

## CROP CONTROL BRINGS SERFDOM

served this, and he asks today why he, of all elements of society, must run his plant, his farm, at full capacity only to hang himself because of the bankruptcy prices that inevitably result. He is fair about it. He says: "Why should I be asked by society to be the only one to do this thing?" And then, in that same fairness he says: "Why should I expect society to take all I can produce at a fair price when no factory or mine or other industry asks society to take all it can produce at a fair price?"

The Agricultural Adjustment Act enables farmers, for the first time in the troubled history of agriculture, to furnish goods to the world on the same basis as that enjoyed by other industries. That is, to furnish all the goods for which society is willing to pay a fair price but not to bankrupt themselves supplying goods for which society will not pay.

I believe the farmers of America have this principle so thoroughly in mind that they will guard it zealously. They will not give that up. And since the Agricultural Adjustment Act, through its co-operative machinery, provides this very thing, they favor it.

I have given you the reasons one farmer gave me why he favors the AAA. I believe he is thinking straight and that other millions are thinking right along with him. It isn't the plan he would favor, perhaps, if export markets were free and open or if, under our economic system, the other groups did not limit the production of the goods and services for which he trades his crops. But, seeing clearly what he is up against, as he does, he and the other millions will be calling for the blueprints of the farm plans that will be thrown together for them in the coming months and will scrutinize them sharply to see just how the plans will work.



## II—Crop Control Brings Serfdom

*by* **L. J. DICKINSON**

*United States Senator from Iowa*

**H**OW MANY FARMERS are against the principle of the AAA? No one knows. There will be no correct answer to that political enigma until November.

However, the decision of the Supreme Court that the program is unconstitutional in a vital sense has clarified the situation. For one thing, it has taken from the hand of the Administration the facile use of money which it had

devised under the Act, and so a dense fog has been lifted from the mind of the farmer.

Therefore it may be asserted positively that the alleged 6-to-1 majority of Secretary Wallace's famous corn-hog referendum does not accurately represent genuine sentiment among farmers.

In considering that vote it must be remembered (a) that it came before the plan had

## THE FORUM

been tried out enough to show up its fallacies, (b) that the opposition had no voice, while government agents, by every known device of cajolery and threat, sought the farmer's signature, and (c) that more than half the farmers *refrained from voting*, even though the proposition submitted was merely whether payments should continue to *themselves*. Also, vast numbers who had signed AAA contracts remained silent rather than stultify themselves by declaring they *believed* in government handouts, even though these handouts were *accepted*.

In this discussion I wish to avoid being placed in the anomalous position which the corn-hog farmers faced on Secretary Wallace's referendum. Fearful of an adverse vote on corn-hog control, the AAA confused the issue by announcing that there would be no more programs on specific crops but only a single blanket contract which the farmer had either to accept or reject. Evidently the farmer swallowed corn-hog control which he did not like to get other regulations which he favored.

Moreover, it should be understood that many phases of the AAA program are not in question. Certain of these I have advocated for many years and others I originated. Practically all farmers are in favor of that part of AAA which enabled them to finance warehouse crops on the farm and which established proper loan facilities. These provisions, designed to avert the perils of "dumping," I fought for in Congress for 12 years.

The farmer is a manufacturer of foodstuffs. He needs and should have all the aid and protection that the government has long accorded to any other business man. No one disputes that part of AAA which gave him this assurance.

What is challenged is the philosophy of paternalism and bureaucratic control which underlay the whole program of crop regulation, with its destructive theory of scarcity. This phase of the AAA, with its system of processing taxes, allotments, and cash benefits, aroused national concern.

When you hook up controls of this character with the principle of paying a man for *not* doing something, there are set in motion vicious forces which are subversive of the initiative and enterprise that are the bedrock of democracy itself. It is bad enough to rob a man of his natural incentive to work, but, when in addition you make him the beneficiary of

what amounts to nothing less than a political subsidy, you have made him part of a vicious system in which he becomes subservient to the politician who is dispensing this bounty.

