

That Third Term

ROOSEVELT—AND THEN? By Stanley High. New York: Harper & Bros. 1937. \$3.

REVIEWED BY DUNCAN AIKMAN

THESE are fourteen sleek prognoses on the outlook for the Roosevelt politics and policies, most of which have appeared in national magazines.

Mr. Roosevelt will probably stand ready to make "the great sacrifice" in 1940, Mr. High intimates, should urgency demand it. He may disband his present Corcoran-Cohen team of intimate advisers on policy, should their personal publicity or their bad breaks with policies as political issues make it advisable, but the system of potent unofficial counsellors will be retained. Mr. Roosevelt isn't likely to shoot for a dictatorship, but he will continue to administer public affairs and partisan strategy more or less autocratically, because he knows what is best for society and is no democrat at heart.

There is a "Second New Deal" in the making in Washington which differs from the 1933-37 "First New Deal" mainly in that it plans a permanent managed economy for the nation rather than a set of emergency measures. Furthermore, Mr. Roosevelt's second administration will stake its all on putting the "Second New Deal" into operation. For that purpose he will maintain his alliance, in comfort or otherwise, with the John L. Lewis unions, keep subsidies flowing out to the distressed farmers, and maintain—

through a federal anti-lynching act if necessary—the Democratic Party's new role as the Negro's best friend. For that purpose, if there is no other way to do business, the conservative Democrats will be purged from the party, or Mr. Roosevelt will set up a new party under Farmer-Labor and big and small "p" progressive auspices.

Not even Mr. Farley's presidential aspirations, which Mr. High seemed to take quite seriously before the New York mayoralty elections, will be allowed to interfere with it. For that matter, neither will those of Senator La Follette or of Governors Earle or Murphy, which Mr. High manifestly takes less seriously.

Occasionally, Mr. High disapproves of the outlook. "A government which convinces a considerable number of its citizens of the availability of blank checks," he warns, "is likely to find itself without checks, or, if it should attempt to stop payment, with a political upheaval on its hands. . . . The future of a great many reforms has been entrusted, almost entirely, to those who benefit by the reforms."

Whether for or against, however, Mr. High writes with a consistent buttery persuasiveness. Occasionally he flecks the butter with a lively, if not too profound, thumbnail portrait of a Washington personage. He writes, too—as the publishers blurb the matter—as a "one time presidential insider."

All in all, it is about the nicest way that could be imagined of putting together the deductions which could be made by any first class editorial writer in Great Falls, Montana.

A Thoreau Omnibus

THE WORKS OF THOREAU. Selected and Edited by Henry S. Canby. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1937. \$5.

Reviewed by MARK VAN DOREN

MR. CANBY'S very welcome omnibus contains the whole of "Walden," most of "A Week on the Concord and the Merrimack Rivers," a third of "The Maine Woods," a third of "Cape Cod," five "Nature Essays," four social or political essays, eleven poems in addition to those which are scattered through Thoreau's published prose, and nearly a hundred pages of the famous but still little-read "Journal." So copious a selection, and one so carefully made, should do much to convince a public already devoted to "Walden" that its author is worth knowing for other reasons, even if not for better ones, than his masterpiece. Thoreau never did anything better than "Walden," but he wrote a tremendous lot in his forty-four years, and the entire body of what he wrote deserves any serious reader's attention; particularly since it is that body of work which seems to have interested Thoreau. He considered himself not so much a writer of books—compositions with beginnings and endings, and with titles—as simply a writer. His writing was in a peculiar sense his life. He gave up everything else for it; he put everything he had into it; he almost married it. And he would hardly have agreed with the judgment that either "Walden" or any other volume confines his essence; not even, perhaps, Mr. Canby's volume; not even, I suspect, the edition of his works which fills twenty volumes and supplies a printed text of all the "Journal."

Here and there Mr. Canby speaks of the books Thoreau would have completed had he lived. They are interesting to speculate about, but it is not certain that they would have been completed. High as Thoreau's opinion of writing was, and unmatched as his skill was in the matter of getting his best thoughts directly and perfectly down on paper, he often despaired, as the "Journal" attests, of getting everything down. His demands upon the art were ideal, and took the form of requiring it always to render the present intellectual moment in its fulness. There were no "subjects" for Thoreau, there was only existence; there was, perhaps, only his own existence. And no fence of words, no matter how long or how barbed, could ever quite keep existence safely inside it. There was always more to say; as soon as one found out how to say *this*, there was *that*, and so on without end. Thoreau, in other words, would have kept on writing, and what he wrote might not have been books, since books have ends. Mr. Canby recognizes this when he speaks of Thoreau's writings as a whole which was never realized. It is proper then to praise Mr. Canby's selection as the best abridgment of Thoreau's works which we are ever likely to have.

