

## Science and Society

OF SCIENCE, by J. G. Crowther.  
V. Norton Co. \$3.50.

OF SCIENCE, by J. G. Crowther.  
Dutton and Company. \$4.

THE HUNDRED and thirty-four years ago a brilliant young chemist stood on the platform of the Royal Institution which had been established in London by that royalist, Benjamin Thompson, better known to posterity as Count Rumford. Presenting the learned auditors who had come to the twenty-three-year-old Humphry Davy's discourse on the wonders of the new chemistry stirred a little uneasiness in their chairs. For Davy was saying:

"The unequal division of property and labour, the difference of rank and condition amongst men, are the sources of power in civilized society; the moving causes, and even its very soul!"

Davy, with the courage and logic of his age, went on to analyze the place of science in human life:

"It is bestowed upon [man] powers which may be called creative; which have enabled him to modify and change the beings surrounding him, and by his experiments to interrogate nature with power, not simply as a scholar, passing and seeking only to understand her operations, but rather as a master, active with his instruments."

note of the words which I have italicized and compare with them the very famous "Thesis on Feuerbach" which was written ten forty-three years later by a certain Karl Marx. "The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the question, however, is to change it."

The history of nineteenth-century British science is written by a man who has also given a remarkable picture of what twentieth-century science can do, and is doing, in the present society which has abolished "the unequal division of property and labour"—the history is outlined for us in the first volume of Crowther's fascinating volumes.

Science is an attempt to view the achievements of five of the most brilliant scientists of the past century against their economic background. Mr. Crowther's Marxist attitude has been confirmed by numerous visits to the Soviet Union, regards it as significant that these—Humphry Davy, Michael Faraday, James Prescott Joule, William Thompson, James Clerk Maxwell—"should be found in one country during one century in that country where the industrial revolution had started, and achieved its triumphs." That Davy's special interest in chemistry ceases to be a mere accident and realize (as Davy himself fully realized) the principles of chemical action are bound up with the rapid development of British industry and the need for the techniques of agriculture and

food supply. From the illuminating chapter on Faraday the reader can obtain not only a good account of the technical aspects of the new electrical science but also an excellent analysis of the man's personal characteristics and of the stupendous economic potentialities of his discoveries. We are shown the close connection between Joule's researches on heat and the development of engineering; William Thompson (Lord Kelvin) elaborates on the theory of heat and the conservation of energy, to the benefit of "the economic structure of capitalism" which "could not be operated without an exact knowledge of the equivalence of different forms of energy." As for the profound mathematical genius of Clerk Maxwell: its ultimate justification is shown to be in the union of mathematical theory and thermodynamic (or electro-magnetic) practice.

Turning to the volume on *Soviet Science* is like shaking hands with a Prometheus freed at last of its chains. Although (with the exception of some forty pages on "Theory and Organization") the greater part of this book is descriptive and sometimes excessively technical, no one who reads it can escape the impression of tremendous intellectual powers

seeking, through the dialectic of science, to "reforge" the world in terms of the needs of those millions who actually create social wealth. Here, in the four great fields of Physics, Chemistry, Applied Science and Biology, is a panorama of organized collective planning for the future which, until the October Revolution, remained but a dream in the writings of philosophers from Plato to Edward Bellamy. The range—if not always the quality—of the achievements so conscientiously described by Mr. Crowther is breathtaking, nor does his book leave much room for the usual bourgeois criticism that in the Soviet Union science is "regimented." When—as happened during the sessions of the Fifteenth International Congress of Physiology held last Summer in Leningrad and Moscow—delegations of scientists are questioned by street-car motormen and greeted by the cheering shouts of Red Army men, the question, "What kind of civilization will profit most from science?" is forthwith answered. It is the answer to be found on the title-page of the Webbs' great work: *Soviet Communism: A New Civilization?*—but without the final note of interrogation.

HAROLD WARD.

## Power and Grace

SUMMER WILL SHOW, by Sylvia Townsend Warner. Viking Press. \$2.50.

SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER has by this time an audience quite her own, acquired since her first novel, *Lolly Willowes*, was published and acclaimed exactly a decade ago. With it and the two novels that followed, *Mr. Fortune's Maggot* and *The True Heart*, her three volumes of verse and one of short stories, she has won the unstinted praise of such American reviewers as Louis Kronenberger, Elinor Wylie, Louis Untermeyer, Christopher Morley, William Rose Benét, etc. The tone of the praise, indeed, and the source from which it has come have occasionally been of a kind to provoke suspicion, as when Christopher Morley, for example, bumbles of "a remarkable little novel . . . pure humor . . ."

