

the great tragedy that catches those who must work and suffer, as in the case of Ida Hauchawout, he writes with the authentic quality of "Twelve Men."

Two men from the West sat in the Harvard Stadium and listened to a university band from Indiana that was present to bring courage to its friends and consternation to its enemies. When it played the Hoosier state song, one of the men said, "Wouldn't it be a strange irony if the first stanza and chorus of 'On the Banks of the Wabash,' which Theodore Dreiser was prevailed upon by his brother Paul to write, should outlive all his conscientious labors in prose?" It would be but a slightly greater irony than has overtaken Ben Jonson. It may overtake Theodore Dreiser despite the best he may try to do. But not a few readers will feel that he openly invites such a fate by adding to his published works "A Gallery of Women."

## Portrait of a Fighter

IRON MAN. By W. R. BURNETT. New York: Dial Press, 1930. \$2.50.

Reviewed by THEODORE PURDY, JR.

THERE is a type of novel more common in America than anywhere else at the moment, which has for its principal business the presentation of a single figure, to be portrayed largely by the use of accurate dialogue, against a brilliant, impressionistic background of localized interest. No story or plot is really necessary, what narrative there is being carried on in brief flashes of characterization and description, written in a quick, journalistic style. A popular subject is all that is needed to make such a book extremely attractive to the present day reader, who is unable or unwilling to follow an intricate plot, uninterested in analysis which goes beneath the surface, yet anxious to read something less obvious than a romance or detective thriller in the conventional mode.

Mr. Burnett's new book is this sort of novel executed with more than usual skill, and made exceptionally interesting because of its author's evident knowledge of what he is writing about and enthusiasm for it. Although the prize-fighter has not been by any means neglected as hero in late years, few rivals in the field are of Mr. Burnett's calibre just now; it seems likely that his book will have considerable success.

Yet it is less remarkable because it is good, lively, readable, and true than because its author has cared to go outside his real subject in order to bring into the book something more subtle and difficult to do than the portrait of a fighter brought low by his worthless wife after luck and his manager have made him champion. This thing of value added by Mr. Burnett is the character of Regan, the champion's manager, whose understanding of his charge is so extraordinary, and whose relation to him is so vital to both that they are ruined by the break which the wife produces between them. While both Coke and the woman are fairly conventional characters, —the honest, stupid pugilist incredibly devoted to his pretentious and unfaithful butterfly wife—the Irish manager is a quite special person, created exclusively by Mr. Burnett out of life. Besides this, there are the many fights in the book, magnificently described, if unavoidably a bit repetitious. The dialogue is fittingly matched to the speakers throughout, the final tragedy wholly convincing in its suddenness. Mr. Burnett has written a good novel, and given notice that it is in his power to write a far better one.

## Peasants of Italy

ENOUGH OF DREAMS. By FRANCESCO PERRI. New York: Brentano's. 1929. \$2.50.

Reviewed by BASIL DAVENPORT

SIGNOR PERRI'S story is a novel of the peasants of Calabria, a people almost incredibly simple, poor, and backward, still at the mercy of natural forces, still oppressed by feudalism. They know nothing of the government at Rome or the factories at Turin; their chief knowledge of the modern world comes from marvelous travelers' tales of America. America is present all through the book, as an enormous, mysterious, capricious power that may give a fortune to the man bold enough to tempt her, or may ruin or kill him. The villagers do not risk the voyage until an unsuccessful revolt and an earthquake have made heroic measures necessary; and when they do the forlorn

hope is utterly defeated; one emigrant is killed, another returns to find his wife unfaithful, another is infected with syphilis, which he gives his bride, a disease of which only one of the country folk has ever heard. But it is not America's fault, any more than it is the fault of the fields that they give good crops one year and open underfoot the next: it is the way of the incomprehensible world.

