

The Saturday Review

of LITERATURE

EDITED BY HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

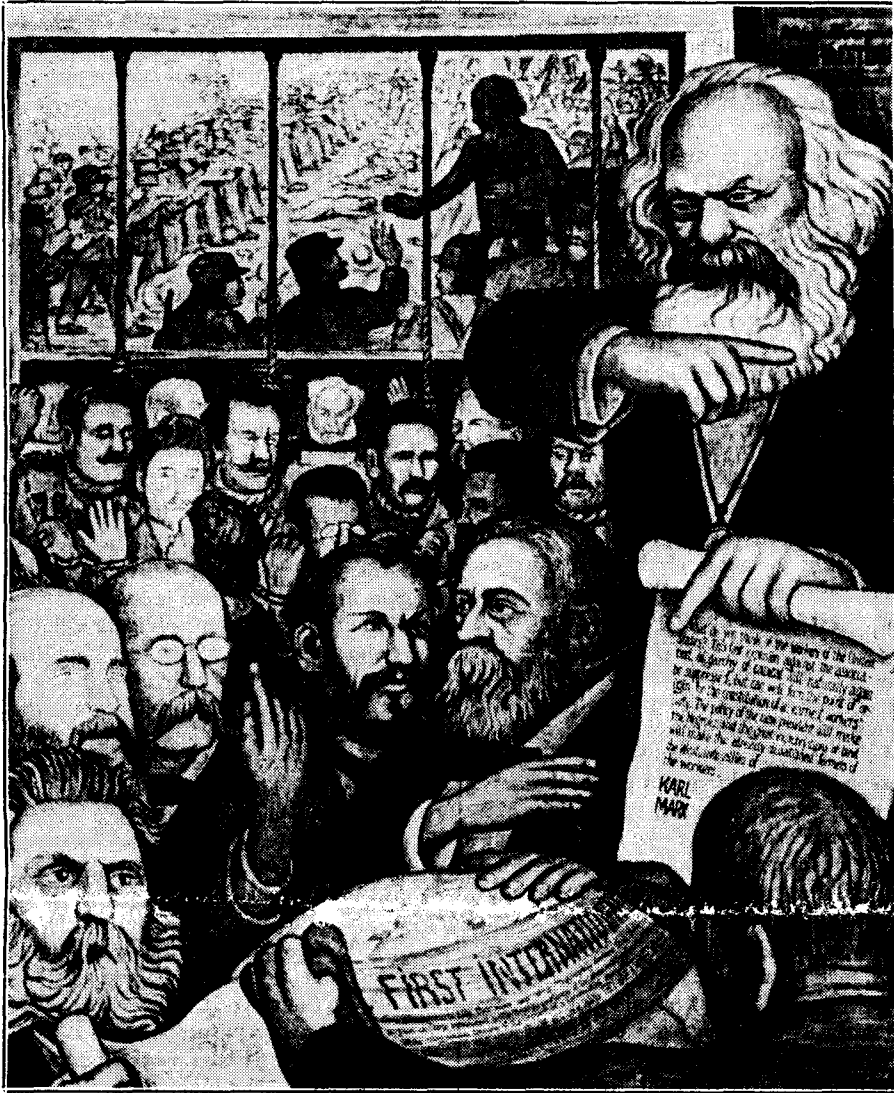
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KARL MARX IN A MURAL BY DIEGO RIVERA

One panel from the series of murals at the New Workers' School, New York, completed shortly before the destruction of Rivera's famous Lenin fresco at Rockefeller Center.

Allan Monkhouse Testifies on Russia

MOSCOW 1911-1933. By Allan Monkhouse. Boston: Little, Brown & Company. 1934. \$3.50.

Reviewed by R. H. BRUCE LOCKHART

THERE can be few people in the world today who have had the same opportunities of observing Russia at first hand as Allan Monkhouse. From the day on which he entered Russia as a young man in 1911 until his forced departure in April of last year after the famous Moscow trial of the English engineers, he has earned his living among Russians. He has seen Russia of Czarist days, Russia of the war, and Red Russia, and he has seen all these Russias through the eyes of an English engineer, whose life has been spent in practical work cheek by jowl with Russian workmen.

