

the hero to the point of madness in order that he might express whatever message there may be in his muddled mysticism. He may have derived some comfort from the Chinese motto "First fecundity, then structure," and from his discovery that "too much lumber, coffee, bacon, and talk" had driven him into a condition where he could at last perceive the unity within diversity and his own union with that unity, but his metaphysical speculations are vitiated for the reader by the fact that he is to all appearances actually mad. The last hundred pages may be justified as a convincing study of incipient insanity (though not as an artistic conclusion of a novel); their message, if any, remains obscure. And this is the more deplorable because Miss Gale's competence and artistry are adequate to the communication of much subtler truths than those than seem to be glimmering in the shattered mind of Bernard Mead.

Mr. Ford's Saga

A MAN COULD STAND UP. By FORD MADOX FORD. New York: A. & C. Boni. 1926 \$2.50.

Reviewed by LLOYD MORRIS

IT is scarcely possible to consider this, the third and penultimate novel in Mr. Ford's great saga, independently of its predecessors. And no present estimate of its merits can claim more than provisional value; a final opinion must await the publication of its sequel. For the most important fact about it is the fact that it is intermediate; a necessary and inevitable element of a structure as yet incomplete.

"A Man Could Stand Up" presents the later phases of the war as they were experienced by Christopher Tietjens. "You see here," Mr. Ford remarks in his dedication, "the end of the war of attrition through the eyes of a fairly stolid, fairly well-instructed man. . . . And you have here his mental reactions and his reflections. . . ." Nor does Mr. Ford disclaim, as to this book, certain non-aesthetic intentions, especially that of making war seem undesirable. In this he has succeeded admirably, accomplishing his moral aim entirely by means of flawless art. A less expert novelist not improbably would have defeated his purpose by sheer excess of moral zeal, falling into the obvious traps of over-emphasis, exaggeration, or hysteria. One has only to compare, in this respect, Mr. Ford's book with "Three Soldiers" or "The Enormous Room" to perceive its essential distinction. It is a powerful indictment of war; there have been few more powerful. But its power proceeds from a calculated and consistent under-statement, a ruthless equanimity that ultimately proves more agitating than any emotion.

The war experiences of Tietjens form the central episode of the book. Mr. Ford, with that extremely assured craftsmanship which one has come to take for granted in his work, has set them in a frame. The actual "action" of the book passes in London during a relatively few hours of Armistice Day. The story opens with Valentine Wannop's reception of the news that Tietjens has returned to London, shifts to Tietjens's final term in the trenches, returns to London and brings Valentine and Tietjens to a belated meeting which, ironically, is interrupted by the arrival of his army companions, tipsy and bent upon further celebration. The conclusion is bitter enough; after so much horror and deprivation and delay the act of love is still denied to the two eager lovers.

In "Some Do Not" and "No More Parades," Mr. Ford again reveals his superb sense of structure, in "A Man Could Stand Up" he has composed chiefly for muted trumpets. This indicates the precise difference between the third novel and its predecessors; a difference in tone-color due to the absence, in this novel, of certain instruments (Sylvia, for example) which figured in the others. But the qualities of writing which gave the earlier novels an exceptional distinction appear once again. Mr. Ford again reveals his superb sense of structure, his ability to write beautiful and subtle prose, his command of the resources of the narrator. There are those of us, and I am one, who believe that he has carried the traditional English novel to its greatest formal achievement. And in his great saga, now all but complete, we recognize one of the few notable contributions of the present century to English fiction.

Cheerful Recollections

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A CHINESE DOG AS WRITTEN BY HIS MISSUS. By FLORENCE AYS COUGH. Illustrated by Lucille Douglass. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1926. \$2.

Reviewed by ISIDOR SCHNEIDER

BOOKS like this one are the reassurances that come all too rarely, that the world is still good to live in no matter how much important people like generals, foreign-office thugs, financiers, and their kind work at their kill-joy business. As an antidote to Mr. Silas Strawn, and the newspaper correspondence from China generally, read this delicious book. As a matter of fact, read it as an antidote to anything that tends to make existence troublesome. It is cheerful, it is wise, with the twofold wisdom of intelligence and humor; and in spite of its canine viewpoint it is human. Or rather because of it; for has not man bred the dog in his own image, turned him, in some respects, into a model of humanity?

