

## The Saturday Review of LITERATURE

HENRY SEIDEL CANBY..... Editor  
NOBLE A. CATHCART..... Publisher  
AMY LOVEMAN..... Associate Editor  
GEORGE STEVENS... Assistant Editor  
WILLIAM ROSE BENET } Contributing  
CHRISTOPHER MORLEY } Editors

Published weekly by The Saturday Review Co., Inc., 25 W. 45th St., New York, N. Y.  
Noble A. Cathcart, President and Treasurer;  
Henry Seidel Canby, Vice-President and Chairman; Amy Loveman, Secretary.

Subscription rates per year, postpaid in the U. S. and Pan-American Postal Union, \$3.50; in Canada, \$5; in Great Britain, 18 shillings; elsewhere \$4.50. Entered as second class matter at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 1, 1879. Vol. 10. No. 15.

THE SATURDAY REVIEW is indexed in the "Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature."

THE SATURDAY REVIEW cannot assume responsibility for the return of unsolicited manuscripts submitted without an addressed envelope and the necessary postage.

Copyright, 1933, Saturday Review Co., Inc.

**Tension** When Tennyson wrote "Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay" he packed a century of symbolism into the words. His conscious mind meant obviously that Europe was alive and Asia dead; the prophetic instinct of the poet, which so often sees more than it understands, forecast the growing tension of the Occident, which was to string high pressure wires throughout civilization upon which bodies and souls were to be wrecked. With China what it is today, we cannot say "Better fifty years of Cathay than a century of Europe," yet if there are still untroubled founts of culture at the back of the Yang-tse-Kiang, the sentiment will have subscribers.

The tension in literature referred to before in these columns, and so marked in the movies, in the novel, on the stage, and in poetry, is the response to, or the reflection of, that tense competition in production and sales which marked the epoch out of which we are just emerging. Its best symbol was the hysterical intensity of advertising, precisely as the blood and violence of pre-Shakespearean drama was a symbol for the violence and blood of the reigns of the first Tudors. American university life was also tense through the decades centering in 1900, tense not with intellectual striving, but with social and athletic competition. Now that tensility is relaxing, and there are widespread complaints of defeatism, disillusion, idle dissipation, and sterile criticism of stale methods of teaching in a college life that has lost its glamour but has not yet attained a different vitality. Yet it is probable that the American university is a healthier place for minds now than in the quite unintellectual feverishness of the last epoch.

The tensility which sparked from laissez-faire competition in the business world to social competition in the American universities is paralleled in Europe by the sudden leap of tensility from political discontent to education. Italy, Germany, and Russia, each in its fashion, are streaked with high-power lines leading to the schools, and tension, tension, tension is exalted beyond any other value in life. Children are led in thousands to view melodramatic monuments celebrating a consecration to war and national aggrandizement at the expense of others, and the state has been deified in order to make the purposes of a whole generation tense.

Of course it is better to wear than to rust, better to be blown up than to be

bored to death, better (some think) to be strung to a pitch of fanaticism than to be let down into idle disillusion—we know all these arguments, but they deal with blacks and whites and do not touch the central fact, that tension on the live wires of the modern world is increasing much faster than the load of electricity on our mechanical power systems, with casualties proportionately more frequent. And if the meek do not seem likely soon to inherit the earth, the future may very possibly be already ripe for the hands of those that have been fortunate enough to escape. It is possible that those who will lead us out of the pit that is being dug visibly at our feet, will not be the demagogues and dictators, whose clenched jaws and strained faces stare out of the Sunday supplements (looking as if they had fed on coiled springs and compressed air capsules), but those others who have freed themselves, or are by nature free, from tension, who have cut or dodged the high voltage wires and returned to the tempo of earth.

