VOL. I JANUARY 1924 NO. 1

THE AMERICAN MERCURY

A MONTHLY REVIEW
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50¢
FOR ONE COPY

$5.00
BY THE YEAR

ALFRED · A · KNOPF · PUBLISHER
NEW YORK AT 220 WEST 42D STREET

take the land the professors can be trusted to find me a title to it".

The modern Fredericks inhabit luxurious banking-houses in Wall street and thereabout, and their weapons are not the bones of Pomeranian grenadiers, but loans and consortiums. They have Silesias staked out in Santo Domingo, Haiti, Nicaragua and Cuba, and, like Frederick, they have a lost Bohemia in Mexico. Now, in Dr. Josey, of Dartmouth (already a familiar name to all law students), they have their professor foreordained. In his "Race and National Solidarity" Prof. Josey not only proves that the benign economic and political oversight of the darker peoples is the manifest destiny of Nordic man; he also proves, in 227 pages of very eloquent stuff, that it is a highly moral business, and unquestionably pleasing to God. "The way to please God", he says, "is to do good"—and "God helps those who help themselves". *Ergo*, helping one's self must be good.

Specifically, the professor argues at great length that it is a foolish and evil thing to take the boons of civilization to the backward races without making sure that they pay a good round price for what they get. But how is this payment to be exacted? First, by keeping the financing of the uplift (*i.e.*, the industrialization) of the poor heathen in our own hands, and taking such a share of the proceeds of their labor that they are never able to accumulate enough capital to finance themselves. Second, by keeping the technical management of industry a sort of national or race secret, so that they shall remain forever unable to run their own factories without our help. This will give us all the cream and leave them the skim milk. Even on this milk, of course, they may fatten; that is, they may increase in numbers so greatly as to offer us danger on the military side. To secure ourselves against this, we must keep their numbers down, first by "a general dissemination of knowledge of birth control", and then by prohibiting child-labor and so preventing "children from becoming profitable". Thus virtue (but is birth control virtuous?) will go hand in hand with enlightened self-interest, and God will be pleased by good deeds.

Prof. Josey, as you may have guessed, is without much humor, and so his book is rather heavy going. But I have read every word of it attentively, and commend his Message to all who desire to become privy to the most advanced thought of this era of Service. However, it will not be necessary to read his actual book. The great bond houses issue weekly and monthly bulletins, free for the asking. Ask for them, and his ideas will be set before you, backed up by a great moral passion and probably in more lascivious English.

H. L. M.

Once More, the Immortals

FANTASTICA: BEING THE SMILE OF THE SPHINX AND OTHER TALES OF IMAGINATION, by Robert Nichols. New York: *The Macmillan Company*.

WHENEVER and so often as the choice is offered one to be born again, the wise will elect for revivification as a romantic myth. That is, I think, the perhaps not entirely premeditated moral of Mr. Robert Nichols' "Fantastica". . . .

I have enjoyed this book. I record at outset that sentence because it appears to me a triumphant and facile chef-d'oeuvre of understatement. This trio of stories, about such copious protagonists as Andromeda and the Sphinx and the Wandering Jew, have come, to me at least, as the most amiable literary surprise since Mr. Donn Byrne published "Messer Marco Polo". Here is beauty and irony and wisdom; here is fine craftsmanship; and here, above all, are competently reported the more recent events in the existence of favored persons whose vitality and whose adventuring each generation of mankind renews. I refer, of course, to such persons as Andromeda and the Sphinx and the Wandering Jew,—and to Prometheus and Pan and Judas and Queen Helen,—and to many others who were so lucky as to originate in a satisfy-

ingly romantic myth, and who in consequence stay always real and always free of finding life monotonous.

Now, it is an ever-present reminder of our own impermanence to note that no human being stays real. In private annals a species of familiary canonization sets in with each fresh advent of the undertaker; no sooner, indeed, do our moribund lie abed than we begin even in our thoughts to lie like their epitaphs; and all of us by ordinary endure the pangs of burying ineffably more admirable kin than we ever possessed. Nor does much more of honesty go to the making of those national chronicles which Mr. Henry Ford, with a candor perhaps really incurable by anything short of four years in the White House, has described as "bunk". In history one finds everywhere an impatient desire to simplify the tortuous and complex human being into a sort of forthright shorthand. Alexander was ambitious, Machiavelli cunning, Henry the Eighth bloodthirsty, and George Washington congenitally incapable of prevarications. That is all there was to them, so far as they concern the average man; and thus does history imply its shapers with the most curt of symbols, somewhat as an astronomer jots down a four's first cousin to indicate the huge planet Jupiter and compresses the sun that nourishes him into a proof corrector's period. Always in this fashion does history work over its best rôles into allegories about the Lord Desire of Vain Glory and Mr. By-ends, about Giant Bloody-man and Mr. Truthful; and rubs away the humanness of each dead personage resistlessly, as if resolute to get rid in any event of most of him; and pares him of all traits except the one which men, whether through national pride or the moralist's large placid preference for lying, have elected to see here uncarnate.