Yo Fei, the hero of this none too modest autobiography, is an aristocratic dog, proud of his lion-dog breed, of his name which is taken from that of an ancient Chinese hero, of his birthplace in Shantung where Confucius, Meucius, and other great ones of China were born. He tells the exciting story of his life from his early days in a Chinese family to the climactic story of his crossing a fearfully large ocean, and a fearfully large continent, one of the tenderest passages of dog-bereavement that may be found in literature. In the course of it we are given a delightfully intimate picture of Chinese life, its festivals, its folk life, and its culture. Readers who go with Yo Fei through the crowded, tight streets of the Chinese city, who watch with him funeral processions, wedding parades, and the demonstrations against an eclipse, who follow him into a Chinese theatre, and upon his rambles over the Chinese countryside will learn much, much more than the great bulk of books about China have to offer. And he will be constantly diverting company, for Yo Fei's observations are well seasoned with humor, and have a certain dignified nonchalance which is a characteristic of well-bred dogs.

Mrs. Ayscough has already put those of us who are interested in China vastly in her debt, with her "Fir Flower Tablets" (translations of Chinese poetry done in collaboration with Amy Lowell) and her beautiful "Chinese Mirror," which is by far the best book about China written by an Occidental. Her new book makes a considerable enlargement of this debt.

It should be added that these books belong not to any tight compartment to be called Books of the Orient, but to the body of Literature itself. They are the products of a joyous, inquiring, sensitive, and cultivated mind and will give pleasure to any lover of good books no matter where his taste turns.

The illustrations by Lucille Douglass (who made the drawings of "A Chinese Mirror") are exquisite, and bring China to the eye as closely as the author brings it to the mind.

A Novelist's Novelist

MY SON JOHN. By E. B. DEWING. New York: Minton, Balch & Co. 1926. \$2.

MAX BEERHOHM has pointed out in one of his essays that there are few convincing novelists to be found in novels. One thinks of those in Henry James and Leonard Merrick as perhaps the best, though even they did not turn the trick consummately; and of all the parade of young men who, since Scott Fitzgerald's Amory Blaine, have mirrored their creators to the point of adopting the same profession, almost none of them has turned the trick at all. Nor, however novel her approach to the problem, has Miss Dewing in "My Son John." Her John Lord, neither as novelist nor man, quite convinces you. His story is told in the style of an informal biography—letters, talks, newspaper clippings and reviews, comments, passages from his books. Through such lifelike mediums are revealed his literary career, his private relationships, his fundamental self. But the method used has a very serious drawback, which makes these revelations far less significant than they should be. So much time is used to set the stage, to create an illu-

sion of reality with realistic paraphernalia, that not a great deal of time is left to give us John. None of us has tastes so exalted that in the case of real writers we are unwilling to forego learning the significant truths of their life in exchange for the material facts, the day by day happenings, the people they knew, the things they liked, the gossip and anecdotes concerning them. All that makes for a delightful biography of real writers. But of real writers only. To ape that style of biography in treating of a writer who after all was not real is to make the trivial very trivial indeed. To trick out John Lord in all the factual raiment of a writer, to fit him into a pseudo-real background, to send him along a pseudo-real career without simultaneously bringing him to life is to fall between two stools.

Just who was John Lord? He found one woman fascinating and married her, found another woman fascinating and couldn't marry her, so that ultimately she passed him up for some one who could. He wrote books that won him great celebrity, but the passages quoted from them make one sceptical of their high merits. He had, we are told, a remarkably charming personality, but it is felt only to the slightest degree. He went to war and was killed, leaving behind him a curious letter, the nature of which does not throw a great deal of light on his soul or a great deal of credit on his authorship. If he was extraordinarily talented, and many-sided and charming, where is the proof of it? Certainly not in the surface literary activities and the conventional love affairs offered us here; they could well enough appertain to an author, but they would hardly individualize or humanize him.

