

Mustered Miscellany



By P. BERNARD YOUNG, JR.



among other things, one of increasing popularity for the Enlightened Order of Myth Destroyers.....Rupert Hughes recently created a tidal wave stir by lecturing and writing about the real George Washington.....As we got it, Washington was a good connoisseur of cellar stocks and a lap ahead of Beau Brummel himself. This, rather than the myth of a Puritanical Father—I-Can't-Tell-A-Lie sort of a chap.

Now, in January's Review of Reviews and in February's Century magazine, two authors seek to tear down the myths concerning Lincoln, Washington, and G. Bernard Shaw.

We hold some rather pointed convictions ourselves regarding the idea that Lincoln was primarily interested in freeing slaves. The belief persists that our forefathers were pawns in the game of "The Union must be preserved." We hope we are wrong...disillusion is painful...but sometime we shall mention our reasons for the belief.....

However, the process of tearing down myths is significant....It is somehow good that heroes are being shown to be less heroes than human beings and organizations less mythical powers than jokes. The same process is stripping races of prejudices.

Herbert S. Gorman says in the January Bookman, in an article on Dumas' works....."It is no part of this article to enter into the vexatious and much disputed argument as to how far Dumas was responsible for his own books, but it is clear that without him his collaborators got nowhere. He was the force, the vitality, behind these ventures." Dumas was a Negro, yes.....by American standards, most surely....

Charles Gilpin, Julian Bledsoe, and Paul Robeson are the subjects of a whole page of pictures in the theater magazine. The compliment paid: "A triumvirate of Ethiopian Stars whose rich performances on Broadway have won them great applause."

Well, we didn't browse very far. We didn't because we got so interested in reading the prize essays in the World Tomorrow on "What Youth Is Thinking" that the library janitor had to warn us it was closing time. Soon we'll tell you what youth is thinking, according to the prize winners.

Browsing around in a library is really fun.....and when you browse around you are missing something good if you fail to read the Journal and Guide, the Opportunity and Crisis magazines.

We forget where we read it but we chuckled when we saw this: Cop: "Who was driving when you hit that car?"

Drunk (triumphantly) "None of us; we was all on the back seat."

Follow the Guide: It leads to Progress. Follow your hunch and send in your poems, jokes, comments, reviews, or anything to the Mustered Miscellany column. It leads to.....We believe this is the end.....or is it the Finis. S'long.



Browsing around in a library is fun . . . and worthwhile. To while the hours away leisurely amid the friends Ruskin recommends to us in our high school days is to discover that classics are not always synonymous to dry-as-dust reading and we are reminded to shout from the housetops that we don't mean to moralize and render this column tiresome.

But you do find out what dead people thought before they died, and modern people of every leaning tell you their ideas in books, magazines and newspapers..... The fundamentalist, the modernist, the flapper and the old-fashioned girl, the New Negro and even Uncle Tom, each and every one has either unscrewed the cap of his or her fountain pen... or lifted the cover of the typewriter.

A thousand little delights meet one in every page turned.....in every paper, magazine, or book thumbed. It is easy to be nonplussed by the great abundance of inviting reading.....But it isn't necessary to be. Quality, genius, interest often are modest, but being cynical about the little chance of finding them is no way to do so.

And the queer things often referred to as people.....say, but some wonderful specimens adorn themselves onto library chairs..... The Professor with his mind in intelligence steeped.....Joe Campus who over his paper at co-eds constantly peeped.....The matronly teacher and the intellectual gawk..... there are types and there are individuals, too many to mention.....but it's fun watching.

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So we browsed around...finding for instance, Countee Cullen's "To Lovers of Earth: Fair Warning" in the February Harper's magazine.... We liked best the second verse.... characteristically Cullenian:

And you whose lusty youth her snares intrigue,
Who glory in her seas, swear by her clouds,
With Age, man's foe, Earth is ever in league;
Time resurrects her even while he crowds
Your bloom to dust and lengthens out your shrouds
A day's length or a year's. She will be young
When your last cracked and quivering note is sung.

Cullen is a poet after our heart. The first poem in his book, "Color" was recalled by the one just quoted....."Time has a pace to lay you low."

In the Atlantic Monthly we found Rudolph Fisher's "The Promised Land".....and avidly devoured it, remarking to ourself that this, his second appearance we believe....recognition by so reputable and venerable a publication further establishes his high position in the group of writers and poets who are a notable constituent of the New Negro movement.

The setting is Harlem. The story is revealing and tragic. In it are frustrated hopes, and futility.....

harsh pictures of the Black Bottom Boys and Charleston Chippies.....A grandmother, her nephews—cousins—and a girl of the city figure—All but the girl are from the South—Virginia, seeking the fulfillment of Harlem's promise. The girl loves one of the cousins, but the money of the other is magnetic. Both boys like her. The stark drama of the resulting situations haunts us yet...Fisher handles the sequence of his episodes and the elements of drama inherent in them with studied restraint.....so that they become compelling by the very unhurried calm he has put into them.

Fisher's "The City of Refuge" published in that memorable volume "The New Negro"....edited by Alain Locke.....has something in common with this story. Both show an observant mind and ability to express the feeling and emotions—to etch the deep shadows and high lights of Negro life and that pitiful phase of it showing inability to adjust to new situations found in complex metropolitan society.

The American Mercury, edited by the eminent H. L. Mencken, cursed of some, blessed of others, was peered into next....."Black Child" by Winifred Sanford caught our attention. A note gave the information that the author is living in Wichita Falls, Texas.....A cursory glance thru the story would not allow us to say whether this apparently Southern lady was intellectually emancipated as far as attitudes towards her darker neighbors were concerned. A future careful reading will allow us to report our findings.

In the same Green Monster of Fundamentalists the article....."The Landscape Priesthood" piqued our interest. The reason? Well, it is personal, but we'll tell.....In a reportorial capacity for a University daily, we attended a Beaux-Arts Ball given by students of architecture, fine arts, and landscape architecture.....Costuming was of Parisian-Apache effect, and as far as we could tell the reproduction of the Montmartre barroom was entirely authentic....gin(ger ale) and (root) beer were realistically served at the bar.....there was a foot rail.....and sawdust was spread on the floor.....decorations were unique; posters showed talent.

As a vital, evolving art, the author of the Mercury article said, landscape architecture is dead. We don't presume to know enough about the subject to question his conclusions....But we do know that each detail of this student Beaux-Arts Ball was colorful enough to afford us copy good enough to reach the front page of the University daily.

And not a single architect, landscaper, or artist—all of the budding class—showed even mild indications of Colorphobia..... Thank God for these landscape architects at any rate!

Somehow, this age seems to be.