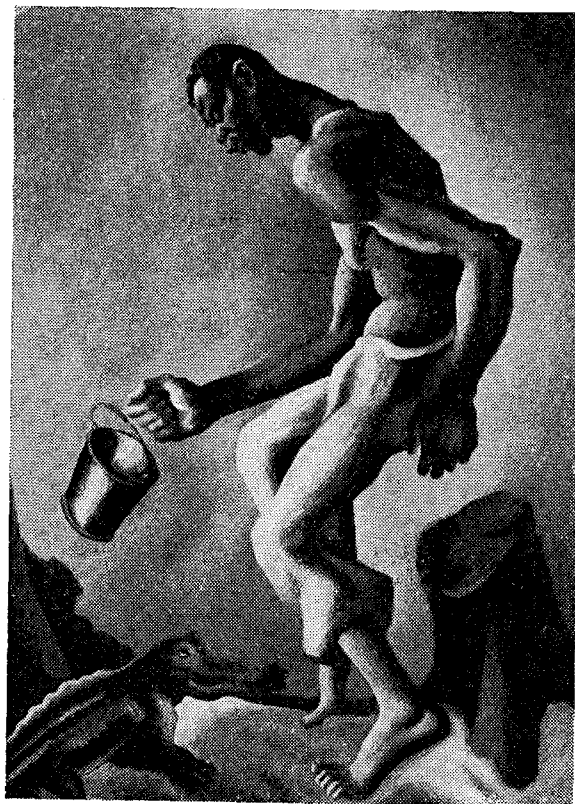
This type of control suspends normal economic forces and places the whole of agriculture on an artificial basis. A vast pyramid is erected, with the consumer at the bottom, the farmer at the top, and the distributing agents in between. All are caught between the pressure of one group for higher prices and that of the other for lower prices. Thus the paternalistic system sets up an ever widening circle which ultimately involves everything and everybody in varying degrees of dependency.

Recognition of these fallacies spread rapidly among farmers. I know literally hundreds among those who voted for the AAA who did so with misgivings and with mental reservations. In 3 years of operation the farmer learned a lot about government controls which differs sharply from those glittering prospectuses of an agricultural Utopia issued by the Department of Agriculture. Let me give you a concrete instance.

The AAA limited the production of corn in the Middle West and of cotton in the South. Restrictions were based upon the acreage previously planted to the respective crops. Now there was no limitation upon the Iowa farmer growing cotton or on the Southern farmer growing corn. But it is at once obvious that the advantage here was all on the side of the Southern farmer. The cotton-growing privilege means nothing in the West, but during the past 3 years the growing of corn became an important new addition to farm income in the South. The corn farmer has had nothing with which to replace his curtailed crop, but the Southern planter, in addition to being paid *not* to grow cotton, could plant his excess acreage in corn. What the Middle Western farmer found out, therefore, is that the AAA set up against him a new competitor in the South who did not exist before. Thus the production not only of corn but of cattle and hogs in the Southern States has increased by a very large percentage during the past three years. It did not, fortunately, assume alarming proportions but it did indicate clearly a significant trend.