His mother's case is better, we think. The famous singer, Madame Helena Lord-Goshen, catches some breath of life at one time or another, and goes out of the story a personality one can accept if not actually remember. But one will long remember the butler she once engaged, whose letters to his wife in England are among the most delightful fish-stories one has ever been asked to swallow. To Tibbetters rather than John Lord must go the real palm for authorship.

This isn't at all a bad book, however, for readers who like a literary atmosphere, and it certainly merits serious criticism. In its own peculiar fashion it is very well told, and John Lord seems in Miss Dewing's clever hands always about to become real, which is enough to hold one's attention throughout. His life-story is a very gallant effort to achieve a difficult end. If he fails to be basically convincing, it is probably because it would take a novelist as great as himself to make his greatness seem real.

Barnstormers

THE BLACK ANGELS. By MAUD HART LOVE- LACE. New York: The John Day Company. 1926. \$2.

Reviewed by LOUIS KRONENBERGER

SOMETHING of Edna Ferber's "Show Boat," and perhaps just a suggestion of "The Constant Nymph" are called to mind by this romantic first novel of Mrs. Lovelace. It is a novel of Minnesota from before the Civil War to the end of the 1880s, and of a large family named Angel, sisters and brothers and later their children, who toured the country as a concert troupe and afterwards as performers in "Pinafore." Song and music came to them naturally, and there was in them enough of the bohemian to make their buffeting about delicious adventures. Among all these angels, a mother and a daughter stand out, as a mother and a daughter stood out in "Show Boat." Fanny Angel, the mother, and prima donna of the troupe, had to give up singing and dancing for marriage; but after her daughter was born the lure of the road proved too strong for her, and she left her husband, she left her baby, to go once more before the footlights and die in harness. Angel, her daughter, grew up with the same strong urge in her blood, and her father, having learnt wisdom, refused to let her marry the young townsman whom he knew she might some day leave. The boy she loved was married to her aunt, a woman much older than himself. When things came to an intolerable pass and they could not marry themselves, he went away, not telling where. Afterwards his wife died in a fire, and he came back to Angel.

A comparison of this romantic story with "Show Boat" is all but inevitable. Both writers have chosen

similar material, similar background, and a similar kind of treatment—romantic treatment. Unfortunately for Mrs. Lovelace the comparison is not in her favor. We don't get here that heightened sense of a past American scene which, for all its heightenings and glamorous veneer, had something plausible and genuine about it. We don't get either the vividness, the richness, the lift of the writing in "Show Boat." Things move more slowly, to a realistic rather than a romantic pace, and the tempo is nearly fatal. No more do we get the broad but vigorous characterizations Miss Ferber gave us; there is no equivalent of Parthy in "The Black Angels," no equivalent of Gaylord Ravenal. And Mrs. Lovelace has stooped to a kind of sentiment which is much less pleasing. Virginie's death-bed gesture, while I will admit it is as gripping a moment as the book can boast, smacks too much of the sentimental story-book heroine even for romance.

To compare "The Black Angels" with "Show Boat" does not, I realize, say just how good or bad it is. Certainly it is not bad. It is agreeably written, and it is not dull. The adventures of the "Pinafore" company hold one's attention admirably, and Mrs. Lovelace has indulged in so much quotation from that opera that it is inevitable to think of her as a Gilbert and Sullivan fan. But the whole book, and I think that is the reason why one likes it so moderately, is too simple, too naïve. For our generation, when the old romantic novel is held up to scorn, it is not treated with enough of the sophistication which a romantic theme now demands. I think of the characters as belonging properly to books for innocent young girls, and I wish that just once or twice Mrs. Lovelace had played a little more boldly with fire. Somehow I cannot see the Angel family concertizing in a covered wagon. Something of their own music fails to communicate itself, and that minimum of dash which must have pushed them forward is not in them. They were such proper folks; and one looks for proper folks in drawing rooms.

