

absurdum of the doctrines of the Church of England, which the Rev. Sir Simon tries to exemplify in literal detail—and Simon, pretty obviously, is insane. About half the book is an excerpt from Simon's own narrative, which is apt to be interesting chiefly to theologians and alienists. Yet Miss Borden deserves credit for presenting the ravings of a maniac as the ravings of a maniac, and not the spiritual autobiography of a young intellectual.

Robinson Jeffers's Poetry

ROAN STALLION, TAMAR AND OTHER POEMS. By ROBINSON JEFFERS. New York: Boni & Liveright. 1925. \$3.00.

Reviewed by EDWIN SEAVER

THE appearance last Spring of "Tamar And Other Poems" announced an utterly new and vigorous voice in contemporary American poetry. Suddenly, out of obscurity, almost—one felt convinced—by divine right, Robinson Jeffers declared himself in the thin ranks of our major poets. It was as if America, having done with broken and muddled songs, with intellectualized escape and the wistful lyricism of children among machines, had conceived out of her instant need a poet lofty and rugged and imperturbable as the granite and cypresses among which he lived.

No one who had the opportunity to read Jeffers's first offering, privately published and launched unpretentiously into an indifferent *milieu*, no one, I think, can forget the thrill of discovery that heightened as page after page of "Tamar" revealed an overwhelmingly poetic imagination, a firm grasp of dramatic values, a profound seriousness, and a fecundity that danced at white heat through his "mighty line." It was an experience not soon to be forgotten. And this, not only because of the amazing poetry, but because here was the rare poet come among us who neither accepted nor rejected his America, but faced it for exactly what it was worth to him and used it as material for a more important end, for his visioned song.

Primitive—that was the word that best fitted Robinson Jeffers, as one who conceived form not as a mold into which the fluid substance is poured and from which it takes shape, but as that which *informs* the substance, which identifies it and makes it choate. Form as spirit, form as imagination, form as life force. By this mark the poems of Robinson Jeffers published last Spring announced their creator a true primitive.

To these poems have been added a new dramatic poem, "Roan Stallion," and more lyrics, the sum heightening the totality of confidence we felt unshaken after several readings of the earlier volume. Serener than "Tamar," more definite in line and more economical in conception, "Roan Stallion" is a magnificent achievement. Only once does Jeffers depart from the intense objectivity of his narrative, and then it is to leap into a characteristically frenzied and dancing strophe:

Humanity is the

start of the race; I say
Humanity is the mold to break away from, the crust to
break through, the coal to break into fire,
The atom to be split.

Tragedy that breaks man's face and a white
fire flies out of it; vision that fools him
Out of his limits, desire that fools him out of his limits,
unnatural crime, inhuman science,
Slit eyes in the mask; wild loves that leap over the walls of
nature, the wild fence-vaulter science,
Useless intelligence of far stars, dim knowledge of the
spinning demon that makes an atom,
These break, these pierce, these deify, praising their God
shrilly with fierce voices: not in man's shape
He approves the praise, he that walks lightning-naked on
the Pacific, that laces the suns with planets,
The heart of the atom with electrons: what is humanity
in this cosmos? For him, the last
Least taint of a trace in the dregs of solution; for itself
the mold to break away from, the coal
To break into fire, the atom to be split.

This is the burden of all of Jeffers's song, over against "coldness and the tenor of a stone tranquility; slow life, the growth of trees and verse." This, and the knowledge that

all the arts lose virtue
Against the essential reality
Of creatures going about their business among the equally
Earnest elements of nature.

It is obvious from these and other lines that Robinson Jeffers is one of Walt Whitman's "poets to come" whom the earlier primitive hailed on the horizon, "expecting the main things" from them. But whereas Whitman sang of an advancing republic rejoicing in its youth, Jeffers faces a "perishing republic" from the heights of a tougher reality.

Evaluating the Moderns

AMERICAN AND BRITISH LITERATURE SINCE 1890. By CARL VAN DOREN AND MARK VAN DOREN. New York: The Century Company. 1925. \$2.50.

