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As we have therefore OPPORTUNITY let us do good unto all men —Galatians 6:10

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The Negro: “New” or Newer

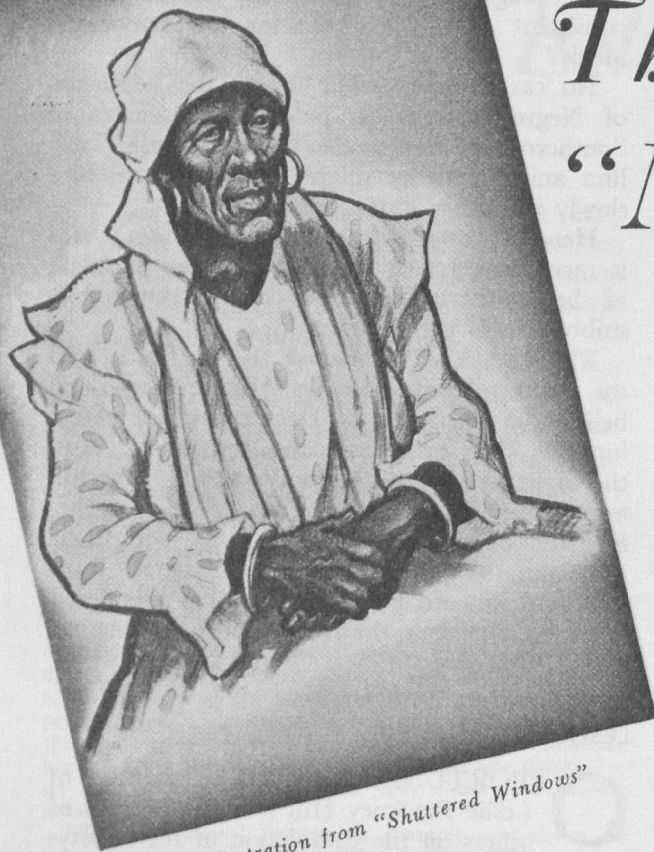
A Retrospective Review of the Literature of
the Negro for 1938.

tivity of approach on the part of the Negro artist to his subject-matter, a greater diversity of styles and artistic creeds, a healthier and firmer trend toward self-criticism, and perhaps most important of all, a deepening channel toward the mainstream of American literature and art as white and Negro artists share in ever-increasing collaboration the growing interest in Negro life and subject-matter. These are encouraging and praiseworthy gains, all of which were confidently predicted under the convenient but dangerous caption of “The New Negro.”

But a caption’s convenience is part of its danger; so is its brevity. In addition, in the case in question, there was inevitable indefiniteness as to what was meant by the “New Negro.” Just that question must be answered, however, before we can judge whether today’s Negro represents a matured phase of the movement of the 20’s or is, as many of the youngest Negroes think and contend, a counter-movement, for which incidentally they have a feeling but no name. These “bright young people” to the contrary, it is my conviction that the former is true and that the “New Negro” movement is just coming

Fiction

- The Dead Go Oversea*—Arthur D. Howden Smith, Greystone Press, N. Y., \$2.50.
Tommy Lee Feathers—Ed Bell, Farrar & Rinehart, N. Y., \$2.50.
How Sleeps the Beast—Don Tracy, M. S. Mill Co., N. Y., \$2.00.
The Back Door—Julian R. Meade, Longmans, Green & Co., N. Y., \$2.50.
Point Noir—Clelie Benton Huggins, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, \$2.50.
Aunt Sara’s Wooden God—Mercedes Gilbert, Christopher Publishing House, Boston, \$2.00.
Uncle Tom’s Children—Richard Wright, Harper & Bros., N. Y., \$2.50.
Love at the Mission—R. Hernekin Baptist, Little Brown & Co., Boston, \$2.50.
What Hath a Man—Sarah Gertrude Millin, Harper & Bros., N. Y., \$2.50.



An Illustration from “Shuttered Windows”

• By ALAIN LOCKE

PART I.

IT is now fifteen years, nearly a half a generation, since the literary advent of the “New Negro.” In such an interval a new generation of creative talent should have come to the fore and presumably those talents who in 1924-25 were young and new should today be approaching maturity or have arrived at it. Normally too, at the rate of contemporary cultural advance, a new ideology with a changed world outlook and social orientation should have evolved. And the question back of all this needs to be raised, has it so developed or hasn’t it, and do we confront today on the cultural front another Negro, either a newer Negro or a maturer “New Negro?”

A critic’s business is not solely with the single file reviewing-stand view of endless squads of books in momentary dress parade but with the route and leadership of cultural advance, in short, with the march of ideas. There is no doubt in the panoramic retrospect of the years 1924 to 1938 about certain positive achievements:—a wider range of Negro self-expression in more of the arts, an increasing maturity and objec-

into its own after a frothy adolescence and a first-generation course which was more like a careen than a career. Using the nautical figure to drive home the metaphor, we may say that there was at first too little ballast in the boat for the heavy head of sail that was set. Moreover, the talents of that period (and some of them still) were far from skillful mariners; artistically and sociologically they sailed many a crooked course, mistaking their directions for the lack of steadying common-sense and true group loyalty as a compass. But all that was inevitable in part; and was, as we shall later see, anticipated and predicted.

But the primary source of confusion perhaps was due to a deliberate decision not to define the "New Negro" dogmatically, but only to characterize his general traits and attitudes. And so, partly because of this indefiniteness, the phrase became a slogan for cheap race demagogues who wouldn't know a "cultural movement" if they could see one, a handy megaphone for petty exhibitionists who were only posing as "racialists" when in fact they were the rankest kind of egotists, and a gilded fetish for race idolaters who at heart were still sentimentalists seeking consolation for inferiority. But even as it was, certain greater evils were avoided—a growing race consciousness was not cramped down to a formula, and a movement with a popular ground swell and a folk significance was not tied to a partisan art creed or any one phase of culture politics.

THE most deliberate aspect of the New Negro formulation—and it is to be hoped, its crowning wisdom—was just this repudiation of any and all one-formula solutions of the race question, (its own immediate emphases included), and the proposed substitution of a solidarity of group feeling for unity within a variety of artistic creeds and social programs. To quote: "The Negro today wishes to be known for what he is, even in his faults and shortcomings, and scorns a craven and precarious survival at the price of seeming to be what he is not. He thus resents being spoken of as a social ward or minor, even by his own, and to being regarded a chronic patient for the sociological clinic, the sick man of American Democracy. For the same reasons, *he himself is through with those social nostrums and panaceas, the so-called 'solutions' of his 'problem', with which he and the country have been so liberally dosed in the past. Religion, freedom, education, money—in turn he has ardently hoped for and peculiarly trusted these things; he still believes in them, but not in blind trust that they alone will solve his life-problem.*"

How then even the *enfants terribles* of today's

youth movement could see "cultural expression" as a substitute formula proposed by the "New Negro" credo I cannot understand, except on the ground that they did not read carefully what had been carefully written. Nor would a careful reading have been auspicious for their own one-formula diagnosis of "economic exploitation" and solution by "class action." Not only was there no foolish illusion that "racial prejudice would soon disappear before the altars of truth, art and intellectual achievement," as has been asserted, but a philosophy of cultural isolation from the folk ("masses") and of cultural separatism were expressly repudiated. It was the bright young talents of the 20's who themselves

