

the catalysts toward increasing comparative study of the two literatures.

Regrettably, it is not always a reliable catalyst. In some matters of editing, of attention to detail, Payne's methods are uncertain to the point of idiosyncrasy. The number of English readers able to set Chinese texts beside the English translations has increased in recent years and will continue to increase. For their purpose, "The White Pony" is almost stubbornly inadequate, being put together in inexplicable disregard of available Chinese editions.

Robert Payne has many abilities. He possesses prodigious enterprise, energy, and talent. But, despite his generous sympathies and appreciations, he lacks, thus far, that humility before detail which marks the mature poet and scholar and that responsibility toward detail which is a prime virtue in editors.

"The White Pony," whatever its spavins, however patched its harness, will, because of its size and road-coverage, make many friends. If Payne is willing to give the concentration and patience which the vast and complex materials of Chinese poetry require, he can be a more efficient courier between China and the West. With additions, with thorough and scrupulous revision, a well-groomed second edition of this present work could be the definitive and scholarly anthology for which English readers are ready, a text to be honored in both Chinese and Western literature.

## Mystic Manqué



1933: *A POEM SEQUENCE*. By Karl Wolfskehl. New York: Schocken Books. 1947. 123 pp. \$3.50.

Reviewed by  
JEAN STARR UNTERMEYER

THE SUBJECT of this poem sequence is one that interests me profoundly: the relationship between God and mankind, and more specifically between that part of mankind calling itself Israel. It is set forth here in a kind of dialogue in which sometimes the Voice (presumably God's) takes up the theme, sometimes a single man, sometimes a race. The poet knows his craft, his rhythms while largely traditional have variety and verve, his metaphors are frequently striking, his passion (which to this reviewer seems more the enthusiasm of an author for a subject than the fire of a man intent on his salvation) is youthful. And this, despite the fact that these poems were written in 1933-34 when the author

was about sixty-five years old. But, although I have read these poems a number of times I left and returned to them with a latent dissatisfaction, inexplicable to me until now when I believe I have found the reason why:

Mr. Wolfskehl expounds the law and lore basic to the faith of the Jews; the material is that of the Old Testament's major poets and prophets. But Mr. Wolfskehl, while an accomplished literateur, is major in neither role. The date-title leads us to expect an exposition of events in our time, and once we see the theme, we await an interpretation of the Jewish plight at a poetic level and in the light of a new revelation. But just this is what is lacking. These verses are as applicable to the historical Diaspora as to the scourge of Hitler; they do not bear the stamp of the present, and thus they leave the reader of the Bible missing all the more the eloquent sweetness of Isaiah, the thunder of Ecclesiastes, the finally resigned wisdom of Job, the fresh gush of Solomon's ardor. The soul of men questions and is by turns sternly exhorted, led on by enigmas, denounced, encouraged and finally ratified. But somehow the sense of immediacy is lacking, the sense of historical validity that would make the book inevitable or necessary.

It may be argued that such a theme, being timeless, need bear no marks of a specific time. And this might be so if instead it were full of a mystic insight that would have made the inherited revelation glow with new light. Poets like Herbert, Donne, Traherne and, later, Hopkins found the world of spirit afresh and gave it forth in a form so highly personal that it served as a new revelation. Certain poems in this collection remind one faintly of famous predecessors, as, for instance, "Do Not Mourn" has overtones of Thompson's "Hound of Heaven." And the last poem in the book, and one of the best, called "He" is reminiscent in manner if not in matter of E. E. Cummings. Space limitation permits quotation of only two verses.

He is not when, He is not who,  
He weighs but sets his weight aside,  
He is no dike, He is no tide.

He is not different and not so,  
Is never glad, yet free from care,  
He is not here nor anywhere.

The translators, Carol North Valloiope and Ernst Morwitz, have been unevenly successful in carrying over sense, rhythm, and sometimes rhyme-schemes. And this is already high praise since, for the most part, poetry is obdurate to translation.

