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THE MAN FROM BAR HARBOUR. By Gilroy Mitcham. *Roy*. \$2.75. Nick Marshall, London shamus, in pickle when client he never saw turns up dead in shabby hotel; cops are suspicious. (Note: this story has nothing to do with the Maine Bar Harbor.) Author's first yarn topped this.

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—SERGEANT CUFF.

Book of the Week

Continued from page 19

history, allotting only two chapters to all the great Asiatic societies before this century. As the principal forces in the long struggle for freedom he singles out religion, economics, and politics. All have helped to liberate men, but also to enslave them: religion by the tyranny of superstition and taboo, economics by exploitation and social injustice, politics by the inveterate concentration on war. In particular Professor Shotwell dwells on the theme of war, now the plainest threat to civilization, as the major impediment to freedom all through recorded history. Although the "drum and trumpet" historians of the past gave many pages to military affairs, he argues that neither they nor social scientists have yet paid adequate attention to the deeper effect of the war system—on religion, on the economy, and above all on government. In his view, politics were born of war and have always been dominated by it. Today modern weapons have made war a political anachronism.

These choices in emphasis are by no means arbitrary or provincial. The conscious struggle for freedom, especially political freedom, has in fact been centered in the Western world; until lately the East has been devoted to other values. If Professor Shotwell has over-compensated for the neglect of war, trying to explain too much by it, its importance can hardly be exaggerated, least of all in this century. The upshot, however, is a largely conventional kind of political history. The author acknowledges that he has paid slight attention to freedom of thought. He does not make clear enough, I think, the importance of cultural factors that he has slighted: of literature and the arts, of philosophy other than political, of technology and science before the industrial revolution. A paragraph on the Reverend Martin Luther King, for instance, may make one aware that bare mention, if any at all, is given to Homer, Thales, Euripides, da Vinci, Shakespeare, Newton, Darwin, and innumerable other key figures.

It would be unreasonable, of course, to demand of Professor Shotwell an exhaustive history of freedom, and peevish to suggest that he should have written a different kind. His chosen approach is obviously most pertinent. Still, it should be noted that this approach limits his survey of the contemporary world too. His history of our century is chiefly a straightforward political report, supplemented by the familiar criticisms of militarism and totalitarianism. Professor Shotwell offers little an-

alysis of underlying causes, makes little contribution to a fuller understanding of the revolutionary developments. Although deeply concerned over the threats to individual freedom, he gives scant attention to the unlegislated social constraints of a mass civilization. He virtually ignores the basic problems of democratic culture, the mass media, the possible portents of a Brave New World.

At heart Professor Shotwell is an old-fashioned rationalist and liberal. Just because I share his essential faith I feel obliged to remark that it comes out rather too simple. Thus he conscientiously notes the paradoxes of history, how the major forces that have promoted freedom have also obstructed it; but he typically finds these paradoxes "almost incredible" and implies that "the enthronement of reason" will take care of them. There is less tension in his thought than there was in Lord Acton's, less subtlety and less irony. When Dr. Shotwell takes up our current problems he glides too easily from what "must" be done to what "will" be, with too little concrete demonstration of how it can be done. One may not be convinced that "the promise of ultimate victory"—victory over superstition, war, and injustice—"already shines before us."

Yet I should finally emphasize that "The Long Way to Freedom" is informed by not only great good will but a great deal of good sense. Professor Shotwell is truly liberal in spirit—fair-minded, broadminded, generous. His concept of freedom as justice is not shallow. The challenge he proposes is



summed up in what he calls the finest sentence in the Treaty of Versailles: "Permanent peace can be established only if it is based on social justice." If he is too optimistic about the chances of such peace, he is nevertheless right: social justice is the only solid basis. In his Wilsonian idealism he is more realistic than both the doctrinaire Communists who promise justice by the method of violence, and the hard-headed Americans who equate freedom with private business, and propose as the most urgent challenge the balancing of the national budget.

LITERARY I.Q. ANSWERS

Column Two should read: 8, 5, 2, 9, 6, 4, 1, 10, 7, 3.



