

It Seems to Me

by
HEYWOOD BROUN

ON A TRAIN GETTING AWAY FROM IT ALL, Nov. 2.—Every now and then I get into a jam promising to do more things than I possibly can perform. There come to be evenings upon which I have agreed to speak in Greenpoint, Flushing and Hartford, Conn. The thing gets to be physically impossible. It might almost be said of these ill-considered acceptances that my "eyes" are bigger than my stomach.

And so I take the craven's way and buy myself a railroad ticket. This is not sheerly self-indulgence. One needs to get, upon occasion, some freshening of his point of view. The City of New York can not be written about properly except by those who come upon it suddenly and from a distance. As a commuting farmer I was not sufficiently far away. On clear nights I could still see the glow of Manhattan's lights from the top of the hill where I ought to be growing corn. It was even possible to dash into town upon occasion and miss the last train home.

But now I am putting a thousand miles between the magical city and myself. Perhaps I shall gain perspective. And if not, at least I may lose some weight. Already I have had a chance to catch up on my reading, and I have plowed under one of the two current novels which are in the news. If it had not been a train journey I could not have finished "Butterfield 8," by John O'Hara.

A Minority Report

EVEN the book reviewers who considered it less than a masterpiece testified that they found it engrossing and could not put it down until they were done. But my minority report must run, in all honesty, that I was completely bogged in the middle, and that I would never have finished the story had it been possible to find a fourth for bridge—or even a third, for that matter.

It would be silly not to admit O'Hara's great skill as a writer, but even if his portable rested on the golden bar of heaven he could not weave much of a tale around the stodgy speakeasy folk who form his cast of characters. The beginning of the book I found exciting, but presently I got an uneasy sense that all the speeches were delivered by the same person. The lady of not very difficult virtue spoke exactly like the newspaper reporter, and for the life of me I could not distinguish the idioms of the illustrator from California and that of the business man who rowed on the crew at Yale.

Possibly this is part of Mr. O'Hara's intent. Maybe he means to say that the colonel and Mr. O'Grady are vocally kin after the fifth round of drinks. As a partially reformed pioneer of the trials which the author follows in his book it may be that I speak with the bitterness of one whose teeth have soured upon the grapes which once were sweet enough.

Dull People

AND yet in my present compromise of living upon a whitebait and locusts I still remember the spots of 52nd-st as somewhat gayer than in the depiction of "Butterfield 8." Even among the fiddling I have frequently heard the voices of those who said, "Don't I smell smoke?"

There are, to be sure, certain pages of lively dialogue or, more properly, monologue. But, on the whole, to my ear the people are not only dull, but unrecognizable. Quite frequently their actions are as puzzling to me as their words. Even the major premise of Gloria's many affairs found me dubious. It seemed to me that the lady did protest her lack of virtue far too much. So much of her time was spent in talking about sinning that I wondered whether she ever managed to catch up with her homework.

It is possible that I may be accused of having completely missed O'Hara's intention. I will grant that it is just as mystifying to me as his title.

I have an uneasy feeling that I recently made a speech in which I argued that there was such a thing as a school of semi-proletarian literature. These writers would be the first trumpet blowers in the march around Jericho, and the burden of their song was simply, "How ill-begotten is this town behind its towering walls!"

Before the walls came tumbling down three themes were sounded on the brasses. I assume that in the second and third flights the blare was harsher and more specific. But even in the first wave there were tumult and emotion. Without seeking to separate those famous twins called Art and Propaganda I see no point from any angle in playing tinkle dirges upon a speakeasy piano while all the seven hills are in flame.

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Your Health

BY DR. MORRIS FISHBEIN

NO mother wants to give her baby toys that are unsafe or unhealthful. As the Christmas season approaches, we find inventive genius has almost surprised itself, and that the materials now available for the child are more ingenious than ever before.

Toys have a great effect on the life of a child. Many a boy has become an engineer, an electrician, a printer, or an aviation enthusiast because of childhood interests. Children may become so attached to toys that they give them actual personality.

FROM the point of view of health, toys interest us because they may occasionally be unsafe or harmful, or because they may be useful in developing the child's physique and mind.

