

to have relied on "the peace-at-any-price Americans who virtuously sidestep present problems for future generations to settle." What Mr. Crow would have us think is clear enough; what he would have us do is only a shade less clear. The Japanese, he asserts, have a unique moral code which makes it impossible to judge their ruthlessness and their objectives by our own standards. They believe in their manifest destiny, in their divinely ordained mission to impose Japanese civilization on the world. So-called self-defense impelled them to move westward to Korea, Manchuria, North China, and Mongolia. Next will come China, then Hongkong, the Indies, and the Philippines—"a series of vicious consequences to which there can be no logical end. After China, what?"

Shades of 1917, Prussianism, and the Hun!

David H. Popper is on the staff of the Foreign Policy Association. See page 18 for biographical note on Carl Crow.

From Pet Child to Potential Foe

FORTY YEARS OF AMERICAN-JAPANESE RELATIONS. By Foster Rhea Dulles. New York: D. Appleton-Century Company. 1937. \$3.

Reviewed by ALBERT PARRY

THE taking of the Philippines was the first and last earnest show of American force in the Far East. From then on to this day our policy in the Orient has consisted of protests and cajoling unbacked by any stiffness in either tone or act. Our present-day withdrawal from the isles, our general passiveness in China, and our helplessness in the face of Japan, are logical results of this policy.

Such seems to be the sound thesis of Mr. Dulles, who in the new volume continues the good work begun in his "Old China Trade" and "America in the Pacific." On the basis of thorough scholarship, enlivened by personal experience in the Far East, he proves that search of the exotic as well as lure of profit brought Americans to China and Japan; that, although the Open Door was meant primarily to safeguard their commercial supremacy, it made a great hit with our people mostly for sentimental reasons. He points out that dollar diplomacy was never really supported by the people of the United States whose stake in the Orient was small.

Mr. Dulles rightly feels that America's withdrawal from the Orient, although a fact, is not quite final, and that no one can say what the future may bring. Nevertheless his book, as the events unfold, will prove a most valuable aid in comprehending the forces that have made the yesterdays and this day and are already subtly sculpting the morrow.

The Unequal Sections

DIVIDED WE STAND: The Crisis of a Frontierless Democracy. By Walter Prescott Webb. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1937. \$2.50.

Reviewed by JOHN CROWE RANSOM

WE all know about the inequalities in the economic structure. But there is one painful feature of this economic inequality which nobody, least of all the personnel of an American government, likes to dwell upon publicly. It is partly an inequality among the geographic sections. Within the Northern states you have your masters of capital on the one hand, and against them your farmers and employees trying to keep a foothold in the economic society. But as for the South and the West, you have almost your whole populations in this latter status, the masters of their capital being in the North. The North owns and operates the national economy; the South and West work under its direction; that is, they work to the extent that work is found for them within the system.

And here a distinguished Texas professor of American history produces a book of which the merit and the boldness alike consist in examining the great American inequality as a historian and a geographer, that is, in its obvious sectional terms. Professor Webb has pulled none of his punches, as his publishers say, but there is nothing petty and hateful in his spirit. His argument is realistic and valid, it is inevitable, it is long overdue. He represents an unreconstructed South and an unassimilated West, but he seems prepared to accept any reasonable settlement of his grievances.

It is not out of pure malice that the North, with less than a fourth the total area (as Professor Webb defines the North) and a little better than half the total population, owns eighty or ninety percent, or more, of the wealth of the United States. If a few Northerners tend to be as complacent as many Southerners and Westerners are restive in this situation, nevertheless conspiracy is too easy to say and too hard to find. A very broad train of history is involved. The West bears a colonial relation to the North because the North actually colonized the West. The South bears it because the South's own economy was upset by force, and then within the dominant new industrial economy the South's actual position

was distant from the center or, virtually, colonial. Few people realized it at the time, but the South was destroyed because it resisted the protective tariff and the rise of economic nationalism. If we waive all the moral questions, as history generally must do, the South opposed itself to what most economists today would call destiny. Perhaps it was destiny that the industrial revolution should concentrate its power in the North and dispense its favors colonially to the other sections. But evidently it was destiny also that in the natural tendency to centralization it should overreach itself and crash; and promise to wind up in stoppage and rust unless a vast and perfectly willful majority of electors undertook by law to enforce some decentralization; which they might do in the name of individual rights, but again might do almost as effectively in the name of the unequal sections. The Constitution of the United States had provided against just such emergencies that the electorate could express itself whenever it liked.

The corrective action of the democratic will must be directed, according to Professor Webb, who loses few tricks for lack of economic understanding, to the control of that most brilliant and anomalous of births within the American system, the corporation with the rights of a person. And as to being deterred by its cries of pain, if there must be a competitive crying to see where justice lies, the farmers and laborers can make a great noise, and so can the West and the South. In his view, it is principally the corporate device, operated by owners in the North, which is "developing" the South and the West, and exacting tribute for the job. This is a work in which it may be said that a motive of missionary benevolence sometimes sanctifies the stern urge for commercial profits. But many persons both South and West have a disrelish for being morally improved and financially worked at the same time, or even for being subjected to these processes separately. Some of this feeling will shine through Professor Webb's even-tempered exposition. His tone is not technically that of urbanity, but something just as ripe: it is the tone of homely country lecture-talk, as produced in some communities which are tolerably patient, polite, and humorous, and more realistic and stubborn than missionaries are likely to imagine.



WALTER P. WEBB

This book is a contribution of great im-

portance for our public discussions, if they propose to be full and frank ones. I am inclined to think it has prophetic value, in the sense in which certain features of three New Deal landslides in as many successive elections had that value. The South and the West do not become more comfortable under the economic dominion of the North. The Constitution has given them plenty of power to relax it.

