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RIDGEFIELD, CONN.

Cacao-Rush

THE VIOLENT LAND, by Jorge Amado, translated by Samuel Putnam. Knopf. \$2.50.

IF YOU are one of those who are unaware that there is a common American continental experience, read this story of the opening up of southern Bahai, Brazil, in the "Cacao-rush." This book is an experience in recognition of the common accent, experience and hope between North and South America.

The run of the mill novel of South America always seems to stress peculiarities and differences in the people and their experience, but the *Violent Land*—and surely this must be attributed in part to the translation of Mr. Putnam—makes you feel these are our people and that our national experience is the common experience of both—the landing on a new continent, developing it swiftly, fighting the same enemies, hoping the same hopes, having the same love for land and freedom.

The bloody struggle told in the story, waged by two predatory owners over the bodies of workers and small farmers, for an area of virgin forest which they hope to convert into rich cacao land, reminds one of our gold rushes, the bonanza wheat farms, the ruthless and often bloody fights over timber. The money octopus is the same in South America—the aspirations of people for a small security is the same.

In Amado's book the great forest swallows them all, exploiter and exploited; and after the two protagonists devour each other, greater octopi take over the forest, strewn with its fighting dead.

Cacao at last will be planted, and the vast riches reaped from it will be enjoyed in drawing rooms not only in South America but in North America as well.

The author, Jorge Amado, has been part of the life of his country. He has not got his material from barflies or drawing room gossips. He starts his book with the explanation that he tackled this huge theme of the development of cacao nine years ago, when he was nineteen, and now returns to it. In those ten years he wrote seven novels and two biographies, the subject of one of which was the great Brazilian political figure, Luiz Carlos Prestes, a book which we hope Mr. Putnam will soon translate. "I carried on the daily struggle," he says, "I travelled, I made speeches, I had my books seized and burned, I came to know the inside of prisons. I was obliged to live in foreign

lands. I lived the life of my people. I am exceedingly happy to note that there is an unbroken thread of unity which pervades, not only the work that I did during this decade, but the life I led as well; the hope—more than the hope, the certainty—that tomorrow's day will be a better and a fairer one. It is in the service of this tomorrow, whose dawn is already breaking over the night of war on the battlefields of eastern Europe that I have lived and written."

One cannot help but feel that a different unanimity of purpose and growth would exist between the North and South Americas were such novels as this widely read. As a matter of truth, there probably has never been a continent in all history with such a common experience as the Americas, in which so great a number of living men share a common memory of their inceptions, of their struggle, and a history within the memory of living men. To communicate the body of this knowledge is surely one of the tasks of the coming time; and it is well served by the publication of this absorbing and important novel.

MERIDEL LE SUEUR.

Up in Canada

LEFT TURN, CANADA, by M. J. Coldwell. Duell, Sloan & Pearce. \$2.75.

CANADA: NEW WORLD POWER, by Louisa W. Peat. McBride. \$3.

THE only large Social Democratic party on the continent, the Canadian CCF (Cooperative Commonwealth Federation) deserves study. *Left Turn, Canada* by the CCF leader, the colorless schoolteacher M. J. Coldwell, outlines the history and views of that party for Americans. The book was written in expectation of spectacular victory in the summer election which failed to materialize.

In brief, it is a story of Social Democratic intellectuals of the Norman Thomas type, allied to reform liberals, and resting on the long-simmering agrarian rebelliousness of the Canadian West, with some hold in the top circles of a number of trade unions. While the CCF started in the midst of the economic crisis of the thirties (to counteract the Communists, Coldwell confesses) with the aim of becoming a right-wing farmer-labor party, it has become a hide-bound parliamentary machine with only a handful of unions affiliated to it—affiliated not in the British Labor Party sense but only in "advisory" capacity.

Its program calls for a nationalization

of banks and industries, a state capitalism presented as "socialism." Mr. Coldwell in his book carefully avoids giving vent to his anti-Sovietism but does not find it so necessary to be restrained in his phobia against Communists or any unity with them. As the wit has it, the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation is neither a federation nor is it cooperative.

Americans should know more about their northern neighbor, but the gems of information contained in Louisa W. Peat's *Canada, New World Power* are lost in a sea of mud. Mrs. Peat has gone slumming across Canada and gushes in a most embarrassing manner about everything Canadian. Her figures about Canada's amazing economic growth are good (although a few boners are strewn about), but they are available free from gush in the Canada Year Book and numerous government publications. Her appraisal of the French-English problem, Canadian history, politics and labor is proof that Babbitry is not dead—on either side of the border. A serious book on Canada for Americans is still wanting.

A. BOLSON.

Recipe for Publication

INTERVAL IN CAROLINA, by William Miller Abrahams. Simon & Schuster. \$2.

HERE'S one of the ways to hit the present market for new writers: Go to Harvard. Graduate from Harvard. Get drafted. Then get yourself sent to Martinsville, Carolina, for six weeks, and after that to a port of embarkation.

While in Martinsville, meet two girls and keep thinking of your old girl, the one you walked out on five minutes before she walked out on you. Play each against the others in your mind. Make it "literary." That is, verbally articulate, sensuously sensitive, and affectedly rhythmic.

Paint yourself as a heel, then show your creative honesty by making your antagonist call you a heel. That is supposed to take the curse off the fact that you really *are* a heel. When stuck for an effect, remember your readings in Henry James, T. S. Eliot, and especially Edmund Wilson's "I Thought of Daisy."

You won't have much of a story, but you will be able to prove you can write acceptable if naively mannered prose. Most of all, you will have persuaded the Venture Press that you are a promising new writer.

CHARLES GOLDBERG.

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