

greatest single factor in pulling the world out of chaos. We need no further evidence of Jo'In Dos Passos's agreement than the closing paragraph of his preface for this book:

The accounts of combat all rise to one climax: the man is hit, there is the smashed body's golgotha before the medics come, then the gradual resurrection of what is left of the man, and his will to achievement in the ruined world . . . learning to walk on artificial legs. . . . These are the things we must not forget. For some reason a couple of pages under the caption "My Room in the Lilac Inn" gave me more than anything I've read a sense of what the struggle is like for a man who's trying to find a place in the world for his war-smashed body and spirit. Some of the sketches have patches of good writing in them, some of them are not well written at all, but it is hard to read them with dry eyes and without a feeling of bitter remorse that we have accomplished so little in our time towards building a nation fit for these sons and brothers and sisters of ours to give their lives for. These are things we must not forget. As you read sketch after sketch, and I for one couldn't put them down, the individual stories merge into one story. What you are reading is the life of which all our lives are a part, the story of man in our time.

It must be quite clear by now that I am urging you to go out and buy this book. *Buy this book.* Forgive me if this is a testament and not a review.

Our Gods of the Left

CRITICS AND CRUSADERS: A Century of American Protest. By Charles A. Madison. New York: Henry Holt & Co. 1947. 537 pp. \$3.50.

Reviewed by ROGER N. BALDWIN

EVEN to an old hand in radicalism, these sketches of eighteen American reformers, set in the background of their times and movements, throw a fresh critical light on the native gods of the left. Mr. Madison, a busy New York book editor, invested his spare time for six years to draw on a wealth of sources for a labor of obvious sympathy. His object, he says, was to "depict and re-evaluate our social progress of the past century."

To do so he selected a few among the "non-conformists who have helped mightily to advance social and economic freedom." The choice of three representative men and women in each of six categories may seem arbitrary; but it creates a pattern that fits together by virtue of a common loyalty to some aspect of freedom and thereby evaluates considerable "social progress." The "crusaders" are evidently the anarchists, socialists, abolitionists, and militant liberals; the "critics" are the utopians and economic dissenters—with some mixing across the groups.

Absent from the studies of native radicals are labor leaders, Negroes,

feminists, agrarians, and political reformers. The active doers tend to yield to the articulate propagandists. But the doers get honorable mention in the historical sketches introducing each of the six groups of biographies.

Mr. Madison's lives of the saints include two women, neither distinguished as feminists, only one man who graced public office, only one whose writings have endured to current reprints. Eight are New Englanders, of whom five are the inevitable Harvard graduates. Six of the eighteen lived into the present generation; the earliest was born in 1800. Five espoused imported European philosophies; all the rest rose out of the native soil of revolt.

Here they are: William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, and John Brown for the abolitionists; H. D. Thoreau, Benjamin R. Tucker, and Emma Goldman for the anarchists; Eugene V. Debs, Daniel DeLeon, and John Reed for the socialists; Margaret Fuller, Albert Brisbane, and Edward Bellamy for the utopians; Henry George, Thorstein Veblen, and Brooks Adams for the dissident economists; and for the militant liberals, Governor J. P. Altgeld, Randolph Bourne, and Lincoln Steffens.

It would be easy to add or subtract from those choices, but all of them deserve present-day recognition, and each of them throws a long shadow in the light of American radical history. With a few exceptions they were sharply individualistic characters, full of color, visions, and gallant strivings. Mr. Madison rightly says of them all that "it is at least partly due to the agitation of these critics and crusaders that the American people are at present enjoying a combination of political freedom and well-being which is the envy of the world." However that may be qualified, it fairly places them in our democracy. Many of their goals remain still to be won. Much of their passion is still relevant. Only the abolitionists could write "finis."

Mr. Madison has presented highly controversial figures and movements with a rare impartiality, and with balanced judgments evidently checked with qualified authorities. His study of comparatively little-known sources weaves a unique story of the American left up to this generation. For sympathizers it is a tonic; for others at least an antidote to complacency.

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"It was this big!"

F. D. R. in Fictionized Biography

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT. By Alden Hatch. New York: Henry Holt & Co. 1947. 397 pp. \$3.

Reviewed by MARK S. WATSON

TO THE sober and critical appraisals of Franklin Roosevelt which have come to attention in recent months now is added a novelized study, by Alden Hatch, which manages to avoid altogether any evaluation of momentous White House actions upon which, for better or worse, turned the course of American economic and political history. This "informal biography," as the subtitle calls it, seeks rather to chronicle the personal side of a popular hero's life, with anecdotes of varying importance. Thus slightly more than half of the text deals with the relatively uneventful pre-Presidential years, by that measure outweighing the earth-shaking years of three administrations: the wrecking of the World Economic Conference in 1933 ("Franklin Makes an Error") is accorded little more space or attention than the episode of a boyhood bicycle trip through Germany, and the reader is hustled past the Court-packing essay at similar speed in order to get to the narration of a more highly personal episode. Mr. Hatch speaks of his facts as "absolutely accurate" and the essential conversations as "generally verbatim" but his good intentions have to combat the handicap of the book's novelized form and the intimately dramatic manner in which historic events are impressionistically recited.