The Realism of Business

SWEEPINGS. By LESTER COHEN. New York: Boni & Liveright. 1926. \$2.50.

Reviewed by ERNEST SUTHERLAND BATES

CERTAINLY industry has been the chief factor in American life during the past fifty years. And, presumably, it is the function of literature to be a revelation of life. From this point of view, it may fairly be argued that American literature has shirked one of its tasks, generally fighting shy of industry or introducing it, if at all, in subordination to some romantic motive, so that one judging by our books would infer that the American man is little interested in business, and is prone to sacrifice it at the slightest provocation on the altar of love. True, there have been numerous exceptions: Frank Norris, Upton Sinclair, Ernest Poole, Dreiser, Herrick, Hergesheimer, Charles Norris, all occur to one, but even here propagandist or romantic interests have tended to divert attention from the theme of industry itself. The romance of business and the wickedness of business, yes; the realism of business, no. We have not had a Balzac or a Thomas Mann or even a Gissing. But now comes Mr. Lester Cohen with a book which suggests that if he is minded to do so he can do the job. "Sweepings" is, in the first place, literature, and is, in the second place, literature with a single-minded concentration on the theme of business. It is comparable to "Buddenbrooks," not inferior to Balzac's second best, and better than Gissing's best.

"Sweepings" is the story of the commercial fortunes of the Pardway family. Peter Aram Pardway, starting out, shortly after the Revolution, as a blacksmith, had become, some forty years later, an ironmaster and owner of a factory. Then his wealth and his life were both destroyed in a great fire, but his ability, leaping over a generation, descended to two grandchildren, Daniel and Thane, the central characters of the novel. These leave their ne'er-do-well father and run away to sea as mere boys; when they return in early manhood it is with their heritage of sturdy character from their grandfather already hardened and matured. Thane becomes a stock broker, Daniel obtains a ship and runs the Civil War blockade with cotton. In a few years they have increased their initial capital of three hundred dollars to thirty thousand. Then on

the famous Black Friday they make a great sum by selling short on stocks, duplicate the performance on the occasion of the Chicago fire, and settle down in the latter city, the elder brother to develop a huge cut-rate department store while the younger comes to be known as the Great Bear of the Chicago wheat pit. The cautious shrewdness of the one in a business where caution counts, the daring of the other in a field where daring is the word, net the two brothers an enormous fortune. But eventually the Great Bear is broken and Daniel's department store slips through the hands of his four feeble children, the "sweepings" of the title. So the cycle is complete; the Pardways sink back into the insignificance from which they emerged, save for the possibility of "a redeemer" in the person of Daniel's grandchild.

The structure of the work is well conceived. The materials are good and substantial; the workmanship is honest; stone is laid firmly upon stone; but after the architect has raised a strong and comely building the unlucky idea comes to him of decking its roof with a series of mortuary chapels. The final pages reek with deaths; Mr. Cohen is as lavish of them as Dickens ever was with eleventh hour marriages. Furthermore, some moralistic demon has impelled him to make each death melodramatically suitable in time and circumstance to an extent that would satisfy a Methodist deacon,—if Methodists have deacons. All this, however, it must be repeated, affects merely the roof of his building. The sins of these last hundred pages may readily be forgiven for the sake of the rest. On the work as a whole Mr. Cohen and his readers are alike to be congratulated.



Too Much of a Cat*

(A Fable for Super-Realists)

HAYA SHI DA couldn't even eat. "What!" cried his mother, raising her hands to the height of her big ears, "What is he doing now?"

His father reached irately across the grass mat and took away a bowl of cherry blossoms from between them. Haya Shi Da was tracing cats on his rice-cake, with a chop-stick, dipped in berry juice.

"The priesthood is the only thing," concluded his father.

"It will cost us fifty yen a year," replied the mother.



"You will now repeat the ceremony backward, beginning with the fifty-ninth syllable," ordered the Priest of the Lower Order of the Temple of Shigi, squatting down and wrapping the skirt of his kimono around his legs.