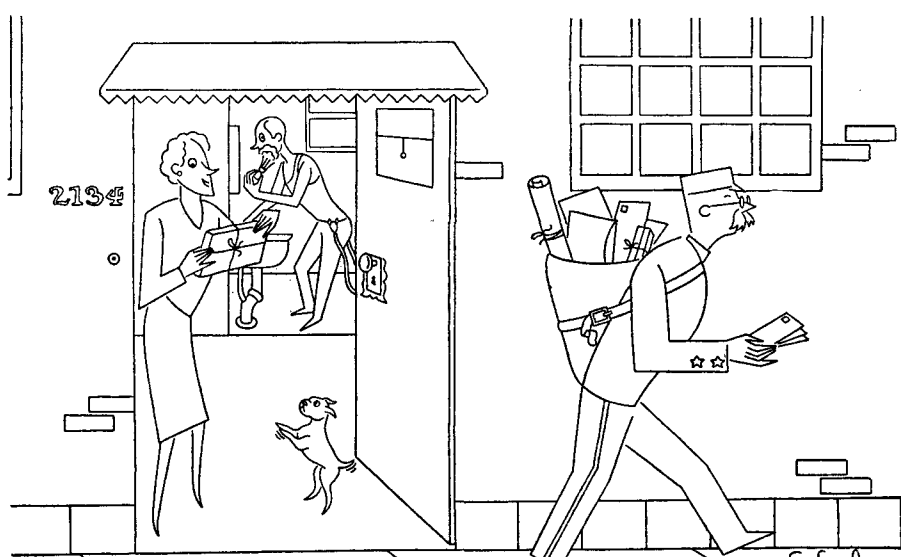
Nor is it the least fortunate aspect of this year in America that President Roosevelt is obviously such a man. His policy of trial and error with a goal ahead but no fixed path pre-determined, and his ability to inspire both confidence and calm, would be unworkable by a fanatic, such as Hitler, or even by a high-pressure American of the type we admired before 1929. How he escaped in this generation of over-tensility one does not know, but it is fair to assume that his struggle with physical disability has given him that equal temper which Tennyson, following the Greeks, also praised.

As for the others, and us, the much put-upon American public, roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard by the waves of tension, there are remedies enough where there is will to want them. In literature, Jane Austen would be our evening choice, that cool persiflage in which pretense and selfish aggrandizement become ridiculous. And philosophy, religion, and a sense of humor were created out of man's imagination for a like end.

### Pamphlet Literature

In these days when government announces its policy by radio, and systems that have taken generations to build change their form over night, it becomes increasingly difficult for written discussion to keep pace with action. Even the most hastily concocted book may be outdated before it is off the presses, and publishers, even though authors might, do not easily contemplate extensive corrections and revisions. As a result a whole literature in pamphlet form is already springing into being which, transitory as its life in the present may be, still should have a large importance for the future. For here, vivid with the excitement of the moment, is a record of opinions and discussion as they shift and veer within a brief compass of time, a sort of informal history of public sentiment which ought to be enormously valuable some day to the student of social psychology. Not for a long time has the pamphlet had so pertinent a usefulness for its own day. But its worth is for the future as well, for a time that may indeed have seen disappear many of the policies which called it into being.

Some lost letters of Richard Wagner have been discovered in Bayreuth. One shows how he encouraged Nietzsche to publish "The Birth of Tragedy."



"OH, JOHN, THEY MUST LIKE YOUR MANUSCRIPT—IT SAYS, 'AFTER TEN DAYS RETURN TO HENRY AND LONGWELL, PUBLISHERS.'"

## To the Editor:

### Spontaneous Combustion

#### Mr. Nevins's Review

Sir: I protest against Allan Nevins's review of "The Brown Book of the Hitler Terror." I protest not merely in behalf of myself, but in behalf of the many readers of *The Saturday Review of Literature* who, I am certain, were distressed by his sabotage of a book that has created an international sensation, but who have not, perhaps, had the opportunities that I have had to learn the facts.

"The Brown Book of the Hitler Terror" was written some six months after the Nazis seized power. It was written in the heat of the brutal civil war that is not yet ended. The documents upon which it is based, according to Lord Marley's foreword, were placed at the disposal of the World Committee that prepared the book by doctors and lawyers now in Germany, by the tortured and martyred victims themselves, and by the reporters of the Committee. These "reporters," as everyone knows, are labor leaders and intellectuals of all camps who were and still are close to the scene, have every conceivable chance to observe what is actually going on, and are risking their lives and the lives of their relatives and friends in order to make the truth known. Lord Marley writes: "It is always difficult to secure authentic information as to what is happening under a well-organized terror." In short, it was heroism that produced this book. . . . Mr. Nevins says it is not "sober."