Chicago Skyscrapers

By FRANK MARSHALL DAVIS

HERE in this fat city
Men seventy-two inches short
Have frozen their dreams
Into steel and concrete
Six hundred feet tall

Thin fingers
On the hard hand
Of Chicago's loop
Are these skyscrapers
Rubbing bright sides
Of rainbow stars
Tearing the gray gauze
Of low clouds
Dipping in the sizzling pot
Of a summer sun
Passing the jeweled moon
From tower to tower
Like a sapphire ring

While below

The masters move
Dreaming greater dreams
Of taller buildings
Turning today's longest fingers
Into dwarf-like thumbs
Constantly pushing
Evolution in stone
Until some day
Heaven will be
Merely another high floor
Barked by a uniformed boy
On an express elevator
Then
A cranky God
Jealous of his privacy
May bend the fingers downward
Toppling tall dreams frozen
In steel and concrete
Upon the puny dreamers
Grinding all into
A chaos of blood and stone

But
Remembering the Tower of Babel
Even that would not
Discourage other builders—
The tireless breed who dream
In iron and granite. . . .

went cosmopolite when they were advised to go racial, who went exhibitionist instead of going documentarian, who got jazz-mad and cabaret-crazy instead of getting folk-wise and sociologically sober. Lest this, too, seem sheer rationalizing hind-sight, let a few direct quotations from *The New Negro* testify to the contrary. Even more, the same excerpts will show that a social Reformation was called for as the sequel and proper goal of a cultural Renaissance, and that the present trends of second generation "New Negro" literature which we are now passing in review were predicted and reasonably anticipated. For reasons of space, quotations must be broken and for reasons of emphasis, some are italicized:

"A transformed and transforming psychology permeates the masses. . . . In a real sense it is the rank and file who are leading, and the leaders who are following. . . . It does not follow that if the Negro were better known, he would be better liked or better treated. (p. 10) . . . Not all the new art is in the field of pure art values. There is poetry of sturdy social protest and fiction of calm dispassionate social analysis. But reason and realism have cured us of sentimentality: instead of the wail and appeal, there is challenge and indictment. Satire is just beneath the surface of our latest prose and tonic irony has come into our poetic wells. These are good medicines for the common mind, for us they are the necessary antidotes against social poison. Their influence means that *at least for us* the worst symptoms of the social distemper are passing. And so the social promise of our recent art is as great as the artistic. (p. 52) . . . Each generation, however, will have its creed, and *that of the present* is the belief in the efficacy of collective effort, in race cooperation. This deep feeling of race is *at present* the mainspring of Negro life. . . . It is radical in tone, but not in purpose and only the most stupid forms of opposition, misunderstanding or persecution could make it otherwise. Of course, the thinking Negro has shifted a little toward the left with the world trend, and there is an increasing group who affiliate with radical and liberal movements. But fundamentally *for the present* the Negro is radical on race matters, conservative on others, in other words a "forced radical," a social protestant rather than a genuine radical. Yet under further pressure and injustice iconoclastic thought and motives will inevitably increase. Harlem's quixotic radicalisms call for their ounce of democracy today lest tomorrow they be beyond cure. (p. 11).

IT is important, finally, to sum up the social aspect of the New Negro front with clarity because today's literature and art, an art of searching social documentation and criticism, thus becomes a consistent development and matured expression of the trends that were seen and analyzed in 1925.

"The Negro mind reaches out as yet to nothing but American wants, American ideas. But this forced attempt to build his Americanism on race values is a *unique social experiment*, and its ultimate success is *impossible except through the fullest sharing of American culture and institutions*. There should be no delusion about this. American nerves in sections unstrung with race hysteria are often fed the opiate that the trend of Negro advance is wholly separatist, and that the effect of its operation will be to encyst the Negro as a benign for-

eign body in the body politic. This cannot be—even if it were desirable. The racialism of the Negro is no limitation or reservation with respect to American life; it is only a constructive effort to build the obstructions in the stream of his progress into an efficient dam of social energy and power. Democracy itself is obstructed and stagnated to the extent that any of its channels are closed. Indeed they cannot be selectively closed. So the choice is not between one way for the Negro and another for the rest, but between American institutions frustrated on the one hand and American ideals progressively fulfilled and realized on the other." (p. 12).

The generation of the late 30's is nearer such a cultural course and closer to such social insight than the tangential generation of the late 20's. Artistic exploitation is just as possible from the inside as from the outside, and if our writers and artists are becoming sounder in their conception of the social role of themselves and their art, as indeed they are, it is all the more welcome after considerable delay and error. If, also, they no longer see cultural racialism as cultural separatism, which it never was or was meant to be, then, too, an illusory dilemma has lost its paralyzing spell. And so, we have only to march forward instead of to counter-march; only to broaden the phalanx and flatten out the opposition salients that threaten divided ranks. Today we pivot on a sociological front with our novelists, dramatists and social analysts in deployed formation. But for vision and morale we have to thank the spiritual surge and aesthetic inspiration of the first generation artists of the renaissance decade.

And now, to the literature of this year of reformation, stir, and strife.

In fiction, two novels by white authors remind us of the background use of Negro materials that used to be so universal. Many such have been ignored as not basically "Negro literature" at all. However these two, Clelie Benton Huggins' *Point Noir* and Arthur Smith's *The Dead Go Oversea*, do exhibit significant if limited use of Negro historical and local color materials. The latter particularly, documenting intensively New England's part in the slave traffic, weaves a melodramatic love story and sea rescue over the sombre details of a New Bedford fishing schooner's conversion into a slave raider and a sturdy personality deteriorating as it passes from cod-fishing to the more prosperous job of man-hunting. Also picaresque is Ed Bell's *Tommy Lee Feathers*, a local color novel of Marrowtown, a Tennessee Negro community. Reasonably well studied local color and characterization are seldom met with in the rustic humor school of Negro fiction, so *Tommy Lee Feathers* registers progress even in its broad stroke characterizations of the exploits of the town's "Black Angels," Tommy's football team, and the more conscious angels of Sister Feather's "Sanctified

Church." One does not, of course, expect serious social commentary under this idiom. But too much "safe" entertainment of this sort has laid the groundwork for bad sociology.

However, it is noteworthy how much serious social commentary there really is in this year's crop of fiction, from both the white and the Negro authors. Already we are used to the semi-doctrinal criticism of the Erskine Caldwell school, which by the way he continues with usual unsparing and unrelieved realism in his latest volume of stories, *Southways*, but there are other and as I think more effective brands of realism. Certainly one of the most convincing and moving bits of documentary fiction on the racial situation is Don Tracy's reportorial but beautifully restrained *How Sleeps the Beast*. More even than the famous movie *Fury*, this novel gives the physiology of American lynching; not just its horror and bestialities, but its moods and its social mechanisms. Vince, who starts out by saying to his girl, "I ain't goin', I got no truck with lynchin's" eventually goes under her taunts; Al Purvis, whose life poor Jim had saved, starts out to rescue him but succumbs to social cowardice and mob hysteria; the Sheriff is jostled from official indifference to sectional hate at the sign of a "Yankee meddler," and a newspaper reporter hunted by the mob for fear of exposure barely escapes the same fate by sleeping the night through in the "malodorous room marked 'Ladies,'" after having been ordered out the back-door of the local Eastern Maryland Shore hotel while the mob pickets the entrance. In realism charged with terror, but tempered with pity and understanding, Don Tracy has written in the Steinbeckian vein the best version yet of this great American tragedy and of the social obsessions that make it happen.