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T. S. Eliot

Continued from page 17

Eliot. "Preludes" introduces the typical sordid furniture of the Eliot world, a Baudelairean rather than Laforgean world. The poem is a series of images evoking despair and disgust. The popularity of the poem comes from its seriousness, the transference from a youthful, well-educated ennui to a genuine, if not very thoughtful, revulsion for all those people "raising dingy shades in a thousand furnished rooms." Eliot here imports the clichés of nineteenth-century French poetry about the wickedness (i.e., mediocrity) of the modern city. "Rhapsody on a Windy Night," a much more convincing poem, dramatizes and symbolizes the horror of the city. Eliot has already found the Culture of the modern city; by simply recording its images (a broken spring in a factory yard, a morsel of rancid butter, the toothbrush hanging on the wall) he evokes a cultured response—the response of the avant-garde reader to society. It is assumed, without having to say so, that the modern city is a degeneration of the past. *Now he knows what to say*: the housemaids have "damp" souls; people await the evening paper for want of something better; the old order changeth and Cousin Nancy has taken to smoking; the poet is quietly rejecting both the present and the immediate past—the American past.

The first really literary poem comes in this phase also. (I use the term "literary" opprobriously.) "Mr. Apollinax" marks a new Eliot; the epigraph becomes an integral part of the poem, an explanation of it; and there is no attempt to provide links from the reader's experience to the cultural cues. The meter begins to break and the rhymes are now artfully coarsened (afternoon-macaroon). Mr. Apollinax is something of a pagan oracle to Eliot and a priapic figure, but not to the Boston professors who entertain him. The poem is inferior to the "Rhapsody" in every way; it is already a culture poem and an exercise in footnoting.

ELIOT'S reputation to a large extent is based upon the poems of this early period, and rightly so. "Prufrock," "Portrait of a Lady," "Preludes," and the "Rhapsody" are among his best works. Of these "Prufrock" is head and shoulders above the rest and is sufficient to justify Eliot's claim as one of the most gifted twentieth-century poets. At the same time it is extremely close to *vers de société*, as the first reviewers were aware (and first impressions are generally valuable in literary criticism),

while the other poems mentioned are almost mannerist in their attention to theory and precedent. These are true weaknesses and Eliot is evidently conscious of their defects, the proof being that he deserts these forms for new ones.

In the next phase we find the majority of the poems in pedantic and ironic quatrains. There is one attempt at a "major" form, as the critics say, in the poem "Gerontion," and there are several poems in French, which cannot certainly be judged as English poems. The quatrain poems introduce Sweeney and various minor characters in Eliot's pantheon. In this group there is also the extraordinarily crude anti-church poem named "The Hippopotamus," one of those surprising lapses of Eliot's which almost equal his good poems in number. Equally crude is the embarrassing anti-Jewish poem "Burbank with a Baedeker," an unhappy utterance of the modern "classical" school. Bleistein is "Chicago Semite Viennese" and he is described in disgusting physical detail. It is interesting to note that as Eliot's feelings become more violent and shocking the epigraphic matter becomes more talky and deranged. The quotation affixed to this poem is a hodgepodge of a French poem, a Latin motto, something from Henry James, something from Shakespeare, something from Browning, and something from Marston. It is as obscure as the quatrains are clear. The Chicago Shylock and the British baronet with a Jewish name have taken back Venice, according to this culture lyric. Stylistically and otherwise there is little virtue in the piece. Stylistically there is little or nothing of value in all the quatrain poems, "Sweeney Erect," "A Cooking Egg," "Whispers of Immortality," "Mr. Eliot's Sunday Morning Service," and the famous "Sweeney Among the Nightingales." In these poems Eliot is exploring the possibilities of character symbols; most turn out to be mere caricatures and do not appear again. Sweeney survives as a representation of Eliot's dim view of modern man. Eliot tries humor in the poems, if humor is the proper word (a highly polysyllabic bumbling kind of pseudo-British joking); and this he alternates with scenes of horror and disorder made ironical by the propriety of the meters. The close of the Nightingale poem is said by critics to mark a high point of nobility, why I am not sure, unless it is that Eliot leaves off "Rachel née Rabinovitch" and switches to Agamemnon and the Convent of the Sacred Heart. These closing lines, if indeed they are serious, are cheap rather than noble and so poorly articulated that they can barely be pronounced. These poems show a

drastic falling-off from the poet's earlier work. (I have said nothing of the complexities of cultural allusion in these poems; most people know them and accept them as part of the rocky road to modern poetry.)

