

The Petal Paper

THURSDAY, MAY 12, 1960

VOL. 7, NUMBER 27



East Side

By P. D.

Whether I'm believed or not isn't too important, not really, but I want to point out that I am not of the "Yeah, and yo' big brudder's one, too" school of journalism. I know, of course, there are a couple of editors in the South today who have leanings in that direction, in that they seem to close their eyes to the evil and wrong at their door steps and search for, and stir up the dirt, around the door steps of the North, Mid-West, and West. Well, to heck with all that, in view of the fact that this is neither an apology nor a sermon.

Not long ago a friend of mine, who lives in Colorado, excited my interest by an incident which happened in the town of Canon City, Colorado. I report the matter as something which interested me, not as an attempt to justify the dirt of which I am a part. In a letter to me, the friend sent a clipping from the Rocky Mountain News, and it carried a three-column, two-line head which read:

CANNON CITY CHURCH GIVES UP CONTROVERSIAL RELIGIOUS ART

The essence of the news story was that the First Methodist Church of Canon City had found a home for a controversial painting of the Sermon on the Mount, which had hung in the sanctuary for ten years. About a year ago the board of the church decided to remove the painting from the sanctuary and, if possible, do something with it. The painting, done by Max Bernd-Cohen, featured a strong color scheme and made use of brilliant greens, for which Mr. Bernd-Cohen is noted. It was, stated simply, too much for some of the more conservative members of the First Methodist Church of Canon City, Colorado. Therefore, the decision by the board to dispose of the painting followed, all of which seems well in character.

My friend, whose name I don't mention, because I don't have his permission to do so, wrote me the following letter:

Dear P. D.:

The enclosed clip from Sunday's Rocky Mountain News made me think of you and your running fight for human decency, — for tolerance and appreciation of others. I think that all of us, even those of us who know better, tend to think of intolerance and bigotry in terms of the deep South.

Well, here is another incident to prove that it exists all over the place and, in this case, right here in good ole tolerant and appreciative Colorado.

The clip indicates the story but avoids the meat of the matter and perhaps rightly so because to rehash the whole business in public would bring many public quarrels and bitter words into the limelight.

More than ten years ago a friend and I teamed up to bring our mutual artist friend Max Bernd-Cohen to Canon City in order to develop a fine arts program which he did but that is distinctly another story. While in residence the membership of the First Methodist Church commissioned Bernd-Cohen to do a huge mural, on canvas, concerning the Sermon on the Mount. As I recall it took the artist about eight months to complete the work. It became a kind of community enterprise. Everybody had some interest in it. My son and the local football coach spent hours posing for the artist as did many others.

We were particularly proud of the project because we felt that a new level in human relations had been reached, at least in our City. We felt that the idea of Church art was basically a Catholic concept and here we had the Methodist's engaging a Jewish

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Letters

Los Angeles, Calif.

Dear Mr. East

A most fortunate combination of events provided me with a mental yardstick for measuring mankind which was entirely different from the one my parents offered me in later years.

I was born in Los Angeles into the midst of a transplanted southern family. When I was six, my mother's ill health and temporary need to be near her mother caused my father to move his family into one of the houses owned by my grandfather in a predominantly colored district. Although once an all white neighborhood, at that time there were few white children in the area. I lived there for about a year and a half while my parents awaited the birth of a child and the subsequent completion of their house in the suburbs. As one of only two white girls in my class at school, I made friends quickly and easily with my colored classmates.

The first words I remember hearing concerning race were those expressing my mother's lament, "Why do you always have to bring colored children home with you? Can't you find any nice white children with whom to play?" My mother didn't emphasize the words colored and white adequately enough to serve her purpose and my bewilderment centered around the meaning of the word, "nice". I failed to see why my friends didn't merit the appellation. So for the first time I evaluated an opinion expressed by an adult and rejected it as

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A Book Review

THE MIND OF THE SOUTH.
By W. J. Cash. Vintage Books.
New York. 440 pp. (paperback), \$1.45.

