

battlefield uses to describe one. Moreover, it was written down at the time of the vision, in 1917, long before any literary description of actual battle scenes could have gotten into print—much less any description of the non-existent "Utilization Factory."

The story is based on the cruel and fantastic piece of propaganda fostered during the war, known as the "Kadaver" lie. It is very brief, only ninety-two pages long.

Carl, a soldier only by bitter necessity, was fearfully wounded in his first battle, and is taken up as dead; stripped; tied in a bundle with three other corpses; and sent to "Utilization Factory of the Tenth Army Section," to be converted into commercially profitable products for "the Factory, though run under military organization, is run at a profit, must so run, or the shareholders will be angry." He is left lying on a platform at the end of the day, and rain awakens him from a blessed unconsciousness. He escapes after setting fire, accidentally, to the place, and wanders across a broad moor until in his encroaching insanity he finds a broken spade and digs himself a shallow grave. At dawn, two of the commanding officers, brutal and bureaucratic types, come across him. While they look down at the naked torn body, Carl stands up and faces them. His spirit is displaced, as one would say, the Over Spirit of the world, and he delivers one of the most beautiful and terrible anathemas it has been our fortune to read. Then one of the officers, fearing that this madman may spread disaffection among the troupes, first wounds him with a revolver shot, and then breaks his neck with his heel. Afterwards, his wife is awarded a Cross of Merit. . . .

No review can do justice to this brief story. Whatever faults it may have—chiefly those of style, when the author uses grotesque childish words as though no others would fit—the total effect is completely, triumphantly successful. There is nothing of the wandering and diffused imagination that so often spoils the effect of a piece of pure imaginative literature; it is more concise, more direct, than the most realistic of war writing.

Stephen Crane's attempt in the same metier is, beside "The Cross of Carl," a cold and intellectual psychological study. This book flames and soars in its effect. The only way to criticise it honestly, is to request that everyone who has any interest in genuine literature should read it at once.

Cotton, a National Weapon

KING COTTON DIPLOMACY. Foreign Relations of the Confederate States of America. By FRANK LAWRENCE OWSLEY. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 1931. \$5.

STATE RIGHTS IN THE CONFEDERACY. By FRANK LAWRENCE OWSLEY. The same. \$3.

Reviewed by WILLIAM MACDONALD

TO say that "King Cotton Diplomacy" is far and away the best history of Confederate diplomacy that has yet been written would not of itself be sufficiently descriptive of it, for while the book is an admirable example of thoroughgoing research it also develops a thesis whose demonstration necessitates not a little rewriting of the story of the Civil War. The foundation of the Confederacy, Professor Owsley correctly points out, was cotton, and Confederate diplomacy "centered around the well-known dependence of Europe, especially England and France, upon an uninterrupted supply of cotton from the Southern States." It was upon this dependence that the South, for more than two years, mainly relied to bring about some kind of European intervention, and whether intervention took the form of a denunciation of the blockade of Southern ports, or of mediation or recognition or recourse to arms, "the result would be the ending of the war, the opening of the source of cotton supply, and the independence of the Confederacy." There was nothing illogical in this view; on the contrary, the view rested upon logic, and its appeal was natural and convincing to a section which still, in marked contrast to the North, "accepted conclusions without mental reservations when drawn from a well-established premise."

Rather more than half of Professor Owsley's book is devoted to the efforts of the Confederacy to use cotton as a diplomatic lever with England and France. Until well into the winter of 1862 the embargo that had been inaugurated by withholding cotton from shipment and supplement by reducing production and even burning some of the stock on hand was "just as near air-tight as human effort could

make it." Unfortunately for Confederate hopes the time of the blow had been miscalculated, for while the cotton famine that had been looked for came eventually, it did not come when it was expected, primarily because of the huge stocks accumulated in England and France from the exceptionally large crops of 1859 and 1860; and from the spring of 1862 the embargo was gradually relaxed. The economic pressure which was to support the efforts of the Confederate diplomatists was, accordingly, thwarted.

