

## The Saturday Review of LITERATURE

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### Warning to Wantons

No, this is not addressed to those lappers-up of the salacious whose cups have been so abundantly filled by recent fiction. Such wantoning is trivial by comparison with the careless irresponsibility of the chaste but economically illiterate American reader. Browsing in the sports columns and the movie journals, reading articles in the magazines written for his supposed liking, not for his need, he can be upset by Mr. Wirt or any other loud cry because he has been too lazy to learn by careful reading what has been going on in the world and his country. The materials of knowledge are available—not simple materials, not consistent or harmonious opinions, but a mass of careful writing in which all experts agree on certain changes which have taken place in our once comfortable world and certain consequences sure to follow.

Wantonly neglecting these writings on the wall, our negligent readers are frightened by nonsense about a Stalin waiting on horseback (or in a Ford) somewhere around the corner. Much worse, they can only shout "plot" and "conspiracy" when someone reports that someone else heard another someone say that a change in our governmental system was impending. They do not know, because they have not read the books by those who have been trying to apply expert knowledge to our crisis, that no one in authority has shown any passionate desire to change the fundamentals of our political and economic system. They do not see, because they have been too careless to observe what has been happening, that the responsible leaders of our so-called revolution have been pulling backward, not forward, have been endeavoring to make only such readjustments of our political system as are demanded by the facts of a changed economic world of relatively self-contained states. They do not realize, because they have not read the reports by impartial students of trade and industry, that something vital has happened to the world of economics and politics since the war, and that change begets change. The very inconsistency of many of the measures adopted, the lack of a clear social philosophy might reassure them, if they had not been too careless in their reading to know that political action in the past year has followed, not preceded, the facts.

It is, of course, the old curse of America—distrust and neglect of the expert, still surviving from our pioneer days, when every man had to know a little about everything. Even twenty years ago one saw signs in every town, "practical mechanic," "practical wheelwright," "practical engineer." No one speaks of "practical engineers" today. Industry in its productive (but, alas, not in its distributive!) side has been given over entirely to the expert. Here as elsewhere experts do not always agree—on the design of an automobile engine or the plan of a line of production, but we do not seek a "practical" rule-of-thumb designer when the experts disagree. Not so in economics or politics. There the man who has studied and experimented is disqualified because he is not "practical." He knows too much to be right. Now experts can be wrong, espe-

cially in such perplexing circumstances as ours, and they can violently disagree, but this at least is their qualification, that they have tried to understand the meaning of harsh facts which the "practical" man either uses to his own limited advantage or denies. And the expert, the real expert, says of this present situation that the problem has already become not how to preserve, not how to destroy, but how to adapt our political system to an economically changed world. That the political system of our cities must somehow be changed before or after bankruptcy even the wanton reader now understands. That our representational system is breaking down under the pressure of organized minorities grabbing pensions and everything else in sight, he is perhaps just beginning to comprehend. But that change is essential if we are not to break with dangerous violence from the past of American democracy and the past of American capitalism, he does not know because he has wantonly neglected the experts who have been putting facts in books and articles which he has not read. Our wanton readers wait until someone frightens them and then bark up the wrong tree.



"THIS MORNING HE SAT BEHIND SINCLAIR LEWIS ALL THE WAY FROM BRONXVILLE TO GRAND CENTRAL."

## Letters to the Editor: *Carrying Coals to Manchester; A Librarian on Book-Making*

### Is Adam Smith Dead?

SIR:—In his article "Who Killed Adam Smith?" Mr. John Chamberlain informs us that all of the "leading ideas" of the free-trade doctrine that Adam Smith promulgated "were shaped by the matrix of the relatively tiny island off the northwest coast of Europe which happened to possess iron and coal in close proximity in the ground, and which chanced to have the inventive genius to harness steam and to provide the first effective industrial machines."

An old-fashioned logician might feel inclined to ask for some proof that this was actually the origin of Adam Smith's economic philosophy, even if it were true that conditions in Great Britain, at the time when "The Wealth of Nations" was being composed, were such as Mr. Chamberlain indicates; for it is at least conceivable that some genuine thinking went into the matter in addition to that unconscious cerebration which was "shaped by the matrix" of Britain's coal and iron.

But it happens to be unnecessary to fall back upon any canons of logic in order to controvert the assertion. Adam Smith says very little about coal, but that little is sufficient to dispose of the question. The only thing in "The Wealth of Nations" that relates to the production of coal is a passage occupying a page or two (Book 2, Chapter XI) in which we are told such things as this: "Coals are a less agreeable fuel than wood; they are said, too, to be less wholesome. . . . Whatever may be the price of wood, if that of coals is such that the expense of a coal-fire is nearly equal to that of a wood one, we may be assured that at that place, and in those circumstances, the price of coals is as high as it can be."

