

The Saturday Review

of LITERATURE

EDITED BY HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

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THE McADOO POLICY.

A CARTOON BY BOWERS IN THE JERSEY CITY EVENING JOURNAL

"Clean" Books

THE Editors of this *Review* are constantly urged by letter and otherwise to join what is described as a nation-wide drive for "clean books" and "clean plays." They are frequently criticized for giving space to books which the plaintiffs say are not "clean," and as frequently bedeviled for refusing to agree that there is only one right and only one wrong in the controversy.

"Clean" and "dirty" in American criticism always refer to sex. A "clean" book, it seems, can be morally unsound if only it keeps off the theme of sex. We would therefore urge those who ask for cleaner books to consider very carefully just what they want of sex in literature before they begin to attack. Precisely what reform do they wish to bring about? Do they propose to return to Victorian reticence; to replace the barrier through which no writer in English before our time could pass freely into fields where every aspect of a rounded life could be discussed with the freedom required for art? If so, their time is wasted and their opposition is futile, if not positively menacing. Realism, which in common with all of us they praise in business, in politics, and even in the churches, was bound and hampered in literature until the taboos on sex topics were broken down. To restrict frankness in fiction is to stifle the imagination of a period which science has made willing to face facts.

If, on the other hand, it is not free speaking but the character of the speaker and his speech to which they object, then they have a case, but they must realize more clearly than at present just what it is that makes so many modern books objectionable to right-minded people. It is not frankness; it is a phase of democracy that is responsible for the vulgar and prurient writing that gives a bad distinction to so many cheap magazines and current novels of night life in great cities. The problems and incidents of sex must be fitted delicately into words. Unless nicely balanced by a civilized imagination they slide into priggishness or mawkishness on one side, or into vulgarity, lasciviousness, or the merely disgusting on the other. The humorous, the witty, the tender, and the sensual are as hard to hold as the beautiful and the true. And this delicacy is more than technique, it is a product of experience, for it is well known how difficult it is in life to hold sex hap-

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A Great Executive

CROWDED YEARS. By WILLIAM GIBBS McADOO, in collaboration with W. E. WOODWARD. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1931. \$5.

Reviewed by HON. JOSEPHUS DANIELS

NO man writes an autobiography unless he has done something that he or his friends think is worthy to be preserved in permanent record. The personal pronoun is inseparable from the life story. If there is no "I" the book ought not to be written. To be sure some writers have referred to themselves by name, but such memoirs were as personal as if the personal pronoun had been used. It is probably better to say: "I did this" or "I advised that" than to camouflage the personal story with a veneer of simulated modesty. Mr. McAdoo held a place of power—in fact several places—in the era of the greatest money raising and money spending by the Government in its history. He had to do both with the raising of thirty odd billion dollars and with their spending, and he had leadership in every fiscal policy of the government from 1913 until after the Armistice. Wider power was conferred upon him than upon any or all of his predecessors. To say that he used it all without mistakes would be to say that he was the superman of whom so much is written and so little seen. His enemies (and like all strong men, he had them) were free to point them out and condemn them. His friends sometimes feared there would come a break in his health, which was indeed temporarily impaired by taxing himself with more duties than any man ought to undertake.

McAdoo had a flair for work and a soaring ambition which forbade him to place any limit on his readiness to assume responsibility. As a boy selling newspapers in Georgia he showed the spirit of achievement which shone in him when he held four big jobs in Washington. As a young lawyer and politician in Tennessee he let no obstacle stand in his way. He always was attracted by big jobs, calling for imagination and strenuous effort and faith that could remove mountains. His conception of the plan to electrify street cars in Knoxville was a burning obsession until he put an end to the cars going through

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Swan Song

By BEN LAPIDUS

BE REED of the pioneer and the immigrant, beating portentous feet on the pavement, dying in foundries underneath offices all broken-hearted. . . . dare I go back to them?

Once having left them, flown over oceans bearing my black swan hatred within me, dare I go back to them underneath offices strutting unwinged?

They will not know me. They will remember (blood of my blood dying in foundries) only portentous feet on the pavement heard by their grandchildren.