I should like to know what Mr. Nevins considers sober. . . . Moreover, what emotion animates a man to plead for sobriety concerning a situation that shrieks for anger and fear. Correspondents in Germany who are anything but communists have been insisting that there is sadism and murder there, and that it is literally a "hell." What justification has Mr. Nevins for damning this book because it says exactly that?

It is "loosely written," he says. Certainly. It was prepared necessarily in haste; it was not prepared as a Ph.D. thesis.

It is "significant that the actual authorship of this volume is nowhere stated," he says. It unquestionably is significant. If the names of the writers were made public they would be murdered. Merely because Professor Einstein is an honorary member of the sponsoring committee, the Nazis have put a price upon his head. Does Mr. Nevins doubt that? Has he forgotten the slaughter of Professor Lessing in Prague?

The names of the "World Committee" that sponsored the volume are not given, he remarks. As a man who is presumably in touch with current affairs he should himself be acquainted with the names. They have been published often. They are: Lord Marley (of the Labor Party), Professor Francis Jourdain, Henri Barbusse, Paul Longevin (of the French Academy), Ernst Toller, Sylvia Pankhurst, Professor H. Levy, J. B. Matthews, Egon Erwin Kisch, Willi Muenzenberg, Professor Robert Morss Lovett, Malcolm Cowley, Romain Rolland, and numerous others.

One of the most significant sections in the volume deals with the burning of the Reichstag. "The Brown Book" exonerates the communists and accuses the Nazis themselves of being the real incendiaries. The evidence put forth was just examined by a group of internationally renowned jurists and unanimously approved by

them. The current trial in Leipzig and Berlin has not yet disproved any part of this evidence. Mr. Nevins, however, is not convinced. He writes that "it does not add to our confidence in the book to find the caption 'Hitler Betrays Himself' applied to some natural words against communism which Hitler uttered immediately after the fire; nor to find a list of 'thirty-one Nazi contradictions' made merely on the basis of confused reports in Nazi organs and confused utterances by Nazi leaders." Mr. Nevins neglects to point out that Hitler's "natural words" consisted of an accusation made before he could, in the ordinary course of events, have learned that the police were charging the communists with the crime. Nor does Mr. Nevins point out that among Hitler's "natural words" were the following: "This is a God-given signal! . . . This fire is the beginning." Shortly afterwards, using the fire as a pretext, Hindenburg turned the government over to Hitler. And finally, Mr. Nevins fails to mention that the "contradictions" prove exactly one thing: that there was absolutely no ground for the arrest of Torgler, Dimitroff, Popoff, and Taneff. Of course, Mr. Nevins says nothing at all about the irrefutable and damning Oberfohren memorandum.

Mr. Nevins complains that the murders are not "adequately documented!!" It is hopeless to attempt a reply.

It all boils down to this: that he resents the radical touch in the book. But who else would have written it? Liberals like Mr. Nevins? No, they would have waited ten years for "adequate documentation." Conservatives like James W. Gerard? Let Hitler quit his Jew-baiting and they will throw themselves into his arms. Mr. Nevins concludes that if "The Brown Book" were "restrained" it would be a "powerful weapon against some of the present policies of the German rulers." Some of the policies? Ah!

BERNARD SMITH.

New York, N. Y.

#### Mr. Smith's Letter

Sir: Thank you for showing me Mr. Smith's letter. In reply, I don't in the least resent the radical touch in "The Brown Book of the Hitler Terror." I don't even resent some violent language in a good cause. I do resent violence to truth. "The Brown Book" does violence to truth when it speaks (p. 132) of "the sadism which in the last few months has led to thousands of murders"; when it refers (p. 133) to "the whole of Hitler's Germany" as "a brown hell"; when it not merely accuses the Nazis of being the incendiaries of the Reichstag, as Mr. Smith says, but treats this dubious case as closed and the charges as proved; when it deliberately distorts such facts of history as those of the Haymarket Riot. It was not I, but former Ambassador Gerard, who said in an entirely different review of the book that it smacked of communist propaganda. My own opinion is that in some parts it is simply hysterical and exaggerated. The World War taught us that nothing is more easily obtained, nothing needs more critical scrutiny, than atrocity stories. Professor Einstein is reported to have dissociated himself from the book; I shall believe that such men as Henri Barbusse approve talk about "thousands of murders" when they are formally quoted to that effect.