February brought publication, for the third time, of *The Mind of the South*, and the enigma of its author is resurrected again. William Joseph Cash spent about five years in the actual writing of his widely acclaimed book, but, counting the time spent for its conception, it probably represents the work and thought of the last ten years of his life.

The original publication was in February, 1941, by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. It was later produced in paperback by Doubleday Anchor Books, and is now on the racks in a new paperback edition published by Vintage Books.

The Mind of the South has been accorded monumental stature by students of the social-historical factors shaping Southern life, but the writer himself has been largely enveloped in mystery. The years — almost two decades of them — have closed around the memory of Cash, but he deserves to be remembered.

This book was a labor of passion, but also of laborious study, of reflection, of common place experience which stamped itself into a sensitive mind. His is the restless spirit of cramped liberalism, bursting for expression, determined at all cost to puncture

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What's Next To Go — FREEDOM OF THE PRESS?

There is something very frightening about THE NEW YORK TIMES being sued by the Birmingham (Ala.) City Commissioners. What this action amounts to when you come right down to it, is that any newspaper or magazine will risk being sued if they print anything uncomplimentary about a city.

What makes this a real threat to the freedom of the press is that in the present tense emotional state of the white people in the Deep South almost any jury which hears such a case will very likely hand down a verdict of heavy damages against the newspaper or magazine which prints uncomplimentary material about a city or a state.

We are almost but not quite back 200 years when an editor was jailed for criticizing a governor. The shadow of Peter Zenger being hauled into court for bringing Governor Cosby "into suspicion and the ill opinion of the subjects of our lord the king..." casts its chilling darkness over us.

In the account telling of the filing of the suit, the Times says (UPI dispatch) "The Birmingham City Commissioners voted today to institute a libel suit against The New York Times because of a Times article that said this city was gripped by racial hatred and fear."

If a city or state can sue a newspaper for saying it is "gripped by racial hatred and fear," what is to prevent a city or a state from suing a newspaper for saying "There was a near race

riot..." or that "The KKK paraded in the downtown business section..." or that a candidate for office calls himself "The white man's candidate," or "Negroes expressed fear of going to the downtown business section of the city..." or "The WCC met in the city hall, with all three of the City Commissioners seated on the platform" or for stating that "the governor demanded that all students participating in the demonstration be expelled from the college." Conceivably any city or state, or any public official could regard these and similar reporting of happenings and conditions as uncomplimentary and sue the newspaper printing them.

Newspapers, we may be sure, will be more afraid to report what their reporters actually see happen in the racial strife now rife in the country. If this suit goes against the newspaper it will be another long step toward curtailing the freedom of the press to report things as they happen, wherever they happen, South, North, East or West. Rarely do we find a minister any more who dares to stand up and tell about what he sees. Now the press is to be silenced. Up until now, the press, through its reporters — with not too much support from editorial pages — have been keeping the country informed on what has been going on. If the press is silenced, we can expect the worst. For about the only restraint that is left in many places is the fear of being told on.

(Aubrey Williams)

Norman Cousins Points To — PEACE WITHOUT PAIN

Something is troubling the American people. It is unpleasant to think about and awkward to talk about. Even to raise the question can produce profound uneasiness. The question is whether we can afford peace. Lending grim reality to this question is this headline in a recent New York newspaper: "FEAR OF PEACE DEPRESSES MARKET."

Or the following prominent billing on the cover of a national weekly magazine: "WHAT PEACE WILL DO TO YOU."

No one in his right mind wants war. Yet more and more people seem to feel we need the threat of war. There is underlying fear that the national economy would come apart at the seams should real peace break out. The nation has been engaged for so long in the business of preparing for war that it has become part of our economic metabolism.

Even more significant than the economic adjustment has been the psychological adjustment. Somehow the notion has become general that we can never be prosperous unless we continue the present program. The notion becomes dangerous to the extent that it may rob us of an essential intensity in thirsting for peace or questing for peace. It is dangerous because it assumes that a course of action is without logical consequences. It is dangerous because it may cause us to be indifferent or mute if a genuine opportunity should develop to bring the means or the cause of war under control.