Such a man has standards of comparison which are unavailable to ninety-nine per cent of the post-war visitors to Russia. His testimony, if reliable and coherently expressed, should be, therefore, of considerable value.

Monkhouse is a reliable witness. I remember him well in those Moscow days from 1911 to 1918. He was a quiet, shrewd, unobtrusive young man who commended himself to his seniors as much by his expressive silence as by his intellectual ability. He belonged, in fact, to that type of young Englishman who for several generations has played an important part in the building up of industrial Russia. For, whatever Germany may have done in Russia just before the war and the United

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Happy Eccentricity

MR. THOMPSON IN THE ATTIC. By Anna Gordon Keown. New York: William Morrow & Co. 1934. \$2.50.

Reviewed by AMY LOVEMAN

TO us this book seems wholly delightful. Those who demand their fiction bustling with action, who like their novels peppered with sophisticated dialogue, who are impatient of the fanciful and regard mere description as padding may find it too little vigorous for their taste. But those who have rejoiced in a "Beloved Vagabond," a "Bishop's Wife," or a "Mr. Fortune's Maggot" will chortle in their glee on discovering in it a book of similar stripe. Nothing momentous happens in Miss Keown's tale, nothing more eventful than that for the brief span of three months an eccentric schoolteacher rejoices in the possession of an attic chamber in a boys' school, wins the affections of his pupils and the alternate jealousy and admiration of his fellow instructors, beguiles the headmaster into long evenings of conversation over his sherry, falls completely and ecstatically in love with the head's wife, and passes out of her life without so much as the single kiss he asks.

Simple and familiar material, surely, out of which to spin a yarn! But there is magic in its telling, so that a cricket game, or the relation in space of an elm tree to a stream, or the burial of Mrs. Maple's Elsie, a picnic, a tinker's encampment, or a mere classroom scene take on charm and import. Mr. Thompson was "no watertight schoolmaster" indeed, but a soul at once ingenuous and astute, with a habit of mind as direct as it was unconventional,

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The Poetry of Karl Marx

BY ARCHIBALD MACLEISH

WHEN the parties to a controversy begin to discuss each other it is usually safe to assume that the controversy is dead. The rule however is not of universal application. The red herring is a bird of ambiguous lineage which has been known to put on various shapes. Not the least common of which is personal affront.

It is therefore permissible to hope that the recent discussion of the role of the poet in our time may not be as defunct as the barrage of epithets would lead one to suppose—a hope which is all the more grateful because the discussion has thus far failed to reach a satisfying conclusion. It has—and for this the dialecticians deserve the praise—revived a journalistic interest in poetry which the prosperous twenties had done their best to kill. And it has produced, also, among the Marxians, a certain amount of skilful invective which even its victims must admire. But the real issue, either because the controversialists would not see it or because they could not, remains untouched.

Serious discussion has been pretty much confined to two heads of argument: the contention that propaganda is, or is not, art and the contention that only the poet who "soaks himself in the historic necessities of his epoch" can write good poetry. Of these the first is irrelevant to the actual issue and the second is only superficially pertinent.

The argument which opposes art to propaganda is merely no argument. There are no *a priori* rules about subject matter in verse and the man who contends that there are is either an academician or that equally unimportant American phenomenon, the revolutionary pedant. Anything which will make a work of art will make a work of art. It is just as silly to say that a poem can't be a poem if its subject is The Young Communists as it is to say that a poem can't be a poem unless its subject is The Young Communists. It is just as ridiculous to assert that the time and place of a poem must be here and now as it is to assert that the only proper subject for an epic is the rape of Troy. The fact is, as a glance at the (politically) left-wing magazines will immediately show, that revolutionary content has precisely nothing to do with poetry one way or the other. Where the writer is an honest workman and where he is deeply moved in his own person his revolutionary verses may be poems. Where the writer is a dishonest workman or where he is substituting for his own emotion the emotion of a Movement his revolutionary verses are never poems. But the same thing is true of a lady sonneteer writing about her Lost Loves. All that can intelligently be said of either is that there is no substitute for art—not even fervor. To criticize a writer because he does, or does not, write of the political issues of his day is to risk playing a ridiculous role before a posterity which may value the writing long after the issues have been for generations forgotten. A poem called "To Daffodils" and a book entitled "Leviathan" are cases decidedly in point.