Science and Mathematics*

By J. B. S. HALDANE

IN this age of applied science it is gradually beginning to be realized that, if civilization is to continue, scientific thought must be applied to men as well as to nature. Hence the public is beginning to try to understand how scientific workers approach a problem. And here they are at once confronted with the curious, but as we shall see, quite intelligible inarticulateness of most scientific workers. In England the most widely read writers on science are Russell, Eddington, and Jeans. It is not a mere coincidence that all three are first-rate mathematicians, that is to say experts in the use of symbols. Russell and Jeans, so far as I know, have never published the result of a single observation of nature, much less of an experiment. Eddington is a great observer, but not a great experimenter. Hence although the three differ on fundamental problems, from the existence of God downwards, their scientific experience is almost wholly confined to the art of organizing known facts, rather than of eliciting new facts from nature. Hence their account of the scientific outlook is inevitably different from that of the laboratory worker.

This difference appears as early as the introduction to Russell's new book. While he realizes that science is both knowledge and technique, he states that the technique, though practically important, has little intrinsic value. Now as a physiologist I note that I need as large an area of brain to control my hands as my vocal organs. And as a scientific worker I note that some of my colleagues appear to do most of their thinking with their hands, and are extremely inexpert in the use of words. One Fellow of the Royal Society, I am told, did not even learn to talk till he was ten years old. He is still a bad talker, but he designs and makes apparatus that can solve problems which have appeared insoluble to better talkers and mathematicians.

So I suspect that Russell, in spite of an attitude far more sympathetic to science than that of most mathematicians, let alone philosophers, has only grasped so much of the scientific outlook as is expressed in words or symbols, rather than actions. This appears in his first chapter, where he describes, as examples of scientific method, the work of Galileo, Newton, Darwin, and Pavlov. We are told that Galileo made a telescope. But we get no indication of the fact that this was an immense technical achievement. One cannot read Galileo's dialogues without feeling that he thought like an engineer rather than a mathematician.

In the case of Newton there is no hint that besides inventing the calculus and the law of gravitation, he actually experimented on optics, which he advanced as much as anyone before or since. So with Darwin. We read that he traveled, observed, and reflected, but not that his experiments on plant-breeding, besides being highly ingenious, were extremely accurate.

It is fairly clear that Russell regards the skilful manipulation of symbols as an activity altogether more respectable than that of material objects, though he never

* THE SCIENTIFIC OUTLOOK. By BERTRAND RUSSELL. New York: W. W. Norton. 1931. \$3.

states this belief explicitly. This eminently academic view permeates his whole thought. Galileo's arguments purporting to prove that the earth's movement was conformable to Holy Writ were probably no better than those of the inquisitors who held the contrary view, but his telescope was better than their eyes.

Russell's knowledge of biology is also not on a level with his knowledge of physics. Indeed he makes a few demonstrably false statements about biology. And it is going too far to say, as he does, that biologists regard natural selection as inadequate to account for evolution. Some biologists hold this view. Others (including myself) are rather more Darwinian than Darwin. Nor (I hope) is it true that mathematics are inapplicable to the problem of evolution, as I happen to have published a mathematical theory of natural selection in eight instalments, and there are more to come. For the same reason, he says very little about statistical methods, which have been developed, largely by biologists, to enable us to deal with cases where we cannot get information as complete as the physicist can sometimes obtain, and which offer one of the few hopes of introducing scientific methods into politics.

I feel that Russell's preoccupation with mathematical physics is largely responsible for the pessimism which he attributes to scientists. "While science as the pursuit of power becomes increasingly triumphant," he writes, "science as the pursuit of truth is being killed by a scepticism which the skill of the men of science has generated." As a director of research in two laboratories I find no signs of this scepticism among the workers there, nor do I find it among my colleagues who are researching in experimental physics. They mostly hold that if Eddington or Russell really believe that the universe is expanding or has no coherence or order, this merely shows that symbols can be as intoxicating to mathematicians as are ordinary words to politicians.

In spite of these limitations in his out-

This Week

"JAPAN'S SPECIAL POSITION IN MANCHURIA."

Reviewed by VICTOR A. YAKHONTOFF.

"LETTERS OF EMILY DICKINSON."

Reviewed by LOUIS UNTERMEYER.

"SISTER AIMÉE."

Reviewed by ERNEST SUTHERLAND BATES.

"A BURIED TREASURE."

Reviewed by BASIL DAVENPORT.

"UNFINISHED BUSINESS."

Reviewed by GLADYS GRAHAM.

"PENHALLY."

Reviewed by JONATHAN DANIELS.

ALICE AND THE AQUITANIA.

By CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

Next Week, or Later

WILLIAM COWPER.

