship of ex-President Taft, I was sent to England with other professors to help as far as possible to promote understanding between the two countries, then in the most disastrous stages of the war. It was a vague commission, whose only definite part was an engagement to send back correspondence to various magazines on conditions in Great Britain and Ireland, and behind the front. Colonel Buchan, in charge of the Ministry of Information, was my reporting officer. He could open the gates of prison camps and training areas, permit me to go to the front, send me to naval bases, allow or forbid me to go to Ireland, then stirring with discontent and of vital interest to Americans. Most important,

he could forbid or permit what I wanted to say for American readers.

In the eight months I worked under his cognizance, I was never once restricted, always helped. I went to stop-the-war meetings in hidden halls, I met Irish rebels in obscure inns, I wrote freely and critically (too critically, my American editors thought) of what I felt and saw. But John Buchan's attitude was always positive, not negative. He assumed that I, as a liberal American, wanted the same kind of world as did he, a liberal Britisher, and that the way to handle me was to let me form my own conclusions. When I asked to go to Southern Ireland, he gave immediate consent, provided that I would agree to see Ulster also. The report which I afterward published drew attacks and praise from both North and South,

which would seem to indicate that he was right.

I repeat all this unimportant history because it was a measure of the man, and perhaps an indication of a way, and a right way, to conduct a propaganda office, which, of course, was precisely what his Ministry of Information was.

His death at this moment is, I believe, a great loss to English letters. Politically he had reached his top. His frail health would never have permitted him to take the kind of a part in rough-and-tumble politics which, congenitally, he would have had to take if he had gone into a cabinet. But he had, I am sure, his best biographical and historical works ahead of him, that would have been his next assignment.

H. S. C.

## Apocrypha

(To all Negro poets now alive)

BY EVELYN SCOTT

SOMETIMES I feel like a motherless child,  
Where rue grows fast and hemlock wild  
As brambles in a ditch;  
Swing low, sweet chariot,  
Let me be carried by your song  
A long way from home.  
Rush on, great wings,  
While black and white dance, golden-shod.  
About your flight;  
Lead, Moses, tell all peoples: *Go!*  
On love upborne as Jesus' grace  
Flings rainbows over barren space!  
Down here is only a dark river murmuring.

Deep river, crossed upon a sigh,  
Our tear-drowned eyes still search for sky;  
O sister, do not mourn  
To find our dank hair floating by;  
O brother, of such nothingness we are  
As is the moonlight and the star;  
Roll Jordan: we are as the sand  
That silts to make a foreign land:  
We are resigned.

Races no longer undefiled  
Will never waken to the piercing, mild  
Encouragement of Gabriel's horn;  
Nor see old Jordan rift lethargic mud  
And pour in morning-riven flood  
Toward tides eternities becalm.

We weep: he never said a mumblin' word,  
And yet his silence can be heard:  
O let us steal away . . .