

who can do this, the Mackenzie River for most of us will continue to be unreal.

The book is illustrated by Dhoreau MacDonald. His work shows in one glance that he knows his subject. His birds are not just birds; they are snow goose, arctic loon, and swan. His trees are the arctic kind. His shores of Great

Bear Lake are rocky with a great expanse of water and sky. The work has sympathy and illuminating detail. Mr. MacDonald catches the spirit of the Mackenzie region.

Constance and Harmon Helmericks are authors of "Our Alaskan Winter," reviewed in the next column.

## Department of Sweaty Amusements

**SPORTS PAGE.** By Stanley Woodward. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1949. 229 pp. \$2.95.

Reviewed by RED SMITH

STANLEY WOODWARD'S departure from the *New York Herald Tribune* last May caused a commotion in the newspaper business, for there was no sports editor who enjoyed the respect of more newspapermen. There was a wide professional opinion that his sports pages were the best of his time, maybe the best of any time.

Now the top man in his field has written what seems to this reviewer to be the best and most readable book yet published about newspapers. This is not an impartial view; it is prejudiced by friendship for the author and a special interest in the subject matter. This would be true in the case of almost any other professional of the sports pages.

According to the dust-jacket blurb, "Sports Page" tells about "breaking into the business; the writing and editing of a story from press box to copy desk; the art of being a columnist; the specialized details of how such events as baseball, football, boxing, and horse racing are covered." It does so. But this sounds like the prospectus of a textbook on journalism. It should not frighten off readers who seek entertainment rather than vocational instruction. Schools of journalism might profitably make Mr. Woodward's book required reading but students will find its style and content refreshingly unlike those of the other texts in the campus store.

This is the liveliest sort of reading, stimulating and provocative. It hits like Joe Louis, covers the field like Joe DiMaggio. Here is the unmitigated "Coach" Woodward sounding off in the manner that made his column a hissing and a byword in Columbus, Ohio (he said Ohio State had a good second-rate football team), heated Minneapolis tempers to a fine Scandinavian boil (he did not idolize the University of Minnesota coach, Bernie Bierman), and rendered him *persona*

*vomica* among Latin scholars at Princeton (he called Nassau undergraduates "implausible brats").

In "Sports Page," the Woodward javelin skewers both the dunderheads of the fun-and-games department and the sacred cows in the newspaper hierarchy. As to the former: "the reporters of the Carnera age were either wide-eyed or bought. It would be kinder of me to say they were crooks, but I gravely fear many of them were something worse—iron-heads." As to the latter: "In every newspaper office there is a corps of older men, frequently serving as top editors, who can't take it with them (a) because of the natural difficulties involved, (b) because they never had it." Charity does not distinguish development of this theme. What does distinguish the book is candor, a towering integrity, and a deep respect for and devotion to newspaper work and the working newspaperman. When the author quit one paper his publisher gave him a letter of recommendation which pointed out: "Woodward did not drift into this business. He came to us because newspaper work is the only work he wants to do."

There is also a splendid intolerance of those persons, including top editors, who look upon the sports sections as the bargain basement of the store, a department staffed by cases of arrested development and patronized by a clientele that bathes irregularly and cannot read without moving the lips.

Earlier books about newspapers have devoted, somewhat grudgingly, one chapter to the sports section. The first volume to be given over entirely to the department of sweaty amusements describes in honest detail the toil and tears and skills that go into the job of telling the reader who won and by what score. Stanley Woodward sees sportswriting as a respectable job for accomplished craftsmen. He makes it sound like a lot of hard, bone labor, and wonderful fun, which it is.

Red Smith is sports columnist for the *New York Herald Tribune*.

## Eskimo Life

**OUR ALASKAN WINTER.** By Constance and Harmon Helmericks. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1949. 271 pp. \$3.50.

Reviewed by MAURINE BROWN

IN this latest volume by the Helmericks, husband and wife, some of the Eskimos are named Roland and others Ook-sook. This is a sample of the fidelity to truth and fact which the Helmericks always have shown in their books about Alaska. No effort is made to give a conventional, trite picture of Eskimo life. Like Horace Greeley, the Helmericks are "not afraid to print what the good Lord lets happen."

The locale of "Our Alaskan Winter" is the Arctic seacoast between the mouth of the Colville River and the Mackenzie delta. Eskimo villages dot this bleak shore. Hunting occupies most of the time. The Helmericks go out with the natives in quest of caribou, seal, and the great white bears. Success in the villages is judged by skill with spear and rifle.

Much nonsense has been written about Alaska. The Helmericks are expert dispellers of this. Caribou bulls often lag behind when the herd is pursued by wolves or men. Some so-called "naturalists" claim this is to guard the cows and fawns. "Another story for children," scoff the Helmericks. The simple truth is that the bulls are too old to run as fast as the others!

Throughout a long Arctic winter Constance and her husband were remote from other white people. No succor would have been possible had one of them come down with an infected appendix or blood poisoning. Yet they thrived and were healthy. And these were ordinary city folks from urban beginnings. This challenges the notion that the present generation of Americans is afflicted with softness and languor. "Our Alaskan Winter" is up to the high standard of the other books about the lonely north by this unique and adventurous couple.

