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of LITERATURE

EDITED BY HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

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Emma and Mr. Knightley

IT was Mr. Knightley's contention that Emma was jealous of the accomplished Jane Fairfax, not for her beauty, not even for the elegance which Emma valued so highly, but because Jane had acquired those accomplishments which come from the good reading that Emma had so often proposed for herself and so often deferred. With such seriousness did they take reading in those admirable houses where Jane Austen visited.

When Francis Bacon remarked with an emphasis that indicates how often he expected to be quoted: "Reading maketh a full man," the idea was not dissimilar. The elegant Emma had planned to fill her active mind with the thoughts of others from which much conversational merchandise could be made. Mr. Knightley hoped that she would learn sense, but it was sententiousness not sense that she hoped to acquire. It was no great misfortune that she was kept busy with match making and patronizing her subordinates, and had to be content with her elegance, which was indisputable.

If only all the Emmas would be satisfied to be elegant, or cultivate elegance as a virtue compensating for a lack of book knowledge! It was getting too full of reading that weighed down the delightful eighteenth century into a final dullness. The blue-stockings were endurable when their surplusage of reading was sublimated in brilliant talk, but when they grew moral, sentimental, like the ladies of Llangollen, they seem, to us at least, quite insufferable. No wonder Byron squirmed and took refuge in Turkish harems. When reading becomes an accomplishment, it is dead at the root. The naughty girls who hid in the shrubbery to read romances with hearts afire were a little maudlin, but at least reading had been for them an experience.

With most women today reading is a distraction, or, as with Emma, a part of the social make-up, or both. They are our most copious readers, yet few of them read for the sake of reading. They pick up a book, usually a good one, because they must feed a mind which they do not dare turn out to pasture. They have no pastures, no more than the weary industrialist with his detective story, and so must always keep the nose in a manger when they are not at work. But not even the motive of distraction is pure. Men usually pretend to know less than they really do, and hide warm interests like diseases, unless they are in congenial company. Women, once they have risen above the merely female, wish to seem to know more than they have acquired about things in general. Books are their greatest aid. They will take a tremendous punishing from an erudite text in order to be able to talk about a book. Books with them are still in the dress-goods category—they must have samples of what the well-read man is reading.

Reading for experience is the only reading that justifies excitement. Reading for facts is necessary but the less said about it in public the better. Reading for distraction is like taking medicine. We do it, but it is nothing to be proud of. But reading for experience is transforming. Neither man nor woman is ever quite the same again after the experience of a book that enters deeply into life. Thus women who do read well are probably the best of all readers, because, more readily than men, they give themselves over to experience. Women deeply experienced in books as well as in active life made the great salons of the age of conversation. They were accomplished, of course, but it was their experience with books that made them such happy friends of the intellect.

The kind of reading we do is reflected in the

Absolution

By ARTHUR DAVISON FICKE

CEASE, O my soul, with so perplexed a mood
To bear the burdens of the fate of man.
It was not you who made life's bad or
good,

Nor were your counsels asked when the firm plan
Was first established for the universe.

No guilt of yours with time and space conspired
To crush the better or exalt the worse;

That evil is, is not since you desired.
Take not upon yourself the heavy load

Of imperfection in the earth and sky,
But humbly dwell within your small abode,

And with unshrinking speculative eye
Watch through the doorway where along the road

The vast processions of the gods go by.

That Other Liberty

By JOHN CORBIN

MR. NORMAN THOMAS'S praise of Mr. E. D. Martin's "Liberty,"* in a past number of the *Saturday Review of Literature*, is as warm as it is discerning and just, but his criticism lacks something of finality. Toward the close he throws out a most interesting and pertinent idea—and leaves it suspended in mid-air.

The point in question is the extension of national power over the States, over industries, and over individuals. Mr. Thomas agrees with Mr. Martin that administrative tribunals such as the Interstate Commerce Commission, the Federal Reserve Board, and the Farm Board, controlling economic and financial affairs, are no just precedent and example for purely social control, such as the enforcement of national prohibition; that the extension of social control, "even for desirable ends," must bear the burden of proof. Yet he contends that in the modern world a general and systematic social order is indispensable, that "the burden of proof has been met."