The second contention on the other hand—the contention that only the poet who soaks himself in the historic necessities of his epoch can write good poetry

on any subject—is a proper matter of debate but one which proves ultimately to lead into a cul-de-sac. Even if the truth of the proposition is admitted over the protests of the students of English verse it still remains to inquire: What historic necessities and by whom determined? I, for one, am strongly inclined to believe that the contention may be truer of our time than it was of the time of Robert Herrick or William Blake or Shakespeare himself. But I am not willing to agree that the bath in which the contemporary poet is to soak is the bath in which I see certain of the proponents of this view actually soaking. To soak oneself in books, to soak oneself in dialectic, to soak oneself in theory, is still to soak oneself in books and dialectic and theory whether the books and the theories are those of a graduate school of English or those of a political revolution. And the results will be the same—pedantry, academicism, intellectualism, and very bad poetry: the kind of poetry precisely which the intellectuals, both collegiate and revolutionary, do now so frequently produce.

What the poet must soak himself in, if he is to take to soaking, is his own time and not theories about his time and particularly not theories about his time developed almost a hundred years before and in another country. Now the outstanding characteristic of our time is industrialism. Whether modern society is run from Wall Street or the Kremlin it is still first and foremost an industrial society—indeed its industrialism is if anything more emphatic in Russia than in the United States. But industrialism is not a theory. It is a condition. It is a fact. It is a highly technical mechanism of complicated and difficult controls which exists only in its operation, only as a thing in action. It is so far fundamental that if it should collapse all issues of capitalism and socialism and proletarianism would be swept away together in a common disaster which would reduce the question of the control of the instruments of production to the inanity of the Nestorian her-

This Week

QUEEN ELIZABETH

By J. E. NEALE

Reviewed by Wallace Notestein

TOO MANY BOATS

By CHARLES L. CLIFFORD

Reviewed by Ben Ray Redman

THE MAKING OF AMERICANS

By GERTRUDE STEIN

Reviewed by Francis Fergusson

THE WELL OF DAYS

By IVAN BUNIN

Reviewed by Elvina S. Adams

THE HOUR OF DECISION

By OSWALD SPENGLER

Reviewed by Fabian Franklin

THE FOLDER

By CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

WHAT EVERYBODY WANTS TO KNOW ABOUT MONEY

Edited by G. D. H. COLE

Reviewed by John Strachey

Next Week or Later

STEPHEN VINCENT BENÉT

By LEONARD BACON

esy. Only those, therefore, who understand industrialism as an existing, working, physical mechanism can lay any claim whatever to an understanding of our time. The rest, those who assume industrialism and debate the question merely of its control, are as infantile as children who assume that dinners appear upon tables as a matter of natural right and that the only question is who shall get the largest helping. And those whose sole knowledge of the contemporary world is a knowledge of its social injustice belong, for all the generosity of their indignation, to the same category. For it is not social injustice which is the peculiar characteristic of our time. It is social injustice bred by industrialism.

It follows that the man who really proposes to soak himself in his time will soak himself not in books but in industrialism as a reality, as a physical, existing fact.

role of the poet in our epoch quite untouched. The real question is not whether the poet should know and draw upon the existing world of his time but whether he should know and draw upon that world as an artist with an artist's single and arrogant demand of artistic significance or whether he should know and draw upon it with the ulterior and calculated interest of the champion of a cause. Briefly the real question is whether the poet should serve a cause or serve an art. It is a question which every man attempting to practice the art of poetry in this time must answer. And which he must answer with the certainty that he will choose one alternative or the other and cannot possibly choose both. There may be cakes in the political world which can be both kept and eaten. There are none in the world of art.