There is not the slightest indication that Adam Smith was aware of the use of coal for anything but the heating of houses; a circumstance which is perhaps sufficiently accounted for by the fact that in 1776 coal had hardly begun to be used either in the production of iron or for any other industrial purpose. And one looks in vain for any mention of steam-power, or of any of the "effective industrial machines" which ushered in the industrial revolution; but this is hardly surprising, inasmuch as, when "The Wealth of Nations" appeared, Watt's steam-engine had barely come into use, the spinning-jenny was in its infancy, and the invention of

the power-loom was still in the womb of futurity. Since, moreover, Adam Smith had spent about ten years in the preparation of his great work, and had expounded many of its ideas in his lectures ten years earlier still, it is somewhat difficult to attribute his doctrines to the impress stamped upon his brain by Britain's coal and iron and steam-engines and power machinery.

FABIAN FRANKLIN.

New York City.

### More Marginal Notes

SIR:—The inner margins of the pages in a well-printed biography dated 1869 measure three, the outer margins, three and one-half centimeters. The figures for novels chosen at random among the crops of later years are as follows:

1905:	Inner margin 2,	outer 3 cm.
1911:	" " 2,	" 2 1/4 "
1927:	" " 1 3/8,	" 2 1/2 "
1929:	" " 1 1/4,	" 2 "
1933:	" " 1 3/8,	" 2 "
1933:	" " 1 1/2,	" 3 "
1933:	" " 1,	" 1 1/2 "

Permit me to suggest to makers of books that this tendency to reduce the inner margin is anything but advantageous. It accounts for much breaking of bindings and makes it almost impossible for libraries to rebind with any hope of avoiding to shave the inner edges of the printed matter. There is an excuse for it in English shilling editions, but in the average two or three dollar book printed on thick stock, with lavish outer margins and relatively small page-forms the visible inner margins should be more generous than one half inch or little more. Moving the page-forms one or two ems to the right would improve the general impression of many books, make them more easily readable and give them a longer life in libraries.

I know all that can be said about examples in classical printing. Some single-column incunabula are as bad as some modern books, with regard to their inner margins. A thin book on thin paper, or a small book lightly bound, is a different problem, but the average book should have inner margins that admit folding of the sheets and leave space for the printed page to form a plane surface when the book is held open.

J. CHRISTIAN BAY.

The John Crerar Library,  
Chicago, Ill.

### Half of Mencken

SIR:—I was amused and interested to see your picture of H. L. Mencken and Clarence Darrow gazing with rapt attention at Mencken's picture of a brewery. I am reminded of a rhyme of my childhood:

"I have no pain, dear mother, now;  
But, O, I feel so dry!  
Connect me to a brewery  
And let me sup it dry!"

Seems to me that Mencken's brewery has long since gone dry and that even when he was imbibing most freely his stuff was somewhat frothy. Ye gods, two such celebrities gazing at some firm's brewery picture!

It was said of the late Lord Rosebery that when he was at his best he was "half Scotch and half soda" but I am moved to ask how we shall classify one half of Mencken or Darrow?

HARRY TAYLOR.

Pittsfield, N. H.

### Apologies to Herrick

SIR:—Not since the days of "Pegasus Perplexing" have I found such enjoyment as Elizabeth Kingsley's double-crostics afford. The arrival of *The Saturday Review* is more of an event than ever.

Knowing no peace of mind until the last square is filled, I am moved to say to "puzzle fans," with apologies to Robert Herrick:

Ye may grumble, groan, revile  
And may even swear awhile,  
But the crostics must be done,  
Night, ye know, is coming on.  
Then, ah then, no moment's grace  
Till the letters come in place!

OLIVE G. RUNNER.

Hartford, Conn.

### Thanks!

SIR:—Your first "Double-Crostic" was a cinch, your second is much tougher, but I have no complaint of ease or difficulty to make. What riles me is the triumphant exclamation mark after ". . . up and down the letters mean nothing!" If the letters up and down had a meaning your punctuation would not be so funny. What an accomplishment! The letters mean nothing! Congratulations!

MARCUS GOLDMAN!

New York City!