The separate scenes are often poignant, and sometimes powerful; the brief glimpse of the transplanted community and their alien lives is only too short; and the episode of the blinded bride praying for healing from a miraculous madonna at a festival, will bear comparison with the chapter of the thousand Aves in "Maria Chapdelaine." But in the end one is moved less than one feels one ought to be. The characters are too remote, too bovine, without the depth that gains sympathy for Maria Chapdelaine or, say Mr. Masfield's Nan.

The translation is over-exact, sometimes to the point of downright ambiguity, as when for "*Nu vecchiu fusu di 'na vecchia*" it gives "An old spindle of an old woman," leaving one to wait for the context to determine whether it means "a spindling old woman" or "an old woman's old spindle."

## Men of the Old Dominion

THE VIRGINIA PLUTARCH. By PHILIP ALEXANDER BRUCE. Chapel Hill: the University of North Carolina Press. 1929. Two vols. \$9.

Reviewed by ALLAN NEVINS

THESE two handsome volumes are a unique tribute to a great State. As the mother of eminent men, Virginia holds a place which Massachusetts and New York alone approach and neither quite equals. It is true that in fields of literature and learning Massachusetts bears off the palm; Virginia is poor in poets, novelists, and scientists compared with the State of Boston, Cambridge, and Concord. But in war, politics, and pioneering there is no list equal to that which includes Washington, Jefferson, Patrick Henry, Madison, Mason, Monroe, Marshall, Winfield Scott, Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, and Woodrow Wilson. Dr. Bruce, rounding out his long career devoted to historical scholarship, has brought together biographical essays upon all these famous men and a dozen of lesser note. His purpose is not merely, or even chiefly, to furnish a series of critical sketches of detached character. It is rather to demonstrate that a complete and rich segment of American history, running from the earliest colonial days to the present time, could be presented in the lives of well-known Virginians. There is only one important gap—that of the Reconstruction period, when Virginia was barren of great men; except for this, the overlapping lives furnish a continuous narrative of American effort.

Because he aimed at a continuous narrative of deeds, Dr. Bruce has fixed his attention not upon subjective aspects of his various heroes, but upon what they contributed in action to American life. The emphasis upon action gives the book movement, sweep, and variety. It leaves it a little poor in one Plutarchian quality, the presentation of intimate traits of character. It is hardly true, as Dr. Bruce claims, that the subjective element is included in an objective narrative—that with these men "their individualities are sufficiently disclosed in the general current of their biographies." If we compare the author's sketch of J. E. B. Stuart, full of plain facts of his promotions, campaigns, and battles, with Gamaliel Bradford's effort in "Confederate Portraits" to get at the essence of the man, we can see what is missing. But Virginia's men were preëminently men of action, and some of the greatest, like Washington and Lee, revealed very little of their inner life to anyone; so that Dr. Bruce's method is not inappropriate. In the whole list there is just one man of letters, Poe, who was not a Virginian in either his birth or death; there are just two scientists, Maury and Dr. Walter Reed. The rest are lawgivers, soldiers, statesmen, or explorers.

In any such collection the sketches must be of uneven merit. Dr. Bruce is at his best in dealing not with his greatest men, nor with his least, but with those of middle rank. After all, nobody can treat Washington adequately in thirty-five pages, and Dr. Bruce's portrait is a little stiffer than those familiar with the recent biographies would expect. His picture of Lee is also cold and formal, bringing out the great talents of the general rather than the fine qualities of the man. As for Woodrow Wilson, the author seems strangely lacking in sympathy with him,

and points out his faults with more emphasis than the virtues which immortalized him. Some of the minor figures—Powhatan, Sir George Yeardley, Sir Francis Nicholson—are but shadows lost in the far past of Virginia history, and it is impossible now to make them start and live, or seem important to our twentieth century world. These colonial governors, too, were Englishmen rather than Virginians; Sir Thomas Dale, who receives a chapter, was in Virginia but five years (1611-1616) out of a fairly long and very busy life.