It cannot be too often repeated that this

before him. His is a labor which is at all times necessary, for without it that sense of human reality which is the poet's greatest accomplishment is lost. But it is a labor which is particularly necessary in times of uncertainty and doubt and intellectual confusion. No man who lived through the publication of "The Waste Land" will forget the crystallizing effect of that poem, the way in which it precipitated the cloudy confusion of an age, and made human and tragic what had before been impersonal and intellectual and for the most part unseen.

The importance, even the social importance, of the art of poetry will therefore hardly be challenged by any save the ignorant. But the truth to be driven home is not that the poet is important. The truth to be driven home is that the poet is important only so long as he acts as poet. The reason is the same as the reason which explains a similar limitation upon the importance of the scientist. The reports of the scientist upon the nature of the physical world are accepted as the bases for conclusions and the grounds for action for one reason only—because the scientist is disinterested. And the scientist is disinterested because his loyalty is to his science. He has no ulterior motive. He has not committed himself to certain extra-scientific views which condition all his findings. He has no preconceptions as to what he would like to find to be true. In the same way the intuitions of the poet are valid and may be accepted only because his loyalty is to his art, because his sole test of the acceptability of a word or a phrase or a poem is the test of his art and not the test of his politics or his social indignation. This is not to say that the true poet is without prejudice. He has of course the prejudices of his blood, his countryside, his education, if you will his "class." But the only demand to which he listens in the making of a poem, the only demand which, satisfied, will satisfy him that the poem is complete, is the demand which his art makes upon him. Where he

its validity is lost in the loss of the guarantee of his artistic disinterestedness. In the paintings of Cézanne every sensitive man recognizes the profound authority of the artist by whom the world is truthfully presented because the world, to him, is merely material for his art. In the work of George Grosz no man feels anything but the partisan and interested presentation of a skilled and passionate pleader.

These are the two alternatives of our time. All writers who hate the stupidity and insolence and inhumanity of the existing order must choose between them. But they must choose with the full and certain knowledge that the alternatives are actually alternatives: that it is impossible to be both Cézanne and Grosz. A few honest men have made the choice of partisanship with their eyes open and in full recognition of the meaning of their act. Unable themselves to live as poets in a house in which the drains were clogged they have generously elected to clear the drains for the next tenant. Their decision must be respected and admired. But they are few. Beside them are the scores of frightened and bewildered writers who, unaware of the meaning of their choice, aware only that the practice of an art is today lonely and difficult, have escaped into the security of a Movement and the support of an organized clique. And beyond are the crowds of intellectualists and critics who, having no artistic obligations and hence no choice to make, shout for blood at the ringside like fat Long Island brokers at a ten-round bout.

There remain certain individuals who believe that the first and inescapable obligation of the poet is his obligation to his art; who believe that the fact that the practice of his art is difficult in no way releases him from that obligation; who believe that the desertion of his art for any reason, even the noblest, even the most humane, is nevertheless desertion. Neither they nor any other honest writers will ignore the issues of their time. On the contrary they will know their time as well



And yet I know of no poetic champions of the historic necessity doctrine who have made the slightest attempt to do so. They have read Marx. They have soaked themselves in the rancid odor of capitalistic stupidity and greed. They have looked at, and romantically admired, and even romantically written about, a few esthetic-looking machines and tools. But they have no faintest idea how three hundred odd millions of pairs of shoes are actually made under any social system or how the food of a nation is actually distributed—actually, the visible, tangible, physical act—or by what organization of men and railroads and trucks and belts and book-entries the materials of a single automobile are assembled. And yet all these matters are of the very life of our time. They are the facts upon which theories must rest. And for the poet, who must always attack his world factually and physically, not abstractly, not in intellectual concepts, they are the one possible road to an understanding of the contemporary age. Those who refuse that road, who do not so much soak themselves in the actual liquor of their time as vaporize in its theories, must face the suspicion that their loyalties are less to the historic necessities of their generation than to the dogmas of their church.

