

is their way of avoiding life. The little players, on the other hand, are aware of nothing. Life and the game are all one to them. They play, and they believe they are living." Gonçalo, like the other "big players," never takes the gamble, never chooses authenticity. This is his inner tragedy, and it leads to tragedy in the relationship most important to him.

Some of the objects of Monteiro's mordacity are by no means peculiar to Portuguese society—for example, the "middle-aged he-men" at the club with their inevitable, almost ritualistic mutual kidding about sexual proficiency. Or the (universal?) jealousy of high-class whores and mistresses toward their men's wives, a jealousy that leads them in *A Man of Means* to conceive of God as "a cosmopolitan who hates 'hypocrisy' and in his infinite mercy will pardon them all their sins and will condemn to the flames of Hell all legitimate wives."

In brief, this little novel, translated from the Portuguese by Ann Stevens, may be recommended as a thoughtful but lively examination of social attitudes and foibles, some of which will be found not wholly alien to our own society.

—WILLIAM L. GROSSMAN.

Land of Labels: In his sixth novel, *Don't Stop the Carnival* (Doubleday, \$4.95), the author of *The Caine Mutiny* and *Marjorie Morningstar* is concerned with the problems that beset Norman Paperman, a New York theatrical publicist, when he buys a hotel in the Caribbean. Because Herman Wouk is not a one-thread fiction weaver this is not all his novel is about (there are subplots concerning the love life of Paperman's daughter and an ill-fated dalliance between Paperman and an alcoholic ex-movie star) but it is the thread used to hold the whole Caribbean comedy of errors together. Despite the exotic locale and Mr. Wouk's inventiveness *Don't Stop the Carnival* becomes wearying as disaster after disaster turns Norman's paradise into hell on earth. It is not long before the reader sees through the palm trees and beyond the colorful natives and discovers just another reworking of *Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House* and *George Washington Slept Here*.

Norman Paperman is a fish out of water on the island of Amerigo not because he is a New Yorker but because he is a Jew. He doesn't move in a world of people, likable and unlikable, but through a land of labels—Jew, gentile, white, Negro, homosexual. To Norman Paperman, even the island Christmas carnival takes on an earth-shattering significance: "Africa was marching down the main street. . . ."

If a novel can be both thin and heavy, *Don't Stop the Carnival* is that novel—more Wouk than play, and that makes a dull buy.

—HASKEI FRANKEL.

Reason Without Brutality

Other Inquisitions, 1937-1952, by Jorge Luis Borges, translated from the Spanish by Ruth L. C. Simms (University of Texas Press. 205 pp. \$4.75), a collection of essays by a noted Argentinian writer and scholar, covers a wide range of topics, from Hawthorne, Coleridge, and Shaw to the nature of time. Emile Capouya's essays have been a frequent feature in *Saturday Review*.

By EMILE CAPOUYA

THE ARGENTINE writer Jorge Luis Borges has a reputation for erudition and brilliant paradox, but the word that best describes these essays is manly. Metaphysical preoccupations, an inclination to see all literature as elaborations of a few metaphors, ironic self-awareness—these things in themselves are neutral or negative, but here they take their coloration from a personality that is humane without being sentimental and commonsensical without being brutal. Until the fact sank in, at about the third essay in *Other Inquisitions*, I was reading with a skepticism that was ready to turn into hostility. I could not have been more mistaken, and I record this piece of autobiography for the sake of those readers who are not yet acquainted with Borges and who might be put off by their very first contact with this dispassionate, intensely serious author.

While Mr. Borges is deeply read in a dozen literatures, it is a happy chance for us that he is a scholar in our own. He is a professor of English literature, but setting aside the title, his love for our classics and his insight into them are unmistakable. For penetration and intelligent sympathy one must compare him to Benedetto Croce, as also for his easy assumption—easier for foreign observers than for us—that English and American writing is a portion of the world's literary heritage rather than the peculiar treasure of a single house-proud tribe.

Interesting as are Mr. Borges's comments on Hawthorne, Coleridge, Chesterton, Whitman, or Shaw, the range of these essays is a good deal more extensive. Language, the inner correspondences of literary forms, the nature of time (Mr. Borges denies the existence of this last in a dissertation somewhat

archly entitled "A New Refutation of Time") are recurring preoccupations, and often he explores them through parables, remembered or invented. All those matters, of course, can turn to moonshine in the absence of common sense, or to irrelevance in the absence of humane standards of judgment. As an example of Mr. Borges's common sense I must mention how he refuses to be seduced by the most seductive quality of the classic Argentine novel, *Don Segundo Sombra*. He observes that it is a mistake, in a story told by a gaucho, to make poetry of every action in the daily routine, for it falsifies the psychology of the presumed narrator. Elsewhere Mr. Borges does full justice to the novel; but I was shocked and cheered by his curmudgeonly observation, unflattering as it is to our taste for the exotic.

This passage from the essay "A Comment on August 23, 1944" will show what I mean by Mr. Borges's humanism:

. . . For Europeans and Americans, one order—and only one—is possible: it used to be called Rome and now it is called Western Culture. To be a Nazi (to play the game of energetic barbarism, to play at being a Viking, a Tartar, a sixteenth-century conquistador, a Gaucho, a redskin) is, after all, a mental and moral impossibility. Nazism suffers from unreality, like Erigena's hells. It is uninhabitable; men can only die for it, lie for it, kill and wound for it. No one, in the intimate depths of his being, can wish it to triumph. I shall hazard this conjecture: *Hitler wants to be defeated*. Hitler is collaborating blindly with the inevitable armies that will annihilate him, as the metal vultures and the dragon (which must not have been unaware that they were monsters) collaborated, mysteriously, with Hercules.

