

# Foreign Literature

## Sailing to Byzantium

WORDS FOR MUSIC PERHAPS AND OTHER POEMS. By W. B. Yeats. Dublin: The Cuala Press. 1933.

Reviewed by PADRAIC COLUM

MR. YEATS is that survival amongst us—a Representative Man. He survives from a period long anterior to the date of his birth, from the time when a man had a role, fitted himself for it, and respected himself and was respected according to his ability to sustain it—when the King, Judge, the Priest, the Artist were recognizable types. Nowadays the roles are mixed up—the King wants to be a functionary, the Judge a director of conscience, the Artist a business man. The Priest remains but only through the discipline of the Catholic Church. I take these views from M. Jacques Maritain who has written, "It is Oedipus who buries Polyneices, Antigone who confronts the Sphinx, Phædre who falls in love with Romeo, and the Moor of Venice who laughs at the sonnet of Oronte. It is useless to add that such parts are badly played and developed all wrong." Well, Mr. Yeats is one of the very few men of our time who has not confused his part with another's: he has sustained the role of poet as a man of another age would have sustained it. No poet writing in English has done this consistently. No other poet, it may be added, has brought fresh elements into his poetry so often, renewing his work by new idioms, new rhythms, new material from youth to middle age and beyond middle age. In the volume previous to the present one, such poems as "Sailing to Byzantium" and "Song out of a Play" have such freshness and energy as if they had been written by a poet making his first discoveries.

He has now reached the age when, turning from passion and regret, he would create an art than would be a talisman against mortality. He would settle in Byzantium—Byzantium being where life takes influence from systems of thought that have come out of profound meditation and abstract art that has come out of a long labor. He has come to that place in the first poem in "Words for Music Perhaps":

The unpurged images of day recede,  
The Emperor's drunken soldiery are  
a-bed.

and now one can be aware that—

A starlit or a moonlit dome distrains  
All that man is,  
All mere complexities,  
The fury and the mire of human veins.

But can a poet who has reason to know himself for an Irishman really make the sailing to Byzantium?

Out of Ireland have we come—  
Great hatred, little room  
Maimed us at the start—  
I carry from my mother's womb  
My fanatic heart.

And that, too, is well. Mr. Yeats cannot remain a courtier in any porphyry palace: even into the Emperor's teeth he would

fling his conviction that the poet's ecstasy comes from something beside contemplation—"What theme had Homer but original sin?" and he would remind him that the words that are the prelude to all songs, systems, civilizations were spoken to "battle-wearied men"—

Wheels by milk-white asses drawn  
Where Babylon or Nineveh  
Rose; some conqueror drew rein  
And cried to battle-wearied men,  
"Let all things pass away."

One can find defects in this poetry. There is an insistence on bare opinion in one or two of the poems. Declaring that Swift, Berkeley, Goldsmith, and Burke hated Whiggery "whether they knew or not," the poet defines Whiggery as "a levelling, rancorous, rational sort of mind." This is an opinion that should be given a prose statement. Then, but this is true of only one poem in the present volume, there is the mixing of a singular sort of vision with a reflectiveness that does not seem to be congruous with it. There is the vision of the tree that is "half all glittering flame and half a green abounding foliage moistened with the dew," and we understand this part of the poem, the first verse, as we understand certain difficult symbolist poetry, and there is the third verse, which is gnomic, telling us that all works of faith and intellect should be made to be judged by such

as come  
Proud, open-eyed and laughing to the  
tomb.

And between are maxims that we are asked to meditate on—

All women dote upon an idle man,  
Although their children need a rich estate;  
No man has ever lived that had enough  
Of children's gratitude or women's love.

These maxims are true, but their truth is on a different level from—

And he that Attis's image hangs between  
That string fury and the blind lush leaf  
May know not what he knows but knows  
not grief

of the first verse. These differences make for incoherency.

These later poems of Mr. Yeats differ from what every other poet of today is writing in having manful energy. Poems like "Conquerors," "The Mother of God," "Remorse for Intemperate Speech," and the "Crazy Jane" series have a tang of laughter and wrath. Before everybody else's these are Songs of Experience.

## National Socialism

GESCHICHTE DES NATIONAL-SOZIALISMUS: Karriere einer Idee. By Konrad Heiden. Berlin: Rowohlt Verlag. 1933.