Reviewed by JOHN W. CUNLIFFE

Columbia University

THE authors of this book, both of them experienced university teachers whose more recent activities are mainly editorial, begin with the modest avowal that it is "intended primarily for the use of schools", but in this instance the "blurb" comes nearer the truth: it is "an attempt to evaluate contemporary American and British literature," and offers "the general reader a guide to the best recent books in English." The authors no doubt had a school book in view when they wrote the first line of the introduction, but by the time they drew up the "Suggestions for Study", which come at the end of the volume and recommend a list of reading in English fiction closing with D. H. Lawrence's "Sons and Lovers" and Aldous Huxley's "Antic Hay", the general reader had obviously crowded the High School pupil out of the writers' consciousness. To stimulate the interest of the general reader in "Jurgen" and "Ulysses" is a very different matter from inciting school teachers to discuss these works in class or encouraging youngsters still in their teens to read them in private; it might be well for the authors to revise their opening sentence to run that the volume is "not intended for the use of schools."

It is obvious that the book is not meant for the serious student any more than it is intended for schoolgirls; even the bibliographies have very few dates and the biographical sketches usually give birth dates only. What the authors have really attempted (and, it may be said at once, have successfully accomplished) is a popular exposition of the main tendencies in American, British, and Irish Literature since 1890, with subdivisions within these three sections into poetry, fiction, drama, and essay, and brief notices (usually of a page or two) of the leading authors in each subdivision.

An analysis of the American Literature section (which is much the best) will give a fair idea of how the work has been done. The earlier poets chosen for notice are Whitcomb Riley, Santayana, Emily Dickinson, and Edwin Arlington Robinson, but it is evident that the real interest of this chapter (both for writer and reader) lies in the criticism of the New Movement which began in 1912. Brief appreciations of Frost, Vachel Lindsay, Masters, and Sandburg lead up to an appraisal of Imagism and Amy Lowell. The summing up of Miss Lowell's services to American poetry may be noted as an instance of the careful judgment and skill of phrase that have gone into the making of what claims to be only a popular handbook.

In the second chapter American fiction is discussed in much the same fashion. The chapter on drama, perhaps owing to limitations of space, is less adequate, and the same scant measure is given to the essayists. John Muir, E. W. Howe, Henry Adams, and Santayana are the earlier writers noted; and then (once more one remarks a rising note of enthusiasm) comes the Welcome to the Younger Generation:—

The war, with its terrific disorder, served to discredit, in part unjustly, these who were in power. No one, even boys and girls perceived, could have done worse. Consequently they had a better excuse than ever for demanding that they be allowed a larger freedom. Perhaps they did not so much take this freedom as talk about it. The difference was considerably a difference in candor. At any rate, youth found a voice such as it had never had in the United States before. Rebellion began to be regarded not as wild oats but as heroism. Moreover, it was rationalized by persons of notable intelligence. In this the younger writers took the lead. There had actually been an interregnum in the national literature, presided over by remote or mediocre or timid spirits who all of a sudden seemed hopelessly ineffectual. No wonder they were jostled aside by the more brilliant and outspoken poets and novelists and dramatists and essayists who succeeded them. These elders, and certain younger men and women who tend to side with them, have during the past dozen years or so been somewhat overlooked, in a measure because they have been so busy answering and censuring the Younger Generation that they have failed to furnish independent statements of their own position.

In accordance with this conclusion the rest of the chapter is given to Randolph Bourne, H. L.

Mencken, and George J. Nathan. One cannot suppose that Brander Matthews, Paul Elmer More, Agnes Repplier, Stuart P. Sherman, and Christopher Morley—not to mention other names which might come to mind—were forgotten; they are deliberately dismissed to oblivion without a word. In a book of this kind considerable allowance must be made for personal judgment and even idiosyncrasy; but the general reader has a right to a warning when he is getting, not a critical, but a partisan estimate.

