

Cool, Dry Meditations: The newspaper column (or "colyum") has developed fantastically since Artemus Ward helped Lincoln endure the Civil War. We may now laugh with Buchwald, worry hopefully with Lippmann, or ponder profitably with Reston. Sydney Harris is on the serious but not the solemn side, keeps clear of politics, is humane and liberal but, as he himself says, the "cool, dry" rather than the "warm, moist" type.

Mr. Harris, who gets his mail at the office of the Chicago *Daily News*, has for some years been writing a syndicated column called "Strictly Personal." *On the Contrary* (Houghton Mifflin, \$4.95) is the fourth collection of these pieces that he has published during the past twelve years.

So, as they say, he has something. What is this something? He does not give an emotional release, for he arrives by reason where others skid in by impulse. He can be humorous, but he usually doesn't care to. He can do "human interest," but the technique is alien to him. His wit is pungent, with an edge.

Harris meditates on some fairly familiar questions: If Christ returned to earth next Christmas Day, who would crucify Him? The Christians, he fears. He laments that we now know how to blow up the world, but not how to live in it together. Like the U.S. Supreme Court, he thinks the Negro is a human being entitled to every right; he is annoyed by those white people who hide their prejudice behind the "separate-but-equal" fence.

He figures that fascists are more numerous in this country than Communists. He is not too scornful of beatniks. He is not enthusiastic about putting a man on the moon when the price of the trip can better be spent at home. He finds some persons' "determined cheerfulness . . . of-fensive." He observes that we are a violent species, but that few of us are born "dull" or "bad"; these qualities have to be taught. The father of five children, he is intelligently fascinated by inter-age relationships.

Most of this material consists of separate columns of 400 words or more each. The final seventy pages or so are paragraphic—each paragraph with an intended bite. For instance: "Nothing we do is half as bad as what we do not do."

A book like this takes a year or more to write; it seems unfair to read it in odd moments over a few days. But one concludes that Mr. Harris would have been welcome in the best circles in Concord, Massachusetts, about a century ago.

Even Thoreau might have been willing to have a gam with him.

—R. L. DUFFUS.

SR's Check List of the Week's New Books

Business, Economics

CITY AND SUBURB: The Economics of Metropolitan Growth. Edited by Benjamin Chinitz. Prentice-Hall. Hardbound, \$4.95. Paperback, \$1.95.

GREAT SALES BY TODAY'S GREAT SALESMEN. By Lassar Blumenthal. Macmillan. \$5.95.

PERSPECTIVES ON ANTITRUST POLICY. By Almarin Phillips. Princeton Univ. Press. \$9.

Classics

HELLENISTIC POETRY AND ART. By T. B. L. Webster. Barnes & Noble. \$8.50.

Crime, Suspense

CANARY YELLOW. By Elizabeth Cadell. Morrow. \$3.95.

FUNERAL IN BERLIN. By Len Deighton. Putnam. \$4.95.

SAFE SECRET. By Harry Carmichael. Macmillan. \$3.95.

Essays

AMERICAN ASPECTS. By D. W. Brogan. Harper & Row. \$4.

Fiction

THE BRINKMANSHIP OF GALAHAD THREEPWOOD. By P. C. Wodehouse. Simon & Schuster. \$4.50.

BUMBLE. By Elma Williams. John Day. \$4.50.

COUNT BEHEMOND. By Alfred Duggan. Pantheon. \$4.95.

DAY OF JUDGMENT. By Wayne D. Overholser. Macmillan. \$3.95.

I RESIGN YOU, STALLION. By Vinnie Williams. Viking. \$4.95.

KATE AND EMMA. By Monica Dickens. Coward-McCann. \$4.95.

MANY THOUSAND GONE. By Ronald L. Fair. Harcourt, Brace & World. \$3.50.

THE POSSESSORS. By John Christopher. Simon & Schuster. \$4.50.

THE PURPLE QUEST. By Frank Slaughter. Doubleday. \$4.95.

THE STERILE CUCKOO. By John Nichols. McKay. \$4.50.

TALE OF A HERO. By Stella Wilchek. Harper & Row. \$4.95.

THE FORTUNATE PILGRIM. By Mario Puzo. Atheneum. \$5.75.

Government, Politics

THE EAGLE AND THE BEAR. (Revised edition.) By Pennington Haile. Ives Washburn. \$3.75.