"GERONTION" is usually placed high among Eliot's works; but it is not much better than "Mr. Apollinax" and is in fact an extension of that poem in its manner. In order to escape a derivative Symbolism, Eliot has settled on the borrowing of quotations. Without a knowledge of the sources the poems sound more or less unified; the quotations themselves remove some of the author's responsibility for what the poems say. Eliot was here working out a method for a kind of poem which would implant certain ideas and images in the reader's mind, almost as if Eliot himself had nothing to do with the poem.

The use of quotation without reference has a further advantage: it creates a specialized class of readers: I am quite serious when I say that Eliot is here providing texts for a new academic faculty. In the same way as Pound he is trying to solve an educational problem. But "Gerontion" is also a personal catechism of the poet's religious hopes and doubts and is part of his spiritual autobiography. Its best feature is the rhetorical accretion of the same grammatical form and the use of meaningless but suggestive names. The theme of the youthless-ageless man, which is Eliot's one contribution to symbology, is advanced again, as in all his earlier poems. And there is in "Gerontion" a careful propaganda for Eliot as a symbolic figure, the poet deep in thought, seated among the ruins of the ages, longing for a salvation which will suit his intellect as well as his desires for spiritual comfort.

"The Waste Land" is the most important poem of the twentieth century; that is, the one that has caused the most discussion and is said by critics to be the culmination of the modern "mythic" style. The poem, by Eliot's own admission, is a collaboration with Pound. Pound edited it and removed one-third or two-thirds of it. The "continuity," we can assume, is therefore the work of Pound, who abhorred continuity in his own more ambitious poetry. As everyone knows how to read the poem or can find out by visiting the nearest library, I will say nothing about its meaning. I will speak rather of the success and the failure of the poem. That the poem is lacking in unity is obvious (assuming, as I do, that unity is a literary virtue). Any part of "The Waste Land" can be switched to any other part without changing the sense

of the poem. Aside from the so-called mythic form, which is worthless and not even true—for Eliot misread James Joyce's "Ulysses" when he saw it as a parallel to Homer—the underlying unity of the poem is tonal and dramatic, exactly as a Victorian narrative poem would be. Eliot tries to conceal this indispensable literary method by mixing languages, breaking off dramatic passages, and dividing the poem into sections with titles. But what really keeps the poem moving is its rhetoric, its switches from description to exclamation to interrogation to expletive, sometimes very beautifully, as in the passages beginning "Unreal City." The straight descriptive passages are weak: "A Game of Chess" is one of the duller and most meretricious of Eliot's writings, indicating his own dissatisfaction with that kind of verse. The dialogue, on the other hand, is generally good. The best moments of all are the image passages, where the images are set in dramatic tonalities: "What the Thunder Said" is the finest of these. The very worst passages are those which are merely quotes; even Eliot's most abject admirers can find no justification of the last lines of the poem, with its half-dozen languages and more than half a dozen quotations in a space of about ten lines.

"The Waste Land," because of its great critical reputation, not because of any inherent worth it might have, is one of the curiosities of English literature. Its critical success was, I daresay, carefully planned and executed, and it is not beyond the realm of possibility that the poem was originally a hoax, as some of the first readers insisted. But hoax or not, it was very shortly made the sacred cow of modern poetry and the object of more pious literary nonsense than any modern work save the "Cantos" of Pound. The proof of the failure of the "form" of this poem is that no one has ever been able to proceed from it, including Eliot himself. It is, in fact, not a form at all but a negative version of form. It is interesting to notice that in the conventional stanzas of the quatrain poems Eliot is more personally violent and ugly about his own beliefs; in his unconventional style the voice of the poet all but disappears and is replaced by characters from his reading.

