The Saturday Review

of LITERATURE

EDITED BY HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

VOLUME X

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, AUGUST 26, 1933

Number 6



CUBAN BREADLINE
Photograph by Walker Evans (From "The Crime of Cuba")

Before Machado Fell

THE CRIME OF CUBA. By Carleton Beals. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company. 1933. \$3.

Reviewed by RUSSELL B. PORTER

ARLETON BEALS is an idol of the youth movement in Cuba. His sympathetic and vivid pen, always fervid against social injustice, has been a mighty weapon on the side of the revolution. The students of the closed University of Havana love and respect him for his help in awakening American public opinion to the monstrosities of the modern Caligula who ruled with machine guns and bludgeons from the presidential palace in Havana until a few days ago.

It is too bad that this book did not come out before Machado fell. Such a complete and blistering indictment of corruption and oppression would have been a most appropriate prelude to the final conviction and sentence imposed by the Cuban people. Yet the manner in which the problem was solved must have been peculiarly satisfying to Mr. Beals, because the solution was preëminently a Cuban solution

The United States did not remove Machado from the seat of tyrants by armed intervention. Even the diplomatic intervention of Ambassador Sumner Welles's mediation was only a secondary factor. The decisive element was the general strike—a spontaneous, irresistible mass action of the whole Cuban population for a purely political purpose, brought about by impatience at the failure of mediation to oust Machado promptly. The general strike brought a showdown, and the army, which previously had kept Machado in power, revolted rather than face certain civil war and probable American intervention. That the Cubans themselves forced their blood-stained dictator to abdicate is of tremendous significance to the future of the island republic and of her relations with the United States. To appreciate this fully, one must understand the meaning of the crime of Cuba as Mr. Beals describes it.

Machado, vernal, brutal, horrible as his régime was, was only a symptom, a logical culmination of the real crime. That was that the United States did not really free Cuba in 1898, but only caused the Cubans to change masters. Mr. Beals sees the Platt Amendment and our subsequent policy in Cuba as instruments of political (Continued on page 66)

Middletown with Cultural Trimmings

THE FAULT OF ANGELS. By Paul Horgan. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1933. \$2.50.

Reviewed by Edward Cornelius

HIS is high comedy of a kind rarely produced by American novelists. The fault must be the novelists', for as this book immediately makes clear, the material for social satire in America is superabundant. In the city of Dorchester, N. Y.—a name scarcely chosen to conceal its prototype-Mr. Horgan has found a perfect milieu. The city is dominated by Henry Ganson, whose millions have endowed Dorchester with an opera, a symphony orchestra, and a large school of music; this superstructure of cultural activity, unique in Dorchester among middle-sized American cities, throws into high relief the social life of the city, and shows how typical it is.

The musical life of Dorchester-and the musical season is the social season-accounts for the presence of various foreigners, who, instead of creating an exotic atmosphere, intensify everything that is American in the community; hence they intensify the effect of Mr. Horgan's social satire. Indeed, some of them are among his best, and most important, characters. Vladimir Arenkoff comes to Dorchester to conduct the opera, and with him Nina, his wife. Nina is something of a modern Madame Ranevsky, young, beautiful, spontaneous; she approaches Dorchester with simplicity which everybody from Mr. Ganson to Leona Schrantz, the loose-living landlady; she is the angel whose fault is ambition. She immediately recognizes the artificiality of the community which Mr. Ganson has created, and the inarticulate reality of the individuals who compose it. Her ambition is to make it possible for these Americans to live as she lives, spontaneously and directly; her attempts, and her gradual discovery that this is the last thing these Americans want, are the embodiments of Mr. Horgan's theme. Some of them, like the downtrodden Mrs. Bliss, worship her; some are aroused to irritation, to jealousy, or-like the social climber, Mrs. Kane-to fury; others, like young John O'Shaughnessy, merely fall in love with her. Love, hatred, and ambition deviously guide the destinies of the musical colony of Dor-