Powers of government must be extended. The question is how, and in what spirit. The concern of a lover of liberty is less with the powers of the thing we call government in the abstract than with the question how we may make government, in our thinking and in our practice, a useful servant rather than an absolute master. Here again Mr. Martin's capacity for clear thinking and vivid and lucid expression might have given us more help.

Very politely, a socialist lays before an individualist the question to which socialists profess to have the only answer.

In the same spirit Mr. Thomas proceeds to suggest that that greatest of oppressors of the liberty of the individual, "large-scale war," is likewise a subject for collective control; but here he adds a sentence with which Mr. Martin, and most other American writers on government, profoundly disagree. "He who would save liberty must put his trust in democracy." In any right use of the word, our government has never been democratic. In the philosophy of the Constitutional Fathers democracy and liberty were antagonistic, irreconcilable, eternally at war; they specifically denounced democracy as no less oppressive than a monarchy. They therefore established a form as radically opposed to one as to the other, namely, a republic; and, in spite of Jefferson's Revolution of 1800 and the democratic movement of the nineteenth century, a republic our government still is. Mr. Thomas envisages only one alternative to the present rampancy of mob psychology—collective democracy, which is another name for socialism. From him, that was of course to be expected. Yet even those of us who reject his conclusion must admit, if we are quite candid, that about the only hard, clean, and systematic thinking on such subjects in the world of today is that of the socialists.

Mr. Thomas falls in with the universal verdict that Mr. Martin's application of the standard concepts of liberty to our modern problems is vivid and eloquent; but he is backed by many or most of Mr. Martin's critics in the verdict that the book is "not profound" and "not in the highest sense original." It was no doubt in a spirit of courtesy and decorum that he refrained from developing his own socialistic ideas of a collective control under which democracy would become the fountain of liberty.

As between socialism and the mainly untrammelled liberty of the individual is there no *tertium quid*? I hope I shall be as decorous as Mr. Thomas in subordinating merely personal opinion; but I hope also to be pardoned for pointing out that a middle way was embodied in our Constitution of 1787 and is

* *Saturday Review of Literature*, June 7, 1930.

This Week

"I'll Take My Stand."

Reviewed by WILLIAM E. KNICKERBOCKER.

"Voiceless India."

Reviewed by RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

"Life in College."

Reviewed by CLARENCE W. MENDELL.

"Responsible Drinking."

Reviewed by JOHN WURTS.

"A Roving Commission."

Reviewed by J. W. T. MASON.

"The Life of Mahomet."

Reviewed by HAROLD LAMB.

"The Cross Bearers."

Reviewed by MARY LEE.

"Through the Alimentary Canal."

Reviewed by LAWTON MACKALL.

"A Woman with White Eyes."

Reviewed by BASIL DAVENPORT.

John Mistletoe, XX.

By CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

Next Week, or Later

Physics and Platonism.

By F. S. C. NORTHROP.

publishers' lists, which are chiefly made up of facts and distraction. We should, of course, have fewer titles and yet buy and read far more books. The women could reform the literary situation if they would choose a book with their emotions and judge it with their brains. For reading a good book the right away is a kind of love affair (the business of women) intense, brief, yet in its effects at least, lasting.

Mr. Knightley thought experience with books might leave Emma less egocentric. But a reading list for her was only the next step in elegance. She was not looking for experience.

still clearly traceable in spite of the inroads of the nineteenth century. In advocating collective democracy Mr. Thomas comes within an ace of it—but an ace is a high card! That it has been ignored by all champions of the old and orthodox concept of liberty is one of the marvels of contemporary thought, a paradox incredible if it were not so clearly demonstrable. Thus Mr. Martin very ably and eloquently traces the development of the idea and practice of liberty in ancient Athens, in the Renaissance, and in the French Revolution; he extensively quotes Milton on the freedom of the press and John Stuart Mill on civil liberty; but he does not mention our own Constitution, the theory of which derives from Aristotle and was put into successful practice in ancient Rome, in eighteenth century England, and in our early State constitutions, before it was given perhaps its most perfect embodiment by the Convention of 1787.

