

# The Saturday Review

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### Pérez de Ayala's Modern Don Juan

**TIGER JUAN.** By Ramón Pérez de Ayala.  
Translated by Walter Starkie. New  
York: The Macmillan Company. 1933.  
\$2.

Reviewed by ERNEST BOYD

IT is a long time ago since I began, in these columns and elsewhere, to urge upon American readers the claims of Pérez de Ayala—thirteen years, to be precise. In the meantime his country has become a republic, and he its ambassador at the Court of Saint James, but only three of the eighteen volumes of his collected works have appeared in English. The first was the three "poetic novels," "Prometheus: The Fall of the House of Limon: Sunday Sunlight," which was beautifully translated in 1920. The second, "The Fox's Paw," followed in 1924, and now, from the other side of the Atlantic, comes an excellent version by Walter Starkie of Trinity College, Dublin, of the novel in two parts which was published in Madrid seven years ago under the title of *Tigre Juan* and *El Curandero de su Honra*. As I have constantly pointed out, America rarely gets any credit for the pioneering work done in this country by translators and commentators on foreign literature. Dr. Starkie's biographical and critical note ignores his predecessors in this field and is written apparently under the impression that nothing by Pérez de Ayala has been presented in English before.

As in most of the author's novels, the plot in this case is not the thing. Its theme is the eternal theme of Spanish drama from Calderón to the present day: woman's honor, in the primitive and medieval concept of complete and absolute submission to her legal lord and master. It is an essentially Latin and Mediterranean concept, and one which seems as curious to the Northern mind as the chastity belts in the Cluny Museum. Juan Guerra Madrigal, nicknamed Tiger Juan because of his supposed ferocity, is a misogynist in the grand tradition; he killed his wife on a false suspicion of her infidelity. In the little village of Pilares, where he plies his trade as a herb-doctor, scrivener and quack-of-all-trades, his life is devoted to his adopted son, Colás, the local Don Juan, Vespasiano, and a widow lady who worships him in silence. Despite Tiger Juan's lessons in misogyny, Colás falls in love, but is respected, whereupon he joins the army and goes abroad. Tiger Juan's hatred for women is increased a thousandfold, as embodying, as Don Juan, the revenge of the male for the wiles of wicked women. But the women are still too clever for him. Herminia's mother marries her to Tiger Juan, who thus finds himself accepted where Colás failed. It is true, she elopes with another man, but returns repentant to Tiger Juan, whose plans to murder her are frustrated by the discovery that he is about to become a father. Colás married another girl, and the story ends in the discomfiture of Don Juan, in the person of Vespasiano, and the triumph of natural affection and fidelity between husband and wife.

Pérez de Ayala, as is evident, makes no effort to hold the reader by a mere story. Analysis and observation revealing the heart and kernel of Castilian Spain are of the essence of his work. His characters, for all the external realism and quaint humor of their description, hold one by their

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FLOYD DELL'S GREENWICH VILLAGE  
Woodcut by Eli Jacobi

### Burke and the Present Order

BY PADRAIC COLUM

THE mind of Edmund Burke is like a great house magnificently and completely furnished, but furnished at the instance of a single inmate. Everything is there that that particular inmate has need of, but if anything else is there it is not shown. The idea of order—it is that which occupies as a single inmate his capacious and coherent mind. "Good order is the foundation of all good things," he says in his "Reflections on the French Revolution," and what he says there as a copy-book maxim he has been saying all his articulate life. That he had a single idea and not a congress of ideas is nothing to complain about: that he held that idea with fervor and illustrated it with persuasiveness, power, and skill is what matters to us. "He gave to a party what was meant for mankind"—we all remember Goldsmith's pithy characterization of Burke. It is true as far as it goes—that is as far as it was intended to go in a squib.

#### In This Music

By JAMES RALSTON CALDWELL

S WAY now this branch,  
And let the clusters fall,  
And let fall gently down  
The white drops upon our fever.

In this music,  
This sweet troubling of air  
Is the ancient healing.