It will not suffice to dismiss the discussion on the grounds that national security demands continual and expanded arms development. The issue, to repeat, is this: Are we afraid of peace if we can have peace — the kind of peace that is consistent with national security? For if this is our underlying fear, we can mark it as certain that there will be no peace. Nor will the trend stop there. A moral failure is a galloping thing. We cannot expect that dependence on war equipment, even when circumstances permit the exploration of a different course, will be without a whole chain of destructive effects.

If we are in a position today — as we may now well be — to reduce and eliminate the dangers of nuclear war, then we should leap at the prospect even if we are convinced it would produce the worst depression this world has ever known. Indeed, only as we demonstrate our readiness to sacrifice for a just and workable peace do we qualify ourselves for the peace-building task.

This much out of the way, we can consider the economic problem. There need be fear of economic collapse only if we are completely blind to the opportunity surrounding us. What is this thing we dread? We dread that the wheels of our factories will stop turning, the energy of our transistors be stilled, and the circulating power of the defense billions be cut off. We dread the

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East Side

artist to do the Sermon on the Mount. It was well received at the time.

The years went by and the rumbles came. Some blunt and ugly, some disdainful, others in the nature of a sneer. Finally, there was action. The mural must come out and some advocated its destruction. Then my friend stepped in to head a committee that must decide its fate.

So they are shipping Christ to Columbus and maybe He will be more effective there than at Canon City. At least, for the moment, He seems to be welcome. In Canon City today there is a sullen silence. People do not feel good about the turn of events but, even as with me, they prefer to let the issues sleep hoping that now the canvas is gone that the trouble within themselves will go away. Maybe so but I doubt it even though I am no better than the most bitter critic because I do nothing positive toward better understanding.

I understand that this event is a mild thing in the passing parade but though lacking in violence and not on the same plane with killing a man on a river bank it still smacks of the same fear encrusted ego-mania and makes hope of progress a maddening frustration. I don't know that this recital helps anything at all but I thought you might be interested in this odd episode.

Letters . . .

utter nonsense, thus establishing a precedent for future mental procedure.

Being a precocious and not very obedient child, I like and visited many Negro families during that time and was always warmly welcomed. Shortly after we moved into our new home, my grandfather sold his property in that district and severed my only contact with colored people. Not until I was grown and fortunate enough to form friendships with two Negro college girls did I again meet colored people socially.

Later on, when the often repeated, "Negroes are all right in their place," doctrine became part of my education both in and away from home, my early association with colored people, plus an inquiring mind, enabled me to painlessly conclude that a Negro's place should be no different than my own.

Time gradually tempered my vehement arguments over racial problems into reflective discussions. Later on, with the disillusionment of learning that while compassionate and intelligent people do not erect color barriers, no amount of discussion can change the opinion of those lacking either of these two attributes, I tried to avoid race as a topic of conversation.

We, here in California, are apt to feel superior and smug when we hear of "Little Rock" incidents in the South but we also have our "incidents" and some of our hotels, motels and restaurants refuse to admit Negroes. Now that the white population is alarmed over the amazing progress made by the Negro race despite severe handicaps, at almost any gathering one hears the inevitable question, "How would you like to have them living next door to you?" If this doesn't evoke response it is invariably followed by, "Your property will drop in value." I don't claim that California hasn't its share of people without prejudice but they aren't to be found among those whom I meet. Even the most tolerant, who assert they are willing to work, eat and share public places with Negroes, add, "But I don't feel I have to associate with them socially and I certainly don't want them for neighbors." The consensus of opinion can still be expressed by that detestable phrase, "They are all right in their place." Unfortunately, I begin to sense a growing determination to keep them there.

Although I still feel it is a sacred obligation "to stand up and be counted," I confess I am weary with tilting at windmills. If my husband and I have been successful in transplanting our ideals into the heart and mind of our daughter and if she can do the same with her children, perhaps that will be our greatest contri-

bution to society.

