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# The Saturday Review

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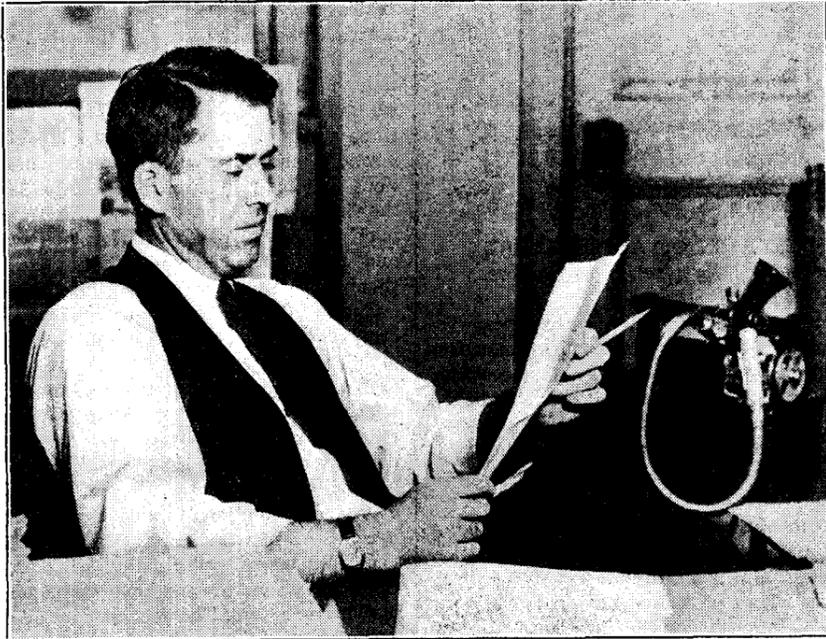
EDITED BY HENRY SEIDEL CANBY



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SECRETARY WALLACE—Keystone photo.

## Good-bye to the Fleshpots\*

BY HENRY A. WALLACE, Secretary of Agriculture

WHEN those forty thousand undisciplined slaves, the Children of Israel, left Egypt, it was possible for them to reach their promised land within a few months. But they were not fit to march a straight course, enter, and take possession. The older men and women among them thought of everything in terms of the fleshpots of Egypt. Before the promised land could be attained it was necessary for the younger generation, hardened by travels in the wilderness, to come to maturity.

We have been forced away from the fleshpots. When our stock market crashed in 1929 it was plain that we would have to abandon them. We, too, know something about a new land and how it may be reached, but we are not yet fit to go in and take possession. Too many of us would like one last round with those fleshpots and golden calves. It may be that many of our younger people have been sufficiently hardened by suffering in our economic wilderness. But all will have to come to a more effective maturity before the new land can be fully possessed. Advance guards sent out to estimate the cost of the new land are still in the wilderness in the way.

I am sometimes accused of undue idealism; but I know very well that it will not do to hope too much of the generation of which I am a part. It is simply impossible for us to let go overnight of the habits and beliefs of a lifetime. Younger people, if they will, can easily accomplish changes which seem impossible to older people.

Unfortunately, many of the oncoming generation now in our schools, or idling in our homes, are handicapped by an inheritance of past concepts, bitterly complicated by the present stalemate. They are stirred by the fact that the present world does not seem to want their services into potentially menacing forms of protest. If misled by demagogues and half-baked educators, they may be inclined to assume more and more that the world owes them not only a living but a limousine. Their restlessness and present disillusionment can be fatal or infinitely constructive, depending upon which side they wake up on.

After all, we middle-aged, middle-course, people have some hard thinking and many hard jobs to do, before we can reasonably expect to arouse our young to hope for an enduring democracy. Talk alone will not lead them to consolidate the position we now strive to hold, and push forward to something better.

The Children of Israel's problems did not come to an end after they had crossed the borders, or even after they had taken possession of their promised land. Their real troubles as a people had then only begun. They had put behind them a vague, nomadic wandering, but they still had to adapt themselves in some measure to the commercial features of the Canaanite civilization. Their old frontier was gone. They had to work on new frontiers. These problems, in many respects strikingly modern, provoked the strife and turmoil which resulted in the tremendous literature of the prophets and the historical records contained in Chronicles and

Kings. Amos, that farmer prophet of the hill country of Judah, first raised in dramatic form the problem of social justice, fair treatment of debtors, and balanced prices.

Physically, and in other ways also, the basic structure of our land of yesterday has been torn to pieces. By the raw pioneer rules of first stakes we have encamped as migrants and have taken greedily and unevenly of its wealth. A few of us, in consequence, have much more than we can comfortably or decently spend or handle; yet most of us have too little for comfort, decency, and hope of a general progress.