The toys interesting to health from the point of view of physical development include sleds, scooters, bicycles, pull toys and health apparatus, such as rings, bars, slides, ladders and swings. For safety these toys should be strongly made, and free from protruding edges of steel or sharp corners that will cut the flesh.

A defective pole used in vaulting, a pair of stilts that break underneath the feet, or a wagon which easily comes apart under stress may result in physical damage to the child and many hours of invalidism.

For little babies, toys ought to be washable.

Today's Science

BY DAVID DIETZ

NEW YORK, Nov. 2.—Scientists of the nation are being urged by the National Research Council to join forces in an attack upon the unsolved problems regarding the formation of petroleum deposits, ore deposits, and varied types of soils.

These problems, of major significance to the automotive and metallurgical industries and agriculture, are "borderland problems" requiring the co-operation of scientists in many fields for their solution.

Basically, the problems involve co-operation of the chemist and geologist, for they are problems in geochemistry, the chemistry of the earth.

There is particular need, in the opinion of Dr. F. K. Richtmyer, dean of the Cornell University Graduate School, for experiments which will duplicate the ways in which minerals which are chemical compounds formed when the earth's crust was taking shape.

IN the formative days of the earth's crust there was a complex mixture of many compounds, all at high temperatures and mixed with many dissolved gases.

It is particularly important, Dr. Richtmyer believes, to try experiments which would duplicate the processes under which ore deposits came into existence.

Such information would be of more than academic value. It would be of direct interest to the mining and metallurgical engineer. Solution of the problem of the formation of oil will require the help of bacteriologists as will also the study of the formation of various types of soils.

Much important research upon the fundamentals of the chemistry of the earth has also been done by Carnegie Institute of Washington.

Black Shirt Black Skin

By Boake Carter

This is the concluding installment of Boake Carter's book, "Black Shirt, Black Skin," which The Times has presented serially.

COMMERCIAL doors are gradually closing, one by one, all over the world, and as each one closes the race for survival grows hotter and more bitter.

It means that the undeveloped territories are becoming more and more scarce. These territories are themselves in the throes of industrialization.

And where this is happening, will find mostly yellow or black people. They are at the threshold of the kind of civilization at which the Occidental world stood 100 or 150 years ago. They are beginning; we are close to the ending. Most of us of the Occident refuse to believe it and that is because of the super-ego of infallibility with which we have imbued our outlook.

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BUT, nevertheless, foreign trade is dwindling. The British empire, famous for a century for its free trade policies, has been forced by the tightness of the race, into erecting barriers and fences against the exchange of goods, produced by its own machine, and derived from the very sources which now threaten its supremacy. America is no different. We continually harp on exports. As long as the balance of the trade scale is tipped well to the export side, we are satisfied. But the inclination in that direction is growing steadily less and less.

In the old days, it was a case of empire building for profit. The Morgans, the Rockefellers, the Rothschilds and the Sassons founded great family dynasties. But no more.

It is now a case of empire hunting for the sake of self-preservation. It is a race for the survival of the fittest, and the yellows and blacks are just awakening and are the freshest of the racers.

We have to step up the speed, so as to keep the factories and business running, so as to keep men employed and consuming. And when we do that we create more money and more surpluses.

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THE surpluses have to be sold to the undeveloped nations, and on these they are building their new era. The money we create, we reinvest abroad into producing more materials to provide more supplies for the factories of our civilization, which in turn, create more surpluses, and more wealth to be invested all over again.

It is an endless merry-go-round that we have built, and the more it whirls around, the faster it travels.

And we ride with it—blinded by that feeling that we can not be wrong and supposing that that started the current war.

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PEOPLE are willing to talk about the "incident," with fellow powers, but they were not willing to discuss boundaries. Ual-Ual is some 70 to 80 miles inside the Ethiopian frontier from Italian Somaliland. Plainly Italian frontier patrols were on the wrong side of the fence.

But the Ethiopian frontier line has been famous for its hardness in certain European chancellories.

Discussion of frontier lines around Ual-Ual might have proven embarrassing to Il Duce, so the talk was of "incidents," not frontiers.

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