Professor Owsley gives a graphic account of the distress which the cotton famine occasioned in England when it at last arrived, and of the slight and grudging charitable relief that was eventually granted. He is more than skeptical, however, of "the idealistic theory of the sympathy of the Lancashire population with the North as a sole explanation" of England's refusal to intervene. The agitations, mass meetings, and monster petitions against intervention have been taken, he thinks, "too much at their face value," while similar demonstrations organized by Southern propagandists "have been too much ignored." "The fact of the whole business is," he declares, "that these meetings, whether pro-Northern or pro-Southern, were not spontaneous but were drummed up by well-subsidized leaders and were frequently packed by the liberal use of small coin." The government had little to fear politically from unemployed operatives, most of whom had no vote, and while there was some danger that the demand for cotton might force England into war, the "docile and submissive British workmen . . . required only enough to keep body and soul together, and the wealth of England saw that they had just this much and no more." Another legend of antislavery propaganda passes into the shades.

An evisceration of the much-vaunted blockade policy is a further contribution which Professor Owsley makes to the history of the time. Of the approximately 160 vessels of various kinds that had been assembled by the end of 1861, "only a small proportion" were "naval vessels capable of strenuous action," and the *Merrimac* or a single British or French ironclad could have made short work of all of them. By the end of 1862, when the navy numbered four hundred vessels, and by the end of the war when the number had reached more than six hundred, hundreds of miles of the southern coast, although declared blockaded, were sometimes left unguarded. Without going exhaustively into the figures, Professor Owsley concludes that after the first year of the war, during which the blockade was "almost nonexistent," it was "never able to stop more than one vessel out of four on the Atlantic Coast, even toward the last, and certainly no more than that on the Gulf Coast." For Lincoln's course in ordering the blockade and continuing it Professor Owsley has nothing but condemnation. "To gain a doubtful advantage over the Confederacy," he writes, Lincoln

flew in the face of all American precedents, all American permanent interests and doctrines of neutral maritime rights, vitiated the principles in the Declaration of Paris that a blockade to be binding must be effective, and thereby furnished an interpretation of the Declaration of Paris for Great Britain which was destined to release that Power from the one burdensome and objectionable feature of that pact. Over a century of struggle on the part of the weaker maritime Powers to force Great Britain to recognize the rights of neutrals on the high seas was rendered futile, and international law was put back where it was in the days of the orders in council and the Milan decree. Old Abe sold America's birthright for a mess of pottage.

Space forbids more than a mention of the elaborate account which Professor Owsley gives of the negotiations of Confederate agents in Europe, Confederate finances abroad, the building of the Confederate navy in Europe, Confederate relations with Mexico, and the revulsion of feeling that swept the South when it became clear that cotton diplomacy was failing and that intervention would not come. Summing up on the question why Europe did not intervene, Professor Owsley rejects the claims that either cotton or wheat had anything important to do with determining British policy. The cotton situation has already been mentioned. "Recent researches in the British archives," he declares, "disclose no concern with a wheat famine"; on the contrary, when in 1864 and 1865 the United States was able to supply its own munitions and no longer exported wheat to England for large munitions purchases there, "the latter country turned abruptly away from America

to Russia and East Europe for her wheat supply." The controlling argument against intervention, Professor Owsley concludes, was war profits—huge profits in cotton goods, in revived linen and woolen manufactures, in munitions, and most of all in "the complete destruction of the American merchant marine directly or indirectly by the Confederate privateers and cruisers."

"State Rights in the Confederacy" is a reissue of a work first published in 1925. As the book was widely commented upon at its first appearance, nothing more need be said of it now than to recall that it expounds the argument that the Confederacy was not strangled by the blockade but died from an acute application of State rights, particularly in military matters, the suspension of the privilege of habeas corpus, and the impressment of property. Its reissuance now has been deemed timely because the researches upon which "King Cotton Diplomacy" is based are regarded by the author as still further confirming the soundness of the earlier thesis.

Pegasus Perplexing



NUMBER XIX

The lover seeks with strict propriety,
Led by importunate affection,
My first's adorable society.
(Envy alone can find objection.)

As to my next, behold how small-it-is!
Less than a mite 'tis sure no giant.
It thwarts my wish to name its qualities,
Against defining still defiant.*

My third, remote in its antiquity,
By devotees of all that's "olden"
Is purged of sorrow and iniquity
And glorified as great and golden.

