

Bryant, Fitz-Greene Halleck, James K. Paulding, Gulian C. Verplanck, Henry K. Brown, N. P. Willis, and many artists of distinct talent, were all living in New York in the 'forties, and were quite as appreciative of paintings as any of the steel-puddlers and copper-smelters whose homes line upper Fifth Avenue and whose collections have enriched the dealers who made their selections for them."

Shortcomings of a similar character are charged to Mr. Beer's novel as well as his life of Crane. But as Mr. Beer is making a special field for himself in biography, we confine our quotations from Mr. Ford to his handling of the life of the author of "The Red Badge of Courage."

"Stephen Crane' is a painstaking work in the true sense of the word, for Mr. Beer has evidently been at infinite pains to collect all possible information regarding a writer for whom he entertains a great and genuine admiration. Indeed, his sincerity and the skill with which he has written this biography atone for an enthusiasm that seems to me scarcely justified by the facts. The literary conditions in New York under the dominion of Mr. Gilder of *The Century* are portrayed in all fairness, so that it is easy to understand why 'Maggie' failed to find a publisher. It was the sort of book we all wanted to write in those days, when what was known as 'low life' was under the *Century* ban, and very properly, too, for 'Maggie' would have cut a wide swath across any respectable subscription list. More than one of us did write such stories, but lacked the money which enabled Crane to get his into type.

"I knew Crane quite well, tho not intimately, during his short-lived popularity, and was quite in sympathy with his intolerance of the magazine rule of the day; I never heard, however, of any cabal against him, for he was generally liked. The charge that he imitated Zola's 'Débâcle' is preposterous, but I always thought he was influenced by Tolstoy's 'Sevastopol,' perhaps unconsciously. He was fond of low company, probably because it opened up to him, as a writer, an immense unexplored territory from which we were debarred by *Century* ukase, and in which he would have gone still further had he lived. I think a taste for high company has spoiled more ambitious writers than any devotion to the low. . . . Mr. Beer introduces into his narrative the names of many of Crane's literary and newspaper associates, but does not seem to estimate accurately their importance."

Mr. Beer contributes to a recent number of *Liberty* (Chicago) a new study of Richard Harding Davis. The editor of this weekly declares that "Mr. Beer has a genius for steeping himself in an epoch and then putting the very pulse of that epoch into print." The editor further declares that Mr. Beer "exhibits that gift to the full in recreating the era of Richard Harding Davis." It is "the era" that concerns us in this showing by Mr. Beer—an era that was languishing for the coming of Mr. Davis, for

"The nation outside of New York was ever so tired of its writers. Mark Twain had lost his novelty. Readers knew what to expect of Mr. Howells and Mr. Cable, and Henry James had fallen from favor as his books began to take on the air of long-winded reports by a stranger in a drawing-room as to the conduct of people whom nobody had ever met. George Ade, Stephen Crane, and Frank Norris had not yet started."

It is well to recall what Mr. Beer does not mention—that among these "twelve times" poorer writers than the new hero were such names as Thomas Hardy, William Black and George Du Maurier. Nevertheless—

"Here was a fresh, young talent whose subjects were fresh, too. If 'Gallagher,' 'Mr. Raegen,' and 'Her First Appearance' are not great fiction, they are easily twelve times as good as were the tales printed solemnly in American magazines of the eighties. Try to read those histories of tame love in which young men woo young women as tho they were moral issues and only drink champagne to show themselves on the road to hellfire, and the dreary English serials that pumped along for nine and ten numbers of *Harper's* and the rest as tho they were worth something—heaven knows what.

"And Mr. Davis talked so cheerfully of things new in American writing—pleasant millionaires idling in the wings of theaters quite blamelessly, cub reporters, Fifth Avenue. Whatever he may have meant to New York, he became New York in the eyes of readers scattered from Bangor to Seattle, and lonesome shacks

in Colorado or bedrooms elsewhere showed his first printed photograph tacked on walls, so before he began to travel, the face with its wide mouth and deep, admirable eyes was familiar to the crowd and he was recognized by the mixed men congested in Creede, Colorado, in March of 1892, when he came to report the new mining town and found it mostly 'lost hope stuck on mud.'"

SETTING LOCOMOTIVES TO MUSIC

"WAVES OF THE OCEAN" has long been regarded as a properly poetic suggestion for musical composition, but what would a generation ago say to "Snorts of a Steam Engine?" The Boston Symphony Orchestra, under its new conductor, Mr. Koussevitsky, brings forward a piece by Arthur Honegger, whose title is not quite so provocative but whose content is almost as bizarre as such a title would imply. "Pacific 231" is a "symphonic movement" as thoroughly up to date as the object taken for its inspiration. The work was played last spring in Paris, and created a furore of applause, lasting, we are told, for a time equal to that taken to perform the music—seven minutes. What the music attempts, says Mr. H. T. Parker in the *Boston Transcript*, "is to reproduce the visual images and sensations evoked in Honegger by locomotives of the largest, heaviest, speediest type, in common use upon both European and American railways." Mr. Parker continues:

"Such psychological processes are not uncommon. There is even a scientific name for them: 'Iconographic Hearing.' In fact, Dr. Vladimir Zederbaum, the learned secretary to Mr. Koussevitsky, came upon an essay about them in an Italian review. 'It stated,' he writes, 'that certain people associate musical melodies or phrases with determined visual images of architectural character, as others associate sounds or tonalities with certain colors—associations which have been developed to a very high degree by Skriabin and Rimsky-Korsakov. The "Pacific" of Honegger represents an inverse phenomenon. Visual impressions of a mechanical character give birth to musical constructions closely associated with them. If we examine carefully the scheme of "Horace Victorieux" as it has been set down by Honegger himself, we may notice that even there the program is conceived in a series of concise visual images which the composer expresses by the music.'

