



LETTERS on POETRY

from W. B. YEATS to
DOROTHY WELLESLEY

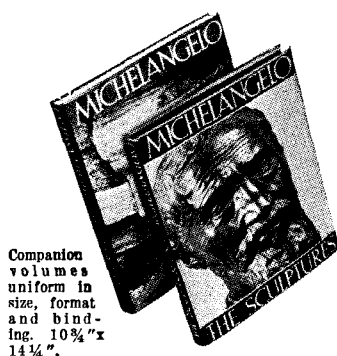
"The almost day-to-day picture of the poet at work—in spite of illness, personal crotchets, the tragic state of Europe and the attacks on critics (for during this period, 1935-39, 'sensuous' art was held wholly in contempt by those with political biases)—is a remarkable one. Because many of the 'Last Poems' appear here in their original version, the book has an added value."—*New Yorker*.

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THE NEW BOOKS

Biography

MAN OF SPAIN: A Biography of Francisco Suarez. By Joseph H. Fichter, S. J. Macmillan. 1940. 349 pp., with index. \$2.50.

Francisco Suarez, the Spanish Jesuit philosopher best known for his political controversy with James I of England, deserves to be remembered with Cervantes, almost his exact contemporary, as one of the most brilliant minds of sixteenth century Spain. He was, in a sense, the last of the great medieval schoolmen, and his lucid, vigorous logic is an essential link between the formulations of St. Thomas and the neo-Thomism which characterizes modern Catholic philosophy. He was also one of the first of modern political theorists, to whom Grotius, Pufendorf, and Hobbes owed an often unacknowledged debt. His work was central to the school of late sixteenth and early seventeenth century Spanish jurists who contributed so significantly to the nascent study of international law.

There has been no adequate biography of Suarez in English, and no really comprehensive analysis and estimate of his work; so there is a large place for a book about him. The present biography fills only a part of the gap. Pious and popular, rather than critical and scholarly, it gives an account of his life based on a thirty year old French biography which is probably quite adequate. Well behaved college professors, in favor with the powers that be, do not lead externally intricate or exciting lives even when they are not specifically vowed to poverty, chastity, and obedience. The excitement is inside their minds, and here this biography fails us. Its account of Suarez's thought is either superficial or evasive, it includes no bibliography to stimulate further reading, and several of the best things that have been written about Suarez are omitted from the sparse footnotes.

G. M.

Fiction

BRIGHT JOURNEY. By August Derleth. Scribners. 1940. 424 pp. \$2.50.

August Derleth adds to his Sac Prairie Saga with this long novel of the early nineteenth century fur-traders in Wisconsin. The novel is in two main parts, the first section dealing with the boyhood of Hercules Dousman on Mackinac Island during the second war with Britain; the longer part with Dousman in Prairie du Chien, on the Wisconsin-Iowa border, first as an employee of the American Fur Company, years later as one of its directors.

A novel of the Northwest Territory covering the years 1812 to 1840 cannot escape being colorful and heady when the author is competent and well informed, and especially when

the story is that of Hercules Dousman, who rose from obscurity to become the wealthiest man in the Territory. Dousman made his fortune without resorting to the sharp practices of John Jacob Astor, without swindling or victimizing either Indian or white man. His was indeed from the outside a bright journey, but not a very happy one; for aside from honesty and a vague humanitarianism he had insufficient inner resources to permit any deep and rich enjoyment of his wealth and power. Dousman is downright dull, often priggish, and fond of striking moral attitudes. His philosophy of success is of the mean and bread-and-butter variety.

Mr. Derleth's hero may be out of Henty, but the flesh-and-blood Indians bear little resemblance to Cooper's braves. Well done, too, are such minor characters as the rascally John Marsh, the notorious trouble-maker of the time, and the wastrel Rolette. The French heroine of the conventional love triangle is sufficiently credible for the purposes of the placid romance. Incidentally, one notes with some surprise that these French traders and voyageurs seem quite weaned away from religion and their Church.