In the early pages is chronicled a boyhood call by Franklin Roosevelt, with his father, upon Grover Cleveland at the White House, and a tradition that on that occasion Mr. Cleveland admonished the boy to pray that he might escape the Presidency; likewise a succession of small stories of youth's enthusiasms for bird-collecting and the like, of the high-kick championship at Groton, of the brash freshman interview with Harvard's Dr. Eliot. There is a fleeting reference to law school uncompleted, and to the unpromising days of practice.

Politics was the foreordained field of action, of course, and it was good fortune that brought victory to young Franklin Roosevelt at his very first candidacy for the Dutchess County seat in the New York Senate. Unlike the Oyster Bay Roosevelts, these Dutchess County members were Democrats (mavericks, in young T. R.'s estimate) and one can surmise that at such a season the wily Democratic machine was not averse to exploiting the Roosevelt name, albeit with mis-



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The boy Franklin and his dog travel by donkey during one of "the relatively uneventful pre-Presidential years [1885]."

givings about any Roosevelt's staying hitched to a machine—misgivings which were to be justified by Big Tim Sullivan's discovery that "the kid is worse than Teddy: his seat wasn't warm before he bolted." This prompt demonstration came as soon as the new Senate of 1911-12 assembled at Albany to name a new United States Senator under the Senate-naming system then in effect. The Democratic majority, Tammany-dominated, was

set to elect Blue-Eyed Billy Sheehan, but twenty independent Democrats, including Roosevelt, balked at it, made up a balance of power, and held it until the Sheehan candidacy was dropped and a satisfactory substitute offered. Opportunity had knocked.

The narrative touches on growing activities in 1912, service in World War I as Assistant Secretary of the Navy (significantly, the post which Theodore Roosevelt had once occupied), the hopeless candidacy for Vice-President in 1920, and, soon afterward, the staggering blow of infantile paralysis. From a depth which would have held most men permanently this extraordinary man emerged to heights few men have dared aspire to. Some of Mr. Hatch's most useful pages are those which record that conquest of adversity, culminating in entry to the White House. On that same day, beyond one ocean, the Japanese were reaching the Great Wall of China and, beyond the other ocean, on the very next day, the new Nazi party was to attain victory in the last free election of the German Reich—surely a curious synchronizing of world events.

The years after 1933 are nearer us and their episodes more familiar. Against the grandeur of their events day-to-day anecdotes seem idle and frail, and an informal biographical treatment is grievously handicapped.

Conservatism Without Alarm

TOTAL WAR AND THE CONSTITUTION. By Edward S. Corwin. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. 1947. xx + 182 pp. \$2.50.

Reviewed by T. V. SMITH

CONSERVATIVES — at least in America—are apt when articulate to be alarmist, a prerogative in "the eternal fitness of things" obviously belonging to the radical. To find a conservative who can speak of the "portentous" in a well-modulated voice is to discover what is as precious as it is rare. Greet, as a shining example of this virtue, Professor Edward S. Corwin, an meet, as exhibit M (for he has written many volumes), the present treatise.

The book was given as lectures primarily for lawyers (University of Michigan), and so will admit of simplification for our purpose. The theme is that our constitutional changes, made natural in war if not necessitated thereby, are never revoked in peace. So the tendency of change is all one way, is cumulative, is portentous, and is *away* from states' rights, away from Congressional autonomy,

away from judicial protection of the individual against government—it is, in short, away from "rights" altogether. The tendency is *toward* executive (in)discretion, toward administrative uncircumspection, toward social rather than individual objectives, and toward security rather than liberty. The leeway allowed the Executive in World War I was utilized as constitutional reason for more of the same during the New Deal "emergencies." It was again enlarged, most probably for good, during World War II. Moreover, what "total war" made appear inevitable, "total peace" will most likely make seem desirable.

All this, if true, is clearly portentous; but it is kept from alarmism by the author's scholarship, his temperament of sweet reasonableness, his whimsy of good humor, perhaps in part here by being addressed to lawyers, and most of all, it may be, by his having constructive notions as to how to keep the bad from becoming the worst. But that is for the reviewer another story, and for the author another volume. Long may the flow continue from Edward Corwin's gifted pen.