Miss Warner will no doubt find her old audience waiting for *Summer Will Show*; but just what the reaction of that audience is likely to be is something of a question. The publisher's jacket-writer, I note, is duly cautious. This, we learn, is a work "that displays more concern for complicated human relationships, it goes far beyond her earlier books in the seriousness of its theme." It probably would not do, of course, to admit on the jacket that Miss Warner has, quite seriously and with no little emotional and artistic effect, discovered that the way out of those same "complicated human relationships" is the simple path of humanity, the only one visible in the world today, that of Communism.

The reviewers, too, I notice, do not quite know what to do with the book. It is like being handed a cup of very hot tea in the drawing-room without a saucer in which to

put it down. And so, we are bound to hear a lot of talk about a "period comedy," a "comedy of manners," and all that sort of thing. But the fact remains: the tea's very hot, and there isn't any saucer.

The truth of the matter is, Miss Warner, who must be having a quiet laugh over it all, has presented her critics with a critical poser. A nicely pigeonholed "light touch" writer comes through with a novel which, while ostensibly, but only ostensibly, cast in her old bright mold of bouncing gaiety, is in its deep underlying implications just about as "light" as the proverbial ton of bricks.

It would be a mistake, however, to suggest that humor is wholly absent. There is the description of God as "not an honest British pugilist," the swift denudation of the "liberal" British ruling class contained in: "the rational humanitarianism which forbids that any race should toil as slaves when they would toil more readily as servants"; the characterization of the Church of England curate: "like some moral vinaigrette, he had but to be filled by a Bishop, introduced, unstopped, and gently waved about the room, to diffuse a refreshing atmosphere." However, one doesn't hear the "period comedy" reviewers tee-heeing over these little sparks of humor. Nor such a bit of dialogue as this:

"When my dear father lost his estates in 1792 his first cry was, 'Now I can do nothing for my poor peasants!'"

"But his peasants were poor?"

No, this is not precisely the sort of thing one had expected of the "light touch school" in the past.

What enables Miss Warner's 1936 review-

ers to save their faces, to an extent, is the fact that the author has chosen to lay her scene in the mid-nineteenth century, with the Revolution of '48 as her centralizing theme. But outside of the horse conveyances inevitably referred to now and then and a somewhat mannered opening page or two, in addition to the historic events involved, you'd hardly ever guess it. There are no striven-for, hoop-skirt effects, and only once or twice do the smelling-salts make their appearance. In spirit and idiom, the book has the hard, firm reality of today, which was, as it happens, that of 1848 as well—the universal reality of an enslaved humanity at bloody grips with its masters.

Incidentally, *Summer Will Show* has a number of unusually fine characterizations. It is significant that the most conventional of them, that of an unconventional dowager, is the one to have caught the fancy of Miss Warner's past admirers.

Something has been said above of a problem in criticism afforded by this novel. It is just that. It is, moreover, a problem of which any but the true Marxist critic, with that deepen-

ing of life and art which is afforded by the materialistic dialectic, is more than likely to make a botch, particularly with regard to Miss Warner's form. In any event, the author has shown that it is not impossible to write a good Marxist novel even in the "light touch" genre. It is, to repeat, a question of the dialectical deepening of form.

The heart of the matter is that worthwhile writers of today in whatever field can no longer remain indifferent to the great call of the age: *the call of the human*. Miss Warner at the same time brings with her a keen intelligence. She does not leap in with any romantic distortions. Her Communism of 1848 is sound and documented; and one is pretty sure that this is true of her politics as of 1936. She goes on creating her own world, as every artist does, a world that may seem a bit unreal at first acquaintance, but which possesses—once more, we may repeat it—that deepened reality that every work of fiction must have, if it is to be a faithful reflection of life. And within her own cosmogony, she is flawless always. SAMUEL PUTNAM.

## The Gentle Art of Pamphleteering

**OUR GOVERNMENT—FOR SPOILS OR SERVICE?** by Ayers Brinser. *Public Affairs Pamphlet No. 3*, 10 cents. *Public Affairs Committee, Washington, D. C.*

**THEY HATE ROOSEVELT**, by Marquis W. Childs. *Harper & Bros.* 25 cents.

**LABOR AND THE NEW DEAL**, by Louis Stark. *Public Affairs Pamphlet No. 2*, 10 cents.

**AMERICANISM, WHAT IS IT?** by Cyrus Leroy Baldridge. *Farrar & Rinehart.* 35 cents.

EVERY great social crisis in this country has brought forth its pamphleteers. In *The Rise of American Civilization*, for example, the Beards recall that "a hundred thousand copies of Thomas Paine's first pamphlet calling for independence were sold while the issue was fresh from the press."