It is with mixed emotions that I find the most un-Christian like attitudes towards people of a different race are to be found most frequently among my friends and acquaintances who attend church regularly and consider themselves good Christians. This partly explains my refusal to embrace a faith which so obviously fails to accomplish its purpose, even though it isn't easy to walk alone with nothing more powerful than oneself and one's ideals to rely upon in time of trouble. My Christian fellow citizens are fortunate to have a God who allows them to draw upon His strength, yet demands so little in return.

I make time to read your editorials, which I always enjoy, even when I can't find time to read your entire paper. As I attend night school classes and study a great deal, I find it necessary to relax with a history, biography or equally enjoyable material during my limited leisure for reading. Your paper is too thought provoking to be conducive to restful pleasure.

—Name Withheld by Request

Peace —

cut-off because we know nothing to take its place. Are we so sure of this? If we have to spend sixty billions a year on an arms program to keep our economy afloat, we can spend at least that much on things we really need, some of which might even brighten up this planet for most of the people who live on it.

Let us announce to the world that as soon as the United Nations is fully capable of taking over the international security function we are prepared to embark on a ten-year program seeking the following objectives:

1. The manufacture of 100,000,000 prefabricated three-room homes, for shipment to and assembly in those countries, principally in Asia and Africa, in which homelessness is a major problem.

2. Our willingness to undertake the construction of community development projects for relocating the major refugee groups in the world, be they Arab, Pakistani, Indian, or whatever, so long as the necessary land is contributed by the respective governments.

3. Our readiness to undertake large-scale hydro-electric power projects, irrigation projects, road-building projects, health-center and hospital-building projects in other countries on the basis of long-term credits.

4. Our immediate readiness to use our agriculture surpluses to help meet the stark fact of hunger that now affects at least one-third of the world's peoples.

So far as the United States itself is concerned, we can launch a program to build at least 25,000 new elementary and secondary schools; to build at least 500 new

Book Review . . .

the illusions and pomposity of its time.

Cash, contemplating his native area with rare perspicacity, laid bare the greatness and anguish, the delusions and realities, of the pre-World War II South. His text rolls with a unique and exquisite fluency.

In any library catalog the researcher will find only one volume listed under the name of this author. Who was this W. J. Cash, whose book is being republished twenty years after it was written and who is being quoted by eminent historians?

Why did his productivity end abruptly in 1941 with the publication of this one, vibrant testimonial which the Atlantic Monthly called "a literary and moral miracle?"

Cash's biography is a story of brilliance, of depression, and finally, of tragedy. His life ended in suicide on July 2, 1941, six months after the first edition of *The Mind of the South* came off the presses. The forty-year-old author received a Guggenheim Fellowship in March, to write a novel with a Mexican setting, and ended his life in Mexico City.

He was born on May 2, 1901, at Gaffney, where the last ram-parts of the Blue Ridge dip down into South Carolina, and not far from the Catawba River country of which Thomas Wolfe wrote with affection. In fact, Cash's career spanned almost exactly the same period of time as Wolfe's.

The best available insight into the nature of W. J. Cash is furnished by the short autobiographical sketches he wrote for his publisher, Alfred A. Knopf, in April, 1936, and April, 1940. Knopf provides mimeographed forms on green paper for use by authors in setting down a few pertinent facts about themselves. In 1936, the form did not prove large enough for Cash. He seemed compelled to tell about his innermost thoughts, his habits and his philosophical ideas. The sketch spilled over and covered the back of the form as well as the ruled section on the front.

One fact seems obvious — that Cash had every earmark of the romanticist he described in his book as being typical of the South. But this quality was under-dashed with something else—a high voltage curiosity—a searching after something which led him to many excursions of the mind and to travels in France, England, Germany, Italy and Switzerland.