Respectfully, all the little apprentice priests squatted down and wrapped the skirts of their kimonos around their legs.

Haya Shi Da squatted down and wrapped the skirt of his kimono around his legs.

Squatting down brings one close to the floor. This floor was made of tender, white, unseasoned cherry. There was a dent in it—from the boot of a tourist, perhaps. Haya Shi Da pressed down with his long thumbnail, making a circle. He added a head. He added a tail. Whiskers remained to be added. Likewise ears. He added these, and more.

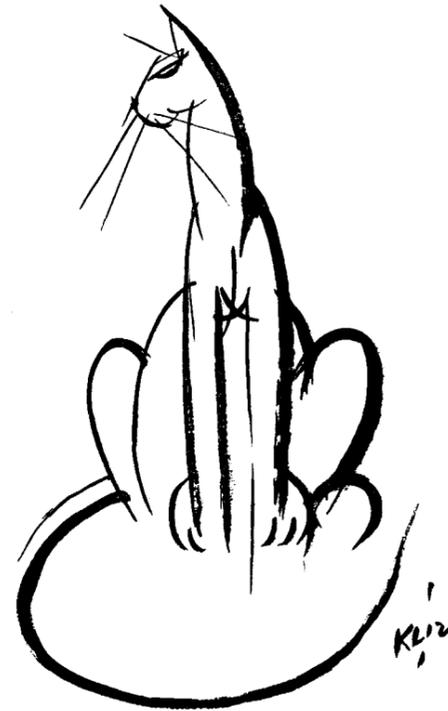
When he came to himself, his comrades were about to pronounce the sixteenth syllable. On the floor the thumbnail cat seemed about to squint, perhaps purr.

By the next day, however, the thumbnail cat had accomplished neither reality. A rude slash had been dealt its nose. There was no accounting for such a thing. Unless some one of the nightly Presences—one of the mysterious temple Presences—had done this, furious at its perfection. No one minded the Presence that came lately. It was supposed to be fond of rice-cakes. No one minded except Haya Shi Da, obsessed by cats.



Lotus rise on the lake like thick cream. They are

*Adapted from a Japanese folk-tale.



too close for counting: too close even for fish to breathe.

Haya Shi Da saw this thing.

When cherry petals fall, they melt and are invisible, if behind stands the holy mountain, pink, too, with the sun.

Haya Shi Da saw this thing.

The tinkle of the little bells in the distant temple is one with the sound of water over velvet stones.

Haya Shi Da saw this thing . . . and yet better than to see these pretty things is to draw cats. This may be done with a twig in the sand.

Only when one is drawing does one forget the puzzle of the Presence. For it comes nightly now. And it eats all the rice-cakes.



There is but one thing to do when the Emperor commands.

The Lower Order of the Temple of Shigi has petitioned for an annual subsidy of fifty thousand yen, in view of the special sanctity of the Presence



that condescends nightly to accept the offering of rice-cakes.

The Priest of the Lower Order of the Temple of Shigi winds a scarf around his middle, and over his kimono. All the little apprentices except Haya Shi Da, wind—respectfully. Heavy shoes are taken. The bridge is crossed. The Priest of the L. O. of the T. S. gets minutely into his riksha.

Haya Shi Da squats in the doorstep—disrespectfully—and watches them go. He is in no mood whatever to have the sanctities of the temple committed to his care.

Charcoal smoke blows out from the inner room. It is a pleasant smoke to smell, one of the few pleasant things thereabouts . . . dry, like burnt rice-fields. (Rice-fields—rice-cakes. Ha! The Presence.) Was the Presence, too, in his keeping? Plague the Presence. It had slashed one of his best cats. Well, to return. The smoke is a reminder that duty waits on one's performance. The ceremony of orris-root-powder-sprinkling had been forgotten that morning in the dignified confusion.

Haya Shi Da unfolded himself from the doorstep, and turned to duty.

Flames eat orris as the sun eats snow, but what