The emergence of Eliot's piety in "The Hollow Men" and in "Ash-Wednesday" takes the form of self-disgust in the one and self-pity in the other. "The Hollow Men" is in every way a better poem than "The Waste Land," though the parodistic style again enforces a poverty of statement and language which become the marks of

self-imitation in Eliot. "Ash-Wednesday" is probably even more laden with gratuitous quotation than "The Waste Land," but its ecclesiastical imagery and richness of music give the poem a beauty which the poet can finally accept as beauty. Eliot here luxuriates in the emotions of piety and surrender which seemed shameful to his puritan soul in a purely human situation. The Eliot-God equation, once he has made the daring step, gives him an intellectual-emotional balance for the first time in his career. After the publication of this poem, Eliot's former work seems more of a piece and his future work is all laid out for him, everything from church pageants to Christmas card poems. The "Ariel" poems are relatively simple and almost narrative. The rest of the poems are shelved under "fragments," minor pieces, and unfinished experiments. Eliot's career as a poet virtually comes to a close with "Ash-Wednesday." After that there is criticism, theology, and drama. The "Four Quartets" is the only attempt at what modern criticism calls a "major" poem—meaning a poem that deals with Culture wholesale. The "Quartets" was hailed by the Eliot critics as his crowning achievement; actually it is evidence of the total dissolution of poetic skill and even a confession of poetic bankruptcy. Eliot is quite open about this in the "Quartets."

THE "Quartets" is Eliot's bid to fame as a "philosophical poet." In it he expounds his metaphysics, his poetics, and his own place in the scheme of things. All of this is quite legitimate and not at all surprising; what is disturbing about the poems is their commonplaceness, their drabness of expression, their conventionality, and, worst of all, their reliance on the schoolbook lan-

guage of the philosophy class. Eliot has traded poetry for the metaphysical abstraction, as in "The Waste Land" he had traded narrative for "myth." This development is psychologically consistent, a descent from French Symbolism to Metaphysical complexity-for-the-sake-of-complexity, to pastiche, to the myth-science of "The Golden Bough," to philosophical abstraction without poetic content. It all ends in the complete abandonment of poetry. When he comes to the drama in earnest he knows, of course, that he must use human language and he begins a new ascent into literature and the voices of poetry. But the "Quartets" lies at the bottom of the literary heap. All the so-called lyric sections, with one or two exceptions, are written with such disregard for the ear that one cannot associate them with the Eliot of "Prufrock" or the "Rhapsody." "Garlic and sapphires in the mud/ Clot the bedded axle-tree" is typical of this diction devoid of both image and music. Eliot, who used to condemn poets like Tennyson for what he called crudeness of feeling, here shows an insensitivity toward language which is marvelous. The more prosy passages are even void of that kind of poetry which rises from the use of imagery or sound. As for the philosophical development, it fails to reach a state of poetry and it may fail as philosophy—of this I am no judge. The much-quoted third section of "East Coker" about everyone going into the darkness, even people in the Almanach de Gotha and the Stock Exchange Gazette, is possibly the best passage of a long, very bad piece of writing; one feels that here there is an acceptance of the badness of the writing, as if good writing no longer held any meaning for the poet. The "lyric" section that follows contains a stanza



"Get off this property, unless somebody wants to get shot."

("The whole earth is our hospital. Endowed by the ruined millionaire...") which in its vulgarity of thought and expression is hardly superior to "Only God can make a tree." For the rest there is a kind of narcissistic figure of the aging Eliot lolling through the poem, the climactic Dante imitation in "Little Gidding," and finally the magnificent passage "Sin is Behovely, but all shall be well." Unfortunately these glorious lines are not Eliot's but are one of his borrowings. In general, "The Four Quartets" appears to be a deliberately bad book, one written as if to convince the reader that poetry is dead and done with. We should remember Eliot's life-long interest in the final this and the final that and at least entertain the possibility that "The Four Quartets" was intended to stand as the last poem in the Great Tradition. Eliot and Pound have both shown themselves to be capable of such arrogance.

