

Library Browsings

Edited by Glen F. Burch

Ten Late Books

- THE REVOLT OF THE OYSTER, By Don Marquis.
- THE MOTHER'S RECOMPENSE, By Edith Wharton.
- THE GEORGE AND THE CROWN, By Sheila Kaye Smith.
- TABLE TALK, By Archibald Henderson.
- THE TREASURE, By Selma Lagerlof.
- THE NEWER SPIRIT, By V. F. Calverton.
- POETS OF AMERICA, By Clement Wood.
- THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS, By Jerome Tharaud.
- PROFESSOR, By Stanley Johnson.
- EASTWARD, By Louis Couperus.

CREATIVE SPIRIT A PAN-ACEA FOR HUMAN ILLS

The one great magic of human life consists in man's ability to conceive an ideal above where he stands, to express his ideal in something material, and then, by living with this material expression, to be lifted up toward the ideal itself. This sentence is, in a sense, the keynote of Walter Rollo Brown's latest book, "The Creative Spirit." Brown assumes as a major premise that the so-called creative spirit is potential in everyone, and that the realization of this potential spirit is the chief end in the individual life.

With this beginning, Brown launches out in an attack on the existing social order, and fires the opening gun in a crusade for the release of the creative spirit. The writer is not, however, purely an idealistic enthusiast. He is a keen observer as well, and his work as a critic justifies the sub-title: "An Inquiry into American Life." Insofar as he confines himself to an analysis of existing conditions, his book is a sound and admirable piece of work. His comment upon the present attitude of the church, the industrial situation, and the modern problems of education, are and science, are decidedly relevant and penetrating, and indicative of a remarkable breadth of vision.

But he is not content with pointing out the existing evils, he offers a panacea: "Release the creative spirit!" And in the proposal of this panacea, Brown ceases to be the critic, and becomes the enthusiastic, the man with a hobby, with a definite bias. He attempts to settle the industrial question with vague suggestions about four hour days, and experimental laboratories for workmen; he places education on a qualitative basis (arbitrarily), and advocates other changes so dear to the heart of the idealist.

The average reader will probably not attach any particular practical significance to Brown's conclusions, but he may take some time to examine his premise. In the first place it is true that every man has a latent "creative instinct" (aside from that of reproduction). The proposition is debatable. But granting that he has, would it be beneficial to the social order that this "creative spirit" be released?

In short, Brown is something in the position of the optimist who advocates the greatest happiness for the greatest number; he is so wrapped up in his ideal he forgets the fact that a general release of the creative spirit would be the practical negation of the release for the individual. But that is a fallacy common to all idealists.

AMERICAN BUSINESS MAN CRITICIZED IN "LOTTEY"

Horatio Alger Jr. wrote scores of books telling of triumph of the poor but virtuous. His heroes always started with honest parents and a great desire to succeed and ended with a million dollars and the respect of the entire community with the exception of the bewhiskered villain who chewed his nails in helpless rage at seeing the triumph of the upright young hero. W. E. Woodward has apparently started on the same sort of a career as Mr. Alger. His first book, "Bunk," told of the career of a poor, if not virtuous, automobile manufacturer and his rise to fame and fortune. His latest work, "Lottery," is the story of a poor, unmoral, very human button manufacturer's acquisition of a million dollars and introduction into the great class of owners.

Mr. Woodward includes in this novel even keener criticism and more biting sarcasm than in "Bunk." He emphasizes the increasing importance of the second rate man. His hero is a young button manufacturer who, through a series of lucky chances, succeeds in spite of his stupidity. He is entirely devoid of culture, executive ability, or knowledge, yet he succeeds. Woodward makes him an example and points out the defects of the American dollar aristocracy as he sees them in his hero.

The book is full of epigrams and wit. The rather light style carries you into a philosophic passage before you are aware of it. There are

clever criticisms of business methods, advertising, middle class culture, and government. The American business man is characterized as "insensitive to ideals, to delicate feelings, of narrow intelligence, ready to accept any standard of false values, saturated with a sort of careless greed." More than any of the books of the younger generation on the deplorable state of modern civilization this book by a retired business man tells us of our faults. Merciless in his observations, heartless in his mirth and logical in his conclusions, Mr. Woodward points out to scorn and ridicule the great American middle class. The book is not constructive. The author does not set himself up as a prophet. Perhaps he sees no hope. He certainly expresses none.

Since the writing of "Bunk" the writer has learned a lot about writing novels. "Lottery" shows more versatility, more sense of the dramatic, more of an original style than was evident in his previous book. The work of Mr. Woodward should gain great fame. A man who shows such improvement may well be watched.—T. M. G.

ALUMNI DRAWS PLANS FOR TRI-DELTA HOUSE

Plans for the new Delta Delta Delta house were drawn up by Margaret Goodin, '23, a graduate of the Oregon school of architecture, who is now employed as an architect in Portland. Miss Goodin is a member of the local chapter of Delta Delta Delta.

Construction of the new house on Twentieth and University, facing University street, began last Monday, and will be ready for occupation at the beginning of the fall term, according to Alberta McMonies, who is in charge of the plans.

The house is to be French in architectural style. It will have sixteen study rooms and is planned to accommodate 32 girls. It is to be constructed of clinker brick, and the cost will be \$35,000.

Jack MacHolland is the contractor.

MRS. PATTEE ENJOYING HER STUDIES IN PARIS

Mrs. Edith Baker Pattee, a graduate of the University in 1911, who has head of the romance language department in the University high school, and who left during the latter part of March on a leave of absence is enjoying her work in Paris, according to letters received by her friends.

Mrs. Pattee is studying French pronunciation and idioms in Paris, and declares that the French which she learned in America is a great aid to her. While in Paris she met Mrs. Jay Cooke Allen Jr., who was formerly Ruth Austin, and her husband, both of whom are former Oregon students. Mrs. Pattee will return to the campus in September.

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