It will be replied of course that this is not at all what the words "historic necessity" connote: that the words "historic necessity" refer to the natural laws of social evolution discovered by Karl Marx, the social trend, the direction of the time. But the only kind of contemporary history in which the poet, the artist, the essentially practical man who makes books and paintings and music, can possibly immerse himself to the advantage of himself or his art is the present history of the existing world. All the rest is *Zeit-Geist*, Spirit of the Age—and as Teutonic and romantic as "The Sorrows of Werther."

The fundamental point to be made, however, is that the theory of the historic necessity leaves the real question of the

issue and the issue of propaganda with which the Marxians attempt, for some reason, to confuse it are not at all the same. Propaganda is a question of the subject matter of particular poems. The question here at issue concerns the art itself, the lens through which the light should come. Ultimately and inescapably it is a question of the relative importance of the art of poetry and the cause to which that art would be deferred.

There are those who believe that the importance of the art of poetry, even from the social point of view which is now so generally imposed, is very great. The modern world, obviously, does not share that opinion. The modern world conceives of itself as depending upon its scientists for a knowledge of the external universe and upon its psychologists for a knowledge of the internal mind and upon itself for everything else of which it has need. But the modern world is deceived. Neither in our day nor at any earlier time has the world been able to depend upon itself for the essential understanding. A great part of our racial knowledge of our lives and our earth and our destiny upon that earth has come in all ages from the intuitive and emotional perceptions of great poets. The poet works with those dimensions of invisibility which exist at the opposite extreme from the microscopic dimensions which concern the scientist. He works with the over-obvious, the too-apparent, the phenomena which men cannot see because they are so close that vision blurs, the phenomena which approach the seeing eye so near that they become sometimes the seeing eye itself. It is for this reason that the true perceptions of the poet have such an overwhelming and instantaneous feel of truth. They require no demonstration because they were always true. They were merely never "seen" before. The poet, with the adjustment of a phrase, with the contrast of an image, with the rhythm of a line, has fixed a focus which all the talk and all the staring of the world had been unable to fix

all difficult facts with epithets (so that the word "Fascist" for example has become an answer to almost everything in our time) will find in this truth nothing but the old, stale doctrine of Art-for-Art's-sake. And the use of the phrase will somehow comfort them. The rest, however, will remark that the difference between a man who serves an art and the man who serves a cause is an actual difference. The servant of a cause accepts of necessity certain preconceptions as to the nature and meaning of life and the quality of the world. He desires his experience to prove to him that his cause is just and will be successful. He rejects anything in his experience which suggests to him that his cause is unjust and will fail. He is a special pleader. And as such his work loses poetic authority because the guarantee of

write of their time whatever the scene or subject of their work. They will, when they so incline, write propaganda if their propaganda satisfies the necessities under which, as poets, they must work. But they will admit no loyalty before the single loyalty they owe their art.

Time which survives the generations and the causes, time in which alone the work of art exists, will damn them or commend them at its leisure.

Archibald MacLeish has been true to the thesis of his article. He serves his poetry as an art, though as an Editor of *Fortune* he is profoundly concerned with the industrial manifestations of his day. He is the author of "Conquistador," which was awarded the Pulitzer Prize last year, and which is included in his latest volume, "Poems, 1924-1933."

Empire State Express

By MARGARET HAYES IRISH

COMRADE, have you observed life along the Hudson river? Or do you consider the railroad too capitalistic to ride on? And the Hudson's wide grandeur a trap and a bourgeois delusion? I maintain you can ride in a train and look out of the window With an esthete's eye, or a bourgeois eye, or the eye of a Marxian, Seeing on one side the pleasant, tree-sheltered rambling estates, The small, friendly homes and green spaces which you call middle-class; (And a clump of burnt-orange stalks in a leafless thicket). The smutty proletarian houses, the huddled shacks, The rickety two-family houses by the tracks where the negroes live With the poor-whites, sawing up wood in their barren yards Or laboring over washings. The cramped huts of campers, the farms Over across the river, and there again the estates; (With poplar trees in November, yellow candles against the dark).