Into eighteen years, from 1923 to 1941, he packed an exceptional number of activities. During that period he was a student, a teacher of languages, a foreign trav-

teacher's colleges; to provide new equipment or facilities for 1,500 colleges and universities; to build at least 10,000 miles of much-needed new Federal highways; to enlarge the plants and facilities of 25,000 hospitals; to carry out an air-decontamination program to get rid of poisons resulting from industrial gases, automobile fumes, and radioactive fallout; and to restore the eroded or eroding lands of the Midwest and West.

Such a program would easily take up the slack left by a substantial reduction in manufacture of weapons of mass destruction.

It will be argued, of course, that the country couldn't possibly afford to spend so much. The answer is that we are already spending that much. Then it will be argued that where our security is concerned there is no choice. The answer is that our security depends even more on creating the conditions of stability and progress in the world than on turning out weapons of absolute destruction.

In any case, the problem lies not in any laws of economic determinism, but in our values, our purposes, and our desire to come fully alive.

(The Saturday Review)

eler, a reporter, an editor, a free-lance writer and an author. His life's story is one of movement which seemed to belie some of his own estimates of himself.

His family left South Carolina and most of his "growing up" years were spent in the village of Boiling Springs, just across the line in Cleveland County, North Carolina. He learned to read at the age of five, was immediately captivated by books, and recalled being absorbed in literature at the age of six as his mother called him "to bring in stove wood."

"After that I read everything I could get my hands on," he wrote "Alger, Henty, Mayne Reid, Clark, Russell, Scott, Dickens, Hugo, Milton, Bunyan . . . with impartiality. At fourteen I discovered the girls and so abandoned the Harvard Classics somewhere in the middle, spent the next fifteen years contemplating them—the girls, not the classics —, often painfully."

At college, Cash said he read sporadically, edited the college paper, won a short story prize, but "mainly sat on the benches under the magnolias and thought about the girls."

His efforts at college football, he wrote, "failed ignominiously," the college newspaper always came out late and sometimes not at all, and he "was always in hot water with the authorities" at the college.

He paints a picture of inconsistency in scholarship, but nevertheless his cherished reading list covers virtually the whole range of the classics. In 1918-19 he attended Wofford College at Spartanburg, S. C., and received his A.B. degree from Wake Forest College in 1922. After attending the Law School at Wake Forest during the 1922-23 terms, he accepted a post as English instructor in 1923 at Georgetown

(Ky.) College. During 1924-25 he taught English and French at the Blue Ridge School for Boys, Hendersonville, N. C.

For a brief period in 1923 he served on the staff of the Charlotte (N.C.) Observer, and in 1924 he traveled to Chicago for a reporting job on the old Post. In 1925 he was a free-lance writer in Chicago; then he returned to Charlotte for a position on the News staff in 1926 and 1927. In the latter year he traveled in Europe, then edited a weekly newspaper, the Cleveland Free Press in Shelby, N. C., in 1928. He was listed as a free-lance writer from 1929 to 1937, contributing to the American Mercury when it was edited by H. L. Mencken. He served as associate editor of the Charlotte News from 1937 to 1941.

During World War I he was unable to enlist in the Navy but got into civilian work at an Army cantonment by "fudging" on his age. Summer employment as a youth included working on his grandfather's farm, driving a truck to haul lumber and brick and working in a hosiery mill headed by his father (twelve hours a night in the latter).

Collection of books and phonograph records "a good deal faster than I can afford" was one of his obsessions, with the accent always on the classics. He read "heavy old books almost exclusively" and thought "Beethoven's C Minor Symphony is still the greatest music ever written." The only sport he ever liked was golf and the happiest time he spent was while riding a bicycle across Europe, with hikes in the Pyrenees, the Swiss Alps and along the Riviera.

Cash termed himself a shy fellow, yet he liked to talk better than anything else, he said, and drank beer with old friends until the late hours.

He stated that his family and (Continued on Page 3)

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Book Review . . .

forebears were "never rich or aristocratic" but were "good up-country farmers" with property in proportion to most of the neighbors. At a young man, he said, he had at attitudes connected with the Old South, and he stated that people "often wonder at my sympathy for any Southern underdog at all." At twenty he was "a thorough Bourbon" in his outlook, but "then a newspaper sent me to cover a strike—and after that I began to look around me."

