

lection in the book is "The Devil in the Desert," which might be called an action story except that no Horgan tale is pure action. Here he calls upon the full range of his versatility as a craftsman to depict an old priest who makes a last pastoral visit to pioneer dwellers in the desert and in the course of it is bitten by a snake. In his delirium—if the reader must have a logical explanation, even though the author does not provide one—he carries on a philosophical disquisition with the snake, bests him in logic, and finally forgives him as he might a penitent. Complex, beautifully articulated, this story represents Mr. Horgan's artistry at its most effective.

Not every piece in the book reaches so high a level. There are a few mild tales (perhaps chosen because of some auctorial preference), such as "The Hacienda," a static sketch in which a bit of social history of the New Mexico the author knows so well is caught in a poetic image. But even the rare failure is relieved by touches of imaginative writing that lift the sentence or the scene above the commonplace. Mr. Horgan's gifts have been framed and heightened in this book of uncommonly effective stories.



**Venomous Futility:** Three decades before Dorothy Yates's slight story of a New Orleans family begins, Jean-Pierre Balmrain had made love to Mathilde Parrington and had married her sister Henriette. Both women bore his sons, although no one suggested that Mathilde's child, Roland, did not belong to her husband, André. In any case, Jean-Pierre soon deserted the sisters and disappeared. Now as *The Family Tree* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, \$4.50) opens, Roland's wife gives birth to their seventh child, a boy who resembles no one in the family. And Henriette's son Etienne for no particular reason suddenly decides to leave his mother and marry a widow with three children. It is the shock to Henriette of Etienne's decision which precipitates the climax of *The Family Tree*.

Telling her story from various viewpoints, Miss Yates complicates it to the point where relationships are hard to follow. Although she displays remarkable ability to create a mood, her first novel fails to move the reader because the characters are simply not interesting. Moreover, unless one understands why they act as they do—why, for example, a thirty-year-old scandal should have such a violent effect—the author's spare, chiseled prose is wasted. An atmosphere of venomous futility is not enough to fill even 184 pages satisfactorily.

—ELIZABETH EASTON.

## Philosopher for the Tender-minded

**William James: A Biography,** by Gay Wilson Allen (Viking, 556 pp. \$10), concentrating on details of the philosopher's life rather than his thought, reveals him as a troubled but generous man who came close to greatness. Walter Kaufmann, a professor of philosophy at Princeton University, has just published a new translation, with commentary, of Nietzsche's "The Will to Power."

By WALTER KAUFMANN

**G**AY WILSON ALLEN has written a too, too solid biography of an exceptionally good man. As a philosopher and psychologist William James was not in the same league with his younger contemporaries, Nietzsche and Freud; he belongs more nearly with Karl Jaspers, the existential philosopher who, exactly like James, began as an M.D. and then turned to psychology before becoming a professor of philosophy. Tender-minded readers who have lost traditional religion but lack the taste for criticism of religion, scholarship, or science, turn to James or Jaspers to be edified. That is an admittedly unkind perspective, and when James himself distinguished tough and tender-minded types he favored toughness.

This streak of bluster culminates in his talk about "risk" in what is possibly his sloppiest but best-known essay, "The Will to Believe." His *Varieties of Religious Experience* deserves far more respect, though he himself admitted that it was "all facts and no philosophy." *Varieties* is a compendium of descriptions that invites comparison with Havelock Ellis's volumes rather than with Freud's: it can be read by those who wish to be titillated by curiosities as well as those who find some reassurance in the fact that they have company.

But what James himself believed is not at all what readers of the two works mentioned might expect. Professor Allen puts the point nicely: James gave "more comfort to the 'spiritualists' of all varieties (Christians, Christian Scientists, 'psychic researchers' like Frederic Myers, etc.) than he himself found in his own ideas. . . . He, too, really suspended judgment, but his hopes were with them."

Such interpretations are unfortunately rare in this biography. Every page is crammed with facts, and the narrative

"is strictly chronological," leaning at each point on diaries and letters. Dates are encountered everywhere, often many on one page, though one has to hunt around to find the year. Even when some facts are odd, which does not happen often, no explanation is attempted; e.g., "During the spring John Wilkes Booth (the future assassin of President Lincoln) played in Schiller's *The Robbers* in Boston, and though William called his performance 'Rant, rant, rant of the most fearful kind,' he went to see and hear him three nights running." The biographer risks neither hypotheses nor the omission of data that yearn for repose in some archive.

Ideas concern Professor Allen very little, the history of ideas even less. Dates of arrivals and departures, as well as all sorts of trivia, abound, while James's relationships to Dewey, Royce, and Santayana are little more than mentioned. But the few mistakes are trivial, too; for instance, the author confounds Princeton University and the Princeton Theological Seminary, which are entirely separate institutions.

**I**N spite of the book's shortcomings, William James emerges from its pages as an extraordinarily generous man who touched human greatness. He lacked the widespread awe of death: writing to his dying father and, some years later, his sister, he spoke without any inhibition about their impending death; and he also faced his own death without fear or apprehension.

His freedom from vanity was outstanding, and not only for a professor. Here he writes of an honorary degree: "I hope you are not serious about an Oxford degree for your humble servant. If you are, pray drop the thought! I am out of the race for all such vanities. Write me a degree on parchment and send it yourself—in any case it would be but your award!—and it will be cheaper and more veracious."

His sense of humor was delightful. After an amusing correspondence with his publisher, James finally mailed the manuscript of his first book to him in 1890, when he was forty-eight, with these comments: "No one could be more disgusted than I at the sight of the book. No subject is worth being treated of in 1,000 pages! Had I ten years more [the manuscript was ten years overdue], I could rewrite it in 500; but as it stands it is this or nothing—a loathsome, dis-

tended, tumefied, bloated, dropsical mass, testifying to nothing but two facts: *1st*, that there is no such thing as a *science* of psychology, and *2nd*, that W.J. is an incapable. Yours provided you hurry up things, Wm. James."

