

Reconstruction in the New South

FORTY ACRES AND STEEL MULES.
By Herman Clarence Nixon. Chapel
Hill: The University of North Carolina
Press. 1938. \$2.50.

Reviewed by WILLIAM SHANDS MEACHAM

"FORTY acres and a mule" was a post-Civil War doctrine of certain congressional reconstructionists who vainly hoped to establish former slaves as freeholders in a South in which the plantation would be only a memory of ante-bellum civilization. But the Solid South—after it had made its political truce with the North—quickly replaced the lost institution of slavery with sharecropping and tenancy. King Cotton carried on with his subjects in a new thrall-dom.

Herman Clarence Nixon, who is professor of political science at Tulane University, and who contributed one of the twelve theses of agrarianism posted for the South in "I'll Take My Stand," now takes a broader view of contemporary Southern reconstruction, admitting all the implications that hinge upon the arrival of Leviathan in the form of the steel mule. The tractor demands large-scale farming; it threatens to plow under the farmer with only one mule and forty acres. Even if he has two mules, his competitive situation may grow worse rather

than better, for another mechanical beast of burden—the Rust cotton picker—is on the way.

The steel mule tirelessly plows a furrow a mile long, and is not likely to wait for an agricultural system that is on the whole medieval (without castles) to catch up. Since the South already has a large farm labor surplus, mechanized agriculture, which will release a countless number of agricultural workers for other employment, will probably put the problem of Southern regionalism much more urgently into the picture of national economy.

Mr. Nixon calls the farm tenancy system of cotton production "an expression of poverty," and factually proves the statement. He prescribes a pattern of remedies for the ills of the present cotton economy. Diversified farming in the South can be brought about only by strengthening its rural commerce all along the line. The author of this book emphasizes the need for better farm villages, and for more government aid for bottom-rail farmers. Southern regions need protection against the protective tariff, and relief from freight-rate discrimination. While the cotton kingdom must have industries, Mr. Nixon is aware that its subjects may easily jump from sun-drenched fields into the frying pans of industrial sweatshops, which are being attracted by its most consistent surplus crop—population.

Mr. Nixon is an economist who writes well, and with a lively sense of humor. The faces of the sharecroppers he has seen, and whose pictures are included in this book, lead him to believe that the outlook for the poorest citizens of the South is not "humanly hopeless." While they may occasionally rest overlong where it is ninety degrees in the shade, when at work they are among the shock troops of economic America.

William Shands Meacham is Associate Editor of the Richmond Times-Dispatch.

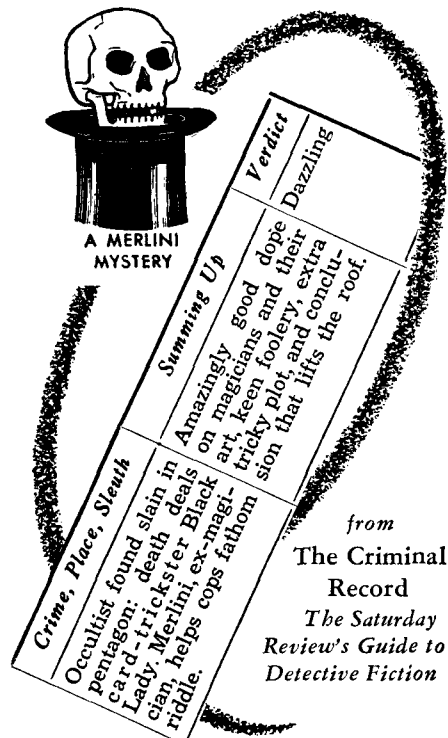
Direct Thinking

INTUITION. By K. W. Wild. New York: The Macmillan Co. (Cambridge University Press.) 1938. \$3.

Reviewed by ROBERT BIERSTEDT

PHILOSOPHY is filled with words that flit about and never seem to come to rest on any particular bit of content. Philosophers, in consequence, spend much of their time analyzing the various meanings and imperfections of words, a task beset with difficulties because, as John Locke observed, they have nothing but words with which to do it. In this book Miss Wild enlists for the duration of the terminological confusion in philosophy and attempts to lay those Baconian idols of the market-place which have tormented discussions of intuition. Although disclaiming authority on any of the questions of "deep philosophic import" with which she deals, her achievement is scholarly and profound as well as competent, and so rich in literary and philosophic allusion that persons with no special interest in, or even with active antagonism to, the idea of intuition will enjoy reading it.