More space is given to English Literature than to American, but this section is, both as a whole, and in detail, not so satisfactory as the first. Ten pages are allotted to Rudyard Kipling—which is surely out of proportion to the scale, either of the book or of this particular section of it; at this day, the authors have not the excuse that Kipling's work stands in need of introduction or exposition to the American public. The description of W. H. Davies as "the best of the Georgians" is more than doubtful. Less than justice is done to Walter de la Mare, and William Wilfrid Gibson gets no mention. In the discussion of Rupert Brooke, attention is concentrated on the war sonnets, which are the least characteristic, though the most popular, part of his work. The satirical, iconoclastic treatment of traditional themes and melodies, which this volume describes as beginning in 1916 with "Wheels" and Aldous Huxley, derives from the earlier poetry of Rupert Brooke.

There is the same lack of sureness of footing and adequacy of treatment in the chapter on English fiction. Instead of the swift summaries of achievement so successfully undertaken in the first part, an attempt is made to discuss in some detail the principal works of the English novelists, and as these are much more voluminous than recent American novels, it is not surprising that the result is sometimes confusion.

Altogether one cannot escape the conclusion that the authors would have given us a better and more useful book if they had resisted the temptation to get as much as they could into one package, and had contented themselves with a popular exposition of recent tendencies in American literature, which is Professor Carl Van Doren's special field. If he had studied English Victorian literature as much as he has studied recent American literature, he would not have countenanced such conventional generalizations as "the somewhat hypocritical temper of the Victorian mind," and such inadequate characterizations as that of General Gordon—"a famous fighter in the wilds of Africa." The general reader demands brevity and abhors the apparatus of scholarship, but he has a right to expect that the views presented to him are not only fair but thoroughly informed. In the contemporary field, in which we have not the advantage of the opinion of posterity, there is the more need for careful study and balanced judgment. The general reader who uses this volume as a guide will do well to make allowance for the authors' point of view, which, it is fair to say, there is no attempt to conceal. Subject to the qualifications indicated, the book may be recommended as helpful and stimulating. Even those who would prefer a more catholic outlook will agree that it contains much craftsmanlike criticism and much excellent writing; it is eminently a readable book.

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A Practical View of China

WHY CHINA SEES RED. By PERCIVAL WEALE. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co. 1925. 8s.

Reviewed by CHARLES C. BARNETT

THIS book is a welcome contrast to the mass of sentimental literature on China, which treats the complicated Chinese problems from purely emotional points of view, with utter disregard of the practical side. The author apparently believes that the real friends of China are those who tell the truth about the present situation, not those who try to curry favor with the Chinese by misrepresenting facts which are well known to all who have lived in China. In many of his statements, he either quotes from official documents, or paraphrases them, and by doing this completely demolishes the claim, so generally made, that the existing treaties were imposed unjustly on China by force or fraud by the imperialistic Western nations. In fact, the so-called "unequal treaties" were regarded at the time they were made as proclaiming equality between China and foreign nations, and extra-territoriality was granted as the only visible solution of the problems which inevitably arise when men of widely differing civilizations are brought closely and continuously into contact.

Mr. Weale is most refreshingly frank in admitting that the problems of China are largely commercial, and sums up the situation by saying:

The most powerful of all bonds, the cash nexus, had begun to unite Chinese and foreigners in numberless ways which they were powerless to dissolve. The failure of the Boxer outbreak as a national movement is due to this one fact alone, since no man will willingly sacrifice his material interests for an ideal which, to be attained, demands not only the total destruction of those interests, but the surrender of his future.

He fails, however, throughout the book to realize that this statement may no longer be true, and that the Chinese anti-foreign, nationalistic movement may be making an emotional appeal strong enough to cause even the conservative wealthy and commercial classes to disregard their obvious material interests for the sake of an ideal.

The brief, historical review, and the treatment of the internal problems, such as the military rulers, called "tuchuns," Bolshevism, the student movement, the Chinese press, the riots this summer in Shanghai and other places, and the existing civil wars show not only an accurate knowledge of the facts, but a real insight into the underlying causes, and an ability to interpret the points of view of different elements, such as might be expected from the author's long residence in China, and his opportunities as one of the "advisers" to the Chinese Government. His anti-Japanese prejudices, however, lead him at times to draw inferences which are not warranted by the real facts, and opinions differ regarding Bolshevik activities.

