

and therefore guilty of their physical and moral degradation, with rather trite allusions to prostitution here and there. In the gradual rejection of such behavior as these practices impose, he sees a gleam of hope—a gleam that is focussed upon the women themselves.

Universal education comes in for the familiar share of battering that is its due. He sums it up by asking, "What is the use of education if, instead of producing a sensitive and cultured mind, it frets away our finer edges?" Religious superstitions and bigotry in the West are as flourishing, though less directly useful, than those that are so honorable a part of Oriental life: monotheism in particular is, in his opinion, a most ignoble and transparent device. "A Great Being who sets the Cosmos in motion and then goes to sleep: that will pass. One who remains awake and responsible for all that happens on earth is a monster. . . . A single God is an absurdity and a bore." The theatre, as a test of intelligence, brings its own burden of inadequacy to the scene.

The book is in no structural sense a book. It is the casual and spontaneously haphazard recording of the findings of an alert and deeply nourished mind, as it moves freely over the surface of our world, and speculates on the remoteness of the people who inhabit it from the processes of nature that created it: he writes what he has to say about this, and therefore the most pertinent method of presenting it is to quote him. The main undercurrent of the book is emotional (though he would kill me for saying so), and invades you as you read.

When and if he considers that thinking about these problems is worth the effort, he could give us the real work of which this is a random collection of notes. "A How Do You" to a new culture, or better still a "Why Do You Do" to mankind, is what we should have from him, who, though he professes that "the business of life is to enjoy oneself," means by the word "enjoy" much that has gone out of life, leaving it a more limited and cumbersome vehicle for living than it was ever meant to be.

The Municipal Dilemma

THE THIRD NEW YORKER ALBUM. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company. 1930. \$2.50.

Reviewed by GEORGE BLAKE

BUT what, after all, is a New Yorker? It is difficult enough for the European visitor to understand this Manhattan in its physical manifestations. Twenty-four hours after landing at Pier 54 or thereabouts, he feels fully equipped to write that book of impressions his publishers expect of him, but three days later he becomes aware of dreadful uncertainties. At the end of a week, if he be a wise and cautious man, he decides that the whole fantastic outfit of New York defies synthesis and national explanation. What puzzles him most, I fancy, is the distinctly temporary air the city wears—as if even the stainless steel of the Empire State building might tomorrow, on the whim of a restless people, become one with the T-model Fords on the junk heaps that charm the eye of the traveler passing through Brooklyn towards Manhasset, the Walt Whitman country, and Mr. Rothman's agreeable establishment. This apparent insincerity of tenure perplexes the non-quota immigrant, I say, and he is apt to surprise his American friends by finding only in the old Post Office—that delicious souvenir of Ostend—and in the châteaux that straddle the Elevated tracks those symbols of continuity of tradition his European mind instinctively craves.

As he has to struggle to understand New York, just so must your average visitor battle with his own prejudices and preconceptions to see the New Yorker and see him whole. Is he the Polish gentleman who tried to sell me a watch and chain, a nice watch and chain, outside the Pennsylvania Terminal on the morning of October 28th? Or the Negro who has just brought me a jug of ice-water? Or the Italian who provides me occasionally with the "purposeful benzine" of John Mistletoe's reminiscences? . . . The safe generalization, you see, is hopelessly elusive. But if I can dare to say that New York wears a temporary air, I will dare to say that the New Yorker—gloriously friendly, generous, cheerful, adventurous fellow that he is—has yet within him a strain of uneasiness, of self-consciousness, of not-just-quite sureness. "Whadja think of Noo York?"—it really sounds like that to British ears—is popped off at the stranger a dozen times a day. One can fill the lungs,

fix the interlocutor with a genial eye, and shout "Swell!" thus soothing the strange provincialism of the largest city in the world. It is, at the worst, only a white lie. But it is not the truth, the whole truth, about what the writer of the foreword to the delightful volume under review calls, in an inspired phrase, "the municipal dilemma."

To cut a long story short, I should, if asked to explain the New Yorker in unequivocal terms, point to the *New Yorker*. Has any city ever had such a perfect vehicle of self-confession? Like New York, it is always up-to-date—and is yet uneasily aware of the fact that up-to-dateness for its own sake is a thing hardly worth having. It can turn savagely on pretensions and silly things: the "uplift" experts, the flush victim of excess under Prohibition, the stupidly rich—and yet it seems to be turning the blade in a self-inflicted wound. It is gay—and yet knows that for every peal of laughter somebody has to shed a gallon of tears. It can be savage and angry—and yet there is never a trace of the gall of irony in its attacks. It is, indeed, awfully like that laughing, but slightly uncomfortable, realist of a New Yorker I think I begin to understand.