By NEILSON CAMPBELL HANNAY.

look, Russell is much more sympathetic with the scientific standpoint than most other popular writers on similar topics; and just for this reason, the last, and in many ways the most interesting part of his book, which deals with the scientific society, appears plausible to a scientific worker. Russell foresees the application of scientific technique to social problems, and the result is not an ideal society, even if it be somewhat more desirable than our own. He believes that, after another European war, the United States will probably take over the organization of the ruins; and that the resulting world-government by millionaires will probably be replaced by a government of experts. It would be interesting to know how far the current economic collapse in the United States and the apparent success of the Russian five-year plan would induce him to modify this view were he writing today. In any case, communism is rapidly becoming a matter of government by technicians, which accounts for its success.

In the scientific state there will be no war or real poverty, and a minimum of disease. The working class will be educated to be docile, industrious, punctual, thoughtless, and contented. They will probably largely be sterilized, so as to allow them unlimited frivolous love affairs. The ruling class will continually provide them with new amusements, and devise new methods of propaganda to increase their reverence for their governors.

These latter, selected by psychological tests in early childhood, and especially treated to secure the maximum of ability, will be trained in intelligence, self-command, and leadership. But they will combine these with a fanatical loyalty to their class and its ideals, and a contempt for other human values. Individual love will be regarded as antisocial, and likely to lead to complexes. Science will gradually become more technical and more cruel, and the social order will slowly develop instability as other tyrannies have done in the past. The detail of such a social system, and the fate of an unscientific intellectual in it, are described in a novel called "Man's World," written by my wife in 1926. Russell agrees with her forecast in most respects.

Such a prophecy is natural enough in view of the author's bias already noted. "It is only in so far as we renounce the world as its lovers that we can conquer it as its technicians," he writes. "But this division in the soul is fatal to what is best in man." My own experience as a biologist is exactly to the contrary. Until I took to scientific plant-breeding I did not appreciate the beauty of flowers. If I find out how to produce a certain change in the composition of my blood I want to know what it feels like, to appreciate it as a fact of life as well as a fact of chemistry. Thus I regard it as interesting that, after taking the largest quantity of calcium chloride on record, I dreamt that Edward Lear had written and illustrated a life of Christ. It was a strange book, but not essentially irreverent. Unfortunately the only detail of it which remains clearly in my memory is Pontius Pilate's moustache.

As science permeates psychology I look for such a heightening of human self-consciousness as would wreck the complacency of Russell's ruling class. His scientific state is a state of engineers rather than of biologists. It is perfectly possible that his forecast is correct. But if so, it will be because biology developed too late to take its rightful place beside physics.

Like all Russell's books, including "Principia Mathematica," this is exceedingly witty. Wit consists in the unexpected but appropriate juxtaposition of ideas, and it was just the capacity for such a juxtaposition which made him a great mathematician. Thus we read of physicists: "Only mathematics and mathematical logic can say as little as the physicist means to say," and of psychoanalysts: "I suppose that, for practical purposes, 'phantasy' is what the patient believes, and 'reality' what the analyst believes." But perhaps the wittiest thing in the book is the examination of the theological deductions of Eddington and Jeans. Eddington regards it as probable

that physical laws do not hold for certain atomic events, and thinks that mind may act on the physical world by taking advantage of this fact. Jeans, on the other hand, is so impressed by the reign of precise mathematical laws in the universe that he postulates a mathematical creator. It would thus seem that in so far as Eddington is right, Jeans's creator has scamped his work. But in so far as the universe attains a mathematical perfection worthy of that hypothetical being, it leaves no place for free will, and the apparent influence of our minds on it is an illusion. Russell contrives to knock the heads of his distinguished colleagues together with a resounding crack, but I do not feel that he is justified in writing that "the bulk of eminent physicists" have made pronouncements that materialism is disproved and religion reestablished. I do not recall any such statements by Barkla, Bragg, Richardson, Rutherford, or Thompson, to mention five Nobel prize-men in physics. The bulk of eminent physicists confine their attention to physics and do not enter into theological controversy on either side.

This book will be widely read and deserves to be. But its readers will do well to remember that its author is an intensely individual human being, endowed with rather strong emotions which inevitably influence his thought except when he is thinking according to certain definite rules. Now there is a technique for thinking scientifically about matter, but as yet none for thinking scientifically about science, except perhaps in the writing of the Russian authors who are investigating the influence of economic conditions on scientific output. Every scientific worker will be interested to learn what is Russell's outlook on science, and will benefit by seeing himself as another sees him, when that other has the originality and intellectual courage of a Russell. But even Russell is not a passionless thinking-machine; the subject matter of the book is science, but the outlook is Russell.