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Death in the Desert

By EDA LOU WALTON

URNING into the nineteen-thirties, our literary critics reappraised the preceding twenties. Novelists and poets were neatly pigeonholed. And all this about five years late, for the tide of romantic enthusiasm had begun to recede around 1925. For poetry, the turn came with the publishing of T. S. Eliot's "The Wasteland." Out went the romantic poets and in came the classic. The days of the discovery and exploration of America as a new land were done. Robinson and Frost had finished New England. Sandburg, Lindsay, and the prosaic Masters had exhausted the Middle West. The Pacific Coast, save for Jeffers's late arousing, had been quiet. Millay, along with her many brothers and sisters, had worn thin the theme of personal heartbreak and ecstacy. The great "American Renaissance" had not been all its promoters had advertised. Critics pointed out the fact that the most original of the true American poets had been the worst artists, that those, like Millay, dabbling their fingers always in the stream of literary tradition, had sung very much in the manner of the poets of the Eighteen-nineties in England. Neither their subjects nor their methods were, strictly speaking, unique. By 1930 America had found and had lost herself as a literary unit. From this time on American poets recognized that they were, after all, directly a part of the English literary tra-

With this discovery, the spontaneity of an American folk literature was lost. The poets here became students of technique and of form. The quarrel over free verse ended in a few sneers. Individuality for the sake of individuality was damned. Poetry, it was announced, was not the expression of a people or of a folk living in a certain section of the country, but a fine art, impersonal in statement, bookish in its sources. The poets became scholars exploring the golden past of art and letters. And why? Because the war generation of poets had lost faith in any manifestation of the present world. Eliot had announced the theme of the sterility and vulgarity of this our present country, the land of our physical and mental strivings. And Eliot had developed the new method for writing verse, that of contrasting and comparing an older and, in memory, perfected world of the past with the newer, completely chaotic, and unpatterned world of esent. Promptly following footsteps, every lesser poet went intellectual and became depressed. Emotional spontaneity was lost in intellectual doubt. If feeling dared assert itself at all in poetry, it was only as an outcry against intellectual scepticism. And so, almost before the year of 1930 ended, the new school of poets so exactly defined their methods and their subject matters as to declare the limits of their own span of artistic life.

Now in the third year of this span, we find that the new poets have said all that they ever will say. Eliot, who could not go on further with the geography of the Wasteland, once he had fully drawn it, has turned to religion and, in desperation, has become an Anglo-Catholic. Sickened of the panorama of the desert, he seeks the church which, for a man of his birth and culture, is most rooted in tradition. Archibald MacLeish has declared that.

sterile or not sterile, American soil is the only soil in which an American poet may grow; then, directed by his longing for a heroic past, he has written "Conquistador," a history of a great conquest which, for the individual conquerors, ended in failure. Allen Tate, profoundly influenced by Eliot, has spun around himself a cocoon of intellectual erudition and has written poems which very few can understand. He has rediscovered the aristocratic traditions of the South, the only section in America which has an old culture, and has founded there the "Agrarian" school of poetry. These three poets are essentially, it would seem, in agreement with Eliot's political creed-"Royal-

All of them, and Yvor Winters as well, have followed Eliot's literary models, the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth century poets. Nor are they alone. They represent only a kind of committee on scholarship; there are many student-poets taking direction from them.

Hart Crane, alone, of the new generation of American poets concerned with the theme of America and possessed of a strong social conscience, went his own way. Against the full pressure of scepticism and disbelief, he remained a mystic and an optimist. A very subjective poet, he sought for his own symbols and his own myths of prophecy concerning this country. He never belonged to the intellectual school of Eliot. He never discussed the Wasteland. He never found his materials in quotations from older poets. Influenced by the French Symbolists, by Whitman, and by Melville, he remained violently original until his own disorganized individualism caused him to kill himself. But not before he had become, very clearly, a poetic prophet of hope for the oncoming generations.