Reading the book, however, is no intuitive exercise, but rather an intellectual one. The author pursues dialectical subtleties with tenacity unabated until she catches them, and when she concludes with thirty-one separate and distinct definitions of intuition, all neatly labeled and filed away, she doesn't quite know what to do about it. It may be permissible to suggest that she has done enough in enlightening the conceptions of intuition held by such writers as Bergson, Spinoza, Croce, Jung, Lévy-Bruhl, Wordsworth, and Whitehead to obviate any further responsibility on her part, especially when she contributes additional chapters on religious, moral, and esthetic intuition and



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THE CASE WITHOUT A CLUE Nigel Moreland (Farrar & Rinehart: \$2.)	Palmyra Pym, Scotland Yard sleuthess, roars down trail of person who slew surrealist author and two other Londoners.	Belligerently dauntless female 'tec and her faithful stooge Insp. Shott slug and shoot their way through exciting puzzle.	Speedy
TREAD SOFTLY Brian Flynn (M. S. Mill: \$2.)	Poisoning of London man-about-town and strangling of actor's lovely wife keep Anthony Bathurst busy.	Shrewd sleuth thoroughly airs scandalous goings-on in rarefied British circles. One murder method clever.	Routine
THE CORPSE THAT TRAVELED Arthur J. Rees (Dodd, Mead: \$2.)	Two corpses in lonely English seacoast mansion send detectives Luckraft and Fernley scurrying after suspicious characters.	Small town marital woes, hint of buried treasure, and black-mail, fail to lift tale out of British stolidity.	Slow motion
THE CURSE OF RED SHIVA Vivian Meik (Hillman Curl: \$2.)	Three - centuries - old curse of wronged Indian girl, but for Maj. Verrey, would have caused destruction of white race.	Blood and thunder yarn of slinking Eurasians, renegade whites, stranglings, etc., with reasonably good detective trimming.	Ordinary

on the relation of intuition to "the values," teleology, and genius. Intuition, it seems, constitutes one of the attributes of genius, and the geniuses discussed include Rousseau, Goethe, Marcus Aurelius, Henry Ford, and the Biblical David, in that order. The author demonstrates her analytical talents best, perhaps, when she treats of the role of intuition in esthetic perception and in the recognition of values.

With less enthusiasm and less success, Miss Wild attempts finally to reduce her thirty-one definitions to a simple array, and arrives at a conception of intuition as "an immediate awareness by a subject, of some particular entity, without such aid from the senses or from reason as would account for that awareness," or as the method by which a subject attains such awareness. Throughout she assumes that some such mental activity occurs and that the word intuition—to purloin a phrase—is not one of the "fig-leaves which cover the nakedness of our ignorance."

A Record of Courage

MY MIND A KINGDOM. By George Thomas. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1938. \$2.50.

Reviewed by WILLIAM SLOANE

GEORGE THOMAS'S heroism is of a kind that does not find its way often into a book. To create a personal life of interest, achievement, and even humor in the face of such odds as he faces daily requires a triumphant character.

Out of the seven members of the Thomas family, four suffer from an apparently incurable and obscure form of progressive muscular atrophy. Their lives, as this day-by-day journal reveals them, should have been intolerably burdensome. Every motion must be made with calculating carefulness, but even so, painful and dangerous falls are commonplace. By the end of the year 1935, in which his book was written, Mr. Thomas was no longer able even to cross his legs unaided. Writing, which he had determined to make his career after the success of his first book, "A Tenement in Soho," must be practised with a special technique.

The Thomases live in a tenement; the father of the family is a London dustman, and though they are not paupers, they are poor. And yet, to quote another line from the Edward Dyer poem which supplies the author with his title, "though much I want which most would have," he is able to face life without self-pity. Books and their writing, music, good talk, and a moving religious feeling do make a kingdom out of what would otherwise have been a caged life of frustration.