Here are the workers splitting the Hudson rock with their picks, Lighting fuses to blast it, loading it on the flat-cars, Laying ties for the rails to straighten the roadbed; Negroes, Italians, Russians and men from Cayuga county, Hardy, intent, unaware of the brooding class-struggle, Eating their brown-paper lunches, their tin-box snacks, With a laugh and a fresh word for girls on the train passing; (And thousands of wild ducks rocking methodically on the waves); Brakemen uncoupling cars, and the men in the roundhouse at Rensselaer, The piles of coaldust and soot where workers' children are playing, (And beyond them the glint, the leaf-flame, the beauty undisciplined, classless.)

Queen Bess's Glorious Days

QUEEN ELIZABETH. By J. E. Neale. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1934. \$3.75.

Reviewed by WALLACE NOTESTEIN

THE greatness of Elizabeth has been an axiom of English history. It has not been unconnected with times and seasons. To the fierce Protestants of the seventeenth century, she was the symbol of England's defeat of Spain. It was the delight of Sir Edward Coke to count up the number of times the Spanish plotters had failed to poison her. The country gentlemen could not forgive the first Stuarts that they could furnish no victories; the fame of England from St. Crispin's Day to the day that Drake left off playing bowls had become part of their pride, and the failures of Cadiz and Rhé hurt them. Things had been otherwise under Elizabeth. To the Imperialists of the late nineteenth century, to the Froudes and Seeleys, to the Kiplings and Newbolts, Elizabeth and her gentlemen pirates were the sign of Britain rampant over lands and seas. Drake would quit the port of heaven, if necessary, to bring back the old glories. It was not necessary, for Joseph Chamberlain and Cecil Rhodes were in the old tradition. On the walls of art galleries and in public school songs the days of Elizabeth were remembered. J. R. Green in his prose poem of the island story gave a portrait of Elizabeth that became at once a classic and was rewritten into scores of textbooks. More than even Wellington or Marlborough, Elizabeth became the character around which gathered national pride.

Yet Britain won her proudest bays
In good Queen Bess's glorious days.

The wrongs the Queen did were forgotten, and her high, brave words and majestic bearing came to belong in the book of great memories.

The books about her are many and we need mention only a few of the shorter ones. Bishop Creighton's book, written a good while ago, is still one of the most judicious estimates. Beesly's little volume is one of the liveliest accounts. Katherine Anthony's recent book was put together from rather obvious sources but with facility. Milton Waldman's work is an honest book that shows some insight and not a little interpretation. Neale's book is welcome because it is not only as good reading as any of them, but it adds to our understanding of the Queen. It is probable that a better book will not be written till the muniment rooms of English country houses have been ransacked and the results published. Even then we may have to wait for a scholar who can write as well as Neale. His book is of course that of a scholar, although without footnotes or the impedimenta of the scholar. Professor Neale, who is the successor of Pollard at University College, London, has spent his life in a close examination of Elizabethan sources, directing his attention mainly to the parliaments of the time. He has become increasingly interested in Elizabeth herself and has turned aside from parliaments for three years to put down his findings about the Queen.

Save for Pollard, in England, and Conyers Read, in America, there is no one who knows more about the reign of Elizabeth. Neale knows not only the politics and religion but the life and spirit of the age, knows it from manuscripts and even from the inscriptions in parish churches. It is not only a question of knowing. He has searched out every conceivable printed source and all the manuscripts available. It is amazing how many details hitherto overlooked, how many pat and pertinent quotations have been used in this volume. New speeches by Elizabeth (without any word that they are new) and new remarks about her by those around her have been dug up. What is more, all the mass of rumor and gossip about the woman naturally most hated in Europe, has been sifted through and given its weight, usually very little. Here is where Neale's experience with the period counts. It is

not only experience and training; he has what Western Reserve folk call gumption. He does not decide, as Waldman, that Elizabeth was the mistress of Leicester; he is not taken in by the gossip that Elizabeth was incapable of sex relations. This is the way in which he treats that overworked story: "Ben Jonson knew this surmise and added a few lewd details to give it an air of reality, when he talked and drank with Drummond of Hawthornden, his story being like the occasion quite irresponsible." He accepts, one observes, the authenticity of the Casket letters and does not lose his conscience in gazing upon the fair queen of the north.