Quite otherwise fare those luckier beings who began existence with the advantage of being incorporeal, and hence have not any dread of time's attrition. The longer that time handles them, the more does he enrich their experience and personalities. It was, for example, Euripides, they say, who first popularized this myth of Andromeda: and, for all that the dramas he wrote about her are long lost, it were time-wasting, of a dullness happily restricted to insane asylums and the assembly halls of democratic legislation, here to deliberate whether Andromeda or Euripides is to us the more important and vivid person, in a world wherein Euripides survives as a quadrisyllable and wherein Andromeda's living does, actually, go on. You have but, for that matter, to compare Andromeda with the overlords of the milieu in which her fame was born, with the thin shadows that in pedants' thinking, and in the even gloomier minds of schoolboys upon the eve of an "examination", troop wanly to prefigure Pericles and Cleon and Nicias, to see what a leg up toward immortality is the omission of any material existence. These estimable patriots endure at best as wraiths and nuisances, in a world wherein Andromeda's living does, actually, go on. It is not merely that she continues to beguile the poet and painter, but that each year she demonstrably does have quite fresh adventures. Only yesterday Mr. C. C. Martindale attested as much, in his engaging and far too little famous book, "The Goddess of Ghosts"; as now does Mr. Nichols in "Fantastica". . . For it is, through whatever human illogic, yesterday's fictitious and most clamantly impossible characters who remain to us familiar and actual persons, the while that we remember yesterday's flesh-and-blood notables as bodiless traits.

So it comes about that only these intrepid men and flawless women and other monsters who were born cleanlily of imagination, instead of the normal messiness, and were born as personages in whom, rather frequently without knowing why, the artist perceives a satisfying large symbolism,—that these alone bid fair to live and thrive until the proverbial crack of doom. Their living does, actually, go on, because each generation of artists is irre-

sistibly impelled to provide them with quite fresh adventures. . . . And I am sure I do not know why. I merely know that these favored romantic myths, to whom at outset I directed the stiletto glance of envy, remain the only persons existent who may with any firm confidence look forward to a colorful and always varying future, the only persons who stay human in defiance of death and time and the even more dreadful theories of "new schools of poetry"; and who keep, too, undimmed the human trait of figuring with a difference in the eye of each beholder. For all the really fine romantic myths have this in common. As Mr. Nichols says, in approaching a continuation of the story of Prometheus one may behold in the Fire-Bringer, just as one's taste elects, a prefiguring of Satan or of Christ or of Mr. Thomas Alva Edison.

And this I guess to be—perhaps—the pith of such myths' durability, that the felt symbolism admits of no quite final interpreting. Each generation finds for Andromeda a different monster and another rescuer; continuously romance and irony contrive new riddles for the Sphinx; whereas the Wandering Jew—besides the *tour de force* of having enabled General Lew Wallace to write a book which voiced more fatuous blather than "Ben Hur"—has had put to his account, at various times, the embodying of such disparate pests as thunderstorms and gypsies and Asiatic cholera.

Well! here—just for one moment to recur to the volume I am supposed to be criticizing,—here is Mr. Nichols with remarkably contemporaneous parables about the Sphinx and her latest lover, about Andromeda and Perseus, about the Wandering Jew and Judas Iscariot. They are, to my finding, very wise and lovely tales, they are, I hope, the graduating theses of a maturing poet who has become sufficiently sophisticated to put aside the, after all, rather childish business of verse making. But the really important feature, in any event, is that he adds to the unending imbroglios of these actually vital persons, and guides with competence and a fine spirit the immortal travellers. Nor is this any trivial praise when you recall that, earlier, they have been served by such efficient if slightly incongruous couriers as Charles Kingsley and Euripides and Eugène Sue, as Matthew of Paris and Flaubert and Nathaniel Hawthorne and the Reverend George Croly.

JAMES BRANCH CABELL

Brandes and Croce

MAIN CURRENTS IN NINETEENTH CENTURY LITERATURE, by Georg Brandes. New York: *Boni & Liveright.*

POESIA E NON POESIA, by Benedetto Croce. Bari: *Laterza.*

THIS latest addition to the canon of Croce's works, "Poetry and Non-Poetry", reached me just as I had been looking through the new edition of Brandes's "Main Currents in Nineteenth Century Literature". The title by no means suggested what the books turned out to be, namely, a fragment of a study which might have been an Italian counterpart to the great Danish work. In his preface Croce explains that he had intended to "re-examine the literature of the Nineteenth Century", in order to bring out "conclusions still implicit in the writings of those who have discussed it, or to demonstrate other conclusions more exactly, or to confute current prejudices, or to propose some new judgments, but especially to keep in mind pure literature which—in spite of the ease with which the fact is forgotten by those whose business is criticism—is the real concern of criticism and literary history". Apparently these essays are all we shall see of this projected work, for other studies have made the realization of Croce's original plan impossible. As it stands, however, the book consists of a series of provocative chapters on such figures as Alfieri, Schiller, Scott, Stendhal, Manzoni, Balzac, Heine, George Sand, Musset, Baudelaire, Ibsen, Flaubert and Maupassant. Brandes stopped his survey