### Lust

SIR:—Bluish stamps in curly sheets . . . Yellow stamps in rows and pleats . . . Special stamps . . . and aeroplane! I am growing more insane Day by day with secret lust. Sheets and sheets of stamps I must Have if ever I'm to be Linked with immortality. O . . . you editors who say,

"Send your stuff out every day;  
Never mind a slight depression.  
Keep on mailing your Expression."  
Which one of you can I vamp  
With no stamp . . . stamp . . . stamp . . . stamp. . .

DOROTHY MARIE DAVIS.

Pasadena, Cal.

### The Saturday Review recommends

**This List of Current Books:**

WHATEVER GOES UP. By GEORGE C. TYLER in collaboration with J. C. FURNAS. (Bobbs-Merrill). Lively memoirs of a theatrical manager.

DR. MARTINO AND OTHER STORIES. By WILLIAM FAULKNER. (Smith & Haas). Fourteen short stories.

IN ALL COUNTRIES. By JOHN DOS PASSOS. (Harcourt, Brace). Impressions of various countries.

**This Less Recent Book:**

AS THE EARTH TURNS. By GLADYS HASTY CARROLL. (Macmillan). A novel of farm life from which a motion picture has just been made.



# Fourteen Faulkner Stories

DOCTOR MARTINO. By William Faulkner. New York: Harrison Smith & Robert Haas. 1934. \$2.50.

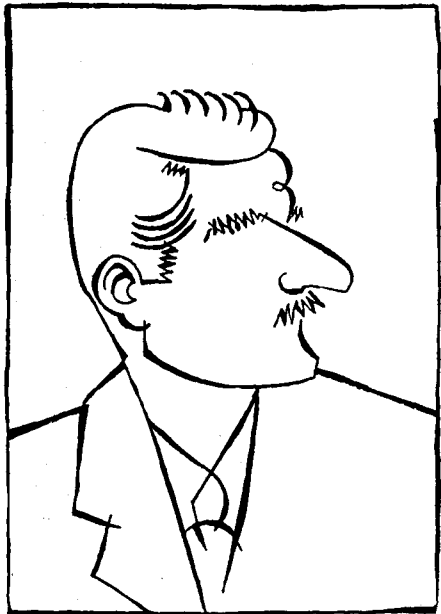
Reviewed by WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

IT hardly needs to be said that William Faulkner is a "natural-born" writer. His stories are never according to any formula, they evolve out of his own unusual temperament. Some are better than others, but none is a prostitution of his natural gifts. In this book he appears to have enlarged his range. His command of the eerie and sinister is well known, but it develops that he can also be sardonically humorous in a high degree. Perhaps this might have been foreseen in an early novel of his, and probably his worst, "Mosquitoes," in which he created a certain dumb-bell feminine character that I still remember. Of course, he can write with strong impact in his climaxes. You have only to read the last paragraph of "Leg," one of his very latest stories, in this volume.

I told him to find it and kill it. The dawn was cold; on these mornings the butt of the leg felt as though it were made of ice. I told him to. I told him.

That is writing, I am sure, that the late Stephen Crane would greatly have admired; and it is absolutely and meticulously right for this particular story.

There are fourteen short tales. *Harper's*, *Scribner's*, and *Story* have published the greater part of the collection. "Turnabout," which appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*, was made into a talking picture. Two stories appear for the first time in this volume. In general the merit of the stories seems to me unusual. "Elly" I had been impressed with before. "Mountain Victory" is my favorite of them all. "There Was a Queen" almost comes next except for its not quite carrying conviction to me in regard to the daughter-in-law's final and crucial action concerning



WILLIAM FAULKNER

Drawing by Arthur Hawkins, Jr.

the letters. This action "makes" the whole story; and still, I don't quite believe it. But the character of the old lady is superbly drawn. "Fox Hunt" and "The Hound" are both good stories, which I have read before in magazines. "Doctor Martino" was new to me, subtle and interesting, but somehow minor for Faulkner. In "Death Drag" he deals in grim humor that is most effective. "Honor" is another story that involves flying. So far as I can tell, his fliers are the real thing, they sound authentic. This flying is of peace-time, but "Turnabout," of course, was a story of the late war. It seemed to me, though an excellent yarn of its kind, to be, strangely enough, influenced somewhat by Kipling's method, even by Kipling's peculiar humor. "Wash" is fundamentally pure melodrama; "Beyond" an only half-successful treatment of the persistence—brief as it may be—of individuality after death; "Black Music" and "Leg" a couple of startling fantasies, the former possessing no inconsiderable humor. Altogether I found the collection

much above the average run of books of short stories, as it should be. There is plenty of variety.