Diaries cannot be plotted any more than life, as Miss Sackville-West points out in her admirable preface, so nothing much happens, in an objective way, in the course of "My Mind a Kingdom." But it needs no plot to make it a special but engrossing kind of book, full of humanity, courage, laughter, and warm faith. Not everyone will like it, but those who do will find it *sui generis* and excellent.

The New Books

Fiction

LATER THAN YOU THINK. By Gawen Brownrigg. Knopf. 1938. \$2.50.

This is a glib and readable tale; in all probability it was so intended. Yet one can't help seeing how its essential subject has been badly diluted by this very glibness, by the way in which too many supposedly sure-fire elements have been crowded in. Automobile racing is a sport full enough of excitement and special techniques to make its own novel. Further, Mr. Brownrigg is a sports editor and has at his finger-tips all of the details and sensations of the game. When he permits himself to set these down in their own tempo, unspoiled, he gives us some fresh, thrilling writing. But then he remembers that a novelist should be an artificer, and thrusts racing into the background. He gives us a flippant Oxford youth who is just a racing genius without ever taking it seriously, who comes down from college to become, in an incredible flash, the greatest racer in Europe. He is also romantically irresistible, and has a melodramatic affair with a melodramatic woman. His employer is a sinister, wholly fantastic auto magnate, who fondles enlarged pictures of terrible crashes and keeps, tenderly, a space on the wall for our hero's debacle, which is of course filled in. All of this is merely an insincere treatment of essentially good realistic material, and therefore disappointing.

N. L. R.

TWO FOR JOY. By E. Morchard Bishop. Scribner's. 1938. \$2.50.

In spite of his title, there isn't much joy in Mr. Bishop's novel, which seems designed to evoke nostalgic poignance rather than any stronger emotion. The story is a simple one, told in the first person by a young English draughtsman who is more sensitive than sensible. The Irish girl with whom he falls in love and ultimately marries would have been happier had she remained a spinster, and little by little they retreat from each other until there is nothing left between them except recollection and regret. After a somewhat staccato and fumbling start, the narrative flows along with occasional moments of intensity that redeem it from pointlessness. But its current is neither deep, wide, nor swift, and most of the time it is not much of a book. Some of the scenes are laid in Dublin. These and the quick sketches of the "real, ould Dublin characters" have a salinity that might have given more bite to the rest of the book had the author been able to sprinkle it more generally through his pages.

W. S.

OLD MOTLEY. By Audrey Lucas. Macmillan. 1938. \$2.50.

The title of this novel suggests one of its main features, namely the theatrical career of a scion of an English Quaker family, in the days of Madame Vestris, Charles Mathews, Macready, and Count D'Orsay. The decade from 1830

to 1840 is its time-span. The novel is also a study of parental dominance and severity warping the lives of the children of a family. John Baron, the Quaker banker, is not another Mr. Barrett, to be sure; but the tyranny of his affection for his daughter Margaret is a trait inherited by her and exercised toward her much younger stepbrother, Charles, who finally breaks away from his family to go on the stage. In the beginning of the book Margaret mothers the boy who usually angers her father, but she is at no time a very sympathetic character, being actually extremely self-centered, like her father.

The presentation of both narrow-minded and broad-minded Quakers of the period is interesting, and Miss Lucas has obviously done considerable research into theatrical history of the time. She writes in a nineteenth century manner which sorts with her material but which runs easily into rather obvious melodrama. This minor novel has atmospheric charm and the manners of the period have been well studied. Frankly a romance, it has little subtlety, but neither is it squeamish. Miss Lucas has inherited the gift of enjoyable writing from her late highly talented father, E. V. Lucas.

W. R. B.

History

LEGENDS OF LOUDOUN. By Harrison Williams. Richmond, Va.: Garrett & Massie. 1938. \$3.

This is a pleasant local history of Loudoun County, Virginia, where Monroe built Oak Hill from Jefferson's plans, where Mosby's name was feared, and where now the new hunting-squires (frequently from the North) pursue even more expensive foxes than those of Peapack, N. J. Mr. Williams is not a trained writer but he is obviously in love with the countryside, and he has some good stories to tell.

S. V. B.

Miscellaneous

MERCHANTS OF PEACE. Twenty Years of Business Diplomacy Through the International Chamber of Commerce, 1919-1938. By George L. Ridgeway. Columbia University Press. 1938. \$3.75.

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