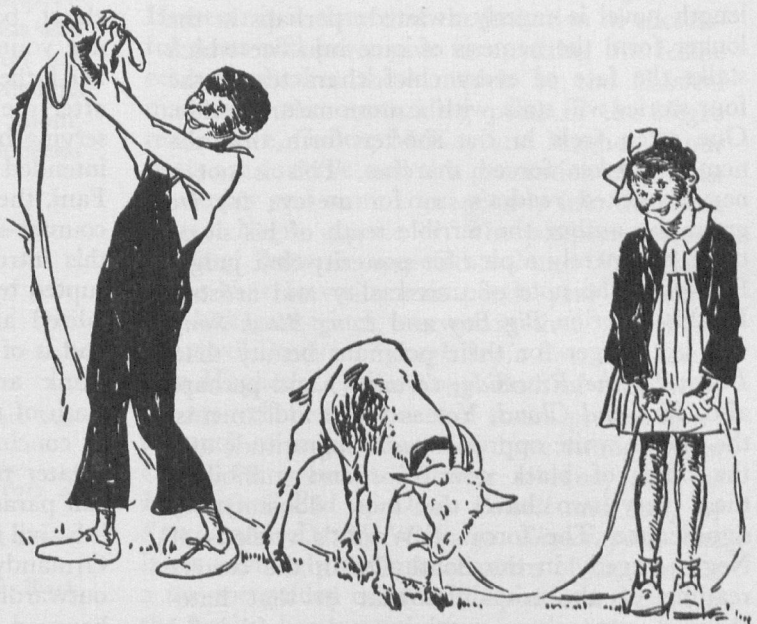
More notable still, because about a more normal social subject, is Julian Meade's saga of Mary Lou Payton, the most fully characterized domestic Negro servant in all the tedious range of Negro servitors in American fiction. *The Back Door* is a book of truthful, artistically-balanced human documentation. Mary Lou's always precarious hold on the good things in life, on both domestic job and self-respect, on her amiable tobacco-worker lover beset by the wiles of looser women on the one hand and unemployment and occupational disease on the other, on her cherished but socially unrewarded respectability that every other week or so con-

fronts the dreaded advances of Frank Anderson, the philandering white rent-collector, on even the job itself, are all portrayed with pity and sympathetic irony. *The Back Door* is as much a step above *Porgy* as *Porgy* was above its predecessors. Its deftly true touches—the wedding ring bought on installments and eventually confiscated, the lay-off that enables Jim to half conquer his consumptive cough, the juvenile blackmail of "Mr. Willie's" retort, "I know durn well *you* hook a plenty on the sly" as reply to Mary's frantic, "Mr. Willie, please don't bother them sandwiches," even the unwitting irony of the waiting ladies' missionary hymn,

*"Can we whose souls are lighted
With wisdom from on high,
Can we to men benighted
The lamp of life deny?"*

are all triumphs of the school of delicate realism well contrasted with the bludgeoning effects of the school of rough-shod realism. To the small sum of Southern classics must be added this tender saga of Stoke Alley and Chinch Row.

TO the fine achievements just mentioned, two Negro writers make this year a sizeable contribution. In the first, Mercedes Gilbert's *Aunt Sara's Wooden God*, the theme of the story is more important than its literary execution. Despite a too lenient introduction by Langston Hughes, this first novel is no masterpiece, not even a companion for *Ollie Miss* or *Jonah's Gourd Vine* with which it is bracketed; but it is promising and in subject matter significant. William Gordon, the illegitimate son, is the favored but profligate brother, Aunt Sara's "Wooden God."



An Illustration from "Araminta's Goat"

From the beginning a martyr to his mother's blind partiality, Jim, the darker brother, takes from start to finish the brunt of the situation—the childhood taunts, the lesser chance, the lion's share of the farm work while William is in school or frittering away time in Macon, then the loss of his sweetheart, Ruth, through the machinations of William, and finally imprisonment for William's crime. Amateurish overloading, as well as the anecdotal style of developing the episodes of the story, robs the book of its full tragic possibilities. William's eventual return to a death-bed reconciliation and Aunt Sara's pious blessings is only relieved by his attempted confession and Jim's heroic resolve not to disillusion Aunt Sara. Our novelists must learn to master the medium before attacking the heavier themes; a smaller canvas dimensionally done is better than a thin epic or a melodramatic saga. Here is a great and typical theme only half developed, which someone—perhaps the author herself—must some day do with narrative power and character insight.

IN contrast, Richard Wright in *Uncle Tom's Children* uses the novella with the sweep and power of epic tragedy. Last year the first of these four gripping tales, *Big Boy Leaves Home*, was hailed as the most significant Negro prose since Toomer's *Cane*. Since then it has won the *Story Magazine* award for the national WPA's Writers' Project contest, and a second story, *Fire and Cloud*, has won second prize in the O. Henry awards. This is a well-merited literary launching for what must be watched as a major literary career. Mr. Wright's full-length novel is eagerly awaited; perhaps in the longer form the nemesis of race injustice which stalks the fate of every chief character in the four stories will stalk with a more natural stride. One often feels in the shorter form that the nemesis makes forced marches. This is not a nerve-wrecked reader's cry for mercy; for we grant the author the terrible truth of his situations, but merely a plea for posterity that judges finally on the note of universality and artistry. By this criterion *Big Boy* and *Long Black Song* will last longer for their poignant beauty than *Down By the Riverside*, certainly, and perhaps also, *Fire and Cloud*. Yet as social indictments, the one of white oppression and ingratitude and the other of black cowardice and gullibility, these very two have the most documentary significance. The force of Wright's versions of Negro tragedy in the South lies in the correct reading of the trivialities that in that hate-charged atmosphere precipitate these frightful climaxes of death and persecution; an innocent

Juvenile

- Shuttered Windows*—Florence C. Means, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, \$2.00.
Araminta's Goat—Eva Knox Evans, G. P. Putnam's Sons, N. Y., \$2.00.
Country Life Stories—Elizabeth Perry Cannon and Helen Adele Whiting, E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., N. Y., 65c.
Bantu Tales Retold—Pattee Price, E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., N. Y., \$1.50.
Negro Folk Tales—Helen Adele Whiting, Associated Publishers, Washington, D. C., \$1.10.
Negro Art, Music and Rhyme—Helen Adele Whiting, Associated Publishers, Washington, D. C., \$1.10.
The Child's Story of the Negro—Jane D. Shackelford, Associated Publishers, Washington, D. C., \$1.40.

boy's swimming prank in *Big Boy*, a man's desperate need for a boat to rescue his pregnant wife during a Mississippi flood, a white salesman's casual infatuation while trying to sell a prosperous black farmer's wife a gramophone, a relatively tame-hearted demonstration for food relief in the other three stories. And so, by this simple but profound discovery, Richard Wright has found a key to mass interpretation through symbolic individual instances which many have been fumbling for this long while. With this, our Negro fiction of social interpretation comes of age.