Mr. Martin finds only two "philosophies" of liberty—or, rather, as these are "incompatible," only one. According to the "romantic" philosophy of Rousseau, liberty is a God-given "natural right," at war with social organization, with civilization—"a gift of nature to be restored to all mankind in equal degree by the emancipation of the masses from social bondage to the institutions and traditions of civilization." Like the kings of old, natural man can do no wrong. "The hope of freedom is based on the belief in the good intentions of man acting as mass. No other guarantee of the individual is necessary." Its characteristic cry is "Let the people rule." Thus "liberty is individual spontaneity secured by mass action." This is the democratic concept, abhorred by the Constitutional Fathers but dear to the Jeffersonians. The great virtue of Mr. Martin's book is its demonstration of how completely mass rule is opposed to true liberty; its shortcoming is in the matter of constructive theory. It does, indeed, recognize that the state has some sort of a claim as against the individual. "The collective will and the individual will are coequal." But as to how such coequality is to be maintained and administered—no inconsiderable problem—it says only that each is to be "a wholesome limitation to the other, each gov-

erning the other within proper limits." This is the common sense of the matter. The phasis of the book is on freeing the individual from trammels. Liberty is "a name for certain concrete rights."

It appeals to historic precedent, to reason and experience. Liberty is a cultural achievement. It depends on personal responsibility, on the exercise of intelligence and good taste, on the securing of certain immunities, necessary if individuals are to attain maturity.

The be-all and the end-all is the individual.

What then is the *tertium quid* of the Constitution? Briefly, it is *collective liberty*, a thing as different from mere individual liberty as it is from the collective democracy of socialism. That Milton ignored it in the "Areopagiticus" is not strange, for he was speaking only of an unwarranted violation of the liberty of the individual—censorship of the press. In other works he is eloquent enough as to the balanced republic. Mill's omission is perhaps to be explained by the fact that he was thinking primarily of the English Constitution, which was already far advanced toward its present state of parliamentary democracy. Mr. Martin's utopian vagueness is more difficult to understand. He is keenly aware of the confusion wrought by the grafting of the Rousseau-Jefferson idea of the beneficent mass upon the Anglo-American concept of liberty; but to that concept he gives recognition only as it affects personal conduct, "cultural achievement." I should perhaps hesitate to urge this if he were alone in such neglect; but it is shared by the very able and rapidly growing school of thinkers to which he belongs, in whom lies the chief hope of the new liberalism. Thus the pseudonymous author of "King Mob" says: "Machine, State, and Nation must exist *solely* for the benefit of the individual."

To explain how and why this is a feeble half-truth may seem to be a descent to platitudes and truisms. I avail myself of Mr. Martin's excuse for quoting page upon page of the most celebrated disquisitions of Milton and Mill. Unless I call in evidence the Constitution of the United States there is grave danger that the simple truth about our concept of liberty will continue to be ignored.

The clearest clue to the theory and content of the Constitution lies in the historic crisis it was framed

to meet. Propaganda and slogans are not an invention of the World War, nor are our times the first to fall victim to their evil consequences. The opening passages of the Declaration of Independence were as ably calculated to inspire popular enthusiasm as were those phrases about the self-determination of nations and making the world safe for democracy. All men are created equal and endowed by their Creator with inalienable rights—life, liberty and so forth. Jefferson knew that men are decidedly not created equal; later, in his "Notes on Virginia," he tried to gloss and gloze the phrase. In the way of "truths," nothing is more self-evident than that liberty and life itself are the forfeit of certain crimes against the collective interest. But, as Benjamin Franklin said in a later Revolution—*Ça ira!* The Declaration went so long as there was need to call men to arms, and it has since achieved world-wide currency among thinkers of a certain sort. But the Revolution was no sooner won than the ideas it popularized swept the United States of America into a most dangerous backwash. The "liberty" of individuals, and the similarly inspired particularism of the several States, was fast depriving the nation (and with it the very individuals who clung to their "natural rights") of the fruits of their new freedom. Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness were far more severely cramped than under King George. As I have shown in another place, Washington had been convinced as a boy fighting the French and Indians that the rights of the colonies could not be maintained without what he called "a general government"—collective control; and many or most of the ideas that went into the Constitution were put there to prevail against the futile and destructive individualism and particularism which his leadership had encountered in the Revolution. After the Revolution what he had so long seen and felt was obvious to all who had eyes to see and minds capable of thought.