URBAN TRANSPORTATION: The Federal Role. By George M. Smerk. Indiana Univ. Press. \$7.50.

History

THE AWAKENING OF AMERICAN NATIONALISM, 1815-1828. By George Dangerfield. Harper & Row. \$6.

BRAVE SHIP, BRAVE MEN. By Arnold S. Lott. Bobbs-Merrill. \$4.

CRISIS: The Inside Story of the Suez Conspiracy. By Terence Robertson. Atheneum. \$6.95.

FROM THE MORGENTHAU DIARIES: Years of Urgency, 1938-1941. By John Morton Blum. Houghton Mifflin. \$8.50.

THE GROWTH OF ATHENIAN ECONOMY. By A. French. Barnes & Noble. \$6.

Miscellany

ETERNAL EGYPT. By P. Montet. NAL-World. \$7.50.

LISTEN TO LEADERS IN ENGINEERING. Edited by Albert Love and James Saxon Childers. Tupper & Love/McKay. \$5.95.

LOCOMOTIVES IN RETIREMENT. By E. W. Fenton. Stephen Greene. \$12.50.

STORY OF THE WORLD SERIES. By Frederick Lieb. Putnam. \$5.95.

A WOLF IN THE FAMILY. By Jerome Hellmuth. NAL-World. \$4.95.

Music, Theater

BALLET RETROSPECT. By Arnold L. Haskell. Viking. \$10.

INCIDENT AT VICHY. By Arthur Miller. Viking. \$3.50.

THE OXFORD CHEKHOV. Vol. III: Uncle Vanya, Three Sisters, The Cherry Orchard, and The Wood-Demon. Translated and edited by Ronald Hingley. Oxford Univ. Press. \$10.

R. V. W.: A Biography of Ralph Vaughan Williams. By Ursula Vaughan Williams. Oxford Univ. Press. \$11.50.

SHAKESPEARE'S BLACKFRIARS PLAYHOUSE: Its History and Its Design. By Irwin Smith. New York Univ. Press. \$15.

Personal History

DYLAN THOMAS: His Life and Work. By John Ackerman. Oxford Univ. Press. \$5.75.

THE DAYS OF DYLAN THOMAS. By Bill Read. McGraw-Hill. Hardbound, \$5.95. Paperback, \$1.95.

QUEEN VICTORIA: Born to Succeed. By Elizabeth Longford. Harper & Row. \$7.50.

Psychology

THE ABILITY TO LOVE. By Allan Fromme. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. \$5.95.

Religion, Philosophy

AFTER THE STRANGER: Imaginary Dialogues with Camus. By Hayden Carruth. Macmillan. \$4.95.

ARCHAEOLOGY IN BIBLICAL RESEARCH. By Walter G. Williams. Abingdon. \$4.75.

CRISIS AND RESPONSE. By Roy L. Honeycutt. Abingdon. \$3.50.

THE ECUMENICAL SCANDAL ON MAIN STREET. By William B. Cate. Association Press. \$3.50.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND YOU. By Donald M. Joy. Abingdon. \$2.75.

THE LIFE AND THOUGHT OF ALBERT SCHWEITZER. By Werner Picht. Harper & Row. \$6.50.

ONE SOVEREIGN LIFE. By Edwin Prince Booth. Abingdon. \$2.50.

POVERTY ON A SMALL PLANET: A Christian Looks at Living Standards. By Edward Rogers. Macmillan. \$2.95.

THE PULPIT SPEAKS ON RACE. Edited by Alfred T. Davies. Abingdon. \$3.95.

THE WAY OF THE MASTER. By Emerson S. Colaw. Abingdon. \$2.50.

Science

JOURNEY TO ALPHA CENTAURI. By John W. Macvey. Macmillan. \$5.95.

LISTEN TO LEADERS IN SCIENCE. Edited by Albert Love and James Saxon Childers. Tupper & Love/McKay. \$5.50.

—Compiled by RUTH BROWN.



On the Side of Life

THE FILM YEAR just ended was given a last burst of vitality by the arrival of *Zorba the Greek*, a triple achievement for Michael Cacoyannis, who was the director, producer, and screen adaptor of the excellent Kazantzakis novel. Since so large and sprawling a production canvas would have been beyond the resources of the Greek film industry, a full dose of gratitude is owed to 20th Century-Fox for furnishing the financial assistance that made this fine motion picture possible. Of late, Fox has not been particularly fortunate in its co-production arrangements. We cite the ill-fated *The Visit* as a case in point. (Apropos of this, it should be mentioned that SR inadvertently credited as producer of that film Darryl F. Zanuck, who is the president of the company, but who has not functioned as a producer since *The Longest Day*.)