It is a peculiar circumstance that what seem to me the best two stories in the book, "Mountain Victory" and "Elly," involve men suspected of being negroes. We do not know the truth about Paul de Montigny of Louisiana, save that white or colored, he became involved with a girl whose environment impelled her into a passionate and murderous neurosis. On the other hand, Saucier Weddel is a noble, not an ignoble character, descendant of a French emigré and a Choctaw woman. Which brings me back to "Mountain Victory," a story in which all the characters, including the negro servant, are extraordinarily well drawn. The infatuation of the young girl, the pathetic quixotism of the young brother; the hatred of the elder brother and the woodenness of the father; the loyalty and childishness and inebriety of the negro; and the impressive fineness of Weddel, the Southern officer; all these qualities emerge in the most natural and absorbing of narratives through an intensely sinister atmosphere, the creation of which is the prime gift of William Faulkner. He is unsparing in presenting the tragedies of life. One might say that the darker they are, the more he is drawn to them. But in this particular story, blind fury is confronted by several kinds of heroism; which does not prevent the brave characters from being blotted out, but is not that exclusive parade of various types of ignobility to which a good deal of Faulkner's former work has accustomed us. In the character of Wash Jones, in the story "Wash," we also have dumb fealty assuming proportions of the heroic in the role of avenger; though, as I have said before, this story seems to me rather a melodramatic "set-up."

I do not wish to wax sentimental in regard to so engrossing a story as "Mountain Victory." For it is the sort of Civil War tale that the late Ambrose Bierce, surely saturnine enough, would have respected. In closing, I see that I have neglected to comment on "Smoke," Faulkner's nearest approach to a detective story; on the whole well handled though somewhat amorphous.

Possibly the best of these narratives does not quite touch the best of the stories in "These Thirteen," Faulkner's former book of short flights. But that must remain a matter of opinion. What I am sure of is that this writer is genuinely credentialed, in the short story as in the novel. In the more compact medium he is doing some of the most powerful and original work that America can claim in our time.

## Horns of Death

(Continued from first page)

nature. And, it can never be forgotten, Belmonte was a revolutionist who transformed the whole character of his art. Before Belmonte,

the ring was considered to be divided into the territory of the bullfighter and that belonging to the bull. The man did not invade the territory of his foe. Now there is no trace of this. Man is the god of all the ground, he has dominion everywhere. Now one does not speak about the territory of the bull-fighter and of the bull. Belmonte swept all that away. The other matadors—they had to do as he did—many of them gave their lives.

Joselito was one of them.

Mr. Baerlein is, as I have said, discursive; while not quite rivalling Robert Burton or Laurence Sterne, he still follows in their wandering footsteps. And he is content to make many portions of his book no more than a jumble of anecdotes and quotations from other writers. The sense of form, which is ever present in the bullfight, without which a corrida would be nothing, is conspicuously absent from the pages of "Belmonte," as, indeed, it is absent from Hemingway's "Death in the Afternoon," considered as a whole. But Hemingway had a larger

mass of material to control than had Mr. Baerlein, and for the pioneer, persuasive work that he was doing his informal handling of his subject was doubtless best. As for Mr. Baerlein's technical descriptions, they lack the beautiful precision which makes Hemingway's so remarkable; that masterly translation of actions into words which succeeds in communicating to the reader something of the same emotion which the spectacle of the bullfight itself arouses in the spectator. The English author may be a more widely experienced and more profoundly in-



DRAWING BY ROBERTO DOMINGO  
From "Belmonte, the Matador"

formed aficionado than the American. I do not know about this. But I do know that the one is no match for the other as a writer about bullfighting. Ernest Hemingway, weaving verbal patterns as exquisite as any ever woven in air by the slow-moving muleta of Belmonte, "gives emotion" to an extent that is quite beyond the reach of Belmonte's English biographer.

Yet this Life, jumbled though it be, is a work for which those who read no Spanish may be grateful. In its own rambling fashion, with sympathy and understanding, and often with considerable charm, it tells the story of a great—perhaps the greatest—matador: tells it from the days of his boyhood, when he swam the Guadalquivir by night, and, stripped naked, using his shirt as a cape, faced fighting bulls; through the glorious years of his triumphs in all the plazas of the Spanish world; down to the present years of his retirement upon his estate of La Capitana, where he breeds bulls for other matadors to conquer.

