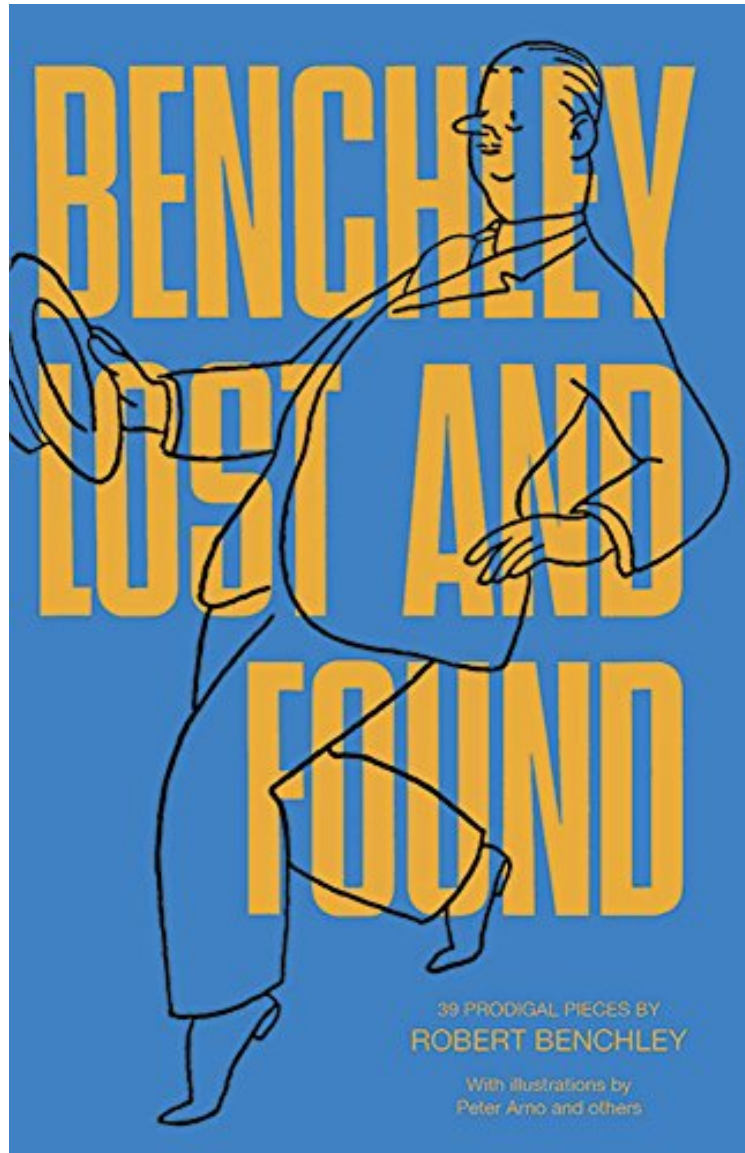


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Benchley Lost and Found (Dover Humor)

Robert Benchley

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Robert Benchley : Benchley Lost and Found (Dover Humor) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Benchley Lost and Found (Dover Humor):

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Thirty Nine Flavors of a Good Humor Man By Neil Shephard Like its cousin the comedic film the humorous essay rarely wins critical acclaim. Tragedy gets the Oscar, comedy a pat on the back. In the literary domain too tears of sorrow are more esteemed than tears of laughter. Heaven save us from a world all somber. Give us more writers like Robert Benchley. BENCHLEY: LOST AND FOUND is an anthology of essays

that details the plight of a modern everyday man pitted against social expectations and malicious devices. "For a nation which has an almost evil reputation for bustle, bustle, bustle, and rush, rush, rush, we spend an enormous amount of time standing around in line in front of windows, just waiting." This is Benchley on people waiting for service. Benchley on gaining weight: "So many simple little actions have been recently discovered to be fattening, there is hardly any move we can make, voluntary or involuntary, which does not put on weight for us." And where political conventions are concerned: ". . . every four years a mysterious list of names appears in the papers, names of people who claim to be 'delegates', seemingly empowered to go to the conventions, eat nuts, and vote for candidates for the Presidency." Although the essays were written in the 1930's, the topics are surprisingly apropos to our time. All writing is contemporary in execution but good writing is timeless in application. Humorous essays are deceptive in that they look casual. That glib approach doesn't come easy as Benchley has attested. His pieces were revised several times to achieve the flippant tone they are noted for. The reader benefits from his care. What might be considered a defect in this collection is the lack of a biographical preface. Perhaps the editors believed the essays themselves sufficed in that regard. In truth, Benchley was not quite the hapless persona depicted in his essays. He earned a livelihood as a dramatic critic for several leading magazines as well as starred in short comic films. He raised several boys (his great grandson Peter Benchley wrote JAWS). He hobnobbed with notable literary and cinematic figures of his day. It is perhaps too much to hope for to expect persons of violent temper would read these droll essays. These days of road rage and random shootings in fast food restaurants need an epidemic of Benchley's attitude toward the flaws of man and machine. Men and women then might be less likely to go berserk because of inconvenience. 10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Benchley's 1930s magazine pieces are still fresh and funny. By Scott MacGillivray If you like Robert Benchley, you won't be disappointed by these 39 short stories which had never been anthologized before. If you don't know Benchley, you're in for a fun read, as Mr. B. shares his wistful memories (candy stores don't seem the same anymore; bicycles are due for a comeback); wishful thinking (why fog makes English racing a mockery, how to improve taxi service in the city); and pet peeves (why people spend so much time waiting in line, why modern children's books are so dull). Many of today's humorists owe a great deal to Robert Benchley's witty, slice-of-life style. The illustrations, typical of the '20s, are by Peter Arno and Adam John Barth, among others. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Benchley doesn't hold up as well as others from his ... By Customer Benchley doesn't hold up as well as others from his contemporaries (e.g. Dorothy Parker) do. So while this was amusing, it was a book I felt I simply wanted to finish.

These "39 prodigal pieces" show Robert Benchley at the height of his whimsicality, damning with gentle urbanity all the things that peeve every one of us — but with a wit and mock anger none of the rest of us could have managed. The discomforts of travel on trains, large and heavy suitcases that must be carried by unwilling porters, standing in line at the post office (then to learn that your package is improperly tied), malicious fogs that blot out the race track at the last lap, the sand that gets kicked into one's face at the beach, vitamins and their puffery, and all the petty annoyances that we grumble about ourselves but laugh at when they befall others. The 39 prodigal pieces greatly enlarge the corpus of the best Benchley. Forty-four original illustrations, mostly by Peter Arno, are included.

.com James Thurber once said that every humorist is haunted by the idea that the piece she is working on was done faster and better by Robert Benchley in 1919. And if Thurber said that, the scrubs that pass for wits today should be doubly scared. (Dave Barry once told me that Robert Benchley was his favorite humorist, and it shows, but we should give him points for honesty.) Benchley Lost and Found is a collection of pieces culled from the old Liberty Magazine, the work of those indefatigable scavengers, Dover Publications. This means that while the 39 pieces in the book aren't all of Benchley's gems, the volume is a nice introduction to one of America's true comic geni. Picking something at random: "'By George,' I said, examining it, 'it is not only a vitamin, but it is vitamin F! See how F it looks!' And, sure enough, it was vitamin F all over, the very vitamin F which had been eluding Science since that day in 1913 when Science decided that there were such things as vitamins. (Before 1913 people had just been eating food and dying like flies.)" Read Benchley. Make yourself happy.