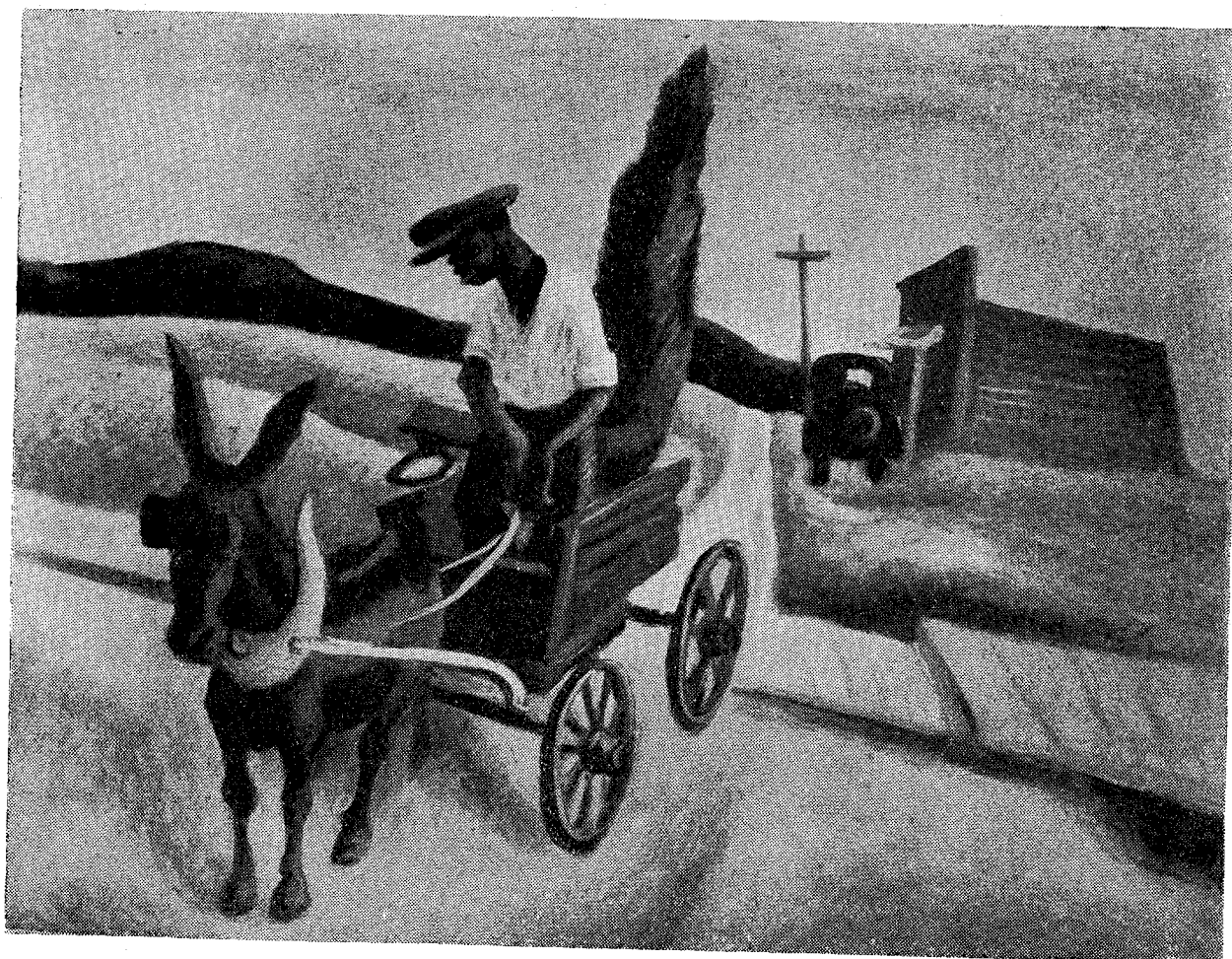
This program also led to the use of substitutes which forced out established crops. Wherever you find that the AAA stimulated a