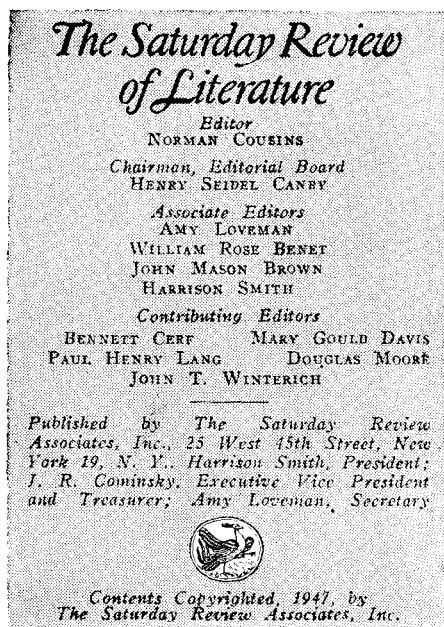
## Your Literary I.Q.

By Howard Collins

### AUTHORS AND THREE HEROES

Listed below are twenty groups of three masculine given names. Each group represents the heroes created in three different works by the same author. Can you match each group with the authors listed in the column on the right? Allowing five points for each correct tie-up, a score of sixty is par, seventy is very good, eighty or better is excellent. Answers on page 24.

- |                                     |                         |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Adam, Felix, and Silas           | ( ) Jane Austen         |
| 2. Brutus, Matt, and Robert         | ( ) James M. Barrie     |
| 3. Cashel, Colenso, and Henry       | ( ) Arnold Bennett      |
| 4. Charles, Edward, and Philip      | ( ) James F. Cooper     |
| 5. Clint, Gaylord, and Yancey       | ( ) Charles Dickens     |
| 6. Clym, Gabriel, and Michael       | ( ) George Eliot        |
| 7. Cosmo, Lawrence, and Tim         | ( ) Edna Ferber         |
| 8. David, Martin, and Nicholas      | ( ) John Galsworthy     |
| 9. Dick, Disko, and Kimball         | ( ) W. S. Gilbert       |
| 10. Doremus, Elmer, and Myron       | ( ) Thomas Hardy        |
| 11. Dorian, Ernest, and Gerald      | ( ) Ernest Hemingway    |
| 12. Edward, Fitzwilliam, and Henry  | ( ) Victor Hugo         |
| 13. Edward, Evelyn, and Priam       | ( ) Rudyard Kipling     |
| 14. Frederic, Harry, and Robert     | ( ) Sinclair Lewis      |
| 15. Frederic, Ralph, and Reginald   | ( ) Somerset Maugham    |
| 16. Gavin, John, and Peter          | ( ) Christopher Morley  |
| 17. Gwynplaine, Jean, and Quasimodo | ( ) Eugene O'Neill      |
| 18. Harvey, Natty, and Uncas        | ( ) George Bernard Shaw |
| 19. Jolyon, Michael, and Soames     | ( ) Thorne Smith        |
| 20. Martin, Richard, and Roger      | ( ) Oscar Wilde         |



## End of a Year

IT COULD hardly be expected that literature of any deep importance could have been produced during a year when international tensions were increasing, when the establishment of peace seemed further away than ever, when Americans had to face, however reluctantly, leadership of one-half of a divided world. So many hopes with which the year started have been blasted, so many projects ended in confusion that the writer, at least the producer of creative literature, did not know in which direction to turn. No new poet appeared on the horizon or any new novelist of real significance.

The United States in particular, and the peoples of the American continents in general, seemed this year to be dwelling in a sphere of their own that had little relation to the starving, prostrated millions in Asia and Europe. To visitors from abroad even a brief visit to this country was a startling experience, for here they saw in abundance spread out before their eyes in prodigal wastefulness everything that they lacked. Our own people were aware of this cosmic irony; and as it began to appear that the endless debates of the UN, the futile meetings of ministers in Moscow and London were getting us nowhere, we began to see that the world could only be saved from ruin, and man's hopes for freedom from totalitarian autocracy, by our own efforts. Our wealth from factories and farms and from our treasury must be distributed, a lifeline extended to chaos.