With its stately, unhurried manner, the narrative barely escapes monotony, though its frequent beauties of description and the sensitiveness of the poet-novelist to the pageant of the seasons give considerable warmth and color to the book. R. A. C.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 343)

EDWARD EVERETT:
ON LAFAYETTE*

Mr. Jefferson offered him the place of Governor of Louisiana . . . but he was unwilling by leaving France to take a step that would look like a final abandonment of the cause of constitutional liberty on the continent of Europe.

* (1834)

John Mason
Brown

BROADWAY IN REVIEW

Mr. Brown's impressions of every kind of theatre from Bill Robinson to Maurice Evans are here imparted with the contagious enthusiasm that has made him one of America's foremost dramatic critics. \$2.75

NORTON

OUT OF THE FOG. By Joseph C. Lincoln. D. Appleton-Century Co. 1940. 360 pp. \$2.50.

Joseph C. Lincoln has proved in thirty-eight volumes that he can spin a good yarn. The thirty-ninth, "Out of the Fog," is a pretty good yarn too. It has all of the dry humor, the salty Cape Cod characters, the general readability which his readers now have a right to expect. For good measure "Out of the Fog" adds both mystery and romance.

Hit and run accidents during the summer have roused the indignation of the townsfolk of Wellmouth, Trumet, and Bayport so they hold a joint meeting to consider ways and means of making the roads safer. Driving home to Wellmouth from this meeting through a dense fog Selectman Mark Hanson and Myra Crusit, his secretary, are horrified to find the body of young George Crockett, son of Wellmouth's leading citizen, flung across a lonely lane, apparently by some hit-and-run driver. It's up to them, so everybody tells them, to track down the killer no matter what scandal may be revealed by the search.

Mark and Myra discover some queer goings-on—and it looks for a time as if Mark will lose his job as Selectman through his reluctance to disclose his findings before he is quite sure nobody in the community will suffer unnecessarily. But it all comes out right in the end.

What does give the book its interest is the background of Cape Cod scenes and characters and the personality of Myra revealed as she tells the tale.

G. G.

LIGHT OVER RUBY STREET. By Edward Harris Heth. Smith & Durrell. 1940. 294 pp. \$2.

Richard Wright would probably not grant that the Negro characters in "Light over Ruby Street" are authentic representations of his people. Many other readers will find them more like minstrel folk than human beings, more nearly akin to the characters in Ronald Firbank's "Prancing Nigger" than to those in "Native Son." Readers who can accept the people of the novel at their face value, or rather at Mr. Heth's value, as simple human beings guided exclusively by their instincts, will find a readable story of a mother's ambitions for her daughter thwarted by the girl's desire for simple, elemental, and unaspiring love. Perhaps such people never existed but amid the gin and marihuana fumes that perfume the pages of "Light over Ruby Street" they seem compelling and real enough (save the hero whose "delicious brutality" fascinates Mr. Heth to the silly point), their feelings and actions by turn amusing and touching, their story, despite an over-hasty ending, interesting. It is interesting because, even granting the specialized quality of the background, the theme has a broad, general appeal: the main events of the novel might happen among any group of people. E. A.

THE NEW REPUBLIC announces that

EDMUND WILSON

will be in charge of its Book Department this fall, as visiting critic, during the absence of The New Republic's regular Literary Editor, Malcolm Cowley.

The issue of October 28 will be a special Book Number. Many distinguished features are planned for coming weeks. Among them, to appear in the Book Number and other early issues, will be:

John Dos Passos

"Franklin and Defoe: Two Eighteenth Century Careers." A study in the splitting off of the American tradition from England.

Paul Rosenfeld

"Stefan George and the Nazis." An article on the political exploitation of one of the greatest of modern German poets.

Edmund Wilson

A series of three articles on a group of American novelists, including James M. Cain, Horace McCoy, John O'Hara, William Saroyan, John Steinbeck and Hans Otto Storm.