Who would want to criticize James's *Principles of Psychology* after reading that statement, or this comment in a letter to his brother Henry: "As 'Psychologies' go, it is a good one, but psychology is in such an ante-scientific condition that the whole present generation of them is predestined to become unreadable old medieval lumber, as soon as the first genuine tracks of insight are made. The sooner the better, for me!" Never was a philosopher more lovable. And his self-criticisms are, of course, grotesquely exaggerated.

Much of the material in this biography has long been available, above all in Ralph Barton Perry's celebrated *The Thought and Character of William James* (1935; Briefer Version, 1948, in

paperback since 1964). Perhaps Professor Allen skimps on James's philosophy and his relation to other philosophers because Perry had given so much attention to these topics. James's extreme emotional dependence on his father, his need to live very near him even when he was a professor, the way his father picked a wife for him when he was thirty-six, and a great many other details remain stunning. According to Professor Allen, James was celibate till he married and always retained "a Victorian squeamishness over this three-letter word," sex.

There was something Victorian and provincial about James, especially in his occasional bluster: "Give me a human race with some *guts* to them, no matter if they do belch at you now and then." His imagination was limited; his soul was not prophetic; and the realities of the later twentieth century were beyond his vision. But he was truly a troubled and wonderful human being.

who are in other branches of medicine. Dr. Binger's book aims for both, and succeeds, with humor, tolerance, and logic—and without jargon.

The author continually underlines the fact that understanding and prevention of mental illness should parallel treatment for physical illness. For example, stomach ulcers often have psychological causes. "The need to be loved and cared for especially when denied may express itself in a desire to be fed. The stomach is then constantly alerted and behaves as it does during digestion, continuously prepared for food that it does not receive." Psychiatry can frequently cure such ailments and others such as asthma, allergies, heart diseases, hypertension, and eczema. But because of the relationship between the two faces of medicine, psychiatrists rarely get a chance to work on sufferers from so-called physical complaints because their physicians are reluctant to refer them for treatment. And the patient is hardly likely to call a psychiatrist because he has eczema.

Most of us go to physicians for regular physical checkups even though we are well, but we do not visit psychiatrists when we think we are mentally "normal." Consequently psychiatrists usually know more about mental illness than they do about mental health. This is good neither for them nor for us, and suggests that there is a good case for annual psychiatric checkups.

**D**R. Binger continually emphasizes the need for keeping medicine human and personal. Education, he says, has been mechanized and dehumanized; clinical medicine is being swallowed up by automation; and although psychiatry has so far avoided this fate, it is increasingly faced with patients suffering from its effects. If a psychiatrist devotes fifty to sixty minutes to a patient, three or four times a week, he can maintain a personal touch; but there is only one psychiatrist for every 18,000 people in the United States. Consequently, as Dr. Binger admits, psychiatry is more expensive than other forms of therapy, and too often the patient's income is analyzed before his mind. Medical insurance will eventually provide for mental treatment, says Dr. Binger, as has been done in many parts of Europe; but no one knows where the psychiatrists will be found. It is certain that they will not be forthcoming unless the attitudes of those in other branches of medicine—including medical teachers—are radically changed. And neither will there be an increase in much-needed paramedical personnel in the field—social workers, visiting nurses, and the like—unless further steps are taken to enlighten the public on the subject of mental health.

Although Dr. Binger's essays appeared originally in *Saturday Review*,  
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## View from the Couch

*The Two Faces of Medicine*, by Carl Binger, M.D. (Norton. 208 pp. \$6), is a collection of essays on psychiatry, which the author sees as the feminine aspect of medical science. David Woods is a Montreal-based British journalist and editor who specializes in medical writing.

By DAVID WOODS

**T**HE STORY of the man on vacation who sent a postcard to his analyst reading, "Having a lovely time. Why?" may be apocryphal, but it says a lot about the close, intense, and subjective nature of psychiatrist-patient relationships. For psychiatry, like politics, is not an exact science, and to be objective about it is a far from easy task. In this collection of essays the profession is placed on the analyst's couch and shown to be in fairly good health, though not entirely free of anxieties and complexes.

Some of these stem from what Carl Binger sees as psychiatry's feminine role in a division of medicine into male and female—the "two faces." "In our culture," he says, "women still seem to regard themselves as inferior," and perhaps psychiatry also feels inferior when compared with the active, manipulative, masculine role played by clinical medicine. Psychiatry is medicine's feminine face, says Dr. Binger, "because it deals with fantasies and feelings and its chief methods are passive ones—to listen

and observe." Some of its therapy is based on intuition, perhaps the most powerful feminine attribute.

In view of this, it is interesting to wonder why there are not more women psychiatrists. Is it because those qualities that would most help them—passivity, for instance—deter them from embarking on a psychiatric career? In Russia, where one of the few real emancipations has been that of women and where, presumably, they don't feel inferior, many more of them practice psychiatry. In that country, too, steps have been taken to integrate physical and mental medicine; psychiatrists are responsible for a patient's physical as well as his mental health. A situation much needed here.

Physical and psychiatric medicine are inseparable and interdependent, yet these two faces of medicine, according to Dr. Binger, do not see eye to eye. Much of today's medical training is highly scientific and has little time for psychiatry's hopes and hunches. Psychiatry is often able to explore and explain mental problems early in their development and to prevent as well as cure both mental and physical illness. There is a need to educate not only the public on mental health, but also physicians