Occasionally we get a glimpse of the simplicity of the native folks. The Eskimo family named Roland immediately asked the Helmericks about Dr. Stefansson. They had "known the great explorer well, twenty-five years ago, and they supposed that probably all white people knew each other!"

Maurine Brown has made many trips to Alaska with her husband, Richard L. Neuberger of the Portland Oregonian. She has contributed to *Liberty* and other magazines.

*The Saturday Review*

**Ideas and Studies.** *The number of Americans who deserve to be called great philosophers is exceeding small. Emerson, James, Dewey—there are few others whose ideas can be called major contributions to the stream of Western thought. Of the books reviewed below, three in particular illuminate the course of American speculative thinking. Samuel H. Beer's "The City of Reason" finds in the metaphysics of Whitehead ideas for an explanation of the ultimate basis of both ethics and politics. Morris R. Cohen's "Studies in Philosophy and Science" is the fourth posthumous volume from the pen of one of America's most stimulating philosophers; his autobiographical "A Dreamer's Journey" will be reviewed in an early issue. Because ours is primarily a business civilization, students will find the latest volume of Joseph Dorfman's "Economic Mind in American Civilization" a treasure-trove.*

## Beginnings of Modern Problems

**THE ECONOMIC MIND IN AMERICAN CIVILIZATION. Vol. III: 1865-1918. By Joseph Dorfman. New York: The Viking Press. 1949. 494 pp. \$6.**

Reviewed by C. E. AYRES

**I**N this book we are the beneficiaries of a happy coincidence. It was, perhaps, the manifest destiny of the author of "Thorstein Veblen and His America" to go on and illuminate other facets of his country's mind. At all events, no one else was better qualified to do so; and it is our good fortune that this tremendous project, begun several years before the outbreak of World War II, has come to fruition just at this time. Never has it been more important that Americans should know their own mind, and never has the mind of any people been more important to all the world.

In this volume Professor Dorfman brings his great study to a temporary climax. The earlier volumes were no less important to an understanding of the forging of American mentality. But the society they described was quite different from the one in which we now live. In large part the issues with which it struggled were inherited from the old regime of Europe. The government which liberal-minded men then sought to restrain still wore the visage of the sovereign from whom Americans had always sought to free themselves. As Professor Dorfman says, the liberals of that day "were, therefore, not anti-capitalistic, but rather anti-feudal." But in the half-century that followed the Civil War the modern economy made its appearance, and with it modern problems, and so the modern mind.

It is a fascinating story, and one that has never before been so well,

or so completely told. In this period monopoly first took its modern, industrial form, and "imperfect competition," as we now call it, first became endemic. In this period, too, agriculture first began to assume its role as the problem child of the American family, and organized labor came to stay, as an unwanted in-law, in the capitalistic household. Tidal waves of industrial progress alternated with ebb tides of depression.

How vigorous and varied were the intellectual responses to all these experiences! The story, as Professor Dorfman tells it, will surprise and fascinate even those who know our history well. Others will be astonished to learn how responsive the American mind has been all along to foreign intellectual developments, such as the German historical school and the marginalism of Vienna and Manchester, and at the same time how stubbornly independent Americans have been in reshaping such imports in the light of American experience.

It is a very heartening story. Here we see American economic thought taking its place on the world stage in the person of John Bates Clark, not perhaps for the first time but now for good. With the formation of the American Economic Association our country may be said to have come of age, economically. What follows is its adult life. But the story is by no means all one of academic conformity. During these years America gave Henry George and Edward Bellamy to world literature and in the next generation produced the greatest dissenter of them all, Thorstein Veblen.

Not the least remarkable of Professor Dorfman's achievements is his ability to paint equally sympathetic and sensitive portraits of minds as diverse as those of Clark and Veblen.



—Lotte Jacobi.

Joseph Dorfman—"reading the mind of our day will be the acid test."

len. Every scholar will of course find points on which to take exception. I would have to take exception to the statement that Veblen regarded technology as an institution. But all readers will await the author's final volume with eager expectation. For reading the mind of our own day will be the acid test of Professor Dorfman's objectivity!

C. E. Ayres, professor of economics at the University of Texas, wrote "The Divine Right of Capital," "The Theory of Economic Progress," and other volumes.

## Soaring Cerebration

**STUDIES IN PHILOSOPHY AND SCIENCE. By Morris R. Cohen. New York: Henry Holt & Co. 1949. 278 pp. \$4.50.**

Reviewed by ROBERT BIERSTEDT

**O**NE of the stories currently told about the late Morris R. Cohen concerns a student of philosophy who, at the end of his course of instruction, complained that the professor had destroyed his traditional beliefs without giving him anything in their place. To this Cohen promptly retorted, "It is not recorded that Hercules was required to do more than clean the Augean stables."

The story is possibly apocryphal, but it is entirely in character. Cohen employed so rapid and at times so rampant a wit that his philosophic colleagues learned always to respect it and, sometimes, to fear it. At City College of New York for many years and, after his retirement, at Stanford,

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