This—the third album of jokes selected from a year's numbers of the *New Yorker*—is, of course, fabulously amusing over and above its value as a barometer of racial tendencies. And one is moved to laughter by the force of two things that are absolutely new in pictorial journalism—an original and highly individual technique of drawing, and a type of jest that depends not on a neat verbal exchange but on the artist's ability to create a comic situation and leave its implications to the delighted reader. For the development of that technique I fancy Mr. Peter Arno is largely responsible, but I am sure he will not begrudge my reverential salute to the genius of Miss Helen Hokinson and other artists whose signatures are to my merely British eyes indecipherable. As for the joke of the comic situation, what could be better than that of the convivial-looking gentleman, all hot and bothered by the intricacies of his evening clothes, demanding of his wife: "Why should I dress up to see a show about a sea gull?" Why, indeed! Then there are the researches of Mr. John Held (Junior) into the family album; and—Oh, go and buy the thing!

I wish we could have in London something like the *New Yorker*, for, though a staunch patriot within reason, I do prefer him to *Punch* in my weekly dose of entertainment. But that, perhaps, is because I am Scot and discover in myself strange, exciting affinities with this Throg's-Necked generation, the people of contemporary Manhattan.

Hoodlum Rule

CHICAGO SURRENDERS. By EDWARD DEAN SULLIVAN. New York: The Vanguard Press. 1930. \$2.

Reviewed by W. R. BURNETT

MR. SULLIVAN concludes his new account of the Chicago crime situation as follows:

. . . thuggery . . . has met no serious rebuff on any front. Its hoodlum marshals obviously have the situation well in hand.

It is amusing as well as instructive to recall that his first book, "Rattling the Cup on Chicago Crime," ended on an optimistic note. Chicago, I believe he said, was aroused at last; "thuggery" was doomed. His swing is radical and understandable. But events have proven him to have been unduly sanguine in his first book, and I think that time will prove him unduly pessimistic in his second. Especially in regard to his attitude on the repeal of the Volstead Act.

Mr. Sullivan, I think, has been led by Wet Propaganda into believing that all Wets, fanatical or moderate, imagine that an immediate paradise on earth will result from a repeal of the Volstead Act. Few if any really think this. It is merely the necessary hoopla without which no law or ordinance of any importance is ever passed in These States. In such cases, shades of opinion are always ignored; white and black are dealt with. The Drys promised a purified land without prisons, asylums, or hospitals. The Wets, in order to win, must promise contentment, prosperity, and order.

Mr. Sullivan's attitude toward repeal is indefensible. He contends that the repeal will turn loose on America countless hordes of unoccupied criminals, who were formerly in the booze racket; this, in a measure, is true. But he further contends that this

army, used to enormous sums of easy money, will organize and rob on a colossal scale, that they will buy up the police, and that the country will be at their mercy. In other words he wants us to believe that the most powerful and prosperous nation in the world, a nation of nearly 15,000,000 people, will give itself up to anarchy and allow a minority to run riot unchecked.

It might be urged that this is at present happening. It is in a certain degree. But it is because the Prohibition law has made the public indulgent. The country is thirsty; gallons of liquor are consumed weekly. This liquor is provided by gangsters to whose activities the drinking citizen has become accustomed. In other words, public opinion does not consider bootlegging "wrong," and even murders arising from this trade are not looked upon with the horror reserved for purely, shall we say, lay murders. This is the direct result of Prohibition.

Repeal the Volstead Act and you will have an entirely different situation. Not that there will be instantly a new Eden, far from it; there will be temporary confusion. But the enormous profits criminals are getting from the sale of booze will be immediately curtailed. In a little while the indulgence for criminals will be gone and a powerful public opinion will force judges, policemen, and mayors to act against crime, however corrupt they may be.

No one, I think, contends that crime has got out of hand merely because of its own power. It can never do that. When organized society decides to fight crime seriously crime hasn't a chance, as was proven in the Old West by the Vigilantes. Virginia City and many of the old western towns had crime situations analogous to Chicago's. Public opinion, up in arms at last, cleaned up.

