

graphic interests, the pressure groups would be less potent and the government more efficacious.

In appraising the hard, stubborn facts that the soft-minded like to evade, Mr. Chase has turned in a first-rate analysis of our major ailments, notably the effort to superimpose practices of scarcity on what is really an abundance economy. His treatment of remedies is necessarily meagre since to assess them in detail would have required a much longer book. However, merely to touch as he does on

such possible "ways out" as regulation of lobbies, control of monopoly, and the like has a tantalizing effect and may leave some readers with a sense of having been somehow let down. It might have been better to have left the cures for the sixth and final volume to be called "Winning the Peace" in the series (of which the present work is the fourth), that Mr. Chase is doing for the Twentieth Century Fund. Yet for what it does accomplish, this book belongs in the library of every man of good will.

more numerous competitors, especially when the going is tough.

Only a shade less exciting than this fascinating paper is the essay on "Elizabeth at Rycote," which illustrates aspects of the lady's character which I think Strachey, who seldom permitted evidence to interfere with his eccentric preconceptions, has successfully ignored. Queen Elizabeth, we are told, is never known to have mentioned her mother whether in speech or writing. But Lord Norris of Rycote enjoyed her favor as long as she lived. Lord Norris, as Mr. Rowse dramatically points out, was the son of Anne Boleyn's lover.

## A Documented Imagination

*THE ENGLISH SPIRIT.* By A. L. Rowse. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1945. 259 pp. \$2.75.

Reviewed by LEONARD BACON

THE cynic has a cliché to the effect that the spread of information necessarily leads to the decay of learning. But in spite of his innuendo we are living in a time when everything connected with the mind thrives tropically. The sciences are obvious examples. Poetry, music, painting, whatever their eccentricities of theory and practice, are going great guns. But perhaps the field of history is being cultivated as well as any. It is a commonplace that Winston Churchill writes as well as he makes it. G. M. Trevelyan, Constance Wedgwood, S. E. Morison practise the art with grace, with humor, and with noble imagination. And there are dozens of younger writers who keep the magnificent pace.

Though his really charming book is "history at its ease," so to speak, a collection of lectures and reviews of almost studied informality, Mr. Rowse quite clearly is in the top flight of the writers of the new school. Certainly he had no difficulty in holding the interest or dispelling the congenital torpor of this reviewer. Naturally, the book has the desultory quality of any collection of fugitive pieces. But Mr. Rowse rightly claims a genuine unity for it, for, whatever his subject, what he calls the English spirit is never absent from his thought. He thinks the English spirit is the spirit of men in harmony with their physical and moral environment, for the most part, at any rate, at peace with themselves. And he makes the amusing point that "everything that England does not stand for" is suggested by the name Carlyle. This spirit, this inner harmony created their institutions which in turn increased the spirit. And it is what makes them such deadly enemies when their private satisfactions are interrupted by restless peoples full

of anxieties and frustrations. From Mr. Rowse's standpoint, English history is a systematic account of the growth and development of this spirit. And in one way or another, explicitly or implicitly, most of the essays in this volume illustrate his idea.

Mr. Rowse is astonishingly learned, and not a bit ostentatious about it. All our literature and several others are at his finger tips. And to borrow from Johnson, the ignorant will read him with pleasure and the informed with advantage. He has a mind made for the delight of others and his book makes you want to chat with him in the common room of All Souls. The American reader will probably find the first essay, "Mr. Churchill and History," the most impressive. The Prime Minister's powers are, of course, gigantic, but beyond any doubt the reading and writing of history has done something to make those powers more effective. His rivals, like the unhappy Chamberlain who, as Mr. Rowse points out, had pretty much the same views as a prosperous merchant, cut sorry figures beside him. It seems sad that it is necessary to prove the case that educated statesmen enjoy many advantages over their

Mr. Rowse has in a high degree the gift of making persons who are mere names to most of us active and vital. Clarendon is of a sudden before us an actual man, pompous but desperately intelligent and philosophic enough to consider temperately outrageous insult put upon stainless loyalty. George Herbert becomes a credible saint in practice. Anyone who dips into the book will feel that he has seen new aspects of Thomas More, Erasmus, Pym, Hampden, Swift, Sarah Churchill, Macaulay, Carlyle, Froude. The sketches are all brief, sharp, and kind, very much in the English spirit.

For the most part the style, in the cant phrase, flows easily along and carries the reader with it. The worst thing you can say of the book is that here and there an unhandsome phrase drops from a hasty pen. "Scoriation" seems an odd word to find in a book from Oxford. This counterfeit coinage cannot be justified by etymology or usage and would have made sport royal for the *Times Literary Supplement* or the *Spectator*, if some American historian had inadvertently employed it.

But the flies are inconsiderable, given the quality of the amber. The reviewer is sorry that the book is so short. He is impressed by an imagination so well documented. He is even more impressed by a writer who, judging the present by the past, lifted up his voice against Lord Baldwin and Neville Chamberlain long before most people perceived the direction of their opportunism. To paraphrase Mr. Rowse, the idiotic commonplace that statesmen never learn anything from history is only true of those statesmen who never read it. Such statesmen have learned nothing from physics or economics either, or even from personal experience. It is to be hoped that one day they will be less numerous. And if anything can catalyze the slow process of their education, it is the great new school of historical writers, informed, readable, illuminating, in whose ranks Mr. Rowse is no inconsiderable figure.