J. B. S. Haldane, one of the most brilliant of contemporary British scientists, is reader in biochemistry in Cambridge University and head of the Genetical Department of the John Innes Horticultural Institution. He is a frequent contributor to scientific journals and the author of several books, among which are "Daedalus," "Possible Worlds," and "Science and Ethics."

A Country Still Loved

THE CAROLINA LOW-COUNTRY. By AUGUSTINE T. SMYTHE, HERBERT RAVENEL SASS, ALFRED HUGER, BEATRICE RAVENEL, THOMAS R. WARING, ARCHIBALD RUTLEDGE, JOSEPHINE PINCKNEY, CAROLINA PINCKNEY RUTLEDGE, DU BOSE HEYWARD, KATHARINE C. HUTSON, ROBERT W. GORDON. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1931. \$5.

Reviewed by HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

THESE are many attributes of the famous low-country of the Carolinas which make it worthy of celebration in a book which (like this one) is more penetrating and imagin-

ative than travel books or manuals. It is a country of low tones, of purple lights on marsh grass and pine forest, of great domes of live oaks softened by trends of lilac moss, of sea islands fed by mist, and high-arched plantation houses, rosy in the sunlight. It is a spacious country, once the seat of an aristocratic society, happier and more truly successful than anything we can show as the result of wage slavery. It is a country made, but not spoiled, by man, with for its capital a rose and violet city seated between two rivers and looking out to sea, like a Platonic ideal of New York. And most noteworthy of all, this land of meandering creeks, dim swamps, bright rice marshes, and sun-shot pine woods always has been and still is one of the few regions in the United States loved by its inhabitants with such a devotion as one often finds in England, sometimes in France, but nowhere else to the same degree East, West, North, or South in this republic. Pride and boasting, as in California, are different; confidence, as in the Middle West, is different; respect, as in New England, is different. Here, and perhaps in Virginia, alone is the love of soil, love of place, which is so alien to modern American life.

Of course, it is not love of scenery, although there is that in the low-country landscape which touches the imagination even of the alien. The scene has been humanized by three centuries of spacious living, by men of considerable genius cropping freely from the soil, by the complete disaster of a ruinous war, and by a long tragedy of relinquishment. Even the Northerners who have bought the great plantations for hunting reserves, repainted the gray cypress houses, and repointed the rosy brick walls, are captured as Ireland captured the Englishman, and share this last spell of a land which, like Ireland, will lose its charm if it learns the new meaning for success. The plantations are sterile, the old homes are rest houses for weary industrialists; only the low-country and the negro, upon which its culture was built, remain almost unchanged. And of the negro the purest expression, the essential poetry, is to be found in his spiritual songs.

This book was evidently first planned as a collection of low-country "spirituals" lovingly gathered by descendants of the plantation people, who heard them in childhood and now have refined them from music-hall corruption and given them as the best examples of the folklore in which (as Mr. Gordon says) America is unbelievably rich. "The Society for the Preservation of Spirituals" was formed for this purpose. Their chorus has sung now, and "patted," and "shouted" before many audiences who have sometimes been taught the inimitable qualities of true folk poetry, and have sometimes wondered why the tunes were less easy to remember than the black-face melodies they heard over the radio. And this is their book. But the spell of the low-country was too strong upon them. They could not be content with spirituals and how to sing them, for the spiritual was the dark poetry of a land and a culture of which it

was an emanation, meaningless without them. The book grew backward. It acquired the admirable explanation of true spirituals by Mr. Gordon with its analysis of their extraordinary rhythms. It enriched itself with the descriptive poetry of Beatrice Ravenel and Josephine Pinckney. It added, by way of introduction, the admirable study of the low-country negro by Du Bose Heyward, one of the best essays on the negro in his relations to the white in the time of slavery that I have read. It was prefaced by an excellent summary of the picturesque and significant history of Charleston, by T. R. Waring. It had given it for illustration Alice R. Huger Smith's water colors of the low-country, regional pictures that need no captions, and other pictures by the capable Charleston school. And then, enthusiasm outrunning the sense of proportion, other contributors forgot their first purpose and added preliminary chapters of history and description of the low-country which, verbose, a little sentimental, and too highly charged with romance, have too much of that rhetoric which always tempts the celebrants of the old Southern culture to write with more effusion than poise. Reading backward, the spiritual, which is the *raison d'être* of this book, begins to seem an excuse to set the white man talking of the glories of the past.

