

and of Freedom and Ireland

RE TO PLEASE. By Har-
nison. New York: Harcourt,
& Co. 1943. 210 pp. and In-
350.

iewed by R. ELLIS ROBERTS

THE trouble about ideas," said the arm-chair philosopher, "is that men of action will fall in love with them; marry them, fall out of love and then put them on the streets, where they infect the mob." In this biographical study of his great-great grandfather Archibald Hamilton Rowan Mr. Nicolson gives pathetic evidence of the truth of this realistic saying. Hamilton Rowan, a gentle giant of a man, with no taint of meanness or malice in him, generous, reckless, timid, self-depreciatory, was of the best families of the Irish ascendancy. He was born in 1751, and so was susceptible to the ideas which made and sprang from the two great revolutions, of America and France; and his whole being responded to the new doctrines which ran through Europe. He was an Irishman, and so his devotion to freedom, equality, and the rights of the people took color from the strange, enchanted island which has captured its conquerors so often, so irrevocably.

Rowan was not discreet, nor wise; and he linked his fortune with the United Irishmen, that band of heroes, braggarts, clowns, and traitors who risked and possibly postponed Ireland's day of freedom by an alliance with the French, when England was at war with France. Wolf Tone, Napper Tandy, McNally, Robert Emmett, Edward Fitzgerald, William Drennan—the names are familiar to all Irishmen, and have not lost their power to quicken emotion. Except, it would seem, in Harold Nicolson. It is true that he is but half-Irish; but less Irish than that has sent some men on the quest to restore the four green fields to the lady who owns them, or at least to cheer on those who adventure on that enterprise. Curiosity, amusement, affection,—all these Mr. Nicolson can feel for his ancestor's quixotic campaigns; but throughout the book he seems a little sad that the "big darlint man"—as I've no doubt the Dublin crowd call'd him—should have so little moderation, so much violence, and so little discretion.

Hamilton Rowan lost his head and his heart. He very nearly lost his life—for if he had not broken jail in 1794 and fled to France and thence to America he would certainly have perished either as did Lord Edward "resisting arrest," or on the scaffold:

It is a pity that Mr. Nicolson could not exercise more imagination on Rowan's character. In his own eyes the man was no more a traitor than was Kossuth, or Garibaldi; and history has confirmed Rowan's opinion, since England has admitted, by her own action, that her hold on Ireland was intolerable.

Everything was done that could be done to detach young Rowan from Ireland. He was taken away from his father at Castle Killyleagh by his English mother, and educated in England; his maternal grandfather, leaving him a fortune, made it a condition that he should graduate from Oxford or Cambridge and not set foot in Ireland until he was twenty-five:



Harold Nicolson

he managed the first condition easily enough, in spite of his rowdiness as an undergraduate at Cambridge, but more than once he slipped back to Ireland and his disreputable father. In 1771 he paid his first visit to America; he came to Charleston in the suite of Lord Charles Montagu, Governor of North Carolina, and the lad of twenty years noted that "the bickerings between England and the Colonies were becoming serious"; and when war broke out he was ready to help two British officers to get commissions in the American forces, an act which Mr. Nicolson dubs "disloyal" and an "attempt to recruit senior officers for service with our enemies." A good many Britons in those days thought of the King and Lord North as "enemies" rather than the armies of General Washington.

From this time on Hamilton Rowan was "agin" the government. He was never a prudent man, nor cautious until after the event. I can see

nothing puzzling in his character or conduct: there must have been thousands like him in Russia and in Germany and in Italy in the last twenty-five years. He was a failure except in magnanimity and kindness. When the United Irishmen were broken and he joined the tiny group who would have brought the French into Ireland, the chief informer, the pitiful Cockayne, had in Rowan's writing a plea for the French invasion. It would have hanged him, had he been caught. Mr. Nicolson tells with all his old brilliance the story of his ancestor's escape; and the misery he underwent in France where he was promptly by mischance clapped into a pestilent jail at Brest, released by pure accident, and then taken in honor to Paris to see Robespierre on the day of the Feast of Reason, and could take no advantage of the interview as he was in the grip of jail-fever.

He was happier in America. At Wilmington he enjoyed the company of Caesar Rodney, Dr. Tilton, Mr. Bayard; happier than he had been in Philadelphia from which city he wrote in 1796 that he was "disgusted by the rough manners of the people." Meanwhile his wife was working hard to have him pardoned; in 1800 he was told that if he took ship to Europe he would not be arrested by any British ship, and he left Philadelphia "accompanied by an opossum, his dog, a red bird and a bag of bird seed." He came to London in 1803, and two years later, after asking for pardon on his knees before the Court of Kings' Bench, he was allowed to live in Ireland.

His return to his ancestral home was a triumphal progress. He was still a friend of freedom and of Ireland; but he was grateful that his family had been spared by the English, grateful that he could come home and was not compelled to disown his past. But he was out of politics. When young Shelley approached him in 1812 Rowan made no response, but his last public appearance was at a meeting organized by the Friends of Civil and Religious Liberty.

A figure, heroic and comic, Don Quixote and Sancho Panza in one, comes to life in Mr. Nicolson's book. The sense of immediacy, of the present reality of Hamilton Rowan and his troubles is cunningly increased by the chapters, at the beginning and end, in which the author tells of his own life in Ireland. Mr. Nicolson's outlook on past and present distresses in Ireland is clear and sensible; but he has so written that most readers will fall under the spell of that romance which cannot die so long as men like Hamilton Rowan are remembered and revered.