His treatment of the Alençon courtship is an admirable illustration of common sense. Beesly has told us all the ups and downs of that prolonged and undignified affair, and leaves the reader with the impression that Elizabeth was only playing a game, that and nothing more. Not so Neale. Elizabeth had been playing a game. But there was more to it than that.

Elizabeth had indeed exploited Alençon without scruple, but this ugly yet most congenial and constant of suitors had a real place in her affections. He had been her last hope of children. She wept for herself.

But this book is more than honest history, it is an interesting narrative well told, and hard to turn away from. It

necessity and authority. I well remember when by violent courses at any time he had got his will, he would ask me, "Now Sir, whose principles be true" and I would again say to him: "My Lord these courses be like to hot waters, they will help at a pang; but if you use them, you shall spoil your stomach, and you shall be fain still to make them stronger and stronger, and yet in the end they will lose their operation."

Neale takes that contemporary information and comment and carries it through his account, using possibly some Strachey technique of repetition of theme. But he does explain the Essex story as it has not been explained before: he comes nearer to what seems likely to be the truth.

Yet Neale for all his scholarship and shrewd interpretation seems to me not to have escaped that nationalistic outlook, so common to those who write about Elizabeth. It is impossible not to see that the Dutch were rather dishonest and the English on the whole pretty fine fellows, with a high mission and the goddess of Fortune attendant. His nationalism is most evident in his attitude towards Elizabeth. He has been kind to the heroine. He has let her off easily in the case of William Davison, who, acting for the Privy Council, saw to it that the warrant for Mary's execution, which Elizabeth had signed, was carried out. Davison was imprisoned and ruined by Elizabeth for doing what she had to have done. Her incredible vacillations of policy are slipped over lightly and usually set down as statesmanship. Let anyone read carefully the story of Elizabeth's diplomacy as recorded in



THE EARL OF HERTFORD'S PAGEANT FOR QUEEN ELIZABETH, 1591
The Earl employed 300 men for the entertainment, for which the Queen stayed three days.

moves along. The reader is likely to forget the delightful style in following the story. It is a style not only delightful but with distinction and restraint. Behind those careful, terse, and sometimes amusing phrases is more than the author has time to stop and tell us, and we are not displeased at that. There are many felicities that spring not from the mind of a ready writer but from the intelligence of one who has thought long over his problems and would answer them adequately and briefly. Neale falls naturally into Elizabethan idiom yet in such sparing fashion that it does not detract from the movement. He has used much quotation but short quotation that could not be spared, and he has often ventured wisely to leave the quotation marks out.

His treatment of the Essex episode is notable. He is telling again the story that Lytton Strachey told so brilliantly. One cannot say that his narrative is as brilliant as that of Strachey, but brilliant it is, and interesting. He goes down to essentials as Strachey never did. Strachey uses Bacon as a serpent and Cecil as the bent little man content to give ever so slight a push to events, both subtly drawn characters and both somewhat out of Strachey's imagination. Neale is not afraid to deal with character, indeed he is not afraid to make psychological guesses now and then. But he prefers evidence. He quotes Bacon about Essex: Essex had

a settled opinion that the Queen could be brought to nothing but by a kind of

great detail by Conyers Read in his life of Walsingham and see if he can have the same admiration for Elizabeth as has Neale. It is hard to admire the stinginess which allowed faithful ministers to go into their own pockets for her emergencies. She weathered the storm and the pragmatists are ready and eager to excuse all. To say that she was a natural liar and that she let down those who served her best is perhaps not to condemn her. 'Twas common. But that her vacillations were wise and that her Counsellors were always less far-sighted is too easy an assumption. Was the situation really touch-and-go? Was it likely that her Catholic subjects would rebel? Was a combination against her so probable? Were her gentlemen pirates incapable of keeping blue water between her and her enemies? Might not other policies have worked? Did Elizabeth possibly have so many face-cards that she could have played them in several different ways? Is it thinkable that Elizabeth, as many before and after, muddled through? All these questions about Elizabeth I have threshed out again and again with Neale and I know that he is ready to stand by the great Queen. And I know, too, that most would agree with him.