Three other works of Jorge Luis Borges are available in English: *Dream-tigers*, *Ficciones* (edited by Anthony Kerrigan), and *Labyrinths*. The present volume is physically quite handsome; it has an interesting introduction by James Irby—more useful if read after the text rather than before, I think. Miss Simms's translation, despite its insistence on calling Duns Scotus "Erigena," as in the excerpt quoted above, is of an exceedingly high standard.

Coming April 24
SR's Report on Writers' Summer
Conferences

The Historical Necessity of Peace

The Faith of an Historian and Other Essays, by James T. Shotwell, selected and arranged by Leo Perla and Helen H. Shotwell (Walker-Inter-Allied. 301 pp. \$7.50), published in the author's ninety-first year, synthesizes his intellectual and moral contribution to society. Stuart Chase is the author of "The Proper Study of Mankind" and, more recently, "Money to Grow On."

By STUART CHASE

JAMES T. SHOTWELL is an historian with a long view and an independent mind. Almost twenty years before the holocaust at Hiroshima he knew that war had outlived its function as an instrument of power politics. Indeed, in his magnificent first essay, which gives the title to this book, he says it was clear by 1917 that a big modern war will spread beyond its objectives. In due course it becomes catastrophic for both victor and vanquished, while it devastates neutral nations as well. World War II drove the point home.

The charter of the United Nations, notes Dr. Shotwell, rests on the lessons of two world wars. No student is better qualified than he to support this statement. Professor Shotwell directed a huge Carnegie study of the impact of War I, for which he mobilized more than 200 experts, including thirty-five wartime Cabinet ministers. "Out of the vast assemblage of the data in this survey, the one conclusion which finally became clear was that for nations living under the régime of science, with their worldwide interplay of interests, war is no longer a valid instrument of policy. . . it can no longer be held to the purposes for which it was fought." It rages out of all human control.

The League of Nations, strongly supported by Shotwell, was the first attempt to come to grips with this revolutionary situation. It failed partly because the United States did not become a member, but perhaps more importantly because of cultural lag: those in the seats of power were not ready for it.

Professor Shotwell tried again. In 1939 he founded the Commission to Study the Organization of Peace; "a hundred of us," he writes, "would spend Sunday, generally all day long, in the

frankest of discussions, the results of which were set forth in a series of reports, beginning with an analysis of war." The State Department set up a small committee to collaborate, with Sumner Welles as chairman. Although kept top secret, "it was in this committee that the first blueprint was made of a charter for the United Nations."

This collection of essays, dating back to "The Discovery of Time," published in 1915, reveals the steps by which a first-class mind, specializing in history, came to realize that history is affected less by kings and conquests than by the development of knowledge, especially science and technology. The steam engine of James Watt was vastly more important in the story of mankind than all the campaigns of Napoleon. The new history, first defined by James Harvey Robinson, observed Mr. Shotwell, has broken out of the old patterns to embrace not only the major developments of natural science, but archeology, anthropology, and the other social sciences as well.

On Shotwell's desk lie two stone axes, one rough hewn, the other smooth and polished. The second represents the sum of technological advance in perhaps 10,000 years. But technology, starting slowly, grows at an exponential rate, like compound interest, and now the principal fills the sky! The V-2 rocket, which made its uncertain way across the Channel to kill Englishmen in 1945, has evolved within two decades into a missile ten stories high that can reach and obliterate any city on earth, or land a space ship on the moon.

Science has wrenched us from a static to a dynamic world. Every major advance causes a displacement in society which calls for new inventions, in a geometric progression. "This is the fundamental nature of the revolution caused by modern science, the greatest happening in all history." Time stood still for men in the last Ice Age, but now, due to one form of technology, it is racing so fast that peace, "the supreme issue of politics," is at last regarded as a political possibility by practical statesmen.

War wrecked the city-state system of the ancient world. War, if it continues, will wreck the nation-state system of the modern world. The faith of an historian lies here: in the strong hope that the facts of the physicists will prevail against age-old conventions.

This brings us back to the United Na-



—Blackstone Studios.

James Shotwell—"one of our greatest world men."

tions and the principle underlying it, for which Professor Shotwell has been battling the past fifty years. "Its inadequacies," he says, "are apparent, but still more apparent is the need for it." James T. Shotwell, on the record of this book, is one of our greatest world men. By this I do not mean a man without a country. Rather I mean a man sensitively aware of the whole human race, who at the same time cherishes his native land so deeply that he cannot countenance its inevitable destruction in thermonuclear exchange. A man who strives unremittingly to find another way than war.

I REALIZE that these reminiscences are slight, and give no adequate picture of Cordell Hull as Secretary of State, of the quiet dignity of the man in his meditative mood or the flash of anger in the eye when confronted with what seemed deception or lack of good faith in those with whom he was dealing. But, I recall one little incident which reveals the inner tenderness of this old Tennessee mountaineer. One afternoon I was sitting with him and Robert Walton Moore, formerly Congressman from Virginia, Counselor to the Department, and the Secretary's closest friend, when a little mouse put its nose out of a hole in the wainscot just beside Secretary Hull's chair. He kept still and asked us not to move either. Then, after a reconnaissance the mouse came over beside Mr. Hull's shoes and curled up on one of them. It was the most incredible sight I have ever seen in Washington! Everyone kept absolutely still. Then as the mouse slipped back into its hole, the Secretary of State turned back to the affairs of the nation, with the casual remark, "I've been making a friend of it." —From the book.