Four defects in the old Constitution of the "Articles" were uppermost in the minds of the Constitutional Convention—the lack of a "general" power of taxation; of a general control of finance and com-

prestige and rights among nations. The country was bankrupt—could not pay arrears of interest on foreign loans or even finance the disbanding of the Army of the Revolution; yet for seven years the States had refused either to pay their just quotas to the general government or to allow it to lay and levy a general impost. Paper money and land banks in the several States had destroyed the circulating medium and wrecked credit; thanks to tariff barriers, States with good ports were levying tribute on the rest of the country, a practice no more oppressive to their neighbors than destructive of their own commercial development. While accepting all the great advantages of the treaty of peace, many States refused to observe unpleasant obligations, with the result that England refused to quit her threatening forts in our West and the control of the Indian trade which should have been ours. And the old Congress had no power to maintain a national army and navy. The result was a general chaos in which all suffered, most of all the unfortunates who had been beguiled by the slogan of equality and natural rights. Individual liberty was not enough. Only by subordination to collective control in these definite respects could anyone escape oppression—realize his possibilities of happiness and rise to his full stature as a free man and an American. The basic and informing idea of the Constitution of 1787 is that the intelligence and virtue of the nation shall be brought to bear on its problems, unpledged by platform promises and untrammelled by any direct influence from the masses. The collective interests of the nation were to be turned over to its collective wisdom.

The fact that Mr. Martin and his fellows overlook the liberty that can come only through collective control may be easily explained. The success of the new national government was so immediate, has been so uniform and so great, that we have long ceased to question or even to appraise it. We cannot see the town for the houses. During the late war it was a Democratic President, an avowed Jeffersonian, who achieved the draft—without remonstrance from his party. If we are amazed to find a thing so near and familiar described by a phrase so portentous as "collective liberty," we are in precisely the same boat with Molière's Monsieur

Jourdain, who was amazed to find that all his life he had been speaking prose.

Curiously enough, the thing upon which Mr. Martin and his fellows lay chief stress was no part of the Constitution as written—the Bill of Rights guaranteeing the conventional individual liberties. The great Fathers seem not to have expected that the general government would prove strong enough to endanger liberties which were well established and mainly safeguarded by the laws of the several States. The Amendments were adopted at the instance of the first Congress. There was no real opposition, even from the most reactionary; but it is a fact as significant as it is ironic that the part of the Constitution which Mr. Martin and his fellows regard as the one great essential was demanded and enforced by the Rousseau-Jefferson faction against whom they chiefly declaim. The ideas that render it triumphantly original, epoch-making in the history of liberty, they blandly ignore. Never was there a more ludicrous exhibition of a dog being wagged by his tail.

It is, of course, true that the problems which agitate them, from the prohibition of drink to the prohibition of war, are of a quite different kind from those which the men of the eighteenth century grappled with and definitively controlled. But it is at least worth an inquiry whether the principle upon which the Fathers proceeded is not, *mutatis mutandis*, still valid and applicable.

In the space at my disposal I cannot rehearse the history of the theory of the balance of orders and interests, its intention and its extension. But the central and vital point may be stated quite simply and recognizably. In the republic which Washington and his fellows conceived, all power originates in the masses and reverts to them in a specified manner on election day and whenever there is question of amending the Constitution. But the actual conduct of government, from day to day and from year to year, is to be in the hands of those who are qualified to rule by virtue of superior experience, ability and public spirit. Power resides with the masses, "the many," but its specific application with "the

few." The choice of President was soon taken from an electoral college of men chosen as the most able and disinterested, and was transferred to the masses. Likewise the election of Senators has ceased to be "indirect" and "filtered" and has become direct. Most abhorrent of all to Washington and his fellows, political parties, each purporting to give immediate effect to the will of a popular majority, have displaced that "calm and mature consideration" which they advocated, substituting blindly "factional" strife.