I have now said all the wicked things I can think of about Eliot and it remains at last to say something favorable. At the beginning of these remarks I mentioned one phase of Eliot's work in which I regard him as a true poet and a man of rich spiritual insight. While I cannot feel that Eliot has contributed anything to the spiritual advancement of our age, I am convinced that he tried. But why is it that his own poems are rubrics rather than works of art? What are they for? What are they trying to say? Is it really all just sociology, reactionary politics, bitterness, spite, and despair? I think not. I have spoken of the apparently deliberate erosion of his great gifts, leading to the final desertion of poetry. And I have touched on Eliot's escape into religion. Here is a capital puzzle for the critic.

MY SOLUTION to the puzzle is this. The motivating force in Eliot's work is the search for the mystical center of experience. This search in his case has been fruitless and increasingly frustrating. Eliot's entire career is a history of his failure to penetrate the mystical consciousness. He begins as a youth with Symbolism when it is already a dying religious-esthetic mystique. He moves from Symbolism to the Metaphysical poets of the seventeenth century. (Neither the dictionary nor modern criticism explains what it is that interested Eliot in these poets, for it certainly was not extreme metaphorical technique or what the textbook calls the conceit.) Eliot was fascinated by the Metaphysical poem because it is virtually a demonstration of prayer. Nearly all the Metaphysical poets were Divines, men deeply troubled by the

new scientific knowledge. What Eliot studied in their poetry was the possibility of fusing sacred with secular knowledge in poetry. Metaphysical poetry lies close to absurdity because it is premised on this peculiar dualism. We recall also that Eliot associated the fairly recent French poet Laforgue with the English Metaphysicals, for at one time it seemed to Eliot that a keen enough wit might serve as a key to the door that refused to open. But neither Symbolism nor Metaphysical sacred poetry offered a way to Eliot, even when he tried a fusion of the two. Third, he attempted secular mythology as a way to penetrate the mystical consciousness. It was in this phase that he wrote "The Waste Land," a poem which is a jumble of sacred and "profane" myths, adding up to nothing.

Meanwhile, both Eliot and Pound discovered T. E. Hulme, whose essays provided written authority for them both, in different ways. Every major doctrine of Eliot's can be found in Hulme's "Speculations," the most basic the one that relates fundamental Christian doctrine to a theory of society and a theory of poetics. Hulme formulated for Eliot the attack on Romanticism and the attack on mysticism (for the Romantic and the mystical are always related, while the Classical and the orthodox are related in their way, at least in the critical mind). Hulme pointed the way for Eliot to orthodoxy in letters and to ritual and dogma in the spiritual realm. I consider Hulme's book as the "Mein Kampf" of modern criticism and a thoroughly evil work; and it was Eliot's undoing. For after the assimilation of Hulme, the rest is elaboration. Except for one thing: the search for the mystical center of experience goes on. Eliot worries it in Dante, in the Hindu scriptures, in St. John of the Cross, and in Julianne of Norwich. But poets of more recent vintage who come closer to mysticism infuriate Eliot, and he pours out his scorn on Blake, Lawrence, Whitman, and our own

Transcendentalists. Yet it is eternally to Eliot's credit that he does not fake the mystical (as he seems to accuse Blake of doing) and it is also to his credit that he does not relapse into magic and spiritualism, as Yeats did. It appears that Eliot is not even acquainted with esotericism; at least he does not seem to be conscious of the esoteric meaning of the Tarot, which he uses in "The Waste Land," but only as its magical meaning for fortunetelling.

THE failure to achieve mystical consciousness drove Eliot back to metaphysics proper and to religion proper. This in my view is the great failure of Eliot. Eliot ends up as a poet of religion in the conventional sense of that term. And once having made the religious commitment he tried to visualize a religion-directed society; he thus becomes an official of the most conservative elements of society and a figurehead for all that is formalized and ritualized. Yeats's fascination for the Byzantine betrays the same spiritual conservatism, as does Pound's fascination for the corporate state and the führer principle. And Eliot ends his quest with his caricature of the modern poet-priest or psychiatrist-priest who alone has power to allay the Furies. Witch-hunting runs through Eliot from beginning to end.