Love at the Mission is Mr. R. Hernekin Baptist's sternly tense story of the frustrations of three daughters of Pastor Oguey, a South African missionary. Hedged about by the double barriers of race and Puritanism, Hortense, the eldest, becomes involved in morbid jealousy of her younger sister's love affair, plots to poison her father, the symbol of this isolation, blames it after the fashion of the country on the African serving boy. But finally she has to stand for her intended crime and wither jealously in prison. Fani, the African nurse and housekeeper, is the counter-symbol of black paganism tolerant of this intruding Puritanism but never quite corrupted by it. Indeed the novel is really a pictorialized analysis of the futility of missionarism, and is of considerable significance because of its frank and carefully-studied approach to the clash of native and Nordic mores. In key so far as conclusions go, Sarah Gertrude Millin, with greater maturity, has analyzed the South African paradox from the point of view of an English civil servant with a tender conscience. Henry Ormandy, the hero of *What Hath a Man*, is outwardly successful as an individual but is haunted to the end of his career by his realization of the futility of the white man's self-im-

posed mission of imperialism. Mrs. Millin has woven into the earlier part of the story, when Ormandy encounters Cecil Rhodes just after the raid of Matabeleland, remarkable documentary evidence that Rhodes himself had a troubled conscience and paused once in his ruthlessness. But the very brevity of such a gesture in a cold-blooded game keynotes Mrs. Millin's indirect but quite effective indictment of imperialism as does also Henry's lonely, terrible death. This too, although on the surface a novel of character study, is a novel of social protest; another David's pebble against our modern Goliath. The cause of social justice has been well served this year by the novelists.

A PROMISING symptom is the rapid growth of serious and sympathetic juvenile books on the Negro theme. Mrs. Florence Means in *Shattered Windows* has written a story of an educated girl from the North, Harriet Freeman, and her struggle for the enlightenment of the illiterate South Carolina Island folk. Eva Knox Evans adds to her already well-known Jerome Anthony series of Negro child stories a sympathetic and quizzical tale of *Araminta's Goat*. Two gifted Negro teachers have collaborated to bring out a laudable public school reader series, beginning with *Country Life Stories*, a book that deserves wide circulation. Mrs. Helen Adele Whiting, Miss Cannon's collaborator in the foregoing, has independently brought out through the Associated Publishers two attractively bound and illustrated child's books, *Negro Folk Tales* and *Negro Art, Music and Rhyme*; the first much more successful in diction than the latter, but both only laudable pathbreakers in the important direction of introducing African legends and simplified race history to children. Dutton has also brought out Pattee Price's rhymed versions of *Bantu Tales*, genuinely true to folk idiom, which is all to their credit, but not too success-

fully adapted to the average child mind. All this is symptomatic of an important trend, of as much significance for general social education as for mere child entertainment. The crowning achievement in this field, however, is *The Child's Story of the Negro*, written by Miss Jane Shackelford. Here in fascinating style the riches of race history are minted down in sound coin for juvenile consumption and inspiration. More attractive format would make this real contribution a child's classic, and it is to be hoped that a second edition will make this advantageous addition.

Returning to the adult plane, the situation of poetry must claim our attention briefly. Time was when poetry was one of the main considerations of the Negro renaissance. But obviously our verse output has shrunk, if not in quantity, certainly in quality, and for obvious reasons. Poetry of social analysis requires maturity and group contacts, while the poetry of personal lyricism finds it hard to thrive anywhere in our day. Especially so with the Negro poet whose cultural isolation is marked; to me it seems that this strain of expression is dying a natural death of spiritual suffocation, Beatrice Murphy's anthology of fledgling poets, *Negro Voices*, to the contrary. Here and there in this volume one hears a promising note; almost invariably, however, it is a poem of social analysis and reaction rather than one of personal lyricism. To the one or two veterans, like Hughes, Frank Davis, Louis Alexander, a small bevy can be added as discoveries of this meritorious but not too successful volume: Katherine Beverly, Iola Brister, Conrad Chittick, Marcus Christian, Randolph Edmonds, Leona Lyons and Helen Johnson. However it is clear that the imitation of successful poets will never give us anything but feeble echoes, whether these models be the classical masters or the outstanding poets of the Negro renaissance, Cullen, McKay and Hughes. If our poets are to serve well this generation they must go deeper and more courageously into the heart of real Negro experience. The postponement of Sterling Brown's expected volume *No Hidin' Place* thus leaves a lean poetic year of which the best garnerings, uneven at that, are Frank Marshall Davis's *Through Sepia Eyes* and Langston Hughes's *A New Song*. Both of these writers are vehemently poets of social protest now; so much so indeed that they have twangy lyres, except for moments of clear vibrancy such as Hughes's *Ballad of Ozzie Powell* and *Song of Spain* and Davis's *Chicago Skyscrapers*, the latter seemingly the master poem of the year in a not too golden or plentiful poetic harvest. On the foreign horizon the appearance of the young Martiniquian poet, L. G. Damas, is significant;

Poetry

Exile—Leslie M. Collins, Privately printed, Fort Valley, Ga.

Pigments—L. G. Damas, La Pleiade Press, Paris.

Poems in All Moods—Alfred Cruickshank, Port of Spain, Trinidad, \$1.00.

Negro Voices—Edited by Beatrice M. Murphy, Henry Harrison, N. Y., \$1.50.

Through Sepia Eyes—Frank Marshall Davis, Black Cat Press, Chicago, 50c.

A New Song—Langston Hughes, International Workers Order, N. Y., 15c.

Drama

Big White Fog—Mss., Theodore Ward, Chicago Federal Theater.

Haiti—Mss., William Du Bois, New York Federal Theater.

The Divine Comedy—Mss., Owen Dodson, Yale University Experimental Theater.

Don't You Want to be Free?—Langston Hughes, One Act Play Magazine, Nov., 1938.

otherwise the foreign output, like the domestic, is plaintive and derivative.

Whereas poetry languishes, drama seems to flourish. The honors are about evenly divided between the experimental theatres and the Federal Theatre Project. The latter, with several successful revivals, *Run Little Chillun* among them, had as new hits Theodore Ward's *Big White Fog* and William Du Bois's moving though melodramatic *Haiti* to its credit. On the other hand, the experimental theatre has given two Negro playwrights a chance for experimentation both in form and substance that may eventually lead somewhere. Dodson's *The Divine Comedy*, the Yale Theatre's contribution, is a somewhat over-ambitious expressionistic rendition of Negro cult religion that shows promise of a new writing talent, while the Harlem Suitcase Theatre's *Don't You Want to Be Free?* has vindicated the possibilities of a new dramatic ap-

proach. Both are to be watched hopefully, but especially the latter, because a people's theatre with an intimate reaction of the audience to materials familiar to it is one of the sound new items of a cultural program that in some of the arts, drama particularly, has stalled unnecessarily. This theatre and the Richmond Peoples' Theatre, under the auspices of the Southern Youth Congress and the direction of Thomas Richardson, supply even better laboratory facilities than the drama groups of the Negro colleges, laudable as their Intercollegiate Dramatic Association is. It is to be hoped that real folk portraiture in drama may soon issue from these experiments. In the dramatized "Blues Episodes" of *Don't You Want to Be Free?*, and in the promising satirical sketches that the same theatre has recently begun, I see potentialities such as I have previously discussed at length. I am not only anxious to see them develop but anxious for some further confirmation of the predicted role of the drama in the Negro movement of self-expression in the arts. Not that an individual critic needs to be sustained, but since the course was plotted by close comparative study of other cultural movements, some national and some racial, rather that the history of this phase of our cultural development should demonstrate the wholesome principle that the Negro is no exception to the human rule. For after all, it is the lesson of history that a cultural revival has been both the symptom and initiating cause of most people's awakenings.