It is generally said that these changes mark failures of the Constitution. Certainly they mark a triumph of the Rousseau-Jefferson dogma over the principle of a representative republic. Yet it is quite as certain that in the eyes of the men who framed the Constitution it would be ourselves who have failed, in that we have substituted mass action and mob psychology for the leadership of able and disinterested men—putting politicians for the most part in the places intended for statesmen. That our effective liberties have thereby suffered is too obvious to be labored; yet Mr. Martin does not even discuss the question. "Liberty," he says, "is a cultural achievement," and in his vision culture is merely a concern of the individual, having nothing to do with the men who should inspire and guide the collective will. If he were himself a victim of the Rousseau-Jefferson dogmas, he could not be more deeply at odds with the basic principle of our constitutional liberty.

Administrative tribunals (which Mr. Martin deprecates and Mr. Thomas regards as inevitable) have resulted from the need of applying wisdom and intelligence to collective concerns which could not otherwise be favorably controlled. They have come as much against the grain of the politician as the Constitution itself. The first Interstate Commerce bill was aptly described in Congress as "a bill no one understands and everybody fears—yet everybody is going to vote for." President Cleveland abhorred the collective control it set on foot as leading to what he called *socialism*—yet he signed it. Nobody saw, and few yet see, the difference between a collective republic and a collective democracy. Yet great as

has been the horror of entrusting power to administrative tribunals, the increase of such tribunals and of their powers has been far greater. Our railroad and banking systems, our business men and our farmers, have developed abuses against which they and the public alike, both in their national extension, require to be protected; have developed needs which can be satisfied only by the most expert, intelligent, and disinterested national control.

It may be cogently argued that the reason for this need lies in a House controlled by party spirit and disrupted by the personal fears of members facing reelection; in a Senate similarly in obedience to the uninformed will of constituents, and thus given to buncombe and sensational publicity. Quite conceivably, if Congress were capable of a "consideration" that is calm, mature, and disinterested, it would not feel obliged to delegate powers so vast to non-political experts. That it should be thus capable was certainly the expectation voiced in Washington's Farewell Address. But it must be remembered that the twentieth century is not the eighteenth. The affairs of modern business and social welfare depend upon conditions so multifarious and perplexing that they must be studied on the spot by men who are able to give to them their whole time. In either case, as our legal writers are beginning to see, we have radically revised the Constitution, adding a fourth to the legislative, judicial, and administrative "departments" which it originally set up—the administrative tribunal which, in a form modified and controlled, combines all three. What is by no means so clearly grasped is that the administrative tribunal is not necessarily "socialistic"; as we have developed it, it is at once essential to our collective liberties and precisely in the spirit of the Constitution. Congress and President, whether they felt themselves to be mob-ridden or otherwise incapable, have delegated to disinterested experts a large and important share of their original function. The spirit of collective liberty has groped blindly: government by commission is far too often blundering and vexatious. But the need of it is every day becoming more obvious and imperative.

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Mr. Thomas seems chiefly concerned with the problem of controlling war. The case of the conscientious objector, tyrannized by mass hysteria in wartime, he would doubtless agree to be one for administrative tribunals operating under general statutes enacted by Congress. The barbarous futility and waste of war itself can be controlled only by international agreement and action. How a collective democracy would proceed he does not say. It would make an interesting discussion. The republican method is very aptly illustrated by the crisis of 1787. Under the old Articles of Confederation, the thirteen States retained many of the attributes of sovereignty. Armed rebellion in a single State (that of Shays in Massachusetts) was an actual and terrifying fact. Washington, among many others, believed that there were "combustibles in every State," and that if things continued as they were going, the union would split into separate confederacies, each liable "to become the sport of European politics" and eventually to fall again under the dominion of England. Uncontrolled particularism, individual liberty, would eventuate in the old tyranny. Thanks to the Constitution, to collective control, nothing of the kind has happened, with a single exception. The Civil War was mainly due to the fact that the Constitutional Convention did not—probably dared not—make a specific provision against secession.