We face, moreover, these hard facts: first, the land frontier of the United States is gone. Depression can no longer be solved by shipping the unemployed West. We must learn to live with each other. We have no longer enormous, unexploited natural resources awaiting only the touch of young and vigorous hands to be transformed into fabulous individual wealth.

Second, the wealth that may be drawn by the shrewdest of a rapidly expanding population is now drawing to an end. In the old days, expanding population, and the million or so of people we received annually from Europe, enlarged certain of our cities so rapidly that tremendous real estate values were reared. Today, immigration is mostly shut out. Our birth rate is decreasing. It appears that by 1950 our population will probably reach its peak, around a hundred and fifty million people, and then start declining. Our rural areas, especially in the South, furnish most of the present population increase. Most of our cities are growing only insofar as they suck in the surplus population from farms and small towns; and this surplus is falling off.

Third, enormous decentralizing forces

## Love Gone in the Wind

MY SHADOW AS I PASS. By Sybil Bolitho. New York: The Viking Press. 1934. \$2.50.

Reviewed by AMY LOVEMAN

FOR those of us who had the good fortune to meet William Bolitho, that rare and flashing personality, alight with passionate interest in life, brilliant, sudden, baffling, this book by his wife, half idyllic romance, half biography, will be of compelling appeal. But it needs no personal recollection of the man, nor even acquaintance with the vivid columns which a few years ago graced the "page opposite editorial" of the now vanished *World*, to find it fascinating. For Mrs. Bolitho writes so well, with so sure a sense of the dramatic, so unflinching an eye for the significant and, above all, with so profound and moving an emotion as to communicate her own fervor of feeling to the reader. There will always be two minds as to the propriety and taste of such documents of the heart as this, revelations of a relationship so intimate that to bare it to the public gaze during the lifetime of both participants would be unthinkable, and which, even after death has broken it, runs the risk in the telling of appearing either sentimental or defiled. Our own inclination is against them, but here is a volume which, to us at least, rides triumphantly over the objections which can be brought against most of its kind. It throbs with feeling, yet is not sentimental, and the picture it leaves of a life compounded of early disappointments and griefs and later fulfillments which could never wholly eradicate the memory of those earlier pains has all the justification to which a work of art can lay claim.

Perhaps in nothing does Mrs. Bolitho more surely prove her skill than in the fact that though she writes of herself as heroine, and that it is her unassuageable sorrow which gives glow to the book, it is the figure of her husband which holds the center of the stage. John as he lies dying, breathing his last in the mean little room in a hospital in Marseilles to which he has been carried after a wayside collision, murmuring his love for Helen in the intervals of thinking himself back in the trenches, John in the incredibly beautiful garden at Vedennes, lush with blossom,

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## From Harrison II to Roosevelt II

FORTY-TWO YEARS IN THE WHITE HOUSE. By Irwin H. (Ike) Hoover. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1934. \$3.50.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE

COURT memoir forms but a scant part of American letters. American politics has had few tattlers. We have had expounders, interpreters, and propagandists infesting the literature of our public life. But few American writers have taken off their shoes, let down their hair, unbuttoned their clothes, and gossiped genially, amiably, or even malevolently, about our American presidents and their private lives in the little white colonial mansion on Pennsylvania Avenue. Alas, now, the little white colonial mansion that McKinley knew has expanded. Today it is an office building with an incidental residence. Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt, the first White House lady to live next to the executive offices, used to say that she felt like a woman who lived over the store.

In the forty-two years covered by Ike Hoover's gossipy reminiscences of the White House he lived only fifteen of them in the old White House, the White House before Theodore Roosevelt had begun to turn it architecturally into an office building. These fifteen years in which Ike Hoover lived in the old White House he lived as one of the ushers after having graduated from an electrician's job. As an ordinary usher, even in the old White House, he had few opportunities and probably little desire to associate intimately with the passing statesmen in the White House and their families. But when he became chief usher, he became in a way major domo of the White House. His job for nearly a quarter of a century has been to look after the president and his family in residence; sometimes to follow them about the world. He went to Paris with Wilson. He was a sort of butler, social adviser, fidus Achates, head doorman, and buffer between the president and the White House staff. But because in his more than twenty years as chief usher the various presidents' major duties were outside of the White House, Ike Hoover seems

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\*The following article is to form part of the concluding chapter of Secretary Wallace's "New Frontiers" shortly to be issued by Reynal & Hitchcock.