(Lento, lento)

No other spell,  
No magic that men make  
Not the overweening word,  
Nor the brave and plausible image  
So flouts the Demon.

Only the early piercer of reeds,  
And he who first drew taut the sinew  
across the shell's throat  
Wore no red and special mark.  
Oh, I believe the word-smith and the  
graver  
Had traffic, somewhat, with the Shadow.

(Sempre dolce)

But the undulations of this tremulous  
bough,  
The drops falling,  
The stirred petals,  
Bear no false witness.

But Goldsmith would have known that what was meant for mankind comes to mankind sooner or later. Burke's statements are our possession although we have no interest in the party that had his allegiance when he made them. Those speeches and dissertations we can read for the splendidly sustained argument that always tends to some humane conclusion, for their dramatic force that triumphs over statistics even, for the strong feeling that is in them, for the sense of words pronounced and heard that comes through them. Burke being an orator was necessarily a good deal of an actor and a dramatist. This friend of Garrick's, this lover of Shakespeare was more of a dramatist in his utterance than the other orators of his time. He labored to improve one dramatic element in his utterance—he worked to come closer and closer to a living speech. Cicero was his master, of course. But what he singled out for praise was that element in Cicero's work which made his utterance "like good conversation." He did not know the Greek dramatists, but he wanted to compose like those dramatic writers who got their effects through the building up of forcible speech—the writers of the Latin comedy, Plautus and Terence. As I read passages of Burke now I think of a chorus in a Greek play. . . . Momentous events are being decided and a chorus of old men are outside the statehouse. The leader speaks and his utterance is grave and measured.—

Not Peace through the medium of War: not Peace to be hunted through the labyrinth of intricate and endless negotiations; not Peace to arise out of universal discord, fomented from principle, in all parts of the empire. . . . It is simple Peace; sought in its natural course, and in its ordinary haunts—it is Peace sought in the spirit of Peace, and laid in principles purely pacific.

The Queen of France had been for him a symbol of order in Europe. Now when that order is falling to pieces he gives vent to an utterance that is more significant for us if we think of it as arising from a mythical and not an historical event—as if it were part of a chorus from some such play as "The Persians."

Oh, what a revolution! and what a heart have I to contemplate without emotion that elevation and that fall! Little did I dream when she added titles

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### Moon-Calf Grows Up

**HOMECOMING.** An Autobiography. By  
Floyd Dell. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1933. \$3.

Reviewed by BEN RAY REDMAN

THERE are various reasons that a man may advance to himself for writing his autobiography. He may argue that he is so famous, and so generally an object of interest and speculation, that he owes the world an account of himself; or that his life has been lived in positions of privilege where, in the usual phrase, he has known everyone worth knowing; or that he has been a devil of a fellow, like Cellini and Casanova, and is determined that everyone shall hear of it; or he may believe, like John Stuart Mill, that his life story communicates a utilitarian message; or he may seek, like Wagner, to justify himself in the eyes of the world; or, like Rousseau, at once to justify himself and rid himself of the burdens of introspection; or, to make an end, he may call upon any one of numerous other reasons, including reliance upon the anonymous writer who has said that biography (which includes autobiography) has no other aim than its own perfection,— "It strives neither to convert nor convince. Its one and indivisible purpose is to achieve in words the portrait of man or woman."

Floyd Dell, who is most modest in his reasons for committing autobiography, satisfies at least in part the requirements of the anonymous writer. If there is no excuse for using the word "perfection" in connection with "Homecoming," it is nevertheless certain that in this book he has achieved the portrait of a man. Once before, in "Moon-Calf," he managed to get much of this portrait on paper, giving his sitter the imaginary name of Felix Fay. To paint himself frankly under his own name, as he has now, must have been harder; for, however appealing Felix-Floyd may be in certain aspects of his character and career, he verges on the ludicrous in others. But Mr. Dell has succeeded in looking himself in the eye, and has reported his findings with commend—

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### This Week

CRY HAVOC!

By BEVERLEY NICHOLS

Reviewed by Lawrence Dennis

THE BOOK OF TALBOT

By VIOLET CLIFTON

Reviewed by William Rose Benét

VIPER'S TANGLE

By FRANÇOIS MAURIAU

Reviewed by Theodore Purdy, Jr.