The criticisms of American policies in China, while caustic and extremely hostile, are worth careful consideration, as there are many who think that continuous failure has attended the American plan of treating China as an equal, civilized state, whose sovereignty and integrity must not only be respected and preserved, but which must be assisted to remove all limitations and infringements on that sovereignty. This is also the policy of the students and radicals today, and is strongly supported by many missionaries and by altruists in the United States.

The policies which are recommended by Mr. Weale to meet the existing emergencies are simply incomprehensible in a man of his great experience, and a reader who is not thoroughly informed about Chinese affairs is apt to be misled into accepting his opinions, by his accurate knowledge of events in China and his frequent reference to documents and other authorities. It is almost universally admitted that international, military intervention on a large scale in China is impossible, not only on account of the violent resistance of the Chinese armies and people, but because it would not be supported by public opinion in America or England, and still more, because the taxpayers of Europe would refuse to bear the financial burdens of doubtful adventures in China. Mr. Weale apparently does not realize that we are not dealing with the Chinese of a century ago, but with the young Chinese permeated with Occidental education, and with a people united by what they deem foreign oppression. He makes this fact so clear that it is astonishing that he does not draw the inevitable conclusions.

The attacks upon the policies of American busi-

ness men and on the International Bankers' Consortium show a want of understanding surprising in an advocate of *real politik*, and of a practical, business management of governmental action in China. He ignores the fact that American business men engage in commerce abroad to make profits and not to extend that intangible and vague "imponderable," American prestige. He also forgets that reputable bankers do not invest the money of their clients in railways or government loans in countries torn by civil war, and without credit at home or abroad, unless specific security is given. Some of his statements are unfounded, such as "in spite of an international prohibition on any loans except those made by an official group, hundreds of millions of dollars have been advanced mainly in the form of American railway equipment." No such American loans have been made since Mr. Lamont's visit to China in 1920, as the representative of the Consortium, and the highest estimate of the debts to Americans, mostly for sales of equipment and other supplies and services to the Chinese Government, does not exceed \$30,000,000.

It is to be regretted that Mr. Weale does not make it more clear that much of the unrest is due to "a rise in prices unparalleled except in times of war" and to the competition of foreign shipping and manufacturers of all kinds with those of China, unprotected by a tariff, limited by treaty to 5 percent. "The struggle for existence may know no other law than the survival of the fittest; but before the unfit go under and the waters of fate close over their heads, there is a mighty clamor," is an epigrammatic statement of the reason for the demands being made at the Customs Conference in Peking for the right to impose a customs tariff rising to 80 percent on luxuries and to tax all foreign business men, even in the foreign settlements.

A Pioneer of Socialism

ROBERT OWEN. By G. D. H. COLE. Boston: Little, Brown & Company. 1925. \$4.

Reviewed by LEWIS ROCKOW
Syracuse University

THIS volume is of interest to us for several reasons. Owen is undoubtedly one of the seminal minds of the past century. He was, as Leslie Stephen remarked, "one of the intolerable bores who are the salt of the earth." He was "a man of one idea," but the idea was salient. Viewed from the broad perspective of a century of development, Owen indeed was the founder of the Socialist movement in England, although not the originator of its philosophy. His present biographer, G. D. H. Cole, is still young in years, but he has already achieved an enviable position among writers on social theory. We cannot deny him a place among the six outstanding writers in that field in England. He is the most eminent representative of the Guild-Socialist movement. Thus, the long and illustrious line of modern English Socialists begins with Owen and perhaps concludes up to the present with Cole. This rare combination in a book compels our attention.

Robert Owen, as his present biographer reveals, lived an eventful life. He was born in 1771 and reached the ripe age of eighty-seven years. His long life spanned the period which marked the ascendancy of the middle class and the emergence of the wage-earners as an economic and political force. At ten years of age, after a decided religious bent in his early childhood, Owen went to London to seek his fortune. He was not disappointed, for at twenty-nine he became the head of the large cotton mills at New Lanark. Now, however, he began to use his opportunities not for the purpose of acquisition, but for the purpose of social experiments. His basic belief, which he enunciated again and again by speech and pen, was that environment creates man. He therefore took it upon himself to create for those dependent upon him such a congenial environment that would produce happy men and women. To this end also he fathered the factory act of 1819, the first effective step in factory legislation. Owen was at this stage not a socialist revolutionary, but a capitalist reformer, aiming at proving that the accepted faith to buy cheap and sell dear is not incompatible with benevolence. The solid portion of society saw no danger in his harmless ventures. Some went even further and lionized "Mr. Owen the Philanthropist."