"Honegger, it also appears, has long been enamored of locomotives. His friend, the publisher of the Swiss journal of music, *Dissonance*, once descried him at Zurich standing rapt before a poster of a huge 'Pacific.' The composer explained that from childhood locomotives had fascinated him. He admired them and loved them. In fact, to his rooms he took his friend and there exhibited a whole collection of drawings, designs and the like that he had accumulated—all about locomotives. They stirred in him lively sensations. Sooner or later, he hinted, he would translate them into music.

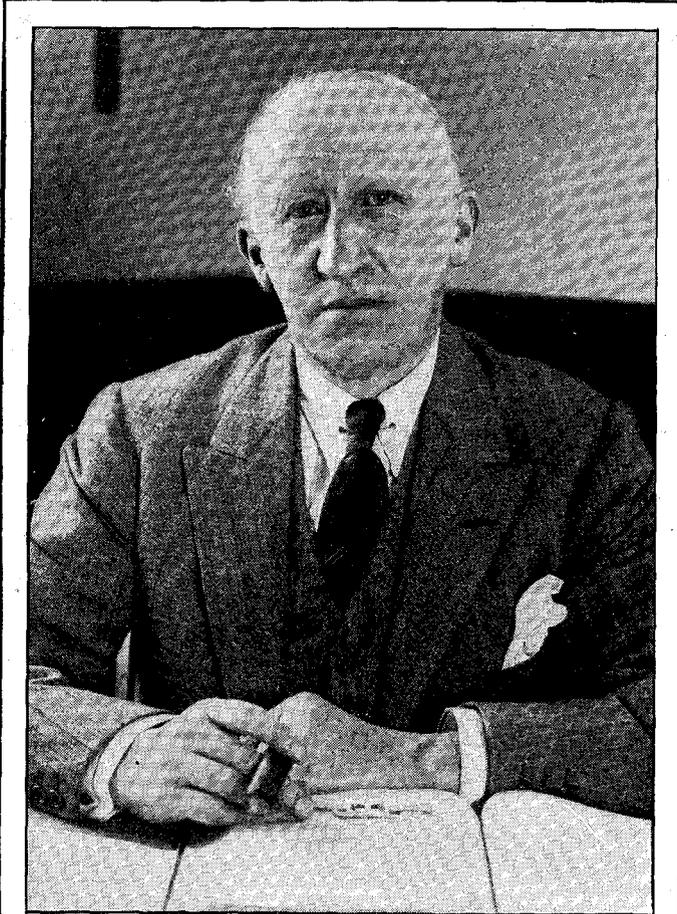
"Dr. Zederbaum tells the story, and supplements it with Honegger's own explanatory note to the finished piece. 'I have always loved locomotives,' writes Honegger, 'and passionate myself for them. To me, they are alive, have a being of their own. I cherish them as other men cherish women or horses. What I have sought to accomplish in "Pacific" is not to imitate the noises of a locomotive. I have tried to imbue a musical framework with a visual impression and a feeling of physical joy. The music begins with an objective contemplation—the quiet breathing of the machine at rest. Then follow the straining start, the gathering speed, the progress from mood to mood, as a three-hundred-ton train hurtles through the dark night, racing one hundred and twenty miles an hour. As an example, I have chosen a locomotive of the Pacific 231 type, for heavy trains at high speed.'"

Mr. Parker does not doubt that the applauding Parisians were impressed by the novel subject matter of Honegger's piece. Still more, however,—

"did the musical content sway them—amazingly sonorous, in solidly massed structure. A perusal of the score—writes C. S. S.—reveals careful and masterly workmanship. The composer employs no unusually large number of instruments, nor does he draw on any that are rarely heard. The use of the tam-tam can no longer be called novel, since every contemporary seems to exploit its weird overtones. Honegger strikes it for the first time

less than a score of measures from the end. The drums, quiet at the outset, mark with increasingly rapid rhythms the course of the design. The horns and trumpets bandy rhythms and counterpoint with string choir. Often the sonorous brass reinforces. Occasionally it opposes an antagonistic rhythm to that maintained by wood and strings.