THIS book bears every sign of having been written and published some time before the triumph of the National Socialist Party in Germany. It has various critical and satirical touches, such as stating that Hitler the orator on one occasion spoke like an *alter Bierhausstammgast*, which would have ensured its

prompt suppression during the past three or four months; it also describes the leader of the National Socialist Movement as "vain to the point of madness," and although Herr Heiden adds that Goethe, Napoleon, and Bismarck were the same, it is hardly likely that the qualifications would conciliate the average Nazi. The general point of view of the book, too, is that of a liberal, even a radical, believer in freedom, and from such a source a favorable, even a really impartial, judgment on the National Socialist Movement is scarcely to be expected. Herr Heiden's explanation of the rise to domination of the poor official's son is not adequate—let that be said at the outset. But except for the purely propagandist productions of the Party itself, not even in Hitler's own book, "Mein Kampf," which, although recently republished, dates from 1927—does there exist any regular account of the origins and development of National Socialism in Germany.

Herr Heiden calls it the history of an "idea," but it resolves itself for the most part into the history of a person, of Adolf Hitler. It is true—Hitler himself admits it—that he did not invent the National Socialist idea or draw up its program. But after he had attached himself to the movement which was later to emerge as the German National Socialist Party, it was he who gave it direction, impetus, ambition, desire to dominate. The germs of National Socialism, as Herr Heiden shows, were present in the Pan-German program which was drawn up during the war, when Hitler was getting wounded or gassed and winning the Iron Cross on the Somme. Although an Austrian born, he had elected to fight in the Bavarian Army. Early convinced that only by the break-up of the Hapsburg Empire with its Slavophil tendencies could the racial reunion of all Germans be successfully accomplished, Adolf Hitler had been unwilling to fight for Austria. His boyhood and youth in Vienna had intensified his Germanism, had awakened his antipathy to the Jews, and had given him a certain sympathy for the working-class movement which, he was convinced, was being led astray by "Marxism" and Jewish radicals.

He pursued the same line of thought after the war. The Pan-Germans who had hoped to win the war devoted themselves to the campaign of resistance against the Bolshevik insurrections which were so frequent in the years after the Armistice. Hitler took part in this; he engaged, while still serving in the Army, in an "educational" campaign, during which he not only discovered his gift of popular oratory, but came to the conviction that in the doctrines of one Gottfried Feder lay the basis for a new party. Feder was an engineer turned economist; he had elaborated a theory of the essential distinction between the productive and purely speculative functions of capital, and he had joined the "German Workers' Party," which had been founded in 1919 by a workman named Drexler. The combination of extreme nationalism with an advanced economic doctrine, hardly distinguishable in certain respects from communism, met the need of the time; it promised to gather support from the two extreme reactions which had settled in Germany after the war. It appealed to the hatred of the Peace Treaty and dictation by Jewish "international finance," but it also attracted, with its slogan of "Down with the enemies

of proletarian Germany," the radical elements. Hitler joined the party, from which was to come his own National Socialist Party. It was to have many ups and downs; it was even suppressed altogether in 1923, after the Munich Putsch, which led to Hitler's banishment and Ludendorff's trial for high treason.

But it rose again; Hitler's domination, as Herr Heiden explains, gradually increased. It was he who called in assistants whose work developed the movement and in some respects changed the emphasis of its appeal; for example, Captain Göring, who established the link with Fascism, or Paul Goebbels, the expert propagandist, who brought the ill-assorted Nazi program within the comprehension of the populace, or Alfred Rosenberg, the fair-haired Baltic Prussian, who emphasized the foreign political aims of the Nazis, that Germany's future lay in Eastern Europe. Sometimes there were differences between the "Führer" and his lieutenants; these are recorded in Herr Heiden's narrative. But Hitler's personality eventually dominated. At least, as Herr Heiden admits, he showed millions of young Germans how to struggle and suffer and do violence in the cause of an ideal—a fantastic ideal, if one will, based on a false racial and economic theory, and accompanied with all kinds of intolerance, but an ideal, all the same. It is a form of Socialism, Herr Heiden concludes, which had been imposed on Germany; in the process the individual liberty which German Social Democracy and the so-called "Marxism" (a vague term in the Nazi vocabulary) always advocated, has been destroyed. But Herr Heiden anticipates an eventual revival, although, writing a few months ago, he expresses his conviction that for a time every department of human life in Germany will be penetrated with Nazi-ism. Here at least he seems to have been a true prophet.