*The Saturday Review*

# Educated Barbarians

C. A. ROBINSON, JR.

**W**RITING in *The Saturday Review of Literature* recently, Joseph A. Brandt, Director of the University of Chicago Press, made this significant statement: "Universities in this country got along pretty well without publishing divisions until the Germanic plan was brought over by Andrew D. White at Cornell. Thereafter, the European idea of a university as an institution dedicated to research and the dissemination of the results of research, in contradiction to the English idea of a university being a collection of colleges training undergraduates, began to prevail with increasing momentum. . . . It probably proves nothing that Europe, on which our system of modern universities is based, is in a period of hopeless collapse, with individual dignity at the lowest ebb in centuries, while England, with its archaic notions of universities, is still a bright star among democracies. Only time will tell in our own country whether we bet on the wrong horse."

The optimist may hope that we shall have the wisdom to develop in our own peculiar manner the best elements of the English and European university systems, but it can be urged without much exaggeration that we are actually in the process of rearing a new type of barbarian, educated to be sure, but without any roots. It may be true, as Harold J. Laski seems to believe, that we have reached the end of an age and that Russian communism represents the triumph of the common man's ideals, the first such triumph since the days of early Christianity, but, as Dean Inge points out, "The Christian Church was the last great creative achievement of the classical culture. It is neither Asiatic nor mediaeval in its essential character. It is not Asiatic; Christianity is the least Oriental of all the great religions. The Semites either shook it off and reverted to a Judaism purged of its Hellenic elements, or enrolled themselves with fervor under the banner of Islam, which Westcott called 'a petrified Judaism.' Christian missions have had no success in any Asiatic country. Nor is there anything specifically mediaeval about Catholicism. . . . Catholic Christianity is historically continuous with the old civilization, which indeed continued to live in this region after its other traditions and customs had been shattered. There are few other examples in history of so great a difference between appearance and reality. Out-

wardly, the continuity with Judaism seems to be unbroken, that with paganism to be broken. In reality, the opposite is the fact."

Cicero tells us that not to know what has been transacted in former times is to continue always a child, though in these days we might better say that the rootless youth is more likely to become a dangerous man. Matthew Arnold reminds us that the Bible, Homer, Shakespeare, Greek art remain the stars by which we may direct our course over stormy seas, but how vital are these studies today? Certainly, if the professional classicist is to be trusted, ancient Greece has virtually disappeared from our classrooms, a situation that must ultimately affect our civilization.

**I**T would be a bold man who attempted briefly to explain the decline of the Classics, and yet I believe that the central core can be laid bare. The reason for my assurance is that my professional and private life is cast in a world full, vitally full, of the Classics, but at the same time I cannot persuade myself that my community is radically different from other communities. Nevertheless, in normal times and even today, my classical colleagues and I have hundreds of students (without any curricular requirements); we are able to look beyond College Hill to the famous Classical High School, where Greek still flourishes; and on Sunday afternoons, once or twice a month, we can come together with the Amateurs of Ancient Greece, a sturdy body of 500 laymen.

The success of the Classics depends in large part, I am convinced, on the calibre of the men who are in control of our educational systems. Since it is well known that administrators and teachers do not generally love each other, it is natural to place the blame



elsewhere, but the other side of the coin is that at my institution the Administration—from Faunce and Mead to Adams and Wriston—has eloquently supported the Classics.

So far as Brown University is concerned, continued importance of the Classics lies, it seems to me, in the faculty's wisdom in creating and maintaining a department that actually embraces classical civilization. As a result, the Brown undergraduate may study at his level the many sides of classical civilization, each complementing the other and completing the whole, so that he comes to his own period easily and naturally and, it is hoped, with an enthusiasm born of the knowledge that he has his feet on the ground. But in some institutions Greek and Roman history and art, for example, are taught in other departments by men whose chief interest and knowledge are often post-classical, and the subjects in any case tend to become poor relations, whereas a true classical department will not only raise the Classics to the standing of a vital study at college, but will challenge and appeal to students whose main interests lie elsewhere; in a word, the Classics will live in the curriculum.

The value of ancient Greece lies in a certain quality of mind, an insatiable love of knowledge combined with an eagerness to see things as they are and to see them whole and to explain rationally everything in heaven and earth. Mere facts, beautiful and important as they may be, can never take hold of men's minds as ancient Greece has done. And let us remember that the isolated farmer or the garage mechanic in a busy city can by the turn of a dial immediately become better informed on current events than any ancient Greek ever could, events, it should be emphasized, that are far more interesting to us than those of so many centuries ago. This is, however, a considerably different yardstick from the one used by the Greek, who placed man in the foreground and declared that he is the measure of all things. It was Greece that discovered man, just as Israel had God.

The pages of Thucydides, for example, are full of local events, but forever intertwined with them is the universal, for the ancient historian had the genius to reduce the actualities of life to their generic and hence their lasting patterns. Freedom, Justice, Truth, Reason, Beauty are eternal and yet not easily met. We have, by way of illustration, ancient Asia's gloomy vision of the world, lacking all humanity, and Egypt where interest centered on the dead. Reason and the spirit were long ago divorced in India, and during our own Middle Ages the best minds could debate how many angels