Mark Van Doren is the author of "Henry David Thoreau—A Critical Study."

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	Crime, Place, Sleuth	Summing Up	Verdict
THIEVES' PICNIC Leslie Charteris (Crime Club: \$2.)	Simon Charteris horns into nest of gem thieves, rescues beauty from their clutches and sails away with all the loot.	As outrageous, incredible, and exciting as other "Saint" exploits, with thieves falling out all over Canary Islands.	Giddy
DEATH OVER HOLLYWOOD Charles Saxby and Louis Molnar (Dutton: \$2.)	Two killings in movie-land—one on "lot," one off—solved, helter-skelter, by several bumptious individuals.	H'wood atmosphere, laid on with trowel, rule-of-thumb sleuthing, <i>soupeon</i> sex, and considerable action.	Less than colossal
THE MAN WITH THE TATTOOED FACE Miles Burton (Crime Club: \$2.)	Mysterious rural Lotherio slain. Insp. Arnold, at dead end, calls in Desmond Merriam, who spots discrepancy and nails killer.	Bucolic English atmosphere and lively character drawing excel sleuthing—which clicks a bit too smoothly for complete probability.	Average
THE RETURN OF BLUE MASK Anthony Morton (Lippincott: \$2.)	John Mannering, "the Baron," runs rings around cops, fights epic battles, grabs precious jewels, etc., etc., etc.	Debonair thievery is all right in its place, perhaps, but there's too much of it getting between bookcovers.	Tosh
HOMICIDE Leslie T. White (Harcourt, Brace: \$2.) (Non-fiction)	Murders of light lady and her maid investigated against odds by plain unvarnished city detective Muttersbach.	Official documents, q. & a. testimony and all, a trifle deadening, but procedure is interesting and verisimilar.	Fair
THE MASTER SPY Arthur Gask (Macaulay: \$2.)	Herr Mitter gets hands on secret formula for "invisible airplane" but secret agent Larose recaptures it.	Routine yarn of espionage in England with murder, plotting, torture, love, and other atrocities.	Ordinary

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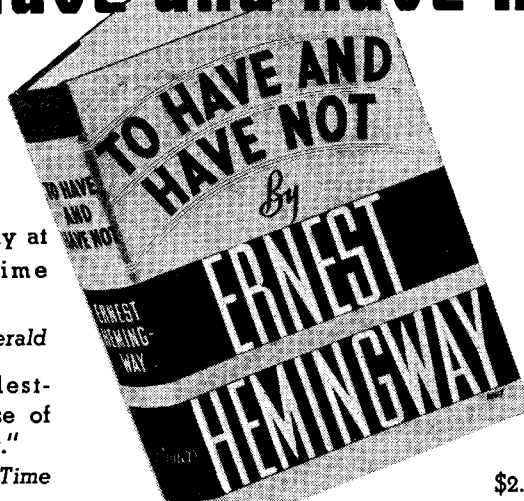
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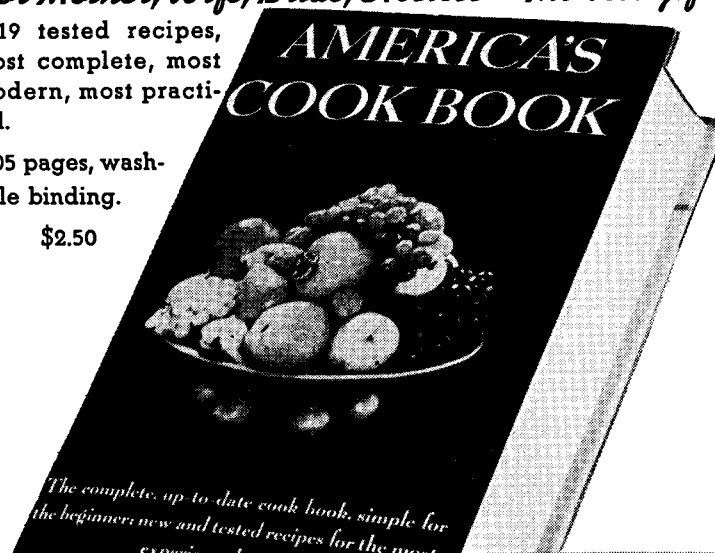
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