But aside from all this, Mr. Sullivan's book is good journalistic work and may be read either seriously as a contemporary document of importance, or picked up for an hour's entertainment. Much of it, however, is familiar, containing, as it does, stories which have been told a dozen times, by Bennett, by John Bright, and Mr. Sullivan himself.

Classic Stories

ORPHEUS: MYTHS OF THE WORLD. By PADRAIC COLUM. Illustrated by BORIS ARTZYBASHEFF. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1930. \$5.

Reviewed by HARTLEY ALEXANDER

SOMEHOW first-off I caught the title wrong, reading "Orpheus-myths of the World"; and I greeted it with a leap of expectancy. For there are few still-to-be-understood motifs of myth which are so rich in example and so tantalizing in sense as that which is classic in the tale of Orpheus and Eurydice. In forms now grisly, now pathetic, now lovely, the story is world-cast, and there is a great book in it for any who can read out the place of man's heart in this which we call Nature. My wish no doubt, fathered the thought that Padraic Colum might be giving us that book,—but it happened that his mind was elsewhere, and so I must settle down to the cool dispassion of another matter. Quite justly, for it is no business of a reviewer to exact the book.

Actually "Myths of the World" is the descriptive title. "Orpheus" is only the jacket that brings the eye to the book,—handsomely justified in this case by the design with which Boris Artzybasheff adorns the paper, quite the best in his interesting series, so that it is a pity that it must be lost with the flimsy and is not repeated within the binding. The plan is simple enough. From Egypt to Zuni, from Babylonia to Polynesia, wherever tales have been told and recorded, streams of a poetry whose sources lie

The Saturday Review

OF LITERATURE

HENRY SEIDEL CANBY.....Editor
AMY LOVEMAN.....Managing Editor
WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.....Contributing Editor
CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.....Contributing Editor
NOBLE A. CATHCART.....Publisher

Published weekly, by The Saturday Review Co., Inc., Henry S. Canby, President; Roy E. Larsen, Vice President; Noble A. Cathcart, Secretary-Treasurer, 25 West 45th Street, New York. Subscription rates per year, postpaid: in the U. S. and Mexico, \$3.50; in Canada, \$4; in Great Britain, 18 shillings; elsewhere, \$4.50. All business communications should be addressed to 25 West 45th Street, New York. Entered as second class matter at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 1, 1879. Vol. 7, No. 18.

The Saturday Review is indexed in the "Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature."

Copyright, 1931, by The Saturday Review Co., Inc.

beyond memory have formed into nymphan pools, and beside them the Irish poet has lingered, concerned only for the local genius. There are no by-plays for the erudite, no student-of-mythology artifice,—and one must not at all confuse this with Salomon Reinach's "Orpheus," as to motive or matter. Further, there are no concessions to ignorance. In his introduction Mr. Colum indicates the primary among his sources; but to understand how he has employed them, with what selection from this, what color from that, it is entirely necessary that the reader know the source. Fortunately this understanding is no more than a prefatory one. The author really does not care whether you—the reader—know or ignore the workshop end of his tale-telling. What is his concern is the story, just for the poetry's sake. By and large, the selections are as happy as might be; everywhere there is an eye for the center of the cycle; and if you enjoy myths told just as the teller might, and have in yourself the blessed gift out of their simplicities to bring forth the fantasy, then you will enjoy this book,—all unconstrained by today or to-morrow, for the half hundred and more of stories form each its own world, bubble now but once life.

There are a lot of pedantic nothings that might be said, wisacredly, about Mr. Colum's sources, selections, phrasings, spellings, colorings. But why pedantry where poetry is the only concern? My most substantial regret, as reviewer, is that the author felt constrained to write (and the announce publishers to play up) a prefatory essay on the "Significance of Mythology." It is lame to the point of limping from any scholar's (forgive me the word!) point of view. If any bookish "front" or "face" were needed, as author's (and publisher's?) justification, it could all have been taken care of by a page of eight-point notes in the backage of the volume . . . but I see that word-jargon is delivering me up to anatomical paradox! The simple moral is, when you take up the book skip the introduction.

More Boswell

THE BOSWELL PAPERS OF THE ISHAM COLLECTION. Vols. 7, 8, 9. Edited by FREDERICK A. POTTLE. Privately printed by WILLIAM EDWIN RUDGE. 1930.

