

*timeless air, not older, not more weary, nor less patient of subjection than in the days of the thingmote."*

The end of the *Portrait* leaves Stephen still at Dublin University. He is the eldest, a swarm of brothers and sisters sit round the table and drink tea out of jam pots. His mother "is ashamed a University student should be so dirty, his own mother has to wash him." He is the poorest of poor students, the most gifted, proud and perverse. We leave him, knowing that there is worse in store for him and turn to *Ulysses*.

*Ulysses* (The Shakespeare Book Co., Paris—by subscription), as the title suggests, is another *Odyssey* of a small Jewish commercial traveler round about the Dublin streets on one day.

About him there unwinds the most extraordinary procession of his friends and acquaintances from one public house to the next, and among them is Stephen, his father gone in drink, Buck Mulligan, a horsey "tough," barmaids, the Rev. Father Conmee S. J., Stephen's little sister buying a French grammar for a penny, maid-servants, loafers, business men, all passing and talking and going about their business, and feeling and noticing and dreaming, and observed and set down to what seems the last possible point of human observation.

A great part of the book is passed in a public house where the scenes of the *Odyssey* are represented by two barmaids standing behind a barrier of whiskey-bottles which contain, as Mr. Joyce observes, "orient and immortal wheat standing from everlasting to everlasting."

Stephen is now a school master, reading *Lycidas* over the heads of a class of indifferent children. He is now a quite subsidiary character. It is in Mr. Bloom that the essence of the book lies.

The disreputable, snobbish Catholic world sees in Mr. Bloom a commercial traveller of a despised race. Mr. Bloom sees himself as a lover, a poet, a *gourmet*, and a man-of-the-world. Yet he is an acute observer of himself, he takes himself into his own confidence, and it is infinitely entertaining to overhear him. It is also shocking and startling. His *Odyssey* is between his home, some shops, a cemetery and a public-house, in a trance on foot. In the beginning he buys a piece of soap, "sweet lemony wax," and the part taken by that piece of soap in his trouser pocket is given its exact proportion. It has a life-history of its own, a "Little *Odyssey*."

I have no space to enter upon the real profundity of this book, or its amazing achievement in sheer virtuosity. Mr. Joyce has taken Homer's *Odyssey* and made an analogy, episode by episode, translating the great supernatural epic into terms of slang and betting slips, into the filth, meanness and wit and passion of Dublin today. Then the subtle little alien is shown exploiting, as once the "Zeus-born, son of Laertes, *Odysseus of many wiles*" exploited, the ladies and goddesses of the "finest story in the world."

At present Mr. Joyce is all but unknown except to the inmost ring of English and French lovers of the arts. In his own country prejudiced Dublin opinion is making a determined effort to boycott him. It would certainly reflect no discredit on the Commonwealth of Australia if she were to be one of the first to recognize a writer who will in time compel recognition from the whole civilised world.

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## What's Wrong With This Picture?

These United States: A Symposium, Edited by Ernest Gruening

(Boni & Liveright, New York, \$3.00)

In his introduction to this symposium which he has edited, Mr. Ernest Gruening notes that there is one *leit motif* which threads its way through the twenty-seven diverse articles on as many states. That *motif* lies "in the one fundamental thing that all Americans have in common—the faith in the American ideal."

But there is another *motif*, and certainly more discernible. It lies in the other fundamental thing that all Americans have in common, in the bovine acceptance of the fact that things are pretty bad over here, that we don't know where we're going but we're on our way. And if you want to carry the musical analogy still further, these twenty-seven representative American citizens who analyze their states are true ultra-modernists. They delight in discord for its own sake. All but the notable exception of Dorothy Canfield Fisher, who furnishes a saccharine melody on Vermont. But in this case one feels that the roseate glamour comes rather from the writer's spectacles than from any nimbus on her state.

What do these wise men and women from the east and west, north and south have to say? Well, things aint what they uster be. The country is going to the dogs—or rather, to the hogs. Millions for sanitary plumbing and not one cent for poetry. Fat-headed petty bourgeois swarming over the states in self-satisfied *For's*. Democracy a worn out fake. Constitution trampled under the feet of those who profess to live by its letter. Uglicism made into a fanatical cult. Dull, stupid, imbecilic infantilism in the high places. Generalities piled on generalities with a page or two of facts and figures in each article to show that the author is a scientific person, indeed, and not given to the writing of broad truisms. Now and then an article like Beulah Amidon Ratliff's on Mississippi given over frankly to a statement of records with no thought of cleverness or literary facility. *In toto*, a magnified rondo in a minor key, leaving the reader in despair and darkness, with hardly a word from the wise men and women as to what might be, might possibly be the