## The Clearing House

(Continued from preceding page)

the World War. Can you refer me to any of his books or articles which give his reasons? His home town, Colfax, is just a few miles from Des Moines, and it would seem to us that the difference is so great that he would not be contented down there."

So far as we know, Mr. Hall, who is the most reticent of men concerning his own accomplishments or achievements, has written only incidentally of the reasons for his moving to Tahiti. He told us once, however, that his finding himself there was quite accidental. He and Charles Nordhoff, an ace like himself and his intimate friend throughout the war years, started off immediately after their demobilization to see something of the world and forget something of their recent experiences. They came finally to Tahiti, and entranced by its beauty decided to linger there for a time. They are still lingering; both of them married to natives of the island, and both still as much enamored of their South Seas paradise as in the beginning. For a long time their homes stood side by side, but quite recently, we understand, they have built houses in different parts of the island. Not to be interrupted in friendship, however, they meet regularly every day at a point half way between the two homes for work and conversation.



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ACCORDING to Edwin C. Hill, Doctor Rosenbach, the New York book-seller, owns a library valued at \$25,000,000.00. I fear that Mr. Hill underestimates. He does not know about the copy of "Faerie Queene," inscribed to Elizabeth Boyle. That brings the sum-total to \$25,000,000.30. George Frisbee.

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# News from the States

What the SATURDAY REVIEW most desires for this department is the pithy paragraph upon some significant matter, whether in relation to author's activities, bookselling activities and problems, the trend of reading in a particular territory, or allied matters. Booksellers' anecdotes will be welcomed. It is our aim to furnish a bird's-eye view of reading and writing America which will prove valuable both to our subscribers and to the book world at large. We hope that our subscribers will submit items from time to time.

COLORADO

THERE will, writes Heloise B. Hawkins, soon be a generous new crop of Colorado novels, owing to the presence of Margaret Widdemer on the staff of the Writers' Conference at Colorado University this month, as instructor in novel writing. She was entertained by the Denver Woman's Press Club, the Colorado Poetry Society, and the American Association of University Women.

According to the organ of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, Colorado is outstanding in its Traveling Library work. From Mrs. J. H. Hegarty, via Miss Hawkins, comes a full and enthusiastic report. It is trite to say that in Colorado, one of the great-open-space states, the traveling library is more than a boon to isolated teachers, preachers, ranchers, and clubs without library privileges. It is thirty-five years old, and owes its existence to A. M. Welles. Its only way of advertising is by sage brush and columbine telegraph. Colorado has not yet acquired big auto delivery wagons for the enterprise, but still uses the railroad. Needless to say, the work is a treasure-trove of moving anecdotes; and it has unexpected by-products, such as "singing-skewls."

Translations loom large in present book-activities here. Lucie Lafort has done Willa Cather into French; and may do Bess Streeter Aldrich, also Josephine Trott is converting into the same language, Colorado juveniles,—and verse to be used as prizes in European schools. The western stories of Clem Yore (known also as a poet) are being translated into Hungarian.

HAWAII

According to Clifford Gessler, Honolulu seems to have supplanted Majorca as the happy hunting ground for footloose writers. John W. Vandercook of New York, author of "Black Majesty," "Forty Stay In," and the just published "Murder in Trinidad," spent two weeks there this summer, with Mrs. Vandercook, sculptress, before proceeding to Fiji and New Guinea. Mr. Vandercook says if you want to see genuine primitive African life, don't go to Africa, but Guiana.

B. H. Lehman, author of "Wild Marriage" and "The Lordly Ones," has been giving a course of lectures on literature and drama at the summer session of the University of Hawaii. Dr. Lehman, who is a member of the faculty of the University of California, says Honolulu would be an ideal place for a school of creative writing. Dr. Lehman also brought word of a rising poetic talent on the Pacific coast, that of Marie de L. Welch, whose "Poems" will be published this fall.

Dr. Peng-chun Chang of Nankai university, Tientsin, is also a guest member of the U. of H. summer faculty. Dr. Chang gave a dinner lecture at Waikiki Lau Yee Chai July 26 on Chinese Poetry, bringing the subject up to contemporary times and reading in both Chinese and English from hitherto untranslated Chinese poets of our own period. He says the translations of the Chinese classic poets by Arthur Waley are thus far the best available. Dr. Chang, a graduate of Columbia University, became widely known in the United States a few years ago when he accompanied the actor Mei Lan Fang on his American tour and gave a course at the University of Chicago.