The problem of war between nations is today in a condition quite similar. But the "catch" as to its solution would seem to be precisely the democratic control which Mr. Thomas advocates. In our thirteen original States there was little or no genuine popular objection to the mutual concessions necessary to secure the blessings of liberty; it was the politicians who made the trouble, inflaming mob psychology to abet their own purposes. Is there any nation today that would not rejoice to be freed from the suffering and waste of war and the burden of armaments—provided only it had faith in the wisdom and integrity of its representative in a league of nations? But every major decision at Geneva must be ironclad against misunderstanding—and, what is more likely, misrepresentation—on the part of a parliamentary opposition which has immediate recourse to the democratic will. If we were a member of such a league, every decision, being in the nature of a treaty, would run the gauntlet of senators whose minds are intent upon the coming election and

on front-page publicity. In a collective republic as intended by the Constitution, that would not be the case. If Washington were here today he might well feel that the fault lies with the politicians and their persistent appeal to mass psychology. Not that he was arbitrary, "an aristocrat." In the crisis of 1786 he declared and reiterated that "the people will be right in the end," and that under truly republican institutions they would become increasingly right. But to his mind their righteousness must consist in their general judgment as to men rather than in judgment of specific measures—of which they are necessarily ill-informed if not quite ignorant. They must cease to be told, and to believe, that, as regards such measures, the voice of the people is the voice of God; and they must learn to defer to the authorities they themselves have established.

Mr. Martin's *bête noir* is the prohibition of strong drink. Presumably he would not deny that drunkenness is a great social evil. Presumably also he would admit that, if it is capable of a generally helpful control, the nation would be very far from free which was estopped from attempting it. This is not an *ex-parte* statement. Perhaps I may be permitted to say that personally I have always believed in a liberal consumption of wine and liquor, and have practiced it, in spite of the stupid and mendacious Volstead act, with what I believe to be physical and spiritual profit; that I regard alcoholism as a mental



One of the famous Currier and Ives prints reproduced in "Mr. Currier and Mr. Ives," by Russel Crouse. (Doubleday, Doran.) See page 478

or nervous disorder to be dealt with as we deal with other imbecilities. But if men chosen for expert knowledge and disinterested ability—not vote-catching Congressmen—were to declare that prohibition is essential to the higher national good, I cannot see that any "natural" or merely individual right should be held up as a bar. The only condition should be that the individual right should be justly weighed against the collective good and measures taken to safeguard both so far as possible. The rational argument against prohibition as we have it is not that it tries to regulate conduct but that it does so stupidly and arbitrarily, multiplying evil. Such a problem would seem to be peculiarly one of collective liberty and administrative control—by State, by nation, or by both conjointly.

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It would perhaps be too much to say that current discussions of liberty are like "Hamlet" without the Prince. One is reminded rather of an ambitious feminine star who proposed a production of "Romeo and Juliet," excising the rival part of young Montague. Between individual and collective liberty there is, indeed, a tug of cross purposes which it would be stupid enough to ignore. But characteristically, to use a phrase of Oom Paul Kruger's, one hand washes the other. That individual liberty is the right hand may be plausibly contended. Historically it was the later to emerge—like Eve when she was fashioned, by an inspired afterthought, from a rib of the slumbering Adam; yet even so it is the mother of genius, of all the great advances in science, in art and in government. But by the same token collective liberty is the masculine principle, organizing and establishing for the general good what the individual creates—protecting and furthering him, too, in the exercise of his genius. Liberty is, in fact, a twin star: red and green must revolve securely, each in its proper orbit, if we are to have the pure white light.