The wide use of pamphleteering is understandable. Pamphlets are less costly, handier and more likely to reach the masses than books. The Abolitionists of slavery days and later the Populists both employed pamphleteering. The pre-war Socialist movement likewise made broad and effective use of it.

Pamphleteering, then, is distinctly in the American tradition. And the left-wing labor movement has to a considerable extent taken it over. So much so, that through pamphlets such as A. B. Magil's *The Truth About Father Coughlin*, it has succeeded in reaching the masses to a greater extent than through any of its other printed mediums. Notable contributions in this field have been made by the Workers Library Publishers and the International Pamphlets, the latter series prepared under direction of Labor Research Association.

By 1933 or so, there had in fact been such

a resurgence of pamphleteering even by non-labor publishers such as John Day, that Amy Loveman devoted an essay to the subject in the *Saturday Review of Literature*. She did not, however, make mention of those published by Workers Library and International Pamphlets. Since then, other groups both conservative and liberal, including the National Economy League, the American Liberty League, the Public Affairs Committee, the Chemical Foundation, etc., have taken to issuing pamphlets for the dissemination of their propaganda.

The above commentary is by way of prefacing some remarks on four recent pamphlets from non-labor sources. Although probably not written with the current presidential campaign in mind, all four have a distinct bearing on it.

For example, listening to one of Alf Landon's three pre-convention speeches over the radio, the writer was struck by his emphasis on the "partisanship" in the Roosevelt regime's administration of relief. I have since seen editorials in Hearst's *New York American* and in other reactionary papers repeating this charge and lauding Landon for making it. The criticism boils down to this: Roosevelt has appointed Democrats as administrators! As if Republican administrations had appointed other than Republicans!

This policy of the ruling party's "rewarding its friends and punishing its enemies," to paraphrase the official A.F. of L. slogan, is nothing more than the old spoils system which has flourished equally under Republicans and Democrats. In the United States it is almost as old as capitalist government itself, a fact made abundantly clear in *Our Government—For Spoils or Service?* a pamphlet written from a liberal viewpoint, and giving a his-

torical sketch of the spoils system. The demagogic Republican charge against the New Dealers is made because *They Hate Roosevelt*, as Marquis W. Childs, Washington correspondent of The St. Louis Post-Dispatch, puts it.

Childs relates a number of instances known to him and others he has heard of, which show the widespread existence of this temper among the "two percent." The "majority (of this class) who rail against the President," he points out, "have to a large extent had their incomes restored and their bank balances replenished" under Roosevelt. And, as "the New Dealers themselves have been at pains to point out, taxes on the rich have not been materially increased." Contrasting the substantial increase in corporation profits with the A.F. of L.'s reported less than two percent increase in the real wages of wage earners during 1935, Childs reports that to "a man who has watched the Washington wheels go round year after year the loud cursing of the gentlemen in the upper brackets appears to have little relation to anything the present occupant of the White House has thus far done." ("Or will do," we might add.) Foreign observers are in agreement that they "are unable to see in anything the President has done thus far cause for such an extraordinary clamor." As a matter of fact, this outcry of certain Wall Street interests has blinded many in the ranks of labor and the middle class to the fact that several Morgan partners and such big business men as Walter Chrysler and others are still Roosevelt supporters. This attitude, on the part of Labor's Non-Partisan League, as well as on the part of the "two percent,"

quite ignores the fact, of course, that under Roosevelt the Reconstruction Finance Corporation has poured out hundreds of millions of dollars to sustain the credit of large corporations, banks, railroads, insurance companies, thereby saving the fortunes of the officers and principal stockholders of those corporations . . . That one of the President's closest friends, Vincent Astor, is one of the wealthiest individuals in the country. And, more important, it ignores the desire of the President, made evident in many ways but particularly in the almost wistful hopes for co-operation thrown out from time to time, to regain the esteem of his class and kind.

Why then do *They Hate Roosevelt*? Although the author effectively poses the question, in this writer's opinion his attempted psychological explanation does not suffice. Perhaps one answer lies in Louis Stark's *Labor and the New Deal* which tells of the strike struggles and battles for union when workers took seriously the paper promises of Section 7a of the N.I.R.A. Because the workers took seriously these demagogic declarations and increased their union strength, the Wall Street interests are no longer faced with the same open shop haven they had in the 1922-1930 period. This, then, is one of the reasons why *They Hate Roosevelt*. On the other hand, as The *New York Times* labor writer, Stark, shows, there has been a tremendous growth in company unions and