Reviewed by ARNOLD WHITRIDGE

ANY one who thought that Geoffrey Scott had perhaps skimmed the cream off the Boswell papers will be agreeably surprised by the three volumes recently edited by Professor Pottle. They cover the period 1765-1774, nine of the most fruitful years of Boswell's life, during which he sprang into fame as the champion of Corsica, established himself as a busy lawyer in Edinburgh, and committed the wisest act of his life in marrying his cousin, Margaret Montgomerie.

Professor Pottle has maintained the same high standard of editorial tact and scholarship that was set by Geoffrey Scott. Like his predecessor he has avoided the temptation to play the showman, for Boswell's extraordinary candor must have tempted him again and again to forget that a good editor does not advertise his wares. When Boswell says in one of his letters to his fiancée "I am sure I have told you everything bad about myself," Professor Pottle contents himself with the laconic comment "he probably came nearer to telling the truth than any other lover in history." The only editorial difference between these volumes and the earlier ones is that Professor Pottle prints the journals in their entirety regardless of any obscurities. Even the condensed journals, which are little more than notes, are included.

We left Boswell at the end of the fifth volume luxuriating in "the charms of sweet Siena." In the end of September, 1765, he finally tears himself away and embarks on his long contemplated trip to Corsica. Rousseau, who had been asked to draw up a constitution for Corsica, had originally kindled Boswell's interest in the Corsicans and their picturesque chieftain Paoli. His own insatiable curiosity, combined with a romantic but perfectly genuine admiration for an oppressed nation, had decided him to explore the country for himself. Paoli was at first bewildered by this strange, expansive young Scotchman, and then like everybody else he thawed in the warmth of Boswell's good humor. But Boswell was not merely a sympathetic and agreeable companion; he soon showed himself an effective ally. As Paoli had anticipated, his "Account of Corsica" had a prodigious effect. "A man come from Corsica will be like a man come from the Antipodes" he told

Boswell, and he was not mistaken. Trevelyan in his life of Charles James Fox speaks of it as by far the best account of the island that has ever been written, and the "Journal of a Tour to Corsica" is even better reading than "the Account." The infamous heresy that Boswell blundered into fame by attaching himself to Johnson has long ago been dispelled, but the fact that Boswell would still have been a distinguished man even if he had never met Johnson is only now being realized. To the end of his life he gloried in the nickname "Corsica."

Not content with literary fame for himself he pushed the claims of Corsica upon the great Mr. Pitt. He called upon him in his rooms in Bond Street and when he was refused, announced that he would "call ten times if necessary." The second time he was admitted and found himself pleading his case before "a tall man in black clothes, with a white nightcap and his foot all wrapp'd up in flannel on a Gout Stool." In the interview Pitt was politely non-committal, but Boswell pursued him with ardent letters urging him to support the independence of Corsica. These letters have already been published in the Chatham Correspondence. Taken in conjunction with Boswell's own journal they illustrate his petty vanity and fine idealism, qualities which are apt to clash in other men but in Boswell always managed to harmonize. "Could your Lordship" he writes "find time to honour me now and then with a letter? I have been told how favourably



JAMES BOSWELL

From a sketch by Sir Thomas Lawrence in the possession of John Murray.

Your Lordship has spoke of me. To correspond with a Paoli and with a Chatham is enough to keep a young man ever ardent in the pursuit of virtuous fame."

No wonder he could not rid his mind of Corsica, as Johnson begged him to do. More than the great Doctor himself Corsica permeated every nook and cranny of his character. It satisfied his idealism, it kept him in contact with great men, and it assured him a wide publicity. How real was the effect of Boswell's efforts on Paoli's behalf may be gathered from the unwilling testimony of one who had little respect for him. "Foolish as we are," wrote Lord Holland, "we cannot be so foolish as to go to war because Mr. Boswell has been in Corsica."