Friends in Honolulu report that Idwal Jones, author of "The Splendid Shilling," is on his way from New York to California by way of Panama and is considering a visit of several months to Honolulu, his wife's home town. Another prospective sojourner in Honolulu is Myron Brinig of Hollywood, whose "The Flutter of an Eyelid" is announced for the Fall.

Lincoln Ellsworth, explorer and author of "Our Polar Flight," "First Crossing of the Polar Sea," etc., spent a few days in Honolulu late in July on his way to the Antarctic. Mrs. Ellsworth accompanied him and will reside in New Zealand while he braves the perils of the frozen south.

Former Honolulu writers represented on fall publishing lists in New York include Don Blanding, with a book of verse,

"Let Us Dream"; Fannie Heaslip Lea with a novel, "Summer People," and Armstrong Sperry, with a South Sea juvenile, "One Day with Manu."

At least one high-powered fiction manuscript will be taken back to New York from Honolulu by Harry Snyder, the ubiquitous publisher's representative. It is a study of three generations of a missionary family in Hawaii. Further details are withheld for the present, as are those of a new Honolulu book store which will be opened early in September by a former New York man.

NORTH CAROLINA

Mr. Waldeen H. White sends us an interesting report of Dr. Archibald Henderson's recent survey of North Carolina literature for the past twelve months. The Bernardian Boswell remarks that whereas a quarter of a century ago a half-dozen to a dozen volumes and brochures told the tale, and five hundred words were ample for review, today one must give consideration to sixty or seventy volumes, brochures, pamphlets, treatises, and three thousand words are inadequate for a few lines each.

Although the term "North Carolina literature" is to be interpreted comprehensively—including with North Carolinians are natives out of the State and writers not natives living in the State—and in part is "flatteringly euphemistic," a number of volumes are of real importance. In history and biography Dr. Henderson finds the record not unimposing. Among these, to mention but two examples, "History of the Lost State of Franklin" by Samuel Cole Williams, of Johnson City, Tennessee; "John Sevier: Pioneer of the Old Southwest" by Dr. Carl S. Driver, of Vanderbilt University. (Not to mention Dr. Henderson's compendious biography of Shaw.) In the field of economics and sociology are works by well-known authors; among these, Ernest R. Groves and Gladys H. Groves, coauthors of the popular and excellent seller, "Sex in Marriage," "a serious study not unrelieved by humor." In fiction, two names of distinction, Paul Green with "The Laughing Pioneer," previously mentioned in these columns, and Gerald W. Johnson with "Number Thirty-Six." Of these authors, Dr. Henderson prefers the one as dramatist, the other as biographer. There is also Edwin Bjorkman's translation of the famous Norwegian novel, "Two Living and One Dead" by Sigurd Christiansen.

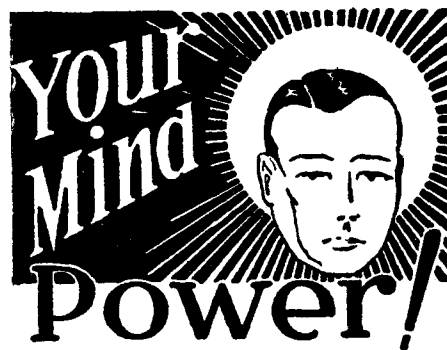
Mentioned as particularly arresting are the works, "Dante Gabriel Rossetti," containing an analytical list of manuscript in the Duke University Library, with hitherto unpublished verse and prose, edited by Professor Paul Franklin Baum of Duke University; and "New Orleans, Its Old Homes, Old Shops, and Public Buildings" with sketches by the author, Nathaniel Cortlandt Curtis, distinguished architect of New Orleans and a graduate of the University of North Carolina. The latter book, Dr. Henderson predicts, will rank high, in charm, in narrative, architectural, and historical interest, with the best accounts of American cities.

OHIO

Katharine Garford Thomas, who inadvertently started the recent librarian controversy, now settles it: "Evidently my statement which appeared in your columns recently was a bit confusing. May I state my point in a different way in the hope that it may be understood. Miss Eastman is directing the largest library in the country which has a woman at its head.

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