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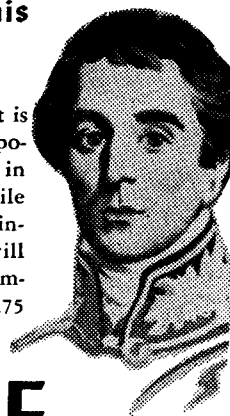
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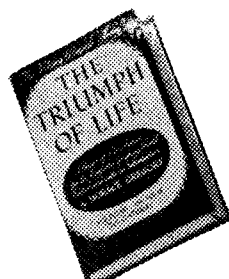
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ONE FAIR DAUGHTER

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Under the Musical Sun

MUSIC FOR ALL OF US. By Leopold Stokowski. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1943. 340 pp. with index. \$2.50.

Reviewed by PAUL HENRY LANG

OUR musical life, while brilliant, ever growing, and deepening, is still largely conditioned by hero worship. There exists a belief that the great figures of the concert podium are the authoritative interpreters of their art no matter through what medium they express themselves. Since these great artists are seldom schooled in letters the results of their excursions into print are usually devoid of the requisites of literature and scholarship. Whatever one's opinion of Mr. Stokowski's musical interpretations, he is indisputably a master of the orchestra, a conductor endowed with superlative abilities. As an author he cuts a pathetic figure. "Music for All of Us" is a naive pot-pourri of everything under the musical sun. The 340-page book has forty chapters, some of them discussing weighty issues on three pages. The chapters deal with esthetics, philosophy, and history of music, musical anthropology, ethnology, sociology, and acoustics; the whole liberally sprinkled with random remarks on the technical side of musical performance. The chapter headings constitute the only discernible plan of organization, but this is counter-balanced by a uniformly tender and sentimental tone, revelling in tried clichés.

The esthetic and historical parts are incredibly primitive, the author even confuses rhythm with meter, contrapuntal polyphony with many-

voiced homophony. What one cannot understand is how his publishers' readers overlooked such gems as this: "In early times in the Catholic Church the right side of the altar as we face it was called Decani, and the left side Cantoris."

While the book contains some interesting remarks relating to the author's own field, conducting, and a fair textbook summary of elementary acoustics, there just is no *raison d'être* for such an amateurish compilation; the country has too many competent professional writers on music, as well as a growing literature of great merit, to condone such superficiality no matter how well meant.

Music to Fight By

SONGS OF MANY WARS. From the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Century. Edited and Arranged by Kurt Adler. New York: Howell, Soskin. 1943. 221 pp. \$3.

Reviewed by WILLARD RHODES

OF the multitude of war songs that come to us today through the medium of the radio, the phonograph, and the sound track of the motion picture, none has achieved the popularity of George M. Cohan's "Over There" of World War I. This lack of leadership in our contemporary war songs cannot be explained solely on the basis of merit. Modern technological developments of the past quarter century have so completely revolutionized methods of distribution of music and various forms of entertainment that national and international popularity for a war song becomes increasingly difficult to attain. The new production tempo of industry has infected the song-maker's field. Before one number has had time to establish itself in the affections of the public it is crowded into the background by the latest piece from the assembly line. In harmony with the accelerated social changes the spirit of man continues to exteriorize itself in song.

This volume is a memorial to that undying spirit of liberty and freedom which has found expression in song through the ages. In attempting to cover world history in song from the religious and feudal wars of the Middle Ages through the present global conflict, the editor's problem has been one of selection. For the periods up to the American Civil War representation has been necessarily limited to such classics as Martin Luther's "Ein' Feste

The reader is inclined to hope that a man so closely identified with the present scene and—unlike most other conductors — admittedly sympathetic toward the future will offer some thoughtful pages on the music that is to come. But he finds the worst type of pseudo-esthetics: "The future symphony is foreshadowed in Beethoven . . ." etc. Well, then, whom does Shostakovich foreshadow, or did anyone ever write a symphony that was free of shadows, just a plain good symphony standing on its own legs? It is disappointing that the man who dares to call the tune for Bach to dance, the imperious artist who can take any scratch orchestra and make it sound like a first-class ensemble, turns out to be such a sentimental ingénue of an author.

Burg," "La Marseillaise," "The Star-Spangled Banner," and other national songs similarly familiar. Even the period of the First World War is inadequately represented as a result of the copyright restrictions which protect that rich crop of songs emanating from the Allied nations.

Of historical and musical interest are the little known national anthems of the states of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, newly created by the Versailles Peace Treaty. The Czech anthem, with its lyric melody in the major mode, is coupled to the characteristic, rhythmic Slovakian anthem in the minor mode, thus doing justice to the ethnic constituents of that freedom-loving republic. The Yugoslav anthem underlines its national unity by combining the national hymns of Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia.

Without discrediting the first part of this welcome anthology of war songs one can safely state that the value of Mr. Adler's contribution is concentrated in the last hundred pages of the book. Here he has made available to the American public for the first time in printed form a new literature of songs that has been sustaining the spirit and hopes of men throughout the world since the close of World War I. Marching and fighting songs of the Chinese nationals, the International Brigade, organized to help the Spanish Republic in its civil war against fascism, Norway's underground army, Yugoslavian guerrilla fighters, the Chetniks, the Red Army of Soviet Russia, the Prague Libertad Theatre, and the pathetic *Peat Bog Soldiers*, from the Boergermoor Concentration Camp in Nazi Germany, are items of timely interest to all Americans. Many of these songs are avail-



Leopold Stokowski

—Halsman