My whole's a home without a wife in it.
Screened from the vulgar crowd so madding,
A loafer leads a lonely life in it
Without a thought of gadding.

*Alas, I am not infallible mentally,
And thus it happens that accidentally
I've shown headless want of veracity
In so restricting my second's capacity.

As a full fledged word, I am still afraid of it;
Yet research will prove that a noun may be made
of it.

It is one of those things, I understand,
That a lexicographer has on hand.

NUMBER XX

My First
May Fortune fair deliver us
From rodents most granivorous
Who gorge themselves with me.

My Second
Among the slightly eatables
That decorate our tea-tables
I cannot fail to be.

My Whole
A mammy straight from Dixie land
Is what you need to mix me and
To cook me to a T.

RULES

Throughout the summer months *The Saturday Review* will publish two charades in each issue of the magazine. The last charade to appear in the issue of August twenty-ninth.

It is our hope that readers of the paper will be interested in solving these puzzles and will submit answers at the conclusion of the contest. Prizes will consist of copies of the book from which the charades are taken, "Pegasus Perplexing," by Le Baron Russell Briggs, to be published by The Viking Press at the conclusion of the contest.

Contestants must solve correctly at least ten of the twenty-four charades in order to qualify. A prize will be awarded for each of the 100 highest scores obtained by those who qualify.

The highest score will win a copy of the book specially bound in leather.

In case of ties each tying competitor will receive the award.

Solve the charades each week as they appear, but do not send in your answers until the last charade is published on August twenty-ninth.

In submitting answers merely number them to correspond with the number of the charade to which they apply and mail the list to Contest Editor, *The Saturday Review*, 25 West 45th Street, New York City.

All answers must be mailed not later than midnight of September tenth, 1931.

It is not required that competitors subscribe to the *Saturday Review*; copies of the magazine are available for free examination at public libraries or at the office of publication. The contest is open to everyone except employees of the *Saturday Review* and The Viking Press.

The accuracy of the answers will be verified by the editors of the *Saturday Review*.

Novels in the First Person

IN his amusing and caustic novel entitled "Cakes and Ale," a novel written in the first person, Mr. Somerset Maugham says somewhere:

A little while ago I read in the *Evening Standard* an article by Mr. Evelyn Waugh in the course of which he remarked that to write novels in the first person was a contemptible practice. I wish he had explained why, but he merely threw out the statement with just the same take-it-or-leave-it casualness as Euclid used when he made his celebrated observation about parallel straight lines. I was much concerned and forthwith asked Alroy Kear (who reads everything, even the books he writes prefaces for) to recommend to me some works on the art of fiction. On his advice I read "The Craft of Fiction," by Mr. Percy Lubbock, from which I learned that the only way to write novels was like Henry James; after that I read "Aspects of the Novel," by Mr. Edwin Muir, from which I learned nothing at all. In none of them could I discover anything to the point at issue.

Alroy Kear, who, according to his creator, reads everything, even the books for which he writes prefaces, apparently does not read French criticism, for if he did he would have pointed out to Mr. Somerset Maugham two passages in which are to be found opinions similar to those of Evelyn Waugh, and which, like the latter, condemn novels written in the first person. The first, by André Gide, is curious; it is contained in a little book dedicated to Wilde. When Gide met the latter, he had just published "Nourritures Terrestres"; Wilde, speaking of it to him said: "It is very good, very good. . . . Only, my dear, promise me never again to use the first person." (Some years ago, talking to Gide of this phrase, I discovered that he approved of Wilde's suggestion.)

"But you at least admit, don't you," I said to him, "that a novel must have a hero or a heroine, a central figure around whom the novelist focusses his events and with whom the reader can more or less identify himself?"

"No, no," answered Gide, his voluminous cape floating out on the wind blowing off the Norman sea, "no, the great novelist places himself in the position of God. . . . Look at Tolstoy. Who is the hero of 'War and Peace?' Of 'Anna Karenina?' Anna, despite the title of the book, is not the leading character. There is no principal character; there ought not to be one."