But when he deals with Nathaniel Bacon, the rebel, or Sir William Byrd, or Patrick Henry, or George Mason of Gunston Hall, or General Daniel Morgan, or Commodore Maury, or Dr. Walter Reed, the author writes with gusto, color, and freshness. In all these men there were salient and picturesque qualities. Byrd, for example, a London man of the world set down in the backwoods, a lover of the frontier, and a wonderfully clear-eyed observer of its humors and crudities; Daniel Morgan, who began his life in dissipation and ended as a gallant fighter; and gout-ridden old George Mason, lover of his library and his ease, who through sheer inertia accomplished so much less than his abilities promised—these are rendered in a graphic way. There is nowhere a better brief essay than that on Bacon, for no one is better steeped than Dr. Bruce in the social and economic background of Bacon's revolt. Now and then it can be objected that Dr. Bruce is too favorable to his subjects, as when he vigorously defends the administration of that littlest of Presidents, John Tyler. But it is pleasant to respond to the enthusiasm with which he writes of men who really deserve it; for example, Dr. Walter Reed. He writes of Reed's Arizona service:

He was not satisfied to confine his professional ministrations to the soldiers belonging to the garrison of the fort where he happened to be stationed for the time being. The people in all the surrounding sparsely settled country were his patients; and he allowed no obstacle to stand in the way of his giving them the benefit of his knowledge and skill, whenever they were in need of his services. For instance, he was often seen to disregard the fact that he himself was suffering with fever when called upon to ride a long distance in order to afford relief at a pioneer bedside. The poorer the sufferer, the more eager was Reed to extend his professional aid. It has been said of him that throughout his later professional life he never lost his impression of his practice among the indigent population of New York City; and that his recollection of the suffering which he had observed there made him, wherever he was posted, more sensitive to the claims of sickness among the same impoverished class, whether in the purlieus of towns or in the barren lands of the western territories. It was noticed in Arizona that the Indians who lived in the vicinity of Forts Lowell and Apache frequently came to consult him about their maladies, in spite of the hostile moods which they so often exhibited towards the garrisons.

It is an interesting and measurably impressive panorama which Dr. Bruce has spread before us. The reader, as he finishes it, will find himself wondering why it was that Virginia proved so prolific of these energetic and far-sighted men of action. She not only kept great men in her own service; she furnished Henry Clay to Kentucky, and Sam Houston to Texas, and George Rogers Clark to the Northwest. Does the explanation lie in the sterling qualities of the homogeneous stock which she drew from England and Scotland, or in some features of her highly individual social life, or in the commanding position of the State with reference to the West and South? Whatever it is, the Old Dominion has a proud record.

Four thousand volumes on food, cookery, and allied subjects have recently been presented to the New York Academy of Medicine by Dr. Margaret Barclay Wilson. The most important item among them is a nine century manuscript of a collection of recipes made after Greek originals.

## The Saturday Review of LITERATURE

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## BOOKS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

### Scientific Journalism

MAN AND HIS WORLD: NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY ESSAYS IN CONTEMPORARY THOUGHT. Edited by BAKER BROWNELL. New York: D. Van Nostrand Company. 12 volumes. \$1.75 each.

Reviewed by JOHN HERMAN RANDALL, JR.

MANY doctors have prescribed a cure for the rash of "Outlines of Human Knowledge" and "Stories of Everything" with which publishers' announcements are currently afflicted. The humanization of knowledge, if possible, is surely a laudable enterprise. Civilization may indeed meet its often prophesied doom if college graduates, garment-workers, and intelligent women remain in their present ignorance of the wisdom of the expert. In any event, skilful publicity has aroused their thirst for reading of some kind, and it might as well be directed to selling good books as bad. Let the experts themselves, therefore, come together to collaborate upon really informed surveys, in the hope that Gresham's law does not apply to the literature of popular education. The same remedy has been often advised for those courses of general intellectual orientation which harassed college faculties have installed to waken lethargic freshmen. From facile outliners and struggling instructors, the cry has gone forth, Good Lord, deliver us! Let us have experts in cooperation!