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East London Swamp

THE MARSH. By Ernest Raymond. New York: Frederick A. Stokes. 1937. \$2.75.

Reviewed by GEORGE DANGERFIELD

"HERE, then, are the two cities: the city of the masters in the security of the hills, and the city of those who live on the lowland, very close to danger, destitution and death." This is London, and Danny Counsel belonged to the lowlands, or the Marsh, and specifically to that part of the Marsh which is called East London. His father was a London dock laborer, and the only future which Danny could see for himself was a future on the dole.

Odd jobs—he was a personable youth, and was therefore able to get them occasionally—could not keep his girl faithful to him when her favors were being solicited by somebody who had climbed into the white collar class. Danny took this with bitterness, but did not see exactly where to place the blame. And then, drifting into a socialist parade, it occurred to him for the first time that wealth might have been withheld from him, not because he did not deserve it, but because he had not been born into it. And it was this piece of rudimentary thinking which, combined with the loss of one girl and his need to find another, ultimately made him an expert thief, led him into prison, and finally left him mortally wounded in a dark alley.

Mr. Raymond's resolute sense of the unresolved injustice between the city on the hills and the city in the marsh, gives this novel its unity. Otherwise he is always at his best when exposing the bewilderment and hypocrisy of his middle-class characters, who are always clearer in the imagination than Danny or Danny's companions.

Mr. Raymond seems to have lived more in his own mind than in Danny's; and that is perhaps why, when you have finished the book, what remains with you is more likely to be a sense of the principles than of the persons involved. But that sense will have been firmly planted. For the author exposes with unremitting intensity the fact that there is little mercy and less understanding in the agents of the city on the hills; and little hope for those who play a lone hand in the city on the marsh.

Three American Poets

THE LAST LOOK AND OTHER POEMS.

By Mark Van Doren. New York: Henry Holt & Company. 1937. \$2.

THE GREAT HORSE. By Helene Margaret. New York: Farrar & Rinehart, Inc. 1937. \$2.

YEAR'S END. By Josephine W. Johnson. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1937. \$2.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

WE need no proof today that there is a poetry characteristically American; these three books, all different in character and in method, seem so to me, and reflect credit upon the states of Illinois, Nebraska, and Missouri, in which states, respectively, the authors were born. Mr. Van Doren, although born on a Middlewestern farm, has in his poetry breathed more the spirit of New England, from his own farm of today in the hills of Connecticut. He has learned from Robert Frost. But his own character and insight have now become deeply impressed upon verse of distinction. He has looked long at country landscapes and people, and has meditated upon them profitably in lyrical narrative that has its appropriate rhythms. Half a dozen books of shorter poems, and one long narrative, "Jonathan Gentry," attest his power. This latest volume is characteristic, and contains memorable work. He and Miss Johnson are the most subtle of these three poets, and both accomplished in their craft. Some of Mr. Van Doren's present poems go back in memory to "the dun, low western house,"—a simple and beautiful poem of family voices remembered—to the old cornetist they called "the Frisco nightingale," to old men dying, a neighbor girl, the little doctor, the ghost horse, Uncle Roger, and a boy's first ride in a train. Perhaps "The Letter" is the best of this type, simple and yet with superbly adroit phrase that John Donne himself might have commended. In the space allowed me it is hard to give a complete idea of this volume, because it is varied, there are five sections, and over seventy poems. It is not to be read complete in an hour, and there are obscurities which spring, it seems to me, from subtlety of apprehension rather than from confusion of thought. The spirit in this poet is sensitive and fine, nor does it despise a strong earthiness mixed with bitterness and wit. He is worth your acquaintance.

Helene Margaret of Nebraska produced an unusual narrative in "The Trumpeting Crane." Now, in the westward migration of the Mormons following the killing of Joseph Smith, she has found a powerful theme, the wild horse of the American dream being its symbol, the story that of the wagons of the Latter-day Saints rolling westward from Nauvoo. Specifically,



JOSEPHINE W. JOHNSON

the tale concerns Lucinda Holman who seeks for westward freedom, chafing at a fanatic faith. Finally she finds her satisfying love in a frontier doctor. There are other saliently drawn characters, the clash of lives, desperation, perseverance, and drama. The background is well-studied and made vivid. The poem is written in rhymed loose pentameter, with a few interludes of a simple ballad measure. Sometimes the verse stiffens and seems awkwardly constrained, but for the most part this is good work of a different kind.

Josephine Winslow Johnson is, of course, the brilliant young novelist who won the Pulitzer Prize two years ago with "Now in November." Her "Year's End" is a notable book. In free verse, unrhymed or rhymed, the poem's rhythm fits its statement, and she speaks out of the experience of love and life with an individual voice. These forty-seven poems, of various lengths, all have something to say, and her manner of saying it is her own. "The White Spring," "Final Autumn," "Under the Sound of Voices," and the long poem last in the book called "Year's End," are impressive; and some of the shorter ones contain considerable sapience. Neither can one read "In This Hour" or "This Wind That Rises" without hearing the voice of the bitter present speaking in an inexorable tone. There is salt in this verse. It is realistic and unhoodwinked. Sometimes the words are trenched deep by irony, as in "To a Certain Author" and "On a Decision." Miss Johnson writes strictly, avoiding the superfluous. The more personal poems take suffering with stoicism. In "The Snow-Blind" the poet has a phrase, "the mind's blinding and momentary birth of sight" that epitomizes the mood out of which real poems are written.