The return journey to London was enlivened as Boswell enlivened all his journeys with promiscuous amours. In Paris where he hears of his mother's death he is at first quite stunned with grief, but he quickly recovers himself. He dines with the Dutch ambassador, talks much of Corsica, and then rushes off to a brothel "as in a fever." He also finds time to thrust his company upon Horace Walpole, who tried unsuccessfully to avoid him, and to visit the Luxembourg, but he discovers as so many of us have discovered since "that it was not the day to see the gallery." On the advice of Wilkes he decided to return home at once owing to the death of his mother. Perhaps the decision was also prompted by the chance of accompanying Rousseau's mistress, Thérèse LeVasseur, across the Channel. Boswell was not the man to miss such an opportunity of obtaining valuable information about one of his heroes. From all accounts Thérèse LeVasseur was a most unattractive woman, vulgar as well as illiterate, but it had always been supposed that she was faithful to Rousseau. That one virtue must now be taken from her. The entries of the first eleven days of February, 1766, during which Boswell and Thérèse were pursuing their leisurely way from Paris to London are now missing from the journal, having been

destroyed just prior to the transference of the papers to Colonel Isham, but it is clear that they drifted into an intrigue. Professor Pottle looks upon the Thérèse LeVasseur episode as "farce," but is there not an element of farce in all Boswell's amours? Except for his wife, whom he loved genuinely after his fashion, Boswell was incapable of any relationship with women that was not either ridiculous or disgusting. When he was not "roaring," to use his own phrase, after women of the town, he was pursuing heiresses for their money, or writing fatuous letters to Zélide or Porzia Sansedoni.

And yet in spite of his infidelities and his drunkenness Boswell contrived to make his wife happy. Mrs. Boswell, as we know from the "Life of Johnson," was in many ways the exact opposite of her husband. She preferred Scotland to England, she did not like traveling, and she did not share Boswell's enthusiasm for Johnson, although on one occasion she did send the great man a jar of marmalade as a token of reconciliation. Johnson respected her even if he did tease her about her dislike for him—he must have been a trying guest for any hostess—and he was wise enough to see how essential she was to Boswell's happiness. Today we know, what perhaps Johnson only guessed, that Margaret Boswell was not only a sensible wife but a very gallant woman. The love letters written by Boswell and his fiancée in the seven months preceding their marriage seem to us almost the richest treasure of the Malahide hoard.

By a strange fatality the originals of Margaret Montgomerie's letters, with one exception, have disappeared from the fireproof safe which Colonel Isham has provided for the protection of the Boswell papers. Fortunately the letters had all been copied by a typist before their disappearance.

At the time of her engagement Margaret Montgomerie believed that marriage meant going into immediate exile with her husband and living on about a hundred pounds a year. Apparently Boswell made this proposal to test her devotion. If she hesitated to accept him on these terms he would know that she did not love him, and he would "set sail for America and become a wild Indian." This, says Boswell in his journal, "was truly romantic." Fortunately Mrs. Boswell contrived to ignore certain qualities, which in the eyes of any other woman would have made him utterly impossible as a husband. Perhaps it was his amazing simplicity, the characteristic which so endeared him to Goldsmith and Johnson, that won her heart. She was herself a remarkably downright person and it may well be that his honesty compensated for every fault. "It is on account of your health," she writes him, "that I am most uneasy, as I am not afraid but you will be very sober when you reflect that being otherwise will make a person unhappy who would sacrifice a good deal for your satisfaction." Knowing the very worst about him she never gave up hoping for the best.

✻ ✻ ✻

Boswell's ingenuous vanity is nowhere better exemplified than in his account of the Shakespeare festival at Stratford in 1769. He was happily inspired to attend the festival in Corsican dress. Johnson much to his disappointment did not accompany him to Stratford, but he had the satisfaction of meeting Garrick whom he compelled to listen to an ode he had written for the occasion. The journal of this jaunt is inimitably Boswellian. "I went to the Ball tonight, just to see how the company looked when dressed, and to be able to tell that I had been there. . . . My Corsican dress attracted everybody. I was as much a favorite as I could desire."

This is the Boswell who excited the compassionate contempt of Macaulay, and in the Isham Papers he stands revealed to the world even more naked and unashamed. But there is another Boswell revealed in these journals not so well known, of whom Macaulay was completely unaware—the Boswell who defended John Reid, the sheep-stealer, an obscure criminal whom nobody else cared to defend. He had nothing to gain by taking Reid's case for the man was penniless, and it was a foregone conclusion that he would be convicted, but Boswell was always ready to champion a lost cause. He even evolved a scheme for resuscitating the corpse after hanging, and only gave it up because the doctors despaired of success. Boswell always acted from mixed motives, and there was no doubt another reason for his devotion to a doomed man. Funerals and executions had an irresistible attraction for him. Just as he posted off to see David Hume on his deathbed because he must know how an atheist face his Maker.