Baker Brownell, who elucidates the mazes of contemporary thought at Northwestern University, and has already published an interesting attempt at an emotional appreciation of the modern world in "The New Universe," has for some years invited various men of learning to address his classes. He has now arranged their lectures in accordance with the scheme of his course and book, and published them in twelve slight volumes of about 175 brief pages each, with rather pretentious titles and format. He is not quite sure what his series has accomplished. It aims, he thinks, "first, to integrate somewhat the uncoordinated content of man's intellectual universe; second, to find the modern theme—or themes—and its development in his varied interests." It tries "to present in language for the general reader the frontier problems of the various fields of modern thought." At any rate, "the result reveals a modern world in which divers kinds of interest and living converge into the modern complex of reality." In this last description, Mr. Brownell is right: it does.

"Man and His World" is a fairly typical product of such collaboration. It avoids many of the crude mistakes into which the popular outliner is prone to fall; but on the whole it awakens new respect for his function and achievement. A single writer, even though he must rely for his facts upon the compilations of others, can succeed in coordinating a field of knowledge and conveying a unified impression of its problems where a group of experts must fail. To be sure, the majority of these fifty-eight contributors are neither outstanding experts nor brilliant writers: they are mostly competent teachers in Chicago and Northwestern Universities, or leaders in the various vocations who happened to be available in Chicago. And in his prefaces, prologue, and epilogue, Mr. Brownell is more lyric than illuminating when he tries to tie the essays together. Still, the collaborators turn out what men usually do on such an occasion, a group of essays some of which are informing, some stimulating and suggestive, and some neither. There is no similarity in aim, temper, or treatment; there is only a group of heterogeneous essays. Some of the lecturers chose to give an elementary survey of a definite field; more of them elected to ride their pet hobbies, and propound interesting speculations growing out of their work; still more undertook criticism and interpretation from a rather personal angle. The result is a somewhat diluted blend of books like the Chicago University "Nature of the World and of Man" and Beard's "Whither Mankind," without the distinction of either: glimpses of the wonders of science, and discussions of the dangers to civilization. There is no coordinated picture of modern thought; there is journalism of respectable competence.

Part of the difficulty lies in the editor's scheme. There is one volume on natural science, one on psychology, one on anthropology, three on social problems, three on the arts, one on religion, and two volumes of general essays. Those on psychology, on anthropology, and, in particular on the arts are distinctly the best, both in organization and content. The treatment of economic conditions is by far the worst. One suspects that Mr. Brownell did not feel free to encourage lectures on such dangerous and controversial themes. Instead he includes eulogies of modern technology, machinery, and business. To be sure, Stuart Chase dissents on the plight of the consumer, George Soule pleads for a pragmatic program of factual investigation, and E. D. Howard combines a realistic analysis of the trends of industrial organization with a program of self-government for industry. But F. S. Deibler dusts off once more all the traditional theoretical defenses of "our economic system." Ellsworth Huntington praises our civilization for producing urban slums and rural poverty, and President W. D. Scott argues that "in America (industrial) power is possessed by the many and used for the benefit of all." Such opinions are certainly contemporary, but hardly thought.

From the standpoint of an organized survey, the natural sciences, too, come off badly. Although, significantly enough, in the essays themselves, with one exception, the idea of evolution as an explanatory concept is relegated to the museum shelves, in their arrangement the traditional evolutionary plan of starting with the birth of the universe and bringing life and man into it is still followed. As a result, though Mr. Brownell repeatedly insists on the "objectivity" of natural science as contrasted with the field of human institutions, it is the scientific essays that are hypothetical and subjective, and the others that are objective and factual. W. D. Macmillan indulges in brilliant but highly speculative theorizing as to the history of the cosmos, Irving S. Cutter guesses as to how life might have originated, and A. H. Clark offers a novel and personal theory of limited animal evolution. The vitality of this H. G. Wells sort of thing in surveys of science is amazing; one wonders what notion of the meaning of careful scientific investigation the unsophisticated reader gains from such imaginative surmises. To introduce science only to romance about the things of which it knows least is to try to outdo Genesis by the brilliance of a new mythology. Perhaps some day such a survey will have the courage to begin, not with the unknown beginning, but with what we know something about, the present course of nature.