Wallace Notestein is Sterling professor of English history at Yale University. Though an American, he is a member of the British committee appointed by the prime minister, on the House of Commons Records.

High Promise

TOO MANY BOATS. By Charles L. Clifford. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1934. \$2.

Reviewed by BEN RAY REDMAN

WHEN a first novel displays as much talent and exhibits as sure a command of unhackneyed material as does "Too Many Boats," a reviewer may admit to disliking the duty which compels him to say that the novelist has failed in his main effort, even while partially succeeding. It would be pleasant, in such a case, to dwell only on the parts; but it is the whole that must be judged. Were the entire work third-rate, the critical approach would be at once less serious and more lenient; it is the presence of some first-rate writing in this novel that forbids an easy tolerance in dealing with it. Severity of judgment, in this instance, is a higher compliment than careless praise.

I think that Mr. Clifford's failure results from an attempt to combine mutually alien elements, moods, and qualities within a single piece of fiction. On the one hand we have truth and naturalism, while on the other we have what appear to be untruth and wilful sensationalism. I assume that the first elements derive from personal experience and that the others are born of the imagination. In any case, the naturalism comes off and the sensationalism does not, even as sensationalism. The story of "the bayou nigger, Private Motto Dinkin," who shot Sergeant Brown, because he was just tired of being picked on, is a beautiful and impressive example of honest, affecting writing. The triangular story of Cork Coates, Major von Kurtz, and Mrs. von Kurtz, is popular magazine junk. And, unfortunately the latter tale furnishes the principal strands of the novel, while poor Dinkin's tragedy is only a supplementary thread. Similarly, a world of fiction lies between the scene in which Captain Coates faces his mutinous black troopers in their barracks, and that in which he melodramatically insults and abuses Mrs. von Kurtz in the bedroom of a Manila hotel.

Writing of white officers and black troops, in a Philippine army post during the great war, Mr. Clifford is writing of a life he has lived. His sympathy with Cork Coates seems to be one of identification, and he is at his best when he is dealing with the relations between Captain Coates and his colored cavalymen. One never thinks of questioning him in that field where every accent rings true, or in the lively description of the Anglo-American polo match which suggests but does not sustain comparison with Kipling's "The Maltese Cat." It is only when the soldier leaves his soldiering and his polo, and embarks upon what appears to be invention, that our critical faculties are provoked into hostility. Please understand me. Were I informed tomorrow that every detail of the Coates-Kurtz yarn is a faithful transcription from life, I would still insist that it appears as a falsification of life in this novel. Despite the author's best attempts at motivation, despite his insistence upon the explosive possibilities of tropical heat, thwarted ambition, and racial antagonism, the yarn fails to convince. And that, so far as the novel is concerned, is what matters.

Mr. Clifford has talent and power and sympathy. He knows how to set his scenes with economy:—

The drill grounds were two miles out. Great barren stretches of burning sand and high, coarse cogon grass. Rank clumps of jungle broke the level desert. The sun had already made the sand hot to the touch. There was no wind, no faint breeze. The necks of the horses were black with sweat, or lathered; soapy where the reins touched. Sweat dripped from their bellies, drenched the cinches. Choking, tinder-dry dust rose about the troops as they moved across the barrens. . . .

Mr. Clifford has plenty to write about. But he must decide just what kind of fiction he wishes to write, and then hew to the line.

By a decree of Mustapha Kemal, recently announced, English will in future be an obligatory subject in all Turkish secondary schools. French and German will be optional.