Dr. Locke will conclude his discussion of the literature of the Negro for 1938 in next month's OPPORTUNITY.

Dunbar

By JAMES EDWARD ANDREWS

THERE is a music in the lonely wood;
And on the moon-struck sea, a sweet refrain.
A balm there is in sleep, slow-falling rain—
No music like a people understood!
Most noble bard! within his realm I stood,
And saw the filtered sunlight slowly wane,
Till dark ensued—would he were here again
To teach us as of yore the humbler good.
The melody of simple lives he caught;
He fettered on life's scroll the spark divine.
Life sang its siren song; with love he wrought
A haunting rhapsody, a heady wine.
In awe I heard the tune, the minstrel sought—
And found him singing such a song as mine.



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As we have therefore OPPORTUNITY let us do good unto all men —Galatians 6:10

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The Negro: "New" or Newer

A Retrospective Review of the Literature of
the Negro for 1938.

ately integrated with the general issues and the competing philosophies of that crisis.

Before inspecting the varied stock of the year, a brief retrospective word is needed. Committed to no one cult of aesthetics (and least of all to the creed of "art for art's sake," since it tried to focus the Negro creative writer upon the task of "folk interpretation"), *The New Negro* movement did have a rather definite set of objectives for its historical and sociological literature. These were a non-apologetic sort of biography; a boldly racial but not narrowly sectarian history; an objective, unsentimental sociology; an independent cultural anthropology that did not accept Nordic values as necessarily final; and a social critique that used the same yardstick for both external and internal criticism. A long order—which it is no marvel to see take shape gradually and by difficult stages. Again to satisfy the skeptical, let quotations from *The Negro Digs Up His Past* attest:

"The American Negro must remake his past in order to make his future. Though it is orthodox to think of America as the one country where it is unnecessary to have a past, what is a luxury for the nation as a whole becomes a prime social necessity for the Negro. For him, a group tradition must supply compensation for persecution and pride of race the antidote for prejudice. History must restore what slavery took away, for it is the social damage of slavery that the present generation must repair and offset."

But this call for a reconstructed group tradition was not necessarily pitched to the key of chauvinism, though there is some inevitable chauvinism in its train. Chauvinism is, however, the mark and brand of the tyro, the unskilled and unscientific amateur in this line, and we have had, still have and maybe always



An Illustration from "African Mirage."

• By ALAIN LOCKE

PART II.

AS we turn now to the biographic, historical and sociological literature of the year, we find the treatment of the Negro, almost without exception, maturing significantly. There is, on the whole, less shoddy in the material, less warping in the weaving, and even what is propaganda has at least the virtue of frank, honest labeling. The historical cloth particularly is of more expert manufacture and only here and there exhibits the frousy irregularities of amateur homespun. General social criticism reaches a record yardage; and so far as I can see, only the patient needle-point of self-criticism has lagged in a year of unusual, perhaps forced production. Forced, because undoubtedly and obviously the pressure behind much of this prose of social interpretation is that of the serious contemporary economic and political crisis. But fortunately also, a considerable part of this literature is for that very reason, deliber-

will have our brash amateurs who rush on where scientists pause and hesitate. However, this was recognized, and warned against, and was spoken of as the mark of the old, not of the newer generation. It was said:

"This sort of thing (chauvinistic biography and history) was on the whole pathetically over-corrective, ridiculously over-laudatory; it was apologetics turned into biography. But today, even if for the ultimate purpose of group justification, history has become less a matter of argument and more a matter of record. There is the definite desire and determination to have a history, well documented, widely known at least within race circles, and administered as a stimulating and inspiring tradition for the coming generations. But gradually as the study of the Negro's past has come out of the vagaries of rhetoric and propaganda and become systematic and scientific, three outstanding conclusions have been established:

"First, that the Negro has been throughout the centuries of controversy an active collaborator, and often a pioneer, in the struggle for his own freedom and advancement. This is true to a degree which makes it the more surprising that it has not been recognized earlier.

"Second, that by virtue of their being regarded as something 'exceptional,' even by friends and well-wishers, Negroes of attainment and genius have been unfairly disassociated from the group, and group credit lost accordingly.

"Third, that the remote racial origins of the Negro, far from being what the race and the world have been given to understand, offer a record of creditable group achievement when scientifically viewed, and more important still, that they are of vital general interest because of their bearing upon the beginnings and early development of culture.

"With such crucial truths to document and establish, an ounce of fact is worth a pound of controversy. So the Negro historian today digs under the spot where his predecessor stood and argued."

THE mere re-statement of this historical credo of the New Negro (1925) shows clearly that not only has it not been superseded, but that it has yet to be fully realized. Indeed it was maintained at that time that the proper use of such materials as were available or could be unearthed by research was "not only for the first true writing of Negro history, but for the *rewriting of many important paragraphs of our common American history.*" One only needs an obvious ditto for sociology, anthropology, economics, and social criticism to get the lineaments of a point of view as progressive, as valid, and as incontestable in 1939 as fifteen years ago.

Indeed we may well and warrantably take this as a yardstick for the literature which we

now have to review. Professor Brawley has excellently edited the *Best Prose of Paul Laurence Dunbar*; a service as much to social as to literary criticism. For by including with the short stories excerpts from his novels, Dunbar's pioneer attempts at the social documentation of Negro life are brought clearly to attention. Less artistic than his verse, Dunbar's prose becomes nevertheless more significant with the years; here for the most part he redeems the superficial and too stereotyped social portraiture of his poetry and shakes off the minstrel's motley for truer even if less attractive garb. Robinson's volume of stories, *Out of Bondage*, is, on the other hand, such thinly fictionalized history as to have little literary value and only to be of antiquarian interest. It is hard, no doubt, to galvanize history either in fiction or biography, but Arthur Huff Fauset's crisp and vivid *Sojourner Truth* proves that it can be done. This—beyond doubt the prize biography of the year and one of the best Negro biographies ever done—takes the fragile legend of Sojourner and reconstructs an historical portrait of illuminating value and charm. It lacks only a larger canvas giving the social background of the anti-slavery movement to be of as much historical as biographic value; and even this is from time to time hinted back of the vigorous etching of this black peasant crusader.

Just this galvanic touch is missed in the scholarly and painstaking biography, historical critique, and translation of the poems of *Juan Latino*, by Professor Valarez Spratlin. Thus this detailed documentation of the ex-slave Humanist, the best Latinist of Spain in the reign of Philip V and incumbent of the chair of Poetry at the University of Granada, rises only momentarily above the level of purely historical and antiquarian interest. In the verses of Latino there was more poetics than poetry, but the *Austriad* faithfully reflected the florid Neoclassicism of Spain of the 1570's; the biography could and should have shed a portraiture light, if not on the man, then at least on his times, for concerning them there is plenty of material.