If there is any doubt that he was a Southerner to the core, this paragraph from his personal sketch should dispel it:

"Reared an intense sentimentalist to the South, my favorite dream as a boy was the fighting over again of the Civil War, and myself leading the charge on the cannon's mouth with the Confederate battle flag. My blood still leaps to the band's playing of 'Dixie,' and to such flourishing phrases as 'the sword of Lee.' And before militantly sentimental ladies who don't like my opinions, I am sheepish and dumb."

Disliking both intolerance and affection intensely, he said, he quite often indulged himself in both. Five years before, he wrote

in 1936, he was "a complete neurosthenic" but had since largely cured himself.

About his views of the mysteries of life, he wrote: "I have developed a great interest in the sciences, though in college I hated a laboratory so much that I rarely ever went—and so was in constant difficulties with the authorities. Yet, for all my belief and confidence here, the universe seems to me to be ultimately an impenetrable mystery. And though I have no time for creeds or theological constructions of any kind, I sympathize fully with the awe which is perhaps the primary source of religion." He was interested in anthropology. And he added:

"I think La Rochefoucauld and not Karl Marx laid his hand on the true primary key to human action—that vanity and not economic interest prevails. But even that is only a half-truth." Illness had given him insights into some things, he noted.

His indictment of himself was brief: "I am hopelessly lazy, and, efforts to convince myself that it is really a virtue having proved unavailing, I am constantly depressed by the knowledge of it."

His ambition, still more brief, is summarized in the final sentence:

"And I want above everything to be a novelist."

No one, it seems, and Cash least of all, suspected that in the magnolia-scented breezes of South Carolina, in the city room above downtown Chicago, in the thin air of the Pyrenees, in various Southern newspaper offices, a book of near-classic proportions was taking shape. His varied life was moving toward an achievement which would assure him lasting renown among the writers of the twentieth century.

There can be little doubt that he was greatly influenced by the emerging progressive colleges of his area—Duke and the University of North Carolina in particular—and by Mencken and Southern scholars such as Howard W. Odum. There was much pioneering in sociology at the University during Cash's collegiate years, and he later wrote one incisive article for the American Mercury about Duke's success in preserving academic independence.

It was at Mencken's suggestion that he started work on *The Mind of the South*. Cash's iconoclastic articles undoubtedly appealed to the old master of satire. Cash, in the early 1930's, saw a deadening vacuity in the life of his region, and in the April, 1933, issue of the American Mercury he delivered a scalding indictment against the city of Charlotte.

He called it "an old Tory town, a citadel of bigotry and obscurantism . . . a Gargantuan blue-nose posed on the face of North Carolina." The flow of civilization in that great state, he wrote, could be charted by the device of conceiving it "as a thundering field of battle whereon the justly famous state university at Chapel Hill gallantly defends the standards of intellectual integrity against the ferocious assaults . . . almost wholly, of this very town of Charlotte." Cash called the city, to which he was to return later in an editorial position, "the chief enemy of civilization in the Near South."

It is difficult to believe that his final, desperate decision in 1941 could have been due to anticipated criticism in his home

sector. For he had been lobbing salvos in that direction for too many years to have been much affected by adverse comment there, and his book was much less caustic than his magazine articles of almost a decade earlier.

The book came out during a boom time for publishers, during a time when the thoughts of Americans were in Europe. Russia was reeling under the strokes of the German army that summer, and an avalanche of both novels and non-fiction about the war was pouring into book stores.

The nation was swept up in a worldwide drama, but seldom, if ever, has a book about the American scene received such enthusiastic reviews as did *The Mind of the South*. The accolade came in a groundswell from newspapers and literary journals.