Cacoyannis is as fluent in English as in Greek, and *Zorba the Greek* is not at all handicapped by its being, by and large, an English-language film. For one thing, the principal character of the story is a young Englishman of Greek ancestry who has been reared in England and who comes to the island of Crete in the hope of developing some mine holdings he has inherited. The adventures that befall him are mainly the result of his meeting up with and hiring Alexis Zorba, a knockabout Greek of indeterminate years whose zesty exuberance and wholehearted acceptance of both troubles and joys eventually succeed in liberating the Englishman's imprisoned emotions. Basil is a writer, given to intellectualizing, and his friendship with Zorba is actually a conflict, of wills, of attitudes, of ways of adapting to life.

While Cacoyannis has not emphasized the period in which the events unfold, the time, it is clear, is before World War II. Basil's abandoned mine is near a village that lives in profound poverty, its people resigned to a harsh existence and tied to customs that lie hidden in the past. Zorba, a man of no intellect at all, is possessed of an immediate, instinctive understanding not only of the folkways of the villagers, but of Basil as well. He also knows that the old retired prostitute who runs the sagging village hotel is fair game for him and that Basil is the only one who could unleash the passions of a handsome young widow who is eyed with covert lust by her neighbors. But Zorba can spring immediately into action, while Basil must wait, and perspire, and trem-

ble before gathering up the courage to approach the widow.

As Madame Hortense, the old prostitute living on her nostalgic memories of four admirals of different nationalities who sought her favors, Lila Kedrova, a noted actress of the French stage, gives a performance of extraordinary flavor and subtlety. She is both hilarious (as when she describes a champagne bath, the gift of the admirals) and profoundly touching (as when she clutches Zorba in her final hour, knowing that the old, black-garbed harridans of the village are about to carry off her cherished accumulation of possessions). As Zorba, Anthony Quinn is at his extravagant best, and a perfect foil for Alan Bates, whose restrained, modulated portrait of Basil is quite marvelously done. And Irene Pappas, a Greek actress who gains stature with each of her roles, suggests her brooding, tragic fate without the use of dialogue at all, for her communication with Basil is wordless.

Mingling humor, the sharpest of human observation, tragedy, and touches of eerie horror, Cacoyannis patiently, and with superb detail, moves Basil toward his acceptance of the richness of being alive, until at the end he can dance with Zorba—a dance that is not one of joy and of high spirits, but that tells of their willingness to go on despite defeat and loss.

Oddly, *Zorba the Greek* ends on a note that is the very opposite of that struck by another fine young director at the beginning of the year. When summing up the best of the year's film achievements, both Arthur Knight and the undersigned placed Stanley Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove* and *Zorba the Greek* highest on their list. Kubrick carried his mordant satire to the blackest of conclusions, the extinction of all life on earth, while Cacoyannis found it necessary to restate his feeling for life and his compassionate understanding of humans, regardless of their flaws.

Between these two poles the year produced such a generous amount of screen entertainment and art that it was necessary to expand the usual list of ten to one of twelve. From several examples of tongue-in-cheek suspense films, *Topkapi* and *The Pink Panther* were judged superior. *My Fair Lady* and *Mary Poppins* emerged as the year's top musicals. Well liked indeed were *The Girl with Green Eyes* and *The Luck of Ginger Coffey*. The biggest surprise of the year were the Beatles in *A Hard Day's Night*. And we liked the soundly acted, splen-

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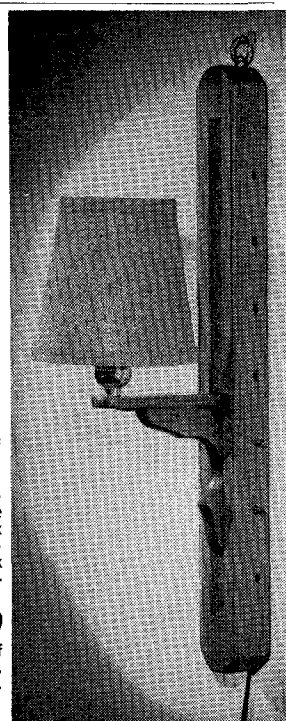
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