Owen, however, did not remain long the mere reformer. The change was gradual. The end of the Napoleonic wars brought on an acute problem of un-

employment. As a cure, Owen suggested the establishment for the unemployed of "Villages of Co-operation," erected either by public authorities or private organizations. These villages were to be self-contained communistic units based mainly on agriculture with manufacturing as an appendage. These communities, he thought, would by their own irresistible example peacefully reconstruct the whole social order. His plan aroused only a wavering support, and even this was mainly withheld when he began his attack on established religions. It was now apparent to most of his supporters that he aimed at nothing else than the subversion of the existing arrangements in religion and property. From this time on his chief supporters were the workers. Owen himself now turned prophet, preaching in an Apocalyptic vein socialism and coöperation as a cure not only for unemployment but for all human ills, and prophets are not easily thwarted. He went to America to experiment and at New Harmony established a shortlived coöperative community.

When Owen returned to England in 1829 the working classes were already becoming conscious both of their misery and of their power. The Owenite religion of coöperation had already obtained wide support among the wage-earners, for it seemed to promise an escape from the misery of competitive industrialism. Thus the erstwhile capitalist philanthropist became in 1830-34 the recognized leader of the proletarian masses. It is he who inspired the National Equitable Labor Exchange, the Grand National Guild of Builders, and the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union, organized to usher in the socialist state by means of the general strike and coöperative marketing and production. The modern British labor movement was thus founded. A host of other Owenite societies testified to Owen's influence. This new effort, however, was short-lived. The trade unions were easily broken by the employers. The coöperative movement took in 1844 a definite turn towards merely consumers' coöperation in the hands of the "Rochdale Pioneers." Owen himself now devoted his energies to a purely moral crusade on behalf of his doctrine. Another attempt to found a model coöperative community of Harmony Hall, or Queenwood, ended in failure in 1846. Still later the Owenite societies became merely rationalist and anti-clerical associations. Owen died in 1858, but his work for factory reform, coöperation, and socialism was already done a score of years before. It is this chronicle of the life of an arresting mind that Mr. Cole's book offers.

This is not the place to analyze Owenism, yet its central thesis cannot be neglected. "Man's character," Owen repeatedly said, "is made for him and not by him." Society collectively is the product of training and environment. By a change in the environment and in the method of education man can be made to realize the inherent superiority of the coöperative society and socialism thus made workable. Owen's assumption undoubtedly contains a large element of truth. Human nature is malleable and elastic, not static or constant. If man creates the environment, the environment creates also man. The doctrine that "human nature is always what it is" is bad philosophy and worse science. Where Owen seems to have erred is to have exaggerated the truth. He expected an instant and immediate perfectibility of the human character. He was thus, as his biographer remarks, not enunciating a falsehood, but exaggerating a truth. Yet a realization of this fact does not lessen our apprehension of the seriousness of his error, for dangerous doctrines are not those that are totally erroneous, but those that do contain an element of worth. It is "just anger that makes men unjust." Owen apparently conceived human nature as a block of wood to be manipulated by fiat, and because he assumed this the failure of his more pretentious proposals was inevitable. The complexity that forms the human personality rests on a precarious equipoise. To readjust it requires nice balancing. Any appreciable modification of the human character and hence of social institutions necessitates unfortunately a long and painful process.

Yet Owen was a major prophet, and to Mr. Cole we are indebted for a keen, lucid, and sympathetic account of his life. His book is never dull, for Mr. Cole is an Oxford man and at Oxford dullness is regarded an unpardonable sin. He rightly emphasizes the constant correlation between Owen and his age, for the work of Owen is in a large measure the reflection of some of the wider currents of his time. There is, to be sure, a necessary coincidence