There are many Anglo-Saxon readers who are incapable of understanding how a man who makes it his business to kill bulls can be venerated as a great artist; how the name of Belmonte can be spoken, by reasonable persons, in company with that of Cervantes and that of Goya. These readers will be merely irritated and baffled when they read the speech regarding bullfighting which Belmonte's biographer puts into the mouth of an imaginary ghostly Salamanca bull, treading the Elysian Fields:—

You know as well as I do that it is a tragic spectacle and not a sport. It is a dance as complicated as a ballet can be and it is composed in the immediate presence of the horns of death. I have been told on excellent authority that the *hora de verdad*, the moment of truth, when the slender, glittering figure bends over the horn and trusts in the sword, deflecting us with the muleta, I have been told by one in whom I have confidence that this is a moment of greater and more piercing emotion than can be found in any other spectacle.

Many will be baffled and irritated. But there are other Anglo-Saxons who will swear that the ghostly bull speaks truly. They have felt that piercing, that overwhelming, that all encompassing emotion; and they know that it can be evoked only by the spectacle in which Belmonte was a supreme performer, only by the art of which Belmonte was a great—perhaps the greatest—master. It is for them, and for those who may some day share their terrible and beautiful experience, that "Belmonte, The Matador" has been written.

## No Hiding Place

AN ALTAR IN THE FIELDS. By Ludwig Lewisohn. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1934. \$2.50.

Reviewed by LOUIS UNTERMEYER

MR. LEWISOHN'S latest novel is distinctly a problem novel, an examination of "the disillusion and futility that have brushed the lives of the post-war generations." It is a story of emotional dilemma and ineffectual escape—a defeat which may be summed up in the words of an old Negro spiritual:

I went to the rock to hide my face;  
The rock cried out, "No hiding place!"  
There's no hiding place down here."

It is not, for a change, a Jewish problem which Mr. Lewisohn propounds, although it is the Jew (Dr. Weyl) who, unable to solve the problem of his race, suggests the solution which gives this book its title as well as its finale. It is a general perplexity which prompts the author to ask some devastating questions—questions so profound that only a few of the answers seem satisfactory.

Rose Trezevant and Dick Belden are part of a circle of artists, critics, studio-talkers, and members of the *soi-disant* intelligentsia. He, son of a college president in the Middle West, writes reviews and short articles, supported by an income which permits him to talk about his novel without going to the trouble of writing it. She, a daughter of traditional Southern gentleness, is planning a future on the stage, though she has neither natural genius for the theatre nor the will to learn the more deliberate business of acting. The two young people talk, take walks, become lovers, drift into marriage.

They were, neither one of them, nor was anyone he knew, contented enough to bear hurt and agony; they had no sources whence to draw strength for the bearing. . . . They wanted to escape. Escape! But whither? To what?

They do not know. More talk leads to more frustration; frustration leads to Europe. There they evade, without ever escaping, themselves in more discussions, in attempts to "lead their own lives" and "develop their own personalities," in half-hearted, semi-intellectual "affairs." They continue to drift, closer and closer to the rocks. Just as shipwreck seems inevitable, they are saved by the counsel of Dr. Weyl, a kindly psychoanalyst, and they return to America, and, having inherited an additional twenty-odd thousand dollars, purchase a farm near the Housatonic River, where Rose prepares to bear her child, and where Dick, erecting an altar in the fields, makes his affirmations to the things that do not change.

It is not easy to say why the story fails to achieve its purpose. Mr. Lewisohn has never been more deeply concerned than he is here; many of the pages rise from earnestness to eloquence. Yet neither eloquence nor integrity save the book from being an unsuccessful composite. "An Altar in the Fields" is a joining, rather than a blend, of a philosophical study of current malaises and a novel about a group of characters who suffer from them. But the philosophy is familiar to the point of being stereotyped, and, in spite of the author's intentions, one cannot share the stress and suffering of Mr. Lewisohn's people. They seem unreal, too shadowy for scorn, and far too vague to serve as figures in an allegory. Their very unreality forces the author to invent an unreal solution. The book suggests that Mr. Lewisohn has not only discovered the current dilemma, but the way out of it. He offers, as purge and panacea, "the eternal verities," parenthood, the return to the soil, the tranquil joy of country labor, an altar in the fields. But Mr. Lewisohn's conclusion is as false a happy ending as the one which permitted the lovers to consummate their happiness by having the awkward obstacle of an interfering wife struck by lightning or a previous husband run down by a motor-car. One is extremely dubious when at the conclusion of Mr. Lewisohn's book, Dick Belden lifts rock upon rock into the semblance of a table and leans towards that altar for security. One waits for the rock to cry out, "No hiding place!"