The Life of George Washington Carver, under the slushy caption of *From Captivity to Fame*, is a good example of what race biography once was, and today should not be. Purely anecdotal, with an incongruous mixture of petty detail and sententious moralisms, it not only does not do the subject justice, but makes Dr. Carver a "race exhibit" rather than a real human interest life and character. One is indeed impressed with the antithesis between the sentimental, philanthropic, moralistic approach and the historico-social and psychological approaches of modern-day biography. They are perhaps ir-

Biography and Belles Lettres:

The Best Short Stories of Paul Laurence Dunbar—Edited by Benjamin Brawley, Dodd, Mead & Co., N. Y., \$2.75.

Out of Bondage and Other Stories—Rowland E. Robinson, Charles E. Tuttle Co., Rutland, Vermont, \$2.50.

From Captivity to Fame, The Life of George Washington Carver—Raleigh H. Merritt, Meador Publishing Co., Boston, \$2.00.

Black Dynamite—Nat Fleischer, Ring Publishing Co., Madison Square Garden, N. Y., \$1.50.

Sojourner Truth—Arthur Huff Fauset, University of N. C. Press, \$1.00.

William Alpheus Hunton—Addie W. Hunton, Association Press, N. Y., \$2.00.

Against the Tide—A. Clayton Powell, Sr., Richard R. Smith & Co., N. Y., \$2.00.

The Black Jacobins—C. L. R. James, The Dial Press N. Y., \$3.75.

Tell My Horse—Zora Neale Hurston, J. B. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia, \$2.00.

Linea de Color—I. Pereda Valdez, Editions Ercilla, Santiago y Chile.

El Negro Rio-Platense y otros Ensayos—I. Pereda Valdez, Editions Garcia, Montevideo, Uruguay.

Juan Latino: Slave and Humanist—Edited by V. B. Spratlin, Spinner Press, Inc., N. Y., \$2.00.

Negro and African Proverbs in Racial Proverbs—S. G. Champion, Geo. Routledge & Sons, London, \$10.00.

reconcilable. Mrs. Addie Hunton's biography of her well-known husband, William Alpheus Hunton, pioneer leader of the Y.M.C.A. work among Negroes, is an example and case in point. A point of view that spots a career only by its idealistic highlights, that is committed to making a life symbolic, whether of an ideal or a movement, that necessarily omits social criticism and psychological realism, scarcely can yield us what the modern age calls biography. It is more apt to be the apologia of a "cause." In spite of such limitations, the Hunton biography is a record worth reading just as the life behind it was thoroughly worth living, but neither a moralistic allegory nor a thrilling success story like Pastor Clayton Powell's creditable autobiography will give us the objective social or human portraiture which the present generation needs and for the most part, desires.

The Black Jacobins by the talented C. L. R. James is, on the other hand, individual and social analysis of high order and deep penetration. Had it been written in a tone in harmony

with its careful historical research into the background of French Jacobinism, this story of the great Haitian rebel, Toussaint Louverture, and his compatriots Christophe and Dessalines, would be the definitive study in this field. However, the issues of today are pushed too passionately back to their historic parallels—which is not to discount by any means the economic interpretation of colonial slavery in the Caribbean, but only a caution to read the ideology of each age more accurately and to have historical heroes motivated by their own contemporary idiom of thought and ideas. There is more correctness in the historical materials, therefore, than in the psychological interpretation of these truly great and fascinating figures of Negro history.

UNLESS it be characterized as the breezy biography of a cult, Zora Neale Hurston's story of voodoo life in Haiti and Jamaica is more folklore and *belles lettres* than true human or social documentation. Scientific folk-lore, it surely is not, being too shot through with personal reactions and the piquant thrills of a travelogue. Recently another study has given Voodooism a more scientifically functional interpretation and defense, and Voodooism certainly merits an analysis going deeper than a playful description of it as "a harmless pagan cult that sacrifices domestic animals at its worst." Too much of *Tell My Horse* is anthropological gossip in spite of many unforgettable word pictures; and by the way, the fine photographic illustrations are in themselves worth the price of the book. The social and political criticism, especially of the upper-class Haitians, is thought-provoking; and caustic as it is, seems no doubt deserved in part at least. One priceless epigram just must be quoted: "Gods always behave like the people who make them."

Contrasting in thoroughness and sobriety with these excursions into *Caribbeana* are the two works of the Uruguayan race scholar, Ildefonso Pereda Valdes. Through the studies of Fernando Ortiz, the learned scholar of Afro-Cubana, and the work in Afro-Braziliana by Dr. Arthur Ramos, shortly to be published in abridged translation by the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, the field of the Negro elements in Latin American culture is at last being opened up to the scientific world generally, and to the North American reader in particular. Not yet translated, Senor Valdes's studies are an important extension of this most important field. In *Linea de Color*, he largely interprets the contemporary culture of the American and Cuban Negro while in *El Negro Rio Platense*,

he documents the Negro and African elements in the history, folklore and culture of Brazil, the Argentine and Uruguay, and traces Negro influences from Brazil right down into furthestmost South America. Important studies of Negro idioms in the popular music of Brazil, of African festivals and superstitions in Uruguay and the valley of the Rio de la Plata open up a fresh vein of research in the history and influence of the Negro in the Americas. In *Linea de Color* are to be found pithy urbane essays on Nicholas Guillen, the Afro-Cuban poet, the mulatto Brazilian poet, Cruz E Souza, and on African dances in Brazil. In the other volume, more academic essays on the Negro as seen by the great Spanish writers of the Golden Age in Spain and several other cosmopolitan themes attest to the wide scholarship of Senor Valdes. It is refreshing and significant to discover in far South America an independently motivated analogue of the New Negro cultural movement. *Linea de Color* reciprocates gracefully by giving a rather detailed account of the North American Negro renaissance in terms of its chief contemporary exponents, cultural and political. It has been an unusual year for Negro biography and folk-lore, the latter capped academically by the exhaustive collation of African and Negro American proverbs in Champion's monumental *Racial Proverbs*.

AS is to be expected, the documentation of Negro life in the Federal Writers' Project, *The American Guide Series*, is varied, uneven and ranges through history to folklore and from mere opinion to sociology. But on the whole the yield is sound and representative, due in considerable measure to the careful direction of these projects from the Federal editorial office. *New York Panorama*, however, in its sections on the Negro, misses its chances in spite of the collation of much new and striking material. Moderately successful in treating early New York, it fails to interpret contemporary Harlem soundly or deeply. Indeed it vacillates between superficial flippancy and hectic propagandist expose, seldom touching the golden mean of sober interpretation. In *The New Orleans City Guide* the Negro items are progressively integrated into the several topics of art, music, architecture, folk lore and civic history in a positively refreshing way. This exceeds the usual play-up of the Creole tradition at the expense of the Negro, and for once in the Creole account the Negro element is given reasonable mention. The *Mississippi Guide* is casual, notable for its omissions in its treatment of the Negro; and savors as much of the reactionary tradition of the Old South as

the New Orleans Guide does of the liberal New South that we all prefer to hold with and believe in. The Old South is an undeniable part of the historical past; but as a mirror for the present it is out of place and pernicious.