The second of my French passages is by M. Albert Thibaudet, the critic of the *Nouvelle Revue Française*. M. Thibaudet says:

It is rarely that an author who depicts himself in a novel succeeds in investing his self-portrait with life. Born romancers, like Flaubert and Maupassant, convert themselves into a Frederic Moreau and a Bel-Ami. Balzac created only one unlikable character, and that was when he attempted to mirror himself in Louis Lambert. The true romancer evolves his characters from all the possible contingencies of their lives; the less spontaneous one develops them solely along the lines of an actual experience.

It is my purpose to attempt to discover here on what possible grounds such outspoken condemnation can be justified, and then to endeavor to show wherein the arguments on which it is based seem inconclusive and under what circumstances it would appear justifiable to write novels (as did such great novelists as Daniel Defoe, Charles Dickens, and Marcel Proust) in the first person.

The first ground on which the disdain of criticism for the autobiographical novel rests, is that it, of all types, seems to be the easiest to write. Practically every writer, if he has led a life normally full of sentimental incident, has at hand the elements of a romantic confession. Proceeding on this belief, the veteran Paul Souday, a man of much experience and one who has read thousands of "first novels," is wont to say that in order to judge of the quality of a new novelist one must wait for his second book. Men of intelligence, even though they may have lacked creative ability, have proved capable of writing a single romance—their own (take, for example, Benjamin Constant with his "Adolphe," Fromentin with his "Dominique," and Sainte-Beuve with his "Volupté"), but they have not been able to do a second time what they so successfully achieved the first, because they have exhausted the one subject which really interests them, that is, the analysis of their own souls.

Certainly, even from the point of view of tech-

nique, it is easier to compose a straightforward recital than it is to draw together in chapter after chapter, each with its diversified scenes and situations, the scattered threads of an objective narrative. As Gide says, the great objective novelists, like Tolstoy or Stendhal, to all intents and purposes assume the position of God. The autobiographical novelist remains in his own observation tower. And it is undoubtedly far easier to remain oneself than to raise oneself to the height of God.

The second reason is bound up with the first. What is the primary purpose of all art? It is to present a reflection of reality sufficiently faithful for acceptance, yet at the same time lifted to a plane from whence life can be viewed with that sort of serene detachment which is the essence of esthetic feeling. (The word "serenity" applies equally to events and to tragic books. We can look upon the most shocking Greek tragedy with elation of spirit.) The peculiar characteristic of the artist, says Proust, is that he soars above the world, that he detaches himself from it. Those emotions only are rightly the subject of a work of art which one has ceased to experience as emotions in the actual world. Well, the novelist who writes in the first person of his own feelings seems to us infinitely less detached from his subject than he who, like Flaubert, no longer conceives of reality except as an illusion to be described.

Furthermore, as Thibaudet says, the more a man talks of himself the less in the last analysis he tells us of the truth about himself. Just so soon as a writer begins to reveal his innermost self, so soon as, writing in the first person, he realizes that he is creating the impression that his book is a confession, just so soon he assumes a pose. Even though he be honestly persuaded that he is capable of carrying his confession to the point of cynicism, as Tolstoy did in "The Kreuzer Sonata" or Dostoevski in "Stavroguine," he cannot escape pleading, striking an attitude, explaining himself. He tells us more about himself when he merges his personality in that of his characters and reveals himself through personages whose history is so different from his own that under shelter of them his inner self feels itself hidden from the too perspicacious reader. The more complete the transposition, the more sincere will be his confession and consequently the more profound his reflections upon human nature. One might cite as an example Flaubert who, by attributing his own romanticism and empty dreams to a woman character, Madame Bovary, found courage to utter some biting truths in regard to this very romanticism.

Confessions published under the title of "Confessions" are almost invariably lies. Rousseau, who pretended to say more about human nature than anyone had ever dared to say before him, like everyone else colored and even transformed his own motives. Somerset Maugham himself, in "Cakes and Ale," does not escape this pitfall, for he paints the novelist author of his tale (presumably Somerset Maugham himself) in entirely favorable colors in contradistinction to Alroy Kear whom he makes "the villain of the piece." Every writer of memoirs misrepresents the truth. M. Briand says that for the political personage to write his reminiscences means that he divides events into two groups; into one category he places all those undertakings which have turned out successfully, making himself appear responsible for them; and into the other those which have turned out unfavorably, maintaining that in them he has had no part. To write an autobiographical novel, is to write a brief for oneself. Thus the true confession is, perhaps, that which, written in the third person, does not call itself a Confession.