ALLAN NEVINS.

New York, N. Y.

## The Saturday Review recommends

### This Group of Current Books:

**TIMBER LINE.** By GENE FOWLER. Covici-Friede. The startling story of the Denver Post.

**THE INTELLIGENT MAN'S REVIEW OF EUROPE TODAY.** By G. D. H. and MARGARET COLE. Knopf. A panorama of present-day Europe.

**AFTER SUCH PLEASURES.** By DOROTHY PARKER. Viking. Pungent tales of contemporary life.

### This Less Recent Book:

**THE GREEK WAY.** By EDITH HAMILTON. Norton. A study of the Greek mind and civilization.



# Farewell to the Nineties

WINNER TAKE NOTHING. By Ernest Hemingway. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1933. \$2.

Reviewed by HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

WE have accustomed ourselves to Ernest Hemingway, and therefore it becomes more possible to estimate his values and to place him in the literary show. His staccato style has had the compliment of much imitation. His themes, drawn from the wreckage of war, or from ruthless analysis of youthful memories, or from the upsurge of savagery or brutal egoism in supposedly civilized man, have become as expected and familiar as the Cinderella plot of the conventional short story. Hemingway, like Ring Lardner, like O. Henry, like Kipling, has created his world and his technique of making it articulate. He is no longer one of the youngsters, and we must praise him now, not for his novelties as such, but for their merit as renderings of life, and for the qualities of that life itself.

And what does one find in a collection of short stories such as this new volume? On the plus side, an extraordinary power of observation, worthy of comparison with Kipling's, an observation that knows no inhibitions, but is as limited as was that earlier master's—who could do the sensational, but not nuances and subtleties of a matured culture. An observation, however, that, because it is not inhibited, brings a fresh range of subjects into the light. I find nothing in this volume as poignant as certain sketches of trout fishing (a passionate subject for Hemingway) in earlier writing, or as beautifully organized as the retreat from Caparetto



ERNEST HEMINGWAY  
The author is at the right of the 468-lb. marlin he caught in Cuban waters. There are no fish stories in his new book.

in "A Farewell to Arms," unless it be the dangerously macabre descriptions of horrid death in "A Natural History of Death," or the hysterical account of fornication in "Fathers and Sons." Yet no one can read of the brute who looks through his water glass at the sunken steamer, with bodies floating inside the port holes, his rudimentary pity only felt, not realized like the frustration of his greed, or the deceptively simple account of the prize fighter in "The Mother of a Queen," whose egoism is so perfect that no blow can touch it, without hailing one of the most skilful writers of our generation.

And yet, and yet, the comparison with Kipling persists. Now that the novelty is off these studies of egoism, brutality, cold lust, and pathetic demoralization, it becomes clearer and clearer that we have not changed so much from the nineties as we supposed. Then it was what somewhere East of Suez had to say to smug Victorianism which excited the younger readers. The lid was on in genteel America and England—even Mark Twain had not dared to lift it, but under the old Chinese pagoda at Mandalay the Westerner became primitive man again. He fell in love with Dinah Shadd but could not step out to tell her so without worse than philandering on the way. He lived a brute's life and paid for it. He was usually drunk, usually lusting for women, and sadly willing to tell about it. Of course Kipling threw a glamour over it all—removed it by half a world from the complacent West. His Mulvaney's were romantic figures in a cleaner, greener land than

ours. The raw shocks to our sensibilities were cushioned by humor and restraint in language, for one remembers that the Soldiers Three told their stories to a gentleman and pruned their language to suit. And unquestionably Hemingway has come a step further along the road. Kipling could never have handled his cold killers, for the war had not yet drained humanitarianism from the imagination. Kipling was incapable of such unadorned brutality of natural speech between men and women only their vulgar selves with no overtones of humane possibilities given to them by the writer.