"Yet these details of percussion and wind present no explanation of the unusual sonority obtained. The secret lies in the



Courtesy of the New York Evening Post

AN INTERNATIONAL CRITIC

Ernest Newman, who maintains an essentially individual point of view.

remarkable treatment of the strings. At the outset, violoncellos and double basses divide themselves so that Honegger has a choir of eight groups. Quickly he reduces the number to six, and then to five, concentrating and strengthening the musical substance. The resounding basses and bassoons announce a descending chromatic scale, which recurs constantly. While varying rhythms contrast and lend vigor, Honegger develops from a few fragments the theme announced about midway by the English horn and clarinet. Immediately afterward begins an almost fugal section. All the instruments share. There is a brief interlude of development and then a recurrence of the theme in the woodwinds against intricate passages for strings. The intricacy spreads to other instruments; the percussions grow frenzied; the tam-tam sounds; dissonances mass themselves; heavier and still heavier sonorities emerge—all is fortissimo, rhythmical, overwhelming. Then, quickly, the end.

"Out of personal recollections, Dr. Zederbaum describes the Honegger of 1924—'a young man turning thirty, shy and almost awkward in his motions, with a quiet, timid voice and a charming youthful countenance, lighted by deep and welcoming dark eyes. There is power in them and unusual attraction.' In Honegger's face, Dr. Zederbaum finds something Beethoven-like in the slightly sensual lips, in the mold of a fine forehead framed in dark, curling, careless hair. This surface-shyness does not conceal a musician who knows his way clearly and definitely. Yet in him there is not a trace of that presuming arrogance and exaggerated self-confidence which many successful young artists wear as an enveloping cloak.

"Yet—continues C. S. S.—Honegger may well put confidence in his abilities. Member of the sometimes maligned, yet oftener overrated group, The Six, he has plainly outstripped his fellows. He is the symphonist among them and has written, besides

orchestral pieces, some chamber music, a modern oratorio or religious drama, 'King David,' and an equally successful ballet (he calls it a 'mimed symphony') 'Horace Victorieux.'"

MR. NEWMAN HIMSELF

MUSIC CRITICISM IN NEW YORK will receive a fillip from Ernest Newman. He is another Englishman, like H. C. Colles, who sojourned with us last year as guest critic for the *New York Times*, only Mr. Newman will serve the *New York Evening Post*. Mr. Henderson in *The Sun* bids him a professional welcome in terms that insinuate something of Mr. Newman's quality, which has never been regarded as gentle. "Mr. Newman may or may not like musical conditions here," observes Mr. Henderson. "Music lovers may or may not enjoy Mr. Newman's comments, which usually have much substance and keen point." Which amounts to saying that the visiting critic will reward attention. His duties on *The Evening Post* began October 1, but the real music season is barely under way, so his Pegasus is, probably, more or less champing in the stall. His observations on music in England have frequently appeared in our pages, and we shall not omit any opportunity to liveliness that he may furnish us in his term of five months' "guest." Meantime we invoke Mr. Henderson's aid to further his introduction:

"Mr. Newman may not wish to expatriate himself. He may even come to wish that an exhausted quota had spared him acquaintance with the traffic turmoil, the growing public discourtesy and the confusion of tongues which are among the visible elements of New York's life. However, the experiment of the *New York Times* last season in importing H. C. Colles, music critic of the *London Times*, for 'a limited engagement,' as the play-bills call it, seems to have encouraged *The Post* to proceed along the same lines.

"Let us hope that in the course of time all the most capable European critics will be brought to New York as guests. It was interesting to observe the course of Mr. Colles. He came a stranger to us and our ways. He found conditions generally different from those of London, and at first his point of view was precisely what should have been expected of a Londoner.

"But he was a newspaper man. He had not been here two months before he was writing about opera and concerts as if he had been here two years and our ways were familiar to him. Now will Mr. Newman be as easily naturalized? One doubts it. He is something of a traveler already. He was born in Liverpool and prepared for the Indian service. He did not go to India, however, but entered business in his native city and devoted his leisure time to the study of music. He became music critic of the *Manchester Guardian* in 1905, and almost immediately made his trenchant essays known far and wide through Britain. Indeed, it was while he was still on *The Guardian* that he became known in this country. He is at present music critic of the *London Sunday Times*, which is not related to the *London Times*.

"It is not essential that a catalog of Mr. Newman's books be given. He is now a critic of international reputation. He has written much and well. He is stimulating. He excites interest by the strong individuality of his point of view, by the clear directness of his thought and expression and by the disclosure of solid, technical foundation for his opinions. He has felicity of phrase and a style that rarely lacks vivacity, but he has never shown any tendency toward lapsing into the sorry state of the mere word juggler.

"His studies of Berlioz, Wagner and Strauss are just as good reading to-day as they were when the author published them. And Mr. Newman must feel happy because they contain so little that has become doubtful through the painful process of overexposure. The writer of this department of *The Sun* has cherished in his memory one final comment of Mr. Newman on the art of Richard Strauss:

"The *Symphonia Domestica* I take to be the work of an enormously clever man who was once a genius."

"Mr. Newman will be welcome to the musical world of New York. Let us hope that he will find much to arouse him and that he will therefore write much to arouse the readers of *The Evening Post*. That newspaper is to be congratulated on its enterprise and its wisdom in finding a worthy successor to Henry T. Finek."