Moreover, having dragged the scientist from his facts and verifications to speculate on cosmic origins, Mr. Brownell curiously omits all historical consideration of the field where available knowledge of the past is really illuminating, that of social institutions. In a single essay Ferdinand Schevill attempts the futile task of interpreting the whole course of political history. Otherwise there is only the most incidental reference to the fact that man's world has a temporal dimension, and surprisingly little appreciation of its present markedly transitional state. The growth of industry is suggested only in its technological aspects; its impingement upon the older forms of our civilization, as well as the revolutionary impact of scientific thinking upon action and belief, is present only by implication. Mr. Brownell's scheme does not permit the reader to face the rapid flux of social institutions, nor to essay their present problems in the light of such cultural revolution.

Within the limits of such an outline, however, many of the contributors manage to be both wise and provocative; the very freedom to develop the ideas that lie closest to their hearts invests most of their words with a sustained interest. The writers on "Mind and Society" really do touch the "modern theme." Freud and the Gestaltists are brilliantly treated by George Humphrey and Joseph Jastrow. C. J. Herrick and E. A. Burt deal lucidly with the modern recon-

ciliation of mechanism and mental behavior, the one as a neurologist, the other as a philosopher. F. H. Allport sets the theme that runs through the discussion of social problems: only a genuine science of human nature can attain the objectivity and insight necessary for an intelligent control of the new energies of man. In "Making Mankind" Clark Wissler, F. Cooper-Cole, and M. J. Herskovits deal critically with primitive society, without, however, drawing any implications for our own.

Certain non-economic problems of civilization are sanely analyzed. A. R. Hatton does not despair of urban politics, and sees a genuine hope in the council-manager plan of government. T. D. Eliot escapes both alarmism and bigotry in presenting the case for birth-control. Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Suzanne La Follette sturdily defend the modern woman, and assure us that the end of her revolt is not yet. Jean Toomer writes with admirable forbearance and keen psychological insight upon the whites and blacks. And Alvin Johnson gives the shrewdest analysis yet presented of the break-down of traditional life-patterns and disciplines among the young. "For the first time in history, the adolescent population is developing a general public opinion of its own, standards of conduct of its own, based on its own limited experience of life." It is primarily the school that has torn the child from the home, without giving him any adequate substitute for domestic discipline; nor can training for mass-production supply the needed stabilization of character. Everything conspires to rob youth of the capacity to form long-term plans and the resolution to carry them out.

The essays on the arts attain the highest level of the series. Lawrence Martin colorfully assays the common man's enjoyments; Clarence Darrow makes Omar live vividly as the epitome of universal experience. C. J. Bulliet accomplishes the impossible by really explaining in words the aims and techniques of modern painting. Modern tendencies in music and the dance are thoughtfully analyzed; there is a comprehensive survey of modern poetry in all languages. Robert Morss Lovett maintains that literature has freed itself of the Victorian problem, "Is life worth living?" and is realistically and pragmatically exploring its possible values. Llewelyn Jones and Charles Johnston somewhat less successfully attack the central problems of esthetics in terms of the theory of philosophic idealism.

Religious problems are treated by an anthropologist and four theologians. The former, Edward Sapir, displays the subordinate place of belief in the religious life; belief is in fact a scientific rather than a religious concept. He denies the existence of any specifically religious emotion, and distinguishes between religions of individual behavior and of collective symbol and ritual. Shailer Matthews approaches religion humanistically, sees in it a technique for establishing personal relations with cosmic forces, and in its success reads the implication that what has produced personality can itself be properly personified as God. E. F. Tittle, Rufus M. Jones, and Bishop McConnell bend idealistic philosophy to the service of an apologetic liberal religion.