THE DELICATE FIRE

By NAOMI MITCHISON

Reviewed by Henry Seidel Canby

SONGS OF THE BOOKMEN

By LEE ANDREW WEBER

PETER ABELARD

By HELEN WADDELL

Reviewed by Ernest Sutherland Bates

WORLD REVOLUTION AND THE U. S. S. R.

By MICHAEL T. FLORINSKY

Reviewed by Fabian Franklin

MANDARIN AND MATHEMATICS

By CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

### Next Week or Later

HITLER'S "MY BATTLE"

Reviewed by Matthew Josephson

## Burke and the Present Order

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of veneration to those of enthusiastic, distant, respectful love, that she should ever be obliged to carry the sharp antidote against disgrace concealed in that bosom; little did I dream that I should have lived to see such disasters fallen upon her in a nation of gallant men, in a nation of men of honor, and of cavaliers. I thought ten thousand swords would have leaped from their scabbards to avenge even a look that threatened her with insult. But the age of chivalry is gone. That of sophisters, economists, and calculators has succeeded, and the glory of Europe is extinguished for ever. Never, never more shall we behold that generous loyalty to rank and sex, that proud submission, that dignified obedience, that subordination of the heart which kept alive, even in servitude itself, the spirit of an exalted freedom. The unbought grace of life, the cheap defence of nations, the nurse of manly sentiment and heroic enterprise is gone! It is gone, that sensibility of principle, that chastity of honor, which felt a stain like a wound, which inspired courage whilst it mitigated ferocity, which ennobled whatever it touched, and under which vice itself lost half its evil, by losing all its grossness.

Goldsmith was in France in the same period as Burke was there. He saw game running tame in the environs of Paris, and he knew this for a sign, not of social security but of social decay. Burke would not have noticed the hares and partridges, and if he had, he would not have come to any conclusion about their enlargement. Carlyle, contemplating the completed revolution whose beginning and middle aroused such abhorrence in Burke cried: "For Nature though everywhere green is built on dread foundations, and Pan to whose music the nymphs dance has a cry in him . . . that can drive all men distracted." Burke never looked for these dread foundations and never listened for that distracting cry. He had wisdom without shrewdness, but he had wisdom; he had vision without variety, but he had vision. He thought of the state as an organism whose future could only be in terms of its past. If that organism suffered violence, if it had to strive drastically against evils that threatened it, it was in danger of dissolution. Order to Burke meant the possibility of growth through gradual change; it was a living order and not a level of changelessness such as Castlereagh or Metternich stood for.—

By a constitutional policy, working after the pattern of nature, we receive,



A CARICATURE OF EDMUND BURKE

we hold, we transmit our government and our privileges, in the same manner in which we enjoy and transmit our property and our lives. The institutions of policy, the goods of fortune, the gifts of providence, are handed down to us, and from us, in the same course and order. Our political system is placed in a just correspondence and symmetry with the order of the world, and with the mode of existence decreed to a permanent body composed of transitory parts; wherein, by the disposition of a stupendous wisdom, moulding together the great mysterious incorporation of the human race, the whole, at one time, is never old, or middle-aged, or young, but, in a condition of unchangeable constancy, moves on through the varied tenor of perpetual decay, fall, renovation, and progression. Thus, by preserving the method of nature in the conduct of the state, in what we improve, we are never wholly new; in what we retain, we are never wholly obsolete.

Such an order would not be unchanging. "A state without the means of change is without the means of conservation."