Thus liberal studies like *A Southerner Discovers the South* by Jonathan Daniels and Frank Shay's *Judge Lynch: His First Hundred Years* become the really important guides to social understanding and action. They, with most of the solid literature of the New South—which someone has said is the necessary complement of the New Negro—keep accumulatively verifying these basic truths: that the history of the South itself is the history of the slave regime, that the sociology of the South is its aftermath and retribution, and that the reconstruction of the entire South is its dilemma and only possible solution. Whatever common denominator solution can be found is the problem of the present generation. Thus for Mr. Shay, lynching is rightly not just the plight of the Negro but the disease of law and public opinion; while for Mr. Daniels the Negro is not so much a problem as a symptom. This realistic third dimension now being projected into the consideration of the race problem is the best hope of the whole situation, and should never be lost sight of by any observer, black or white, who wishes today to get credence or give enlightenment.

For this reason, Professor Stephenson's study of *Isaac Franklin: Slave Trader and Planter of the Old South* is as social history of the newer, realistic type as much a document of Negro history as it is of the socio-economic story of the plantation regime. Factual almost to a fault, it is a model of careful objective statement; no one can accuse this author of seeing history through colored spectacles of opinions. Only slightly less objective, and even more revealing is Professor Bell Wiley's study of *Southern Negroes: 1861-1865*. But a decade ago so frank and fair an account of the Negroes during the crisis of the Civil War would have been very unlikely from the pen of a Southern professor of history and certainly unthinkable as a prize award of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. Southern abolitionism, Negro unrest and military service to both sides, the dilemmas of Southern policy and strategy, are not at all glossed over in a work of most creditable historical honesty. Almost a companion volume, by chance has come Professor Wesley's penetrating study entitled *The Collapse of the Confederacy*. Here surely is a fascinating division of labor—an analysis of the policy of the Confederacy by a Negro historian and of the status and behavior of the Negro population during the same period

Historical and Sociological:

Chapters on the Negro in *The American Guide Series*—Federal Writers Project—*The Mississippi Guide*, Viking Press, Inc., N. Y., \$2.50; *The New Orleans City Guide*, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, \$2.50; *New York Panorama*, Random House, Inc., N. Y., \$2.50.

Isaac Franklin, Slave Trader and Planter of the Old South—Wendell Holmes Stephenson, Louisiana State University Press, \$2.00.

The Negro in Louisiana—Charles B. Rousseve, Xavier University Press, New Orleans, \$2.00.

The Collapse of the Confederacy—Charles H. Wesley, Associated Publishers, Inc., Washington, D. C., \$2.15.

Southern Negroes: 1861-1865—Bell Irvin Wiley, Yale University Press, New Haven, \$3.00.

Judge Lynch: His First 100 Years—Frank Shay, Ives Washburn, Inc., N. Y., \$2.50.

A Southerner Discovers the South—Jonathan Daniels, The MacMillan Co., N. Y., \$3.00.

The Black Man in White America—John G. Van Deusen, Associated Publishers, Washington, D. C., \$3.25.

The Negro and the Democratic Front—James W. Ford, International Publishers, N. Y., \$2.00.

Howard University Studies in Social Science, Vol. I.—Edited by Abram L. Harris.

The 1938 Year Book: Journal of Negro Education: Relation of the Federal Government to Negro Education, \$2.00.

The Negro College Graduate—Charles S. Johnson, University of N. C. Press, \$3.00.

American Caste and the Negro College—Buell G. Gallagher, Columbia University Press, \$2.50.

by a white historian. Dr. Wesley carefully and incisively documents the economic breakdown of the Confederate economy, showing its military defeat as merely its sequel. He is also insistent on the too often forgotten facts of the Confederacy's last frantic dilemma about military emancipation and the proposed use of Negro soldiers to bolster its shattered man-power. Thus both the historical and the contemporary Southern scene have this year had significant, almost definitive interpretations.

The fascinating subject of *The Negro in Louisiana* has unfortunately not had anything approaching definitive treatment at the hands of Professor Rousseve; for his volume, a creditable ground-breaker, has too much sketchiness and far too little social interpretation to match worthily the rapidly rising level of Southern historical studies.

Turning from the regional to the national front, we find the discussion of the race problem gains by the wider angle of vision and attack. We find also one great virtue in the eco-

nomic approach, apart from its specific hypotheses—an insistence on basic and common factors in the social equation. The economic interpretation of the race question is definitely gaining ground and favor among students of the situation. Both studies in the long anticipated Volume I of the *Howard University Studies in Social Science* have this emphasis, the one explicitly, the other by implication. Wilson E. Williams' dissertation on *Africa and the Rise of Capitalism* breaks pioneer ground on the importance of the slave trade in the development of European commerce and industry in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries and establishes the thesis that it was a "very important factor in the development of the capitalist economy in England"—one might warrantably add, of Western capitalism. The second essay, by Robert E. Martin, skillfully analyzes *Negro Disfranchisement in Virginia*, not in the traditional historical way, but by documenting the shifts of political policy and the mechanisms of majority-minority interaction, thus bringing to the surface conflicts of interest and motives too often unnoticed or ignored. Apart from such clarifying information these studies, reflecting the trend of the graduate instruction of which they are products, seem to predict a new approach in this field with broad implications and deep potentialities.

IN contrast to this critical economic attack, J. W. Ford's *The Negro and the Democratic Front* hews rather dogmatically to the official Marxist line, but with frank and zealous insistence. Its frankness is a virtue to be praised; as is also the value of having a clear, simply-put statement of the Communist interpretation of major national and world issues from the angle of the Negro's position. Though largely a compendium of Mr. Ford's addresses, it does focus for the layman a unified picture of radical thought and programs of action. Quite to the opposite, John G. Van Deusen in *The Black Man in White America* has taken up the cudgels for gradualism, gratuitously and with feeble effect. To a book seven-eighths full of patiently assembled and well-organized facts about every important phase of Negro life, Professor Van Deusen adds the banalities of philanthropic platitudes and dubious advice. He counsels "patience," expects "education and understanding" and in another paragraph "that universal solvent: Time" to solve the Negro problem, yet admits that "the greatest part of the work of conciliation remains to be accomplished." If there were some automatic strainer to separate fact from advice and opinion, this book would be a boon to the average reader, for there are

regrettably few up-to-date compendiums of the facts about Negro life.

In education, there are three books of note this year. The Yearbook of the *Journal of Negro Education*, in keeping with the high standard of all its five annual year-book issues, documents exhaustively and in many regards critically *The Relation of the Federal Government to Negro Education*. Similarly exhaustive, with elaborate deduction of trends but little or no overt social criticism, Professor Charles Johnson's study of *The Negro College Graduate* offers for the first time since DuBois's *Atlanta Studies* an objective and composite picture of the college-bred Negro. Significant conclusions are the relatively low economic standard of the Negro in professional service and the serious displacement of trained Negro leadership from the areas of greatest mass need. It may be plead that an objective survey study should only diagnose and must not judge or blame. But just such vital correlation with social policy and criticism of majority attitudes is boldly attempted in President Buell Gallagher's book, *American Caste and the Negro College*. Instead of just describing the Negro college, Dr. Gallagher spends seven of his fourteen chapters analyzing the social setting and frame of reference of the Negro college, namely the American system of color caste with its taboos and techniques of majority domination and minority repression. Then he illuminatingly decides that in addition to its regular function as a college, a Negro college has imposed upon it the function of transforming and transcending caste, or to quote: "the segregated college has a special set of responsibilities connected first, with the problem of transforming the caste system" and second, "with the success of the individual member of the minority group in maintaining his own personal integrity in the face of defeat, or of partial achievement." If for no other reason, such keen analysis of the social function of Negro education would make this an outstanding contribution; but in addition, the diagnosis is sound, the prescriptions liberal and suggestive, and the style charming. Indeed a noteworthy contribution!