What began early in the year as a half-hearted attempt to keep Greece and Turkey in the Western bloc by supplying them with money, mate-

rials, and arms, has blossomed into the Marshall Plan, which will involve no one knows what dangers or how many billions of American dollars. Last January we were still talking of one world; this December what was perhaps the last conference of foreign ministers fizzed out like a wet firecracker. In this brief time we have had to learn a grim lesson; that there is implacable hostility and an apparently unbridgeable gulf between the ambitions, the expanding totalitarian communism of Soviet Russia and the institutions and ideals of the rest of the world which we now must lead into an unpredictable future.

There is now no other alternative for us except gradual surrender or perhaps, in the end, war. But this is only one cause for our uneasiness in the midst of plenty; the other is the unsolved problem of what we still call the atomic bomb, as a tribute to the memory of the now outmoded device which destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It lies at the heart of everything, for no one can chain this sleeping and growing monster which already has the power to destroy all civilization. At the end of 1947 we only know, as the whole world knows, that this country and those that are united to us must become so strong that no one will ever dare attack us. One year has brought all of us who care to think to this appalling and fearsome conclusion, that there is no hope in the kind of international debate we have witnessed, "the public disagreements publicly arrived at." The world and we ourselves are bankrupt of reason and only our armed might and continued prosperity can save us.

It has indeed been a terrible year,

## Beatitudes, 1947

By Bianca Bradbury

BLESSED are the quail and hare  
who seek

No quarrel, being gently bred and  
wise.

Blessed are the children who inherit  
Doorsteps and the damp

Of cellars. Blessed are all they who  
gaze

Through wire of this year's concen-  
tration camps.

Blessed is the doe with quiet eyes.  
Blessed are all those with alien skin,

All who turn the other cheek,

All who borrow

Against the promised legacy,

A green tomorrow—

Who wide-eyed sow in faith and reap  
in sorrow—

Blessed are the meek.

this swift conclusion that we must depend, like an armed bully, on strength, not on faith, that we must be a deadly menace to one-half the world in the hope that we can save the other half. There has not been time enough for writers to dramatize this situation, or even to explain it thoroughly. The next year, or the year after, a new kind of apocalyptic writing may appear, formed from this frightful dilemma. For the first time we may begin, as a country, to know fear, for in all our history since this nation was founded we have never entered a war which we did not know with complete assurance we would win. But it will be this perhaps unavoidable fear, to which the nations from Europe have been accustomed for centuries, that may give us the strength and the will to make ourselves invulnerable. Our writers who may have seen the battlefields of the last war and who have returned somewhat bewildered to the familiar pattern of their old life will find that their horizon has again expanded. America as the head of a coalition of nations throughout the world, wherever Russian power has failed to establish itself, must have men who can explain and dramatize our position, not only to ourselves, but to our friends and to our antagonists where we can reach them.

No one can appreciate what the effect on our culture and literature will be. It may turn gifted writers into blatant propagandists, for fear generates hate, and hate is the enemy of thought and calm reflection. Those who cannot deal with the wider aspects of our new relationship to the world may become introverted, may delve deeper into the subconscious and into the doubts and maladies that will afflict the souls and minds of men who cannot endure the strain of unending external pressures. On the other hand, there is exultation in accomplishment and in having a cause to fight for as great as that of man's freedom throughout the world. It may become a time for the poet and the essayist again, for strong and vital words and rhythms are called forth by the necessity for great and heroic effort. There may be a deeper impatience in our minds at our own weaknesses and follies, a savage anger at the kind of intolerance that will be weapons in our enemies' hands, for even while we are at peace those who would destroy us can now be measured by the tens of millions. It will be a sterner time, if we are thus to remodel ourselves into a grim colossus of armed strength and at the same time save our own freedoms, to keep intact our way of life and every man's bill of rights.

H. S.