The propertyless communist state with its deliberate breach with the past, could he have foreseen it, would have appalled Burke. But only a little less horrifying to him would have been the fascist state. It is true that such a state preserves — indeed glorifies—a national memory, but it stands for a concentration of power, functioning through one and not through several naturally developed and connected organs. The state's activity should be a harmony of effects made by different parts. In that troubled testament of his, "Reflections on the French Revolution" (from which the previous passage has been quoted), he told his correspondent that in their old-time states the French

possessed that variety of parts corresponding with the various descriptions of which your community was happily composed; you had all that combination and all that opposition of interests, you had that action and counter-action, which, in the natural and political world, from the reciprocal struggle of discordant powers, draws out the harmony of the universe. These opposed and conflicting interests, which you considered as so great a blemish in your old and in our present constitution, interpose a voluntary check to all precipitate resolutions . . . Through the diversity of members and interests, general liberty had as many securities as there were separate views in the several orders, whilst by pressing down the whole by the weight of a real monarchy, the separate parts would have been prevented from warping, and starting from their allotted places.

Holding the idea of a living, tissue growth, revolution was abhorrent to him. And the French revolution was doubly abhorrent because its promoters wanted to mold society upon an abstraction—The Rights of Man. Doctrinaires and their abstract social conceptions were hated by him, for he could not tolerate the idea of society being resolved into "the organic *moleculæ* of a disbanded people." Today, when the men of dialectic bear down upon us, we should remind ourselves of Burke's counter-statements—perhaps of this one which is also given in "Reflections on the French Revolution":

These metaphysical rights entering into common life, like rays of light which pierce into a dense medium, are, by the laws of nature, refracted from the straight line. Indeed in the gross and complicated mass of human passions and concerns, the primitive rights of men undergo such a variety of refractions and reflections, that it becomes absurd to talk of them as if they continued in the simplicity of their original direction. The nature of man is intricate; the objects of society are of the greatest possible complexity, and therefore no simple disposition or direction of power can be suitable either to man's nature, or to the quality of his affairs.

Revolutions were unnecessary evils, but Burke was attached to a party that promoted a revolution—the Revolution of English history—and whose lease of power came from that operation. That revolution was only a very little revolution, he explains—it was, in fact, a restoration. Burke, when he deals with the origins of the Whig party, reminds one of Boccaccio's story of the Jew converted to Catholicism: he announces his intention of visiting Rome; he will certainly revert, his converter believes, when he has a near view of the higher churchmen. But Salomon is confirmed in his faith; only a church founded for eternity, he concludes, could survive the self-indulgence of those who were in its highest positions. And only a party in whom was deposited the proper understanding of British constitutionalism

could have got rid of the second James and brought in William and Mary without any breach of the constitution. The Revolution was justified because the Whigs carried it through, and the Whigs were justified because they carried it through with hardly a strain on the constitution.

As he examines the acts of the promoters of the revolution his faith in a developing constitution waxes stronger. He becomes so enthusiastic that for once he is indiscriminating in the use of an adjective. "That immortal law!" he exclaims as he reads over the Declaration of Right, paying homage to those law-givers whose "penetrating style has engraved in our ordinances and in our hearts, the



THE HOUSE OF COMMONS IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

words and spirit of that immortal law." No writer ever used adjectives less wildly than Burke; to attend to his sentences is to get to understand how meaningful an adjective can be. But when he becomes, as in this instance, an apologist, he lapses into the enthusiasm of any doctrinaire.

It marks him of a period as does his reference to the man of none or of little property. I need not quote that inconceivable sentence of his which made him a fair mark for the defenders of the French Revolution—that sentence in which hope in a better world is offered as a consolation prize to those who have failed to acquire property in this. But I shall have to quote a sentence that shows how the man of little or no property was looked on by this really liberal political philosopher.

You would have had [he says to the French] a free constitution; a potent monarchy; a disciplined army; a reformed and venerated clergy; a mitigated but spirited nobility to lead your virtue, not to overlay it; you would have had a liberal order of commons to emulate and recruit that nobility; you would have had a protected, satisfied, laborious, and obedient people, taught to seek and recognize the happiness that is to be found by virtue in all conditions; in which consists the true moral equality of mankind, and not in that monstrous fiction, which by inspiring false ideas and vain expectations into men destined to travel in the obscure walks of laborious life, serves only to aggravate and embitter that real inequality which it never can remove.