It won quick recognition from the New York Times Book Review, which stated that "certainly no one else has succeeded in writing the ideological and social history of the South from colonial times to the present in such a philosophical and illuminating manner. . . . In fact it would seem that there is no important ideological or social factor affecting the life of the South which Mr. Cash has overlooked. . . . He has brought to his task a deep knowledge of economics, genealogy, institutional history, psychology and law, and something else without which his book would have been a dull performance—a constructive, historical imagination and a gift for fresh and lively phraseology."

The New Yorker said that it was "probably the most readable and penetrating general treatment of the subject we've ever had." The American History Review stated: "Mr. Cash has written a brave and critical book about the South which deserves a wide circle of readers, including the effective political and social leaders of the South today."

Time magazine declared that "Cash is honest, temperate, eloquent and kind, and he is definitely in command of his subject," and concluded: "Anything written about the South henceforth must start where he leaves off."

Although the book does not deal with recent events, its pertinence is far from being lost as the 1960's begin. In fact, Cash's rare perspective is probably being utilized as never before in this period when the South is, to the amazement of many, exhuming ancient arguments and remembering long dormant bitterness.

Roosevelt's war time FEPC and the series of civil rights decrees, which started with outlawing the white primary in 1944 and reached high water mark

with the school desegregation ruling ten years later, were still in the future when Cash was writing. As the regional mores came under judiciary and legislative assault from Washington the South reacted, and why it reacts as it did is better understood after reading *The Mind of the South*.

But Cash sensed that a time of trial was coming, as he wrote of the South in his final paragraph:

"In the coming days, and probably soon, it is likely to have to prove its capacity for adjustment far beyond what has been true in the past. And in that time I shall hope, as its loyal son, that its virtues will tower over and conquer its faults and have the making of the Southern world to come. But of the future I shall venture no definite prophecies. It would be a brave man who would venture them in any case."

No one, reading the book, can escape the impression that Cash was motivated by a consuming love for his section. True, he assailed the Cavalier aristocracy legend as none other before him, describing the "Proto-Dorian pride" it helped produce, and pointing to a "savage ideal" which gripped the area after the Civil War. The hedonistic "hell of a fellow" was a dominant personality, he said, in a sector where the frontier lasted longer than anywhere else, and there was depreciation of authority and processes of law. He told of racist demagogues with their continued "appeals to such vague shibboleths as states' rights, and heroic gasconade of every sort." He said that there was a "core of tragedy" in the fact that "intellectual leaderships are by themselves always helpless."

But the better nature of the South is there, too, the "sweepingly splendid fellows . . . a kindly courtesy, a level-eyed pride, an easy quietness, a barely perceptible flourish." Some, in the early days, went even "beyond the kindness of the old back country" to set "an impeccable example of conduct and sentiment."

It was "the conflict with the Yankee," he concludes, which really moulded the mind of the South in the way he pictures it, and he said: "The mind of the section . . . is continuous with the past." He calls the South "a tree with many age rings, with its limbs and trunk bent and twisted by all the winds of the years, but with its tap root in the Old South."

So it was in 1940. Who can say how nearly the Southland approximates that description twenty years later, when the winds of a new storm are whistling through it?

His summary is full of feeling: "Proud, brave, honorable by its lights, courteous, personally generous, loyal, swift to act, often too swift, but signally effective, sometimes terrible, in its action—such was the South at its best. And such at its best it remains today, despite the great falling away in some of its virtues. Violence, intolerance, aversion and suspicion toward new ideas, an incapacity for analysis, an inclination to act from feeling rather than from thought, an exaggerated individualism and a too narrow concept of social responsibility, attachment to fictions and false values, above all to great attachment to racial values and a tendency to justify cruelty and injustice in the name of those values, sentimentality and a lack of realism—these have been its characteristic vices in the past. And, despite changes for the better, they remain its characteristic vices today."

So reasoned a man who wrote briefly and brilliantly. Strangely enough, this admonition appears in his book as he writes of his fellow Southerners: ". . . the South must not be too much weaned away from its ancient leisuredness—the assumption that the first end of life is living itself—which, as they rightly contend, is surely one of its greatest virtues."

TOM DEARBORN
in Nieman Reports

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