But the bravura and expansiveness of the opening chapters of this book no more than delay the reader's perception of the excellent material it contains. It should be read skipingly with due regard for nuggets of information and passages of good descriptive prose as far as the chapter on Charleston, then read with a care that will be rewarding. Thus the reader will come to the spirituals with the right low-country background, and with the proper attitude toward those strange Gullah songs which, for all their dependence upon hymn tunes and revivalist couplets, are like nothing else in English literature.

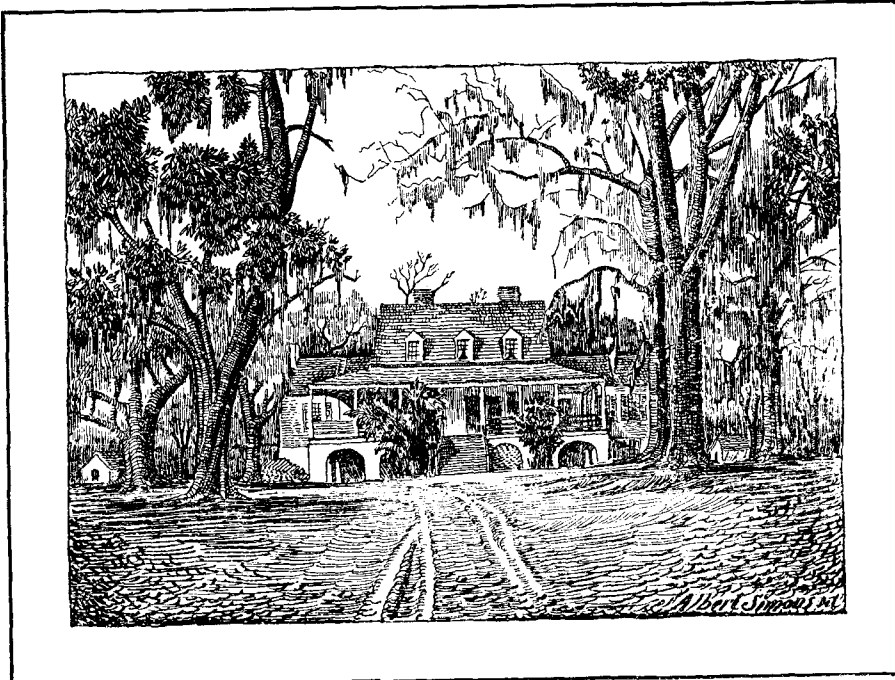
*I look down duh road, en duh road so lonesome,
Lawd, I got tuh walk down dat lonesome road,
En uh look down duh road, en duh road so lonesome,
Lawd, I got tuh walk down dat lonesome road.*

This is neither the book, nor am I the qualified critic, for a discussion of these spirituals as folk poetry. "The Carolina Low-Country" will introduce them in their proper setting to many who make no distinction between black-face mammy songs and the essential poetry of a primitive race, and in spite of its something too much of effusiveness will give a just impression of a unique country, loved and worth loving. But a reviewer must solicit another and simpler volume, devoted more to blacks and less to whites, with more spirituals and less introduction. The makings of a standard book, scholarly and yet not devoid of the charm inseparable from the low-country, are in this volume. I hope that its editing will be the next job of the Society for the Preservation of Spirituals.

Students throughout the country will be interested to hear that annual awards of \$12,000 are offered at the University of Michigan for creative work in play, fiction, poetry, and essay writing. These prizes are to be given yearly from the income of the estate of the late Avery Hopwood, Michigan alumnus, the author of "Seven Days," "The Best People," "The Alarm Clock," and other plays.

Four major awards of \$2,500 each are announced for 1931, while eight minor awards of \$250 each are also to be given. When it is recalled that the famous Newdigate Prize at Oxford University, held in the past by so many distinguished British authors, is for only a little over \$100, and that the Pulitzer awards are for \$1,000 each, some idea of the financial value of the Hopwood Awards is made clear.

Unlike many other similar awards the "Jules and Avery Hopwood Prizes" are very liberal in the type of work which may be submitted, since Mr. Hopwood's wishes were to encourage the new, the unusual and the radical.



EUTAW PLANTATION, ST. JOHN'S, BERKELEY
From a drawing by ALBERT SIMONS for "Carolina Low Country."