Rudyard Kipling recently headed a deputation to request the British Government to preserve Hadrian's Wall from decay. The story of the old Roman wall is told in "Puck of Pook's Hill."

Back to the Hand

PLL TAKE MY STAND. The South and the Agrarian Tradition. By TWELVE SOUTHERNERS. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1930. \$3.

Reviewed by WILLIAM S. KNICKERBOCKER
Editor, *Sewanee Review*

IN the face of increasing difficulties caused by the industrial invasion of the South, a group of economic protestants (chiefly products of a university whose principal patron was the northern industrialist, Cornelius Vanderbilt) has arisen, repudiating the newest form of carpet-baggism, and, by implication at least, the gospel of those southern reconstructionists of the last generation who exhorted their compatriots to resist a tendency to inertia. What Walter Hines Page called "Mummyism"—resistance by inertia—has at last found its voice in John Crowe Ransom, Donald Davidson, Allen Tate, and Andrew N. Lytle. These regressive philosophers, skilled in medieval dialectics (especially of Duns Scotus and William of Occam), scathingly demolish the props of industrialism by a destructive scepticism in an effort to exhort the South to return to the ten-acre, one-mule farm.

Mr. Stuart Chase, in analyzing the causes of the present economic crisis, declared that the only way out was by planned production. While this does not reveal paralysis by an expert analyst of industrialism, still there is magnificent courage exhibited by these agrarian Southerners in their *Putsch* against what they conceive to be the already toppling capitalist society on which we have too optimistically depended. This symposium is the most audacious book ever written by Southerners: indeed, some claim might be made for it as the most challenging book published in America since Henry George's "Progress and Poverty." Important as a vigorous declaration of social protest, it is even more important as a prescription for current economic evils. Its earnestness, intelligent treatment of profound questions, its note of determined conviction touched with emotional zeal, will make it an exciting experience for Southerner and non-Southerner alike. The superficial reader may regard it as the swan-song of the Old South; the more excitable reader may suppose that it marks the reopening of the Civil War; but the calm reader will see in it the newest phase of Reconstruction: the reconstruction of the entire framework of American society on the basis of an agrarian policy suggested by the small farm of the old Middle South.

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Unlike most symposia, it has a certain art in the arrangement of its twelve essays. Beginning with a statement of general principles in compact paragraphs, it proceeds like a prose symphony following the movement of a summer's day. The cock-crow of John Crowe Ransom, "Reconstructed but Unregenerate," sets the key which is taken up by Donald Davidson's "Mirror for Artists," which shows the impossibility of a genuine art in a capitalistic society. Follows the chauvinistic and hysterical "The Irrepressible Conflict," by F. L. Owsley. The middle section of the book bears the heat of the day by its series of essays destroying the philosophy on which modernism rests: on education, on progress, on religion, on political economy. Then follow two rapturous sketches: Andrew Nelson Lytle's "The Hind Tit," which idealizes the peasant of middle Tennessee, and Robert Penn Warren's discussion of the Negro in "The Briar Patch." Then evening, pure and serene: the descent of the sun in J. D. Wade's "The Life and Death of Cousin Lucius"; "William Remington: A Study in Individualism," by Henry Blue Kline; and an exquisite bit of prose, quite the most moving in the book for its nostalgic languors, Stark Young's "Not in Memoriam but in Defense." The various essays, read in the order in which they are printed, produce truly a musical effect, something like Saint-Saëns's "Danse Macabre," ending on a note of beauty and peace.

The book rests on these fundamental fallacies: the value of exclusiveness, the essayists' definition of happiness, and their over-simplification of the problem.

All of the writers assume that exclusiveness is a value, though only Mr. Tate (and that in a footnote) is "constrained to point out that . . . the general title of this book . . . emphasizes the fact of exclusiveness rather than its benefits." But the book dismally fails to reveal the benefits of exclusiveness. Then, too, the repetition of the appeal to happiness would have more effect if these metaphysicians could have exercised their scholastic talents in demonstrating the possibility of happiness at all. Whatever happiness may be, it is a consequence which, if made a