The lyric poets of the nineteen-thirties, students of form and of literatures as they are, nevertheless remain singers. But singing has in it now the same qualities as



AMERICAN SPRING
A Poem by JOHN GOULD FLETCHER
A MILLION MILES IN SAIL
By JOHN HERRIES MCCULLOCH

By JOHN HERRIES McCULLOCH Reviewed by Arthur Ruhl

CONGO SOLO

By EMILY HAHN

Reviewed by S. Zuckerman

HISTORY OF GERMANY
By HERMANN PINNOW
Reviewed by Eugene N. Anderson
MELLON'S MILLIONS

By HARVEY O'CONNOR
Reviewed by John Chamberlain
THE UNIVERSE OF LIGHT
By SIR WILLIAM BRAGG

Reviewed by Harold Ward HAVEN'S END

By JOHN F. MARQUAND
Reviewed by Elmer Davis
THE FOLDER
By CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

Next Week or Later
THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF ALICE B.
TOKLAS

Reviewed by BERNARD FAY

are discovered in seventeenth century lyric verse. Léonie Adams, for example, feels what she thinks, thinks what she feels. In her poetry feeling and thinking are one and the same act. She is a unique figure today, a mystic who presents her very individual personal emotions with so impersonal a detachment as to make them, immediately, universal. She is the one American poet who, in the same sense that Blake is so named, may be called a "pure poet." Louise Bogan, although a lyric poet, is much more directly influenced by the thought and action of the scene in which she lives; she has shown many evidences of being influenced by the theory that we live in a vulgar and sterile age. She reacts to the whole Eliot tradition with a perverse individuality, but her very violence indicates how well she knows the main values, negative as they

are, which most modern poets swear by. All I have been saying makes, of course, a rapid and to some extent an inaccurate survey of the present outlook in poetry. I am emphasizing only the main trends, the outposts. Eliot and his innumerable imitators, possessed of much or little individuality, have given us every detail of the Wasteland of doubt. Hart Crane, seeking to integrate a disorganized world of ideals and actions, has pointed to new emotional values in a world of anonymous creation, a world in which the creative instincts of men may have outlet in the building of an industrial nation, a world in which not the single engineer or a single poet, but many unknown men may construct bridges and poetic hymns. E. E. Cummings, a poet not to be overlooked, has exhausted pure sensation. unorganized, and presented for its own sake. The lyric poets have, many of them, turned intellectual. Only the best of them keep the necessary balance between feeling and thinking, and are, therefore, able really to sing. Most of the poets of this new school have deliberately renounced the art of singing and become conversational or argumentative. This, as I see it, is a brief diagram of American poetry to-

Look at the imagery of these poets. It is

Andrew Commencer Commencer Milled, beneu se stone of thought, ivory of the brain, jewei of the brain, and similar images are constant. Second only to these are images of time. Every contemporary poet is obsessed by the idea of time, the feeling of life's brevity and meaninglessness, the desire to get outside mere temporal existence. Next come the images of space. Space, as defined scientifically, or as defined by the eye, is another poetic obsession these days. In other words the intellect, the mind, separated now almost entirely from the emotions, spins round and round in the confines of time and space. Human life and nature have no longer any fixed values. Science, war, political thought, and the Bergsonian philosophy have seen to that. The word or image of the "heart" has almost disappeared from poetry. "What matter if the heart live on?" If it does live on, it becomes a nagging kind of contradiction, an ancient hunger which the mind cannot quite neglect. The heart, the emotions are really lost to most modern poets. Human feelings are known to be momentary only, without ultimate value. Human beings are mere ants which near and vanish under the microscope First their bodies disappear (their hearts within the flesh), then only their spinning heads are left, detached and mechanical as some scientific invention. "The mind that lives on print becomes too savage." Finally it freezes up altogether. And so throughout most modern poetry, conceptual language is the language used. Physical imagery in any pure form is gone. As scenery for the translation of emotions, it is no longer useful. A new language for the mind, the only thing that most of these modern poets have left to talk about, has been invented. Poetry is burdened with abstract, ideational, pseudo-scientific phrases and images.