*Negro and Alligator*

*Lonesome Road*

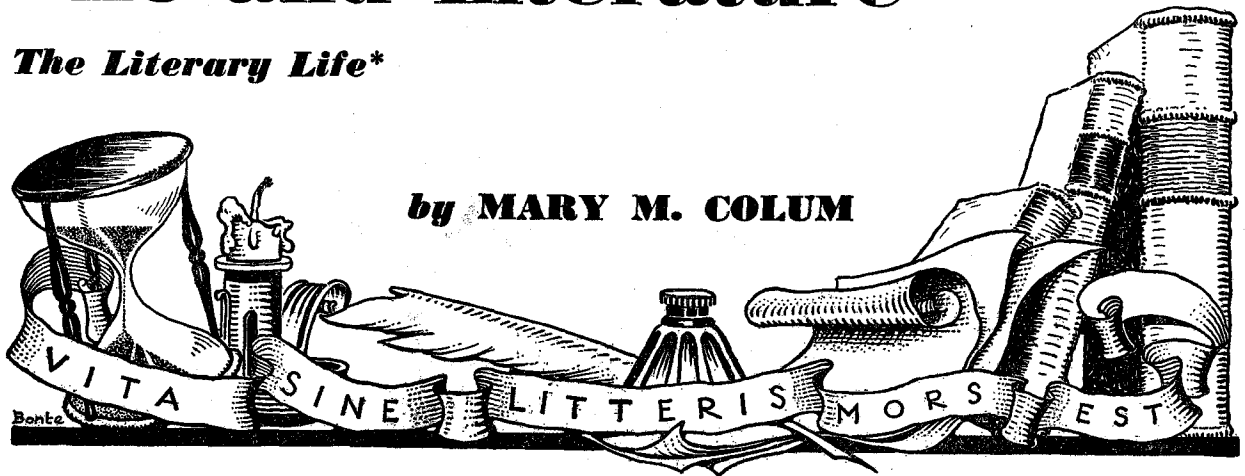




# Life and Literature

## *The Literary Life\**

by MARY M. COLUM



**A**T NO VERY remote date the literary world in every country was composed of people all of whom had heard of each other and who were, to some extent, familiar with each other's work. This was true not only for all the writers in any one country but even of those of foreign countries: an English or an American writer would be known to French or German writers and vice versa; a new writer of power would be known from his initial publication. Now, at the present moment, the literary world is a vast, miscellaneous crowd, composed for the most part of writers who have very little connection with literature. The artist-writers who used to make up the whole literary world are now a fraction of it, and their work is getting crowded out and is either ignored or half-ignored in the medley of books turned out by all sorts and conditions of people on all sorts of subjects.

Books are now published in such multitudes that even the most omnivorous reader can get through only a small percentage of them, and even all the book reviewers together cannot cope with the output. Book publishing is getting completely out of hand; nobody seems to be able to control the production any more; nobody wants such numbers of books but nobody can stop their publication. It is the same story with many other things in this civilization: nobody wants so many ships built or so many cars constructed or such quantities

of munitions manufactured but nobody can halt their production. In the same way, nobody wants war but nobody seems to be able to stop the world or portions of the world from heading towards it.

In the literary world, though, part of the trouble undoubtedly comes from the increased commercial nature of publishing; a part of it certainly comes from the fact that we have an insufficient number of all-round experts in literature. We have too many specialists, or, anyhow, people trying to specialize, and not enough of those with sufficient breadth of mind and extensiveness of training to be able to resolve the problem as a whole—the sort of mind which can relate a book to the past, to the needs of the moment, to its value to the publisher, writer, and reader. Most of the books published are by people who have nothing significant to say; they die after a couple of weeks or a couple of months, and when read at all are read by people who could write as good or even better books themselves. No nutriment is provided for the readers.

The necessity for some form of book control for the benefit of both reader and writer is becoming evident, but how that control can best be exercised is a difficult matter to work out. We have forms of crop control, food control, fuel control, wage control; the expressions “planned society,” “planned economy” are becoming familiar to everybody. The physical needs of people are being planned for everywhere; their intellectual and psychic needs are being largely ignored. Some of the big publishing firms are really factories for turning out books; they can give very little attention to a

\*EDITOR'S NOTE:—The recent books referred to in this article include Amy Lowell: a Chronicle, by S. Foster Damon (Houghton Mifflin, \$5.00); Epitaph on George Moore, by Charles Morgan (Macmillan, \$1.25); Irish Literary Portraits, by John Eglinton (Macmillan, \$2.00); If It Die, by André Gide (Random House, \$5.00); Prophets and Poets, by André Maurois (Harper, \$3.00); What Is a Book? edited by Dale Warren (Houghton Mifflin, \$3.00).