

with colorful and absorbing events—into the adult modern world, full of glare, ugliness, abuse of power, 500-kilo bombs, and the fragments of children's bodies. Hence the conflict, in these personal poems, of the internal, the inside-of-the-house, with the "immense street" outside; of "going to bed at night and at last sleeping" with "cruelty on awaking." "The Cruise" is an immense scenario of the same revulsion, the story of a ship which set out on a world tour and could find no safe port because there was war in every burning harbor.

Miss Rukeyser's greatest successes are in the field of real events and real images. She has the technical range to grasp them, from the sublime:

Rivers are turning inside their mountains . . .
Steep gorge, the wedge of crystal in the sky

to the catty and sardonic:

The dull girls with the educated minds and technical passions—
pure love was their employment,
they tried it for enjoyment.
Meet them at the boat: they've brought the souvenirs
of boredom,
a seashell from the faltering monarchy.

She has the precision of epithet which convinces one, for a moment, that poetry is the most exact of the arts. In poems like "Alloy," "Power," "A Child Asleep," and brilliant sustained passages of "The Dam," we hear the accent of a major American poet. In these poems she has faced her own conflict, the tragic necessity of the artist to record our bloody era without flinching.

What do you want—a cliff over a city?
A foreland, sloped to the sea and overgrown with roses?
These people live here.

DAVID WOLFF.

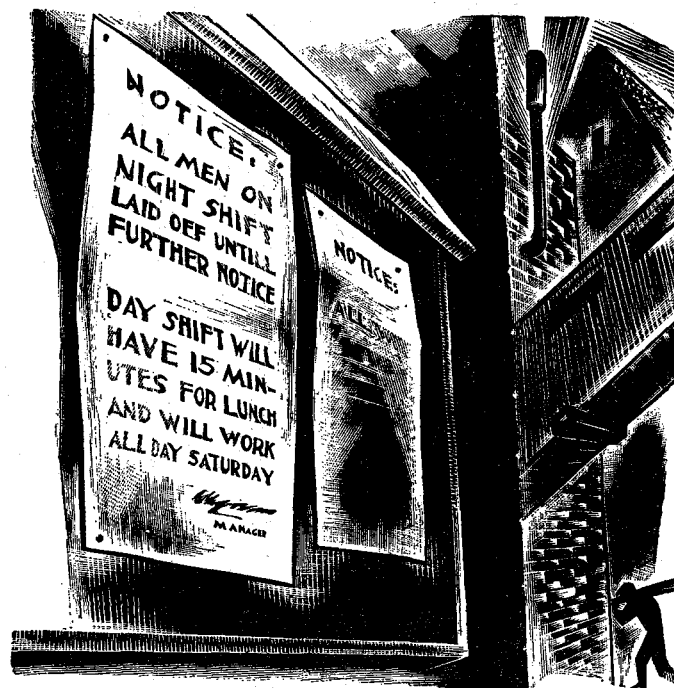
Confederate Heroism

THE UNVANQUISHED, by William Faulkner. Random House. \$2.50.

EVER since Faulkner wrote the opening chapters of *Sartoris* in 1929, it has been clear that he would some day write the book. Of all the families with which he has peopled his Jefferson, Miss.—the Snopeses, Sutpens, Compsons, Benbows, and so on—only the Sartorises command his admiration. In general he is as complete a skeptic as our age has produced, but he retains an enthusiasm for Confederate heroes almost as unadulterated as that of Margaret Mitchell or Stark Young. And the Sartorises are the embodiment of Confederate heroism.

The Unvanquished is for the most part made up of stories that appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*, and that too seems appropriate, because this is almost the only

theme on which Faulkner could write in a way that would be satisfactory to *Post* readers. Not that these tales are free from gruesomeness, for "Vendee" is as brutal a piece as he has ever written, but they are cloaked with a glamour that he can summon up only when he is writing of the Old South. The dashing splendor of the narrator's father, the romantic (and incredible) audacity of his grandmother, and the general atmosphere of chivalry have their appeal to persons whose



Woodcut by Lynd Ward from *Vertigo*

lives are unsplendid, unaudacious, and certainly unchivalrous.

The best of the stories—they have unity enough to be called a novel if the publishers insist—is "An Odor of Verbena," which has not been published before. In this study of conflicts, baffling emotions, and strange decisions there is some of the insight that made it worth our while to puzzle our way through *The Sound and the Fury* and *As I Lay Dying*. But for the most part the book is unpleasantly close to the general level of the Stars and Bars school.