All this is a kind of death in the desert. The desert, very clearly, of the intellect. Man does not live by taking thought. Poetry is of the emotions and not of the

intellect. We have seen, since 1925, the effort on the part of our poets to understand a world which is obviously coming to an end, the world in which every life value is denied, in which only a futile and exhausting intellectual research is left for activity. One knows instinctively, that most of these modern poets, forced, as they have been, to renounce spontaneous feeling, living in mechanical cities, trying to comprehend realms of knowledge so contradictory as to give no security, have no real grip on life at all. The most thoughtful of them realize clearly their own predicament, know that, without some faith, they must starve spiritually. The questions, which as poets they must answer, are the old ones: why are men



T. S. ELIOT
From a drawing by Powys Evans
(Courtesy the London Bookman)

born, wherefore do they live at all, where do they go? Today these questions seem unanswerable. No amount of intellectual tight-rope walking will enable the poets to answer them. What, then, is ahead? Without any ability to prophecy, the important poets of these past few years have completed their survey of this world and

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concerning the world seen as a conflict of meaningless forces. Consequently Eliot's words "teach us to turn and not to turn; teach us to sit still" have become the modern poet's only prayer. And those to whom even a return to an orthodox religion is denied because such a return seems a moving backward of the hands of time, must sit still in the most vast, lifeless, and valueless desert men's eyes have ever stared upon.

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Despite this constant picture of the desert and of sterility presented in poetry, literature will prove, as always, to be a flowing stream not to be damned for long. And now that the landscape of the war and of the post-war world has been analyzed, now that we have come, or so it would seem, almost to the end of drouth, now that signs of change are with us, a new school of poets must be ready somewhere with new themes. Where are these poets and what is their message?

Most of the college poets—and one might expect to find new voices among them are very imitative. Some have grown up in the Millay tradition; some, especially those in the Eastern colleges, have grown

up in the Eliot school. Very few have stepped forward into an expression of thought which can be said to be new. The amazing fact about college poets is that they can be very competent without being in the least unique or important. As editor of a national college verse magazine I have seen, in the past two years, very little poetry which indicates hope for the future of American poetry. Only two or three young poets have appeared who write with definite originality and excellence. These college poets are, as a whole, hopelessly isolated from the world; they are very young. They have not as yet felt deeply or taken much thought. Eliot and Crane were writing with amazing power when they were yet in their very early 'teens. Perhaps there are, hidden away somewhere, today young poets who are writing with the same easily discerned originality. Here and there among the young communists one finds, to be sure, an emotional force which in time may well be translated into a new literature.

But evidence comes in the English periodicals and in books from young poets there, that the "next renaissance" may take place in that country, that once again English poets may step far ahead of American poets. Only once did American poets hold the banner and that was during the period when all English artists were suffering from the war and from a post-war bitterness and disillusion. America, rather untouched by that psychology, was then a country of enthusiasms which found their expressions in poetry. Today, America is throttled by internal, economic conflicts, her poets of this chaos have nothing more to say, and no new group of young poets has appeared.

The young English poets who are coming into prominence have been influenced, quite as much as have our American poets, by Eliot. But to his teachings they have reacted with a difference. Erudite some of them are, and given somewhat to the use of allusions and quotations from earlier poets. They were rather too intellectual, as yet—all of them. But they have accepted, intellectually at least, a new creed, that of communism. They are seeing the world in a new light when held

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elements in men poetry are obscured as the still sceptical intellect. These poets have published through the Hogarth Press an anthology of prose and poetry, "New Country," and a perusal of this volume alone will give us their point of view. W. H. Auden, C. Day Lewis, Stephen Spender, Michael Roberts, and William Plomer are the chief contributors. We have had individual volumes of poetry from Auden, Lewis, and Spender (perhaps from some of the others, although I have not seen them) which announce the same general creed. All of these young writers have outgrown the indecision of the post-war years and look forward to another kind of world:

I think, and the writers in this book obviously agree, that there is only one way of life for us: to renounce that system [the present one] now and to live by fighting against it. And that is not because we would sacrifice the present to the future, not because we imagine that the world which we shall help to make will be in any absolute sense "better" than the present, but because there is no other decent way of life for us, no other way of living at our best.