This was written, we must remember, before the United States and Republican France had put the democratic state into action. Burke, one supposes, thought that in the developing society which he envisaged the classes "destined to travel in the obscure walks of laborious life" would have their condition constantly improved. Development for him could not be at the pace that it is for us; our dynamic society could not be conceived of by a man who, gaining inch by inch his position by closely knit argument, made speeches to Parliament lasting five hours.

Well, then, what has Burke to offer our metropolitan, industrial, hearthless society as a philosophy of adjustment and progress? Something surely, inasmuch as all visions of society held fervently by men of disciplined genius have something for us. Burke, I think, has more to offer us than most of these philosophers. A society fully conscious of its past, which functions, not through one but through several organs, and which maintains a balance of powers within itself,—that is not an unworthy nor an unworkable idea of society. And at present, when abstractions and revolutions in the name of abstractions are the order of the day, it is well to think on this vision of a flesh and blood society that has progenitors and posterity and to hold to the humanity of it as against "the organic *moleculæ* of a disbanded people" which is being offered us by so many able and earnest people today.

The last words in the "Reflections on the French Revolution" are such as the leader of the chorus of old men might use when he recognized the end of the order to which his whole being was bound; they have a noble humility and they rise to the dignity of prophecy.

I have told you candidly my sentiments. I think they are not likely to alter yours. I do not know that they ought. You are young; you cannot guide, but you must follow the fortune of your country. But hereafter they may be of some use to you, in some future form which your commonwealth may take. In the present it can hardly remain; but before its final settlement it may be obliged to pass, as one of our poets says, "through great varieties of untried being," and in all its transmigrations to be purified by fire and blood.

Padraic Colum, poet, dramatist, and essayist, is an Irishman by birth though an American by residence. He was formerly editor of the Irish Review, and was a founder of the Irish National Theatre. He is the author of a large number of books.

## Beverley Nichols's Pacifist Manifesto

CRY HAVOC! By Beverley Nichols. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1933.

Reviewed by LAWRENCE DENNIS

THIS book is a preachment against war delivered in the form of a letter from Beverley Nichols to H. G. Wells. Its effectiveness will depend on the responsiveness of the reader to good journalism. Its effect will be to strengthen the feeling in those who already have it that war is a terrible business and that there ought to be a law agin it. As most Englishmen and Americans are conditioned to a high degree of responsiveness to good journalism and as they also have the feeling about war just mentioned, this book should have a large and responsive public and prove effective in raising the warmth of anti-war feeling several degrees. Some people, including Mr. Nichols, no doubt think that the intensification of this feeling will contribute to the ultimate elimination of war. I don't.

Sentences like the following are fairly typical of the profundity of Mr. Nichols's thought:

I think that one of the greatest services any millionaire could render to mankind would be the offer of a substantial prize to any man who invented a slogan that would finally drive this cheating word war out of currency of decent contemporary language.

We had better plunge straight into the heart of the problem. At the heart of the problem as I see it is the armaments industry.

The armaments industry is a personal devil on which Mr. Nichols concentrates a withering fire. He proves it guilty of doing what every other industry does, namely, trying to promote business or enlarge its market. The conclusions Mr. Nichols draws from this characteristic of the armaments industry are as logical as the conclusion that Armour & Company and the Childs Restaurant Company are important factors in creating a human need of, and craving for, food. The hackneyed horrors of war, past and future, are put through their paces like the bloodhounds in the old-fashioned stock company presentation of "Uncle Tom's Cabin." Those who can gnash their teeth at Simon Legree or weep over East Lynne will be moved. Pacifism needs a few writers with the insight and subtlety of a Chekhov or Proust. Tolstoy was a rare and happy example of a pacifist who could write literature which incidentally made out a case against war.

In the chapter on the City of Hope, Geneva, giving Mr. Nichols's impressions of a session of the League and his impassioned plea for peace through international coöperation, we not only have some excellent journalism but material for a psycho-analysis of a typical and significant young English intellectual of the pacifist persuasion. He remarks:

There is too much eating and drinking and too little breathing at Geneva. . . . But even the shortest sojourn at a disarmament conference makes one feel that the world will never know peace until it is run by vegetarians and until its business is conducted in the open air.