There are two outstanding philosophic essays. D. T. Howard analyzes the changed conception of science, largely in terms of Peirce and Whitehead. And E. R. Slosson, in "The Democracy of Knowledge," a plea for scientific journalism, persuasively proclaims the philosophy on which Mr. Brownell's whole enterprise is based. Intellectual middlemen must employ all the arts of skilful writing to convey an appreciation of the value of science as a guide in personal and political affairs. They cannot make scientists, for scientists do not "read" science, they make it. But they can teach respect for the experimental processes by which scientific principles are established, the ability to distinguish the man who knows from the man who pretends to know, and something of the scientific temper of mind. They can persuade men to value science by displaying its influence in the life and thought of the world. "The popularization of science does not mean falsification,

but its translation from technical terms into ordinary language. Popular science need not be incorrect, but has to be somewhat indefinite. It differs from the exact sciences by being inexact. Popular science may be defined as science in round numbers." The average educated man today, Slosson rightly points out, knows and cares less about the world in which he lives than did the educated man of the Huxley era. "Man and His World," within the limits of its scheme and method, does make a beginning at correcting this disastrous state of affairs. It is scientific journalism for the average man, offering bait tempting enough to attract him and sustain his interest, and ideas provocative enough to drive him to thought.

### Recent Discoveries

SONNETS. By GEORGE HENRY BOKER. Edited by EDWARD SCULLEY BRADLEY. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. 1929. \$2.

NYDIA. A Tragic Play. By GEORGE HENRY BOKER. Edited by EDWARD SCULLEY BRADLEY. The same.

Reviewed by HARRY HAYDEN CLARK

University of Wisconsin

IT is unfortunate that the "barbaric yawp" of Whitman and the insurgent realists of the latter part of the nineteenth century should have drowned the delicate, finely-modulated tones of such a figure as George Henry Boker, the author of "Francesca da Rimini," our greatest romantic tragedy. Among the major contributions to American literature this year we must note the publication for the first time of Boker's "Nydia," a tragedy discovered by Professor Quinn, and his sequence of three hundred and thirteen sonnets just discovered by Professor Bradley "in a cupboard in the house of the daughter-in-law of the poet." This is a discovery which makes Boker the peer of Longfellow as a master of the sonnet.

Those who prize the union of intensity of emotion and perfection of form will prize the sonnets of this beautifully-bound little volume. In an admirable introduction Professor Bradley divides this "Sequence on Profane Love" into three groups, corresponding to three well-marked periods in the poet's life. The first group of 282 sonnets appears to have been inspired by Boker's devotion from 1857 to 1872 to a married woman of Philadelphia; the second group of 13 by a Parisienne in 1877; and the third, of 17, by another Philadelphian about 1881. The sedate diplomat and social leader planned to leave the sequence to his friend Taylor—"to be edited by you with bawdy notes, and illustrations to match!" No doubt the Freudians will be interested in Professor Bradley's theory that this illicit love creatively determined Boker's life work as an artist: "The passion and insight of these sonnets reveal the heart of the poet himself as the source of that fire which consumed his Alda, flamed to a splendid holocaust in the death of Francesca and Paolo, or became a quiet but perpetual altar-flame in the heart of Nydia."

"Nydia," a dramatization of the central situation of Bulwer's "Last Days of Pompeii," deals with the hopeless love of the beautiful blind slave, Nydia, for the Patrician Glaucus. It appears that the play was written in 1885 for Lawrence Barrett, who modestly rejected it because his part (that of Glaucus) was not as important as that of Nydia. The spectacular orgy in the splendid hall of the villain-priest's palace would interest Mr. Ziegfeld! Boker's notes are enjoyable, especially the one to Barrett on the death of Glaucus:

I have got into such a habit of killing my heroes that I would far rather kill you than let you escape with a speech. But the dead riot will not let you die gracefully and according to my wish; so you must make the best of the words with which I have provided you,—a poor apology for living.

On the whole, the play is by no means ineffective. Professor Bradley calls it "one of the finest examples of the author's dramatic blank verse and one of the best plays in the history of American literature."