In these words from Michael Roberts's

introduction we find stated the profound need of these poets to find new human values, to find a cause whereby they may live. And regardless of what one may think of any change in our political systems or governments, this emotional need for new faith and for new values is tremendous. Poets, like all other artists, are and always will be individualists, but they must have something to be individual about. And the present generation of older artists finds nothing. Today "the real statesmen and artists are in danger of having only the disconnected individuality of the lost sheep."

What kind of poetry do these young English poets give us? One cannot generalize with any accuracy about the work of the group as a whole; each artist's talent is his own. But all of them have certain attitudes in common. All of them register disgust with the world of the passing-present, even with their own attitudes en-

What kind of poetry do these young English poets give us? One cannot generalize with any accuracy about the work of the group as a whole; each artist's talent is his own. But all of them have certain attitudes in common. All of them register disgust with the world of the passingpresent, even with their own attitudes encouraged in childhood by that world. All of them tend to satirize, not always artistically, the immediate past. All of them have become acclimatized emotionally to a highly mechanical and industrialized world. Many of these poets are, for example, taking their imagery from their own familiar experiences in flying. Most of them make a constant use of certain scientific words which have, by this time, an aura of emotional connotation.

But even this group of younger poets is intellectual, too intellectual to be deeply emotional. This is their great lack. Intellectually they have accepted new values, new ideas. Emotionally they are, as they themselves confess, somewhat deadened. The new values and the new ideas which they assert in their verses are not deeply a part of their subconscious desires, not so much intuitional as carefully and logically decided upon. Therefore, as in the eighteenth century, satire is the best medium for this new poetic expression. Therefore, poetic language is, as yet, quite artificial. There is not in any of this new poetry that fusion between intensely felt emotions and the image used to translate those emotions which is the earmark of all great poetry. This brief quotation from one of Stephen Spender's poems will indi-

The architectural gold-leaved flower
From people ordered like a single mind,
I build. This only what I tell:
It is too late for rare accumulation
For family pride, for beauty's filtered
dusts:

I say, stamping the words with emphasis,
Drink from here energy and only en-

ergy,
As from the electric charge of a battery,
To will This Time's change.

For these younger English poets, Eliot's subject matter is the subject matter of a poet who has been defeated. They refuse to retire into a bookish past; they will not live in closets, religious or imaginary. Nevertheless, trained in a strict tradition, they cannot quite escape their own learning. They try, merely, to live in a real world as well as in a literary world and to relate the two worlds. Because this is a difficult task, they often fail. They are sometimes obscure, very often prosaic, sometimes given to overt propaganda. Nevertheless, they are out of the Wasteland, they seek new territory, and their poetry may be an indication of the poetry of the future.

One American poet only is akin to this group of younger English poets. Horace Gregory has much the same outlook and one advantage over any of them. For all of his historical outlook on life, for all of his obvious classical training, he remains more emotional than intellectual. He is, therefore, able to fuse deeply felt personal experience with social criticism. He marks a turning point in American poetry.

There is no better survey of what has been wrong with poetry for some eight or more years than A. E. Housman's essay, "The Name and Nature of Poetry." Without once applying his thesis to contemporary poetry, Housman, in defining his own position in poetry, his own judgments concerning it, has cleared away more critical nonsense with a stroke of the pen

American Spring

By JOHN GOULD FLETCHER

OT with the steam of hazels softly swinging
Their powdery censers, nor with celandines
Aglow, nor with wild daffodils' rioting lines
Beside the hedge as if some god they were ringing
Up from the earth; not under feathery pines
Or naked birch, or gorse in ochre springing;
Or the dim bluebells over which go winging
White drunken butterflies; not these are our signs;

But the slow forest drowsing for day on day
On ice and rock, impenetrably old and black,
As watching to slay spring if it should come;
Then suddenly through its corridors pours a ray
Of red-hot metal from a cardinal's back,
And a stray branch puts out a torch of bright green flame.