Eliot is a poet of religion, a thoroughgoing anachronism in the modern world, a poet of genius crippled by lack of faith and want of joy. I believe in Blake's proverb that "the road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom." Had Eliot ever set foot on that road he might have been as great a seer as Whitman or Rimbaud or even Dylan Thomas.

Mr. Shapiro's essay in expanded form, will appear in a book "In Defense of Ignorance," to be published in April by Random House.

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Death of a Versifier

By Sydney Kessler

We found him holding the dog to his heart,
And closed his wound with a string of lies.
Since time is slipping off the chart,
All friends are welcome:—no one cries.

His songs were seldom more than trite.
The dog, called Truth, had watched for days.
This is the man we found bled white,
Still swathed in tourniquets of praise.

Science in Politics

Continued from page 24

inclined, the new utopians take this question very seriously. If manipulating people is bad—and manipulation is one of the dirtiest words in the new lexicon—how can one justify the manipulation of people for good ends?

This is a problem still being seriously discussed. But there is a fallacy in all this twaddle. The theorists are assuming what they have to prove.

Where, then, it may be asked, should they have begun? They should have begun with the first step in scientific method, and that is to admit your complete ignorance of the problem you are to solve. The second step is to feel some real curiosity about what the answer will turn out to be. But the new utopians, to use Whyte's phrase, are twittering about ethics and democracy. Instead of discarding all these preconceptions, as a true scientist obviously must, they are still befogged by all they learned at college. They have not cleared their minds of cant. Faced with theories such as theirs, Roger Bacon exclaimed:

If I had my way I should burn all the books of Aristotle, for the study of them can only lead to a loss of time, produce error, and increase ignorance.

The quantity of books which are today increasing ignorance would come to an impressive total. It would be well, however, if ignorance were all that they produced. For the chief obstacle to progress is not ignorance but knowledge; and just such knowledge as medieval physicians had of medicine. They were all stuffed with information. They knew all there is to know about the habits of the unicorn and dragon. They knew the importance of the horoscope and they learned the peculiarities of the salamander. They had piles of books dealing with all aspects of medicine. But medical progress dates, in fact, from the moment when the physician stopped looking at the books and tried looking at the patient. In politics that is a moment we have not yet reached.

Suppose, however, that we gain the first step, and then the second; how do we proceed from there? First of all, we shall have realized that scientific progress is made step by step and one at a time, and that each step rests not on theory but on fact. We shall then grasp that the questions commonly propounded are at present insoluble. If asked what form of government is best, we can only reply that the question is meaningless. Best for whom and in what way and

where? But if the question were rephrased in more exact terms, we should have to admit that our researches have only just begun. Good government is that which governs well. Its effectiveness is measurable in terms of population, fertility, health, education, efficiency, economy, public spirit, and obedience to law. Its further effect is less certainly measurable in terms of learning, literature, drama, music, and art. Careful investigation of all that has been achieved might reveal, to begin with, some tentative grounds for thinking that there may be an optimum size for the political unit. It might perhaps be shown that states tend to stagnate when too small and become inefficient when too large.

If we are to progress beyond these elementary facts about, say, the size of the unit to be administered, we need to call in the anthropologist, the historian, the psychologist, the statistician, and the specialist in public health. With their help we might attempt a further set of problems. What should be the number, age, and sex of persons to whom authority is to be entrusted? How long should a meeting be allowed to last? What should be the rules of procedure? We need information of this kind before we can reach the conclusions upon which further progress can be based. We also need some careful investigation of what the mass of people want and need and of how (if at all) their views can be usefully expressed. In this way we might eventually reach the point at which the merits of monarchy and aristocracy, democracy and dictatorship could be compared. At present the means of comparison simply do not exist. —C. NORTHCOTE PARKINSON.

FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT NO. 871

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 871 will be found in the next issue.

CXHA B LBA PD
CNBFFHM EF PA
XPLDHOK XH LBQHD B
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—HARVARD LAMPOON.

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