One might urge finally against the autobiographical novel that in an intangible, but very real fashion it almost invariably irritates the reader. Self, if obtruded with any persistence, becomes unsupportable to others. Thus, the sentimental self-satisfaction of a Sterne very quickly sets on edge the nerves of his readers. We are thankful to an author for effacing himself in his personalities, and we much more readily approve a hero like Stendhal's Fabric (even though we know full well that he is merely a projection of Stendhal himself) than one like Constant's Adolphe.

Comparative ease of production and lack of sincerity are, then, the most weighty objections which

can be urged against the autobiographical novel. But I am playing the part of devil's advocate, for, so far as I am concerned, I see no reason to condemn it. I shall now tell you why.

In the first place, is it really easier to write an autobiographical novel than one in the third person? I am not so sure. Certainly it was much more difficult to write "La Recherche du Temps Perdu" and even the little tale, "Adolphe," than it is to write a mediocre novel in the third person, perfectly detached, to be sure, but not the less perfectly empty. Besides, what does the charge of facility mean when made against a really gifted artist? Facility is sometimes the result of genius, but even more often the result of a long cultivation of one's powers. There is no getting away from Whistler's dictum before an English court—that if a great artist paints a picture in a very short time, it is because he has spent his entire life in acquiring his technique.

IS the second objection more weighty? The artist, we are told, ought to have attained detachment from the work of art. But can he detach himself from himself? I am tempted to reply: "yes, and it is by virtue of that very fact that he is an artist." A great novelist is almost invariably a man who in the beginning has lived a life crowded with emotion (Balzac, Dickens, Stendhal, Meredith); he has had some romantic experience, and it has enriched his nature with memories and sensations that eventually become the stuff of his work. But, the moment he begins to write, he becomes the spectator of his own life precisely as though it were that of another. The personal dramas which furnished Balzac with the themes for his "Lys dans la Vallée," "La Duchesse de Langeais," and "César Birotteau" ceased to be more than objects for observation to him the instant he began to write. The Proust who composed "La Prisonnière" was no longer the same man as the one who had experienced the feelings of jealousy he there described. He was an entirely different person, able to regard that other self as if from the distance of another planet. Edmund Wilson is perfectly right in saying that Proust in his work depicts snobbery in its most contemptible aspects, but that by no means proves that Proust himself was never a snob. As a matter of fact it may prove quite the contrary; it may prove that he was indeed a snob, that, stern satirist that he was, he had studied the manifestations of this absurd trait in himself, and was able to portray it with as much detachment as if he had watched it in another. In his "Kreutzer Sonata" Tolstoy actually wrote his own confession, but though the person there revealed was a Tolstoy who once existed it was no longer the Tolstoy who wrote the book. A novelist as he sits at his table, bringing a personality into being with the words he is putting on paper, pauses ever and again to look back through his past at a model which is himself—but a self-perturbed and suffering, and quite distinct from the man he is in the moments of composition. It is for this reason that I am inclined to interpret Wilde's statement to Gide in a sense quite different from that which Gide placed upon it; in art, I should say that such a thing as the first person does not exist, no, not even when it appears to, for he who writes in the first person does not think in the first person.

That which ought to help man to acquire self-detachment is that with the passage of time, changes take place in our opinions, in our feelings, even in our bodies. Old age or even maturity, having experienced the difficulties of life and discovered the obstacles which the world opposes to the realization of dreams, is able to measure with detachment the romanticism of its own youth. Flaubert was the Frederic Moreau of "L'Education Sentimentale"; after a time he no longer remained so; if he had chosen to present his novel in autobiographical form there is no reason at all to suppose he could not have done so with as perfect impartiality as if it had been written in the third person.

Moreover, all this distrust of the autobiographical novel is based on the assumption that the "I" of the book is necessarily the author. This, however, is not of necessity so. It was, I believe, Gerhardt, who delivered himself in "Futility" of the epigraph: "The I of this book is not myself." When Swift wrote "Gulliver's Travels" in the first person, he never