Yet Kipling, with more humor, was far less sentimental than Hemingway. He never is so sorry for himself as this man who records struggle where the winner gets nothing. His norm is still a hearty, courageous world in which brutality or degeneracy is an aberration, romantic because it releases the inhibited in man, but transitory. And Kipling is the better story teller. When you cannot reread with the old pleasure a story of Kipling's it is because he so gloats upon and over-emphasizes the sensations. His style is sometimes all exclamation mark. Yet even then the brilliant plot remains. When you

are bored by Hemingway, as I frankly am by a half dozen of these new stories, which are repetitive with the slow pound, pound of a hammer upon a single mood, there is nothing to revive you except flashes of excellent observation. The younger man is at his best precisely when (if one insists upon regarding him as a novelist) he is at his worst,—when he takes one episode, one phase of a temperament, one mood, one moment, and eliminating all context, all verbiage, cuts a stencil of it

and stamps it on the page with unforgettable incisiveness. I would cite from this volume the narrative of the doctor at the end of the "Natural History of the Dead" who will not let them kill the dying man. I don't believe that Kipling or anyone of his time could have written those few pages. They would not have dared the language, they would not have been able to keep what they believed was the hearty normal world so completely out of their imaginations.

And yet I cannot see much difference in the history of art between the sensationalism of Hemingway, except that the first (like his business contemporaries) had Asia to exploit, and the second, after the breakup of the great war, finds his horrors at home, and makes his romance out of reversions instead of adventures. Neither man is a novelist, both men deal in specialties eminently suitable to the sketch or the short story. Both depend upon over-emphasis. Both will suffer heavily from a change in taste, as Kipling has already suffered from the shift in interest away from the romance of imperialism. Kipling, of course, has a far greater endowment as a writer. Yet I do not believe that it is merely the franchise to speak plainly of things not written about in nineteenth century English which has given Hemingway his great success. His dialogue is limited. It is good only for special people—especially for primitive passionates, for wounded sophisticates where the primitive shows through like an exposed bone, for pathetic inarticulates, and for men of abnormal simplicity whose

love of wine, of women, or of murder so dominates as to run the whole machine—but for these it is a superb instrument. Whether Kipling's humor and his superb apprehensions of the beauty of heroism, of the fundamental decencies, of patriotism, of love not merely sexual, do not make him the greater man, depends upon whether the brutality in which the world is just now indulging is, in truth, further from the heart of human desire than what other ages have longed for. But the two belong to the same wave of historical culture. Kipling began what Hemingway, perhaps, is ending. The path seems to lead into a swamp.

## O'Neill Backs and Fills

AH, WILDERNESS! By Eugene O'Neill. New York: Random House. 1933. \$2.50.

Reviewed by JOHN CORBIN

IN a double sense Eugene O'Neill turns time backward in his latest play. "Ah, Wilderness!" which his publisher insists on calling "A Comedy of Recollection," dates a full quarter of a century ago, when the author of it, now panoplied in years, was seventeen; and its technique is that of the then-honored "new school" of realism, which O'Neill practised so ably in his earlier plays. As they used to say on the Connecticut shore where his action takes place, he backs and fills. The phrase has come to connote vacillation; but originally it described a difficult manipulation of sails by which Yankee skippers made headway against the wind. It applies in both senses. We have here no technical stunts—no rubber masks denoting the double-facedness of life, no pseudo-Freudian soliloquies, no sedulous aping of Æschylus. But the sails of the playwright swell to the breeze, and the result is some measure of progress.

The theme and the setting are curiously similar to those of Booth Tarkington's "Seventeen," but with a difference equally curious. A case of calf love crops out in a very respectable small-town family, developing a world of adolescent passions and posturings, of flighty speech and fly-by-night conduct, male and female. But between the mental horizons of the two small-town youngsters there is a significant contrast. The passions and posturings of Tarkington's Willy Baxter are recognizable and welcome alike to readers of *The Saturday Evening Post* and, let us say, to the audiences of the Theatre Guild, where "Ah, Wilderness!" is now playing; they are universally human, fundamental, eternal, and all that sort of thing. And they are primordially American, being innocent of the three deadly sins of our small towns. The mind of O'Neill's Richard, on the contrary, is immersed in wine, women, and song, though he puts it in no phrase so bald.