Reviews: Sidney Hook on Mortimer Adler; Mary McCarthy on the foreign correspondents; Richard Wright on Langston Hughes; Norbert Guterman on "Liaisons Dangereuses."

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OCTOBER 26, 1940

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P. E. G. QUERCUS

SCRIBNERS celebrated a double event lately when Alfred van Duym, expert fenestrolologist or Window Regisseur, devoted its central window to the Fall Book Number of the *SRL* and books dealing with wine for Wine Tasting Week. Many of the other books displayed were those



reviewed in the Fall Number and the attractive wine shade of the *SRL* cover was temperamental with the layout. Incidentally, bookstores on their toes can write our own Louis Greenfield for alluring proposals. More than 200 of the better bookstores through the country are *SRL* depots. In times when there is a good deal of loose talk about Democracy, we recommend (to a few) a reading of that remarkable book *The Degradation of the Democratic Dogma* (by Henry Adams) in which you will find a definition of Intellect. Adams describes it thus:—"An ultimate, independent, self-producing, self-sustaining, incorruptible solvent of all earlier or lower energies, and incapable of degradation or dissolution." Some day some lively magazine interested in large doing, *Time* maybe, will rediscover Henry Adams and make public his extraordinary essay "The Rule of Phase Applied to History." Can any bookseller tell us where we can find a copy of Walter Leaf's volume about Troy? Very stimulating reading is a dual symposium on *Literature and the Professors* in the *Kenyon Review* and the *Southern Review*, five essays in each Review. The prevailing suggestion is that professors of English literature in this generation are rather running to seed. We got a specially good chuckle out of Wright Thomas's (University of Wisconsin) piece about a tripy sonnet he wrote for submission to graduate students; most of whom decided it was either Shakespeare or as good as. Peter Greig, hardworking student of wine and food, would not believe our statement that there

are two villages in Norfolk, England, called Great Snoring and Little Snoring. So he checked up with his friends the Gaymers of Attleboro, Norfolk, whose grand sparkling cider Peter Greig imports in quantity. Messrs. Gaymer indeed confirmed our allusions. We had stated that to be rector of Great and Little Snoring was our idea of a good life; now Mr. Greig tells us that the rectory of the twin parish dates from 1485; and even gives the name of the rector, which we do not print as we don't wish to cause embarrassment.

★ ★

The excellent Catholic weekly *The Commonweal* utters a justified squawk about the usual run of Christmas cards. This year it has had some of its own designed in collaboration with the quarterly *Liturgical Arts*. These, it says, are "no hackneyed commercial art, no watered pietism, and no nonsense about cute but meaningless scot-ties." Non-subscribers to *The Commonweal* can buy the cards at 45 cents for a set of six small, \$1.50 a set of six large. Full information from *The Commonweal* at 386 Fourth Avenue, N.Y.C. One of the saddest lunches we ever had was with a couple of boys in the Christmas card business, trying to suggest some new ideas for that egregious traffic and finding it utterly impossible to put any notions in their heads.

★ ★

The Emergency Rescue Committee, 122 East 42, N.Y.C., whose efforts were able to get Franz Werfel and Heinrich Mann and others safely to this country, is appealing for funds to help continue this urgent service. Dr. Frank Kingdon, the chairman, says "We have accurate information about more than 50 men and women whose lives count greatly and are in present danger of seizure by the Gestapo. They are of all European nationalities and have one common denominator, they are enemies of Nazi-fascism. A gift of \$350 will make possible the rescue of one more life. We will welcome any token of participation. It is a work of which every American can be proud." We gather from the reviews that John Ford and Dudley Nichols have melded four of Eugene O'Neill's shorter plays into one moving picture, *The Long Voyage Home*, which should give strong pleasure to O'Neill admirers in the book trade. It may be remembered that Dudley Nichols, the distinguished scenario writer, was once a wireless operator at sea and has long been a keen admirer of O'Neill's work. As long ago as 1928 he wrote a preface for a Modern Library reprint of some of O'Neill's plays.

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