AFRICAN life has a disproportionately voluminous literature, since any European who has been there over six weeks may write a book about it. It is safe to say that over half of this literature is false both as to fact and values, that more than half of what is true to fact is false in interpretation, and that more than half of that minimal residue is falsely generalized—for Africa is a continent of hundreds of different cultures. So, the best of all possible interpreters

is the intelligent native who also knows, without having become de-racialized, the civilization of the West. Next best is the scientific interpreter who uses the native informer as the open sesame to African social values. The virtue of Rene Maran's *Livingstone* is that he himself knows by long acquaintance that same equatorial Africa which was Livingstone's country. Jose Saco speaking of slavery in Brazil, Dantes Bellegarde speaking for Haiti and, with some reservation for amateurishness, J. A. Jarvis speaking for the Virgin Islands make their respective books welcome and trustworthy as native opinion upon native materials. The same should have been true for Nnamdi Azikiwe's *Renasant Africa* but for the almost adolescent indignation distorting the outlines of a statement of native West African conditions, grievances and programs. Even so, an expression of native opinion is valuable at any price. Just as radical, in fact more so in spite of its cool reasoning, is George Padmore's *Africa and World Peace*. In addition to being one of the sharpest critiques of imperialism in a decade of increasing anti-imperialist attack, this book vividly expounds the close connection between fascism and imperialism, on the one hand, and fascism and African interests and issues on the other.

Turning to the less controversial, we have from Professor Herskovits a monumental and definitive two-volume study of the Dahomean

Africana:

Livingstone et L'Exploration de L'Afrique—Rene Maran, Nouvelle Revue Francaise, Paris, 25 fr.

Renasant Africa—Nnamdi Azikiwe, Zik Press, Lagos, 12s. 6d.

Africa and World Peace—George Padmore, Secker & Warburg, London, 7s. 6d.

Historia de la Esclavitud de la Raza Africana en el Nuevo Mundo—Jose A. Saco, La Habana Press.

Le Nation Haitienne—Dantes Bellegarde, J. de Gigourd, Paris, 25 fr.

Brief History of the Virgin Islands—J. Antonio Jarvis, The Art Shop, St. Thomas, V. I., \$3.00.

Dahomey, An Ancient West African Kingdom, 2 Vols.—Melville J. Herskovits, J. J. Augustin, N. Y., \$12.00.

Black and Beautiful—Marius Fortie, Bobbs-Merrill Co., Indianapolis, \$3.50.

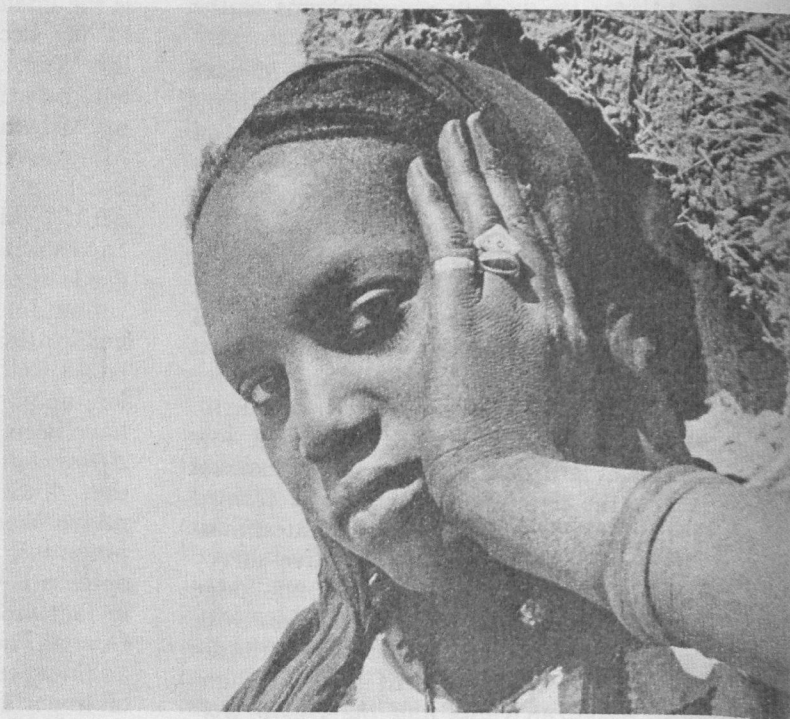
Out of Africa—Isak Dinesen, Random House, Inc., N. Y., \$2.75.

African Mirage—Hoyningen Huene, Charles Scribner's Sons, N. Y., \$3.75.

Kings and Knaves in the Cameroons—Andre Mikhelson, G. P. Putnam's Sons, N. Y., \$3.00.

culture. A careful historical and functional approach yields a sympathetic view of a much misunderstood people, and both illustrates and fortifies a growing trend toward the independent interpretation of African life not in terms of Nordic *mores* and standards but of its own.

So conceded is this point of view becoming that even the best travel literature is now being keyed to it. *Black and Beautiful* is one such, not just by wishful thinking in its title but by virtue of twenty-five years of "going native" by the author, Marius Fortie. His natives are individuals, not types; several of them were his "wives" and sons, and he speaks passionately for and in behalf of his "adopted people," a far cry indeed from the supercilious traveler, missionary or civil servant. Even Andre Mikhelson's *Kings and Knaves in the Cameroons*, mock-heroic and ironic, is a cynical fable castigating "so-called European civilization"; while Isak Dinesen's *Out of Africa* gives a delicately sensitive and respectful account of Kenya native life and the Kikuyu, the Somali and the Masai. The approach is human rather than anthropological and we have that to thank for a general impression that these peoples have a future and not merely a tragic present and an irretrievable primitive past. An impassioned defense of pagan primitivism is the subtle theme uniting the impressionistic diary pictures of *African Mirage*, by Hoyningen-Huene, by considerable odds one of the most understandingly observed and beautifully written volumes in the whole range of



Another of the excellent photographs from "*African Mirage*."

this literature. Even with all of our scientific revaluation, all our "New Negro" compensations, all our anti-Nordic polemics, a certain disrespect for Africa still persists widely. There is only one sure remedy—an anointing of the eyes. *African Mirage* seems to me almost a miraculous cure for cultural color-blindness. Such normality of social vision is surely one of the prerequisites also for effective history, sociology and economics; no scientific lens is better except mechanically than the eye that looks through it. Let us above all else pray for clear-minded interpreters.

The National Urban League extends a cordial invitation to the friends and readers of OPPORTUNITY to attend its Twenty-eighth Annual Meeting which will be held on Wednesday afternoon, February 8, 1939, at three-thirty o'clock, at the Russell Sage Foundation, 130 East 22nd Street, at Lexington Avenue, New York City.

The report of the Urban League's accomplishments of 1938 and plans for 1939 will be presented, and the audited treasurer's statement for 1938 will be rendered. Vacancies on the Executive Board will be filled.

The Annual Address will be delivered by Rabbi Sidney Emanuel Goldstein, Associate Rabbi of the Free Synagogue of New York City and Professor of Social Service at the Jewish Institute of Religion.