To the horror of his skirt-and-shirt-waist mother, he reads Swinburne and Omar on the sly (not to mention Shaw and Ibsen); and, wooing a girl of fifteen, he sends her elegant extracts about drinking her veins like wine, eating her breasts like honey, and thus entombing her very flesh in his flesh. This cannibalism enrages the girl's father and even nonplusses the boy's more reasonable male parent. To Richard the upshot is an adolescent despair that drives him to the back room of a bed-house saloon and lands a tart little peroxide blonde in his lap. He escapes drinking this lady's veins, being kicked out of the family entrance by an irascible barkeep; but he gets very drunk and, like the young lady of Twickenham, when he took off his shoes he was sick in 'em.

Is it possible that, as chronology and the publisher's insistence on that word *recollection* imply, we have to do with a bit of fictional autobiography? Mr. O'Neill himself suggests this—suggests even that he is, so to speak, the eponymous hero of his tribe. For, singling out George Jean Nathan from among his followers, he dedicates "Ah, Wilderness!" to him—"who also, once upon a time, in peg-top trousers went the pace that kills along the road to ruin."

As always in his zig-zag course of backing and filling, Mr. O'Neill reveals a new facet of his genius. Hitherto he has been least of all things remarkable for the sym-



EUGENE O'NEILL

pathetic humor which is the essence of comedy. He has, indeed, shown the keenest of insight into character, which is the essence of drama in all its forms; but the bent of his plays has been tragic, or at least sardonic. When "comedy" folk appeared, as in the hick chorus of "Mourning Becomes Electra," the humor has been lugubrious. In "Ah, Wilderness!" there is the same preoccupation with deadly sin, and the revelations of it are at times rather heavy-handed; but the play reads better than it can be briefly described, and, thanks to an inherent instinct for theatrical effect, it acts better than it reads. Certainly the sophisticated have joy in it.

John Corbin was for a time dramatic critic of the New York Times and later of the New York Sun.

## March in Reverse

RADETZKY MARCH. By Joseph Roth. New York: The Viking Press. 1933. \$2.50.

Reviewed by FRED J. RINGEL

WITH the critical applause which "Radetzky March" will undoubtedly receive, it seems absolutely imperative to analyze first the startling change in the intellectual personality of Joseph Roth before one sets out to review this beautifully written book. Hardly another writer directly after the war entered upon so striking a career, aroused so much attention and expectation, and so influenced a whole school of writers. Six years ago, when Joseph Roth with his book "Flight without End" started out in a new direction, he rejected the word "novel" as designation of a contemporary means of expression for the social upheaval, hopeless despair, and groping for a new future after the collapse of a world. He called his book a "report" and, interpreting his conception, he wrote that "there is no longer any point in 'improvising'." Most significant of all is what has been observed. Today Roth returns to the structural depth of the novel, but he has accomplished only a drawn-out narrative. The refreshing gusto of satire and sarcastic criticism in his former books, bound to lead to an active attitude towards present-day problems, has escaped in the turbulence of our chaotic time into a painful passivity, which naturally had to find its climax in the glorification of a decaying past.

The first novels of Joseph Roth portrayed our imprisonment within the times: "Flight without End" was the report of Lieutenant Tunda, who returns from the war and marches towards his home without being able to find it. In the ultimate realization that he will never be home, he stands in the end, in the same spiritual state as at the beginning of the book, "on the square in front of the Madeleine, in the center of the world's capital and didn't know what to do. He had no calling, no love, no desire, no hope, no ambition, and not even egotism. In all the world there was no one as superfluous as he." Then Joseph Roth writes the book of "Zipper and His Father," and paints the pre-war time with its comfortably soulless, idyllic life; he writes of the sleek respectability underlying all ambition, the childish ad-