In one respect, however, it is quite unlike any other Confederate novel. In *Soldier's Pay*, his first novel, Faulkner hinted at a deep hatred of war. The hint recurs in *The Unvanquished*, rather surprisingly since the book is intended to glorify the Confederate dead. It is in no sense the book's theme, and it does not save Faulkner from the charge of triviality, but it is there, reminding us that there is more in the man than he has allowed to appear in his recent novels.

With every book he writes Faulkner becomes a more complex problem. But unfortunately with every book the incentive to try to solve the problem diminishes. Certainly *The Unvanquished* does not do much to encourage us, but it does make us conscious that this is one more tragedy of frustration, and a very real one.

GRANVILLE HICKS.

Novel in Woodcuts

VERTIGO, by Lynd Ward. Random House. \$3.

NO one can impute to Lynd Ward a narrowness, a one-sidedness in his treatment of the capitalist. Ward's capitalist is a man of many interests. He patronizes art, attends concerts, unveils monuments, distributes charity, goes to church. At the same time Ward remembers that besides being a God-fearing, benevolent, æsthetic "elderly gentleman," the capitalist is also—and before everything else—a capitalist, a member of a class whose function in society is to "serve," i.e., to draw profits. Hence, when in 1929 profits begin to decline, we are not in the least surprised to find the old gent in full command of every technological innovation designed to deal with "labor trouble" and preserve profits. He dismisses part of his working force, reduces wages, plants stool-pigeons in his factory, introduces the stagger

system. As labor resistance stiffens, he deputizes thugs, supplies them with booze and blackjacks so they can slug workers, break up their headquarters, and scatter their demonstrations. Finally he requests and gets government troops whose gas bombs and bayonets turn the trick. Modern technique triumphs. Profits begin to climb upward.

Ward skillfully indicates how the system of which the "elderly gentleman" is chief beneficiary determines in innumerable ways the fate of the Boy and the Girl and their families: how the Girl is frustrated in her ambition to achieve a musical career, how her father loses his job, tramps the streets, attempts suicide; how her sweetheart, the Boy, is forced to take to the road, vainly seeking his fortune across the country, narrowly escaping a career of crime. 1929, '30, '31, '32, '33, '34, '35—eviction, pawn shop, relief station.

There is one element in this otherwise consistent tale which seems to be at odds with the whole tenor of the book. We have seen the capitalist in action and we know what he would do in a given situation when his interests are at stake. On the other hand, the Boy and the Girl, sensitive and intelligent, thwarted in their affections and careers, go through several years of post-depression horror without once becoming aware of the social meaning implied in their experiences, without

finding—without even seeking—the reason for their plight.

For the rest the author's own views are clearly enough reflected in the satirization of the finks, nobles, and our economic royalist himself; in the sympathetic portrayal of the workers; further, in the choice of particular events and the manner of representing them. This is, of course, where technique and composition enter. By emphasis on certain details and elimination of others, by special arrangement of light and shade, scenes are visualized at a glance and events made dramatic and absorbing (coming of a Red Cross ambulance, busses taking scabs to factory, Boy amidst telegraph poles, scene of eviction and others). Ward has an ability to render the atmosphere, the character of a scene: the swank of a financier's office, the highway cluttered by signboards, the chill rigidity of the financial district, the garishness of Luna Park, the dark home by the "L."

From a purely technical standpoint, from the standpoint of mastery of the medium, nothing superior is being done in the American woodcut today. Every technical device—white lines on black, black lines on white, dots, cross hatch, fine linear shading—are employed freely, sometimes several in the same picture.

Compositionally Ward has always depended on extremes of contrast: violent opposition of light and dark, of big and small, of far and near; violent foreshortening from above and below; violent movement. These repeated contrasts are considerably subdued in *Vertigo*, resulting in higher effectiveness and æsthetic quality. There are scenes which are in themselves effective—some even lyrical—outside of their relation to the story. Within its own field, the novel in pictures, which has such an outstanding pioneer as Masereel, *Vertigo* should be accorded a high place.

LOUIS LOZOWICK.

Personal History

ONE AMERICAN AND HIS ATTEMPT AT EDUCATION, by Frazier Hunt. Simon & Schuster. \$3.

FRAZIER HUNT's *One American* is the autobiography of a man who in his fifty-odd years of life has seen as much history in the making as any of his vigorous American newspaper contemporaries. Moreover, he has done his bit in helping to make it; on at least two occasions he "scooped the world," bringing into the focus of public opinion facts which had an immediate effect on American foreign policy.

Hunt will be remembered not so much for his scoop on the Versailles treaty, for which as he says he received more credit than was due him, but for his other—what he terms "The Great Scoop." In 1919 he sent out dispatches from Soviet Russia and from the Siberian front with General Graves that played their part in putting a stop to intervention. For this he will



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