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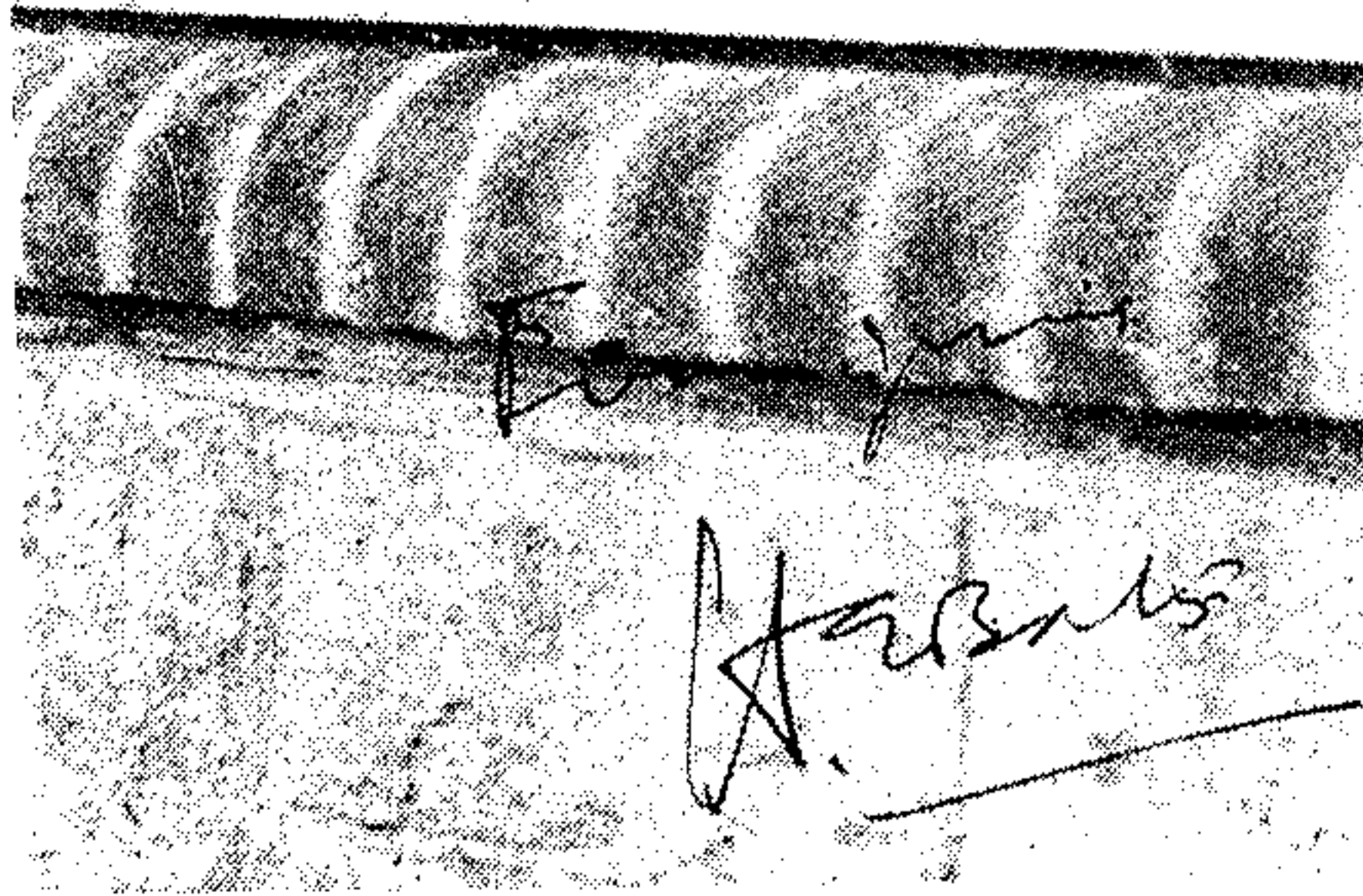
INTRODUCTION

WITH this issue, the editors of *STORY* are inaugurating several new departures in the magazine with a view to making it the most definitive magazine of its kind on the short story and contemporary writing in English. From time to time contributions in the nature of "notes" or comment on writing and writers will be printed from the outstanding short story writers of the world; letters, which have a general interest will find a ready publication; and more than passing attention is to be given to books in general, with a regularly departmentalized monthly survey of the reviews for and against the most significant books of the month. The editors wish expressly to make clear that these various additions are extensions of the magazine, on added pages, and not any encroachment on the regular number of pages which have been in the past, and will be in the future, devoted solely to distinguished stories.

ON THE ENGLISH SHORT STORY

H. E. Bates

H. E. BATES, known to STORY readers for his delightful tales of his "Uncle Silas," lives in England. He is one of the editors of the magazine New Stories published in Oxford, and has published several volumes of short stories which rank among the best English short stories of today.



H. E. Bates

THE history of the English short story is a melancholy one. Indeed it might be said that the English short story has no history—for the simple reason that it has hardly existed. It is true that certain nineteenth-century novelists, Dickens, Hardy and Mrs. Gaskell, for example, wrote what were termed short stories, but which were in

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DEVOTED SOLDIERS

Vol. VII

C O N T E N T S

Birthday
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That's What Happened
A Life in the Day of a
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STORY RECOMMENDS

RUSSIA LAUGHS, by Mikhail Zostchenko, translated from the Russian by Helena Clayton, foreword by Whit Burnett; *Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Co.*, Boston (now *Thomas Nelson & Sons*, N. Y.). \$2. Forty-nine stories (five of which have appeared before in this country only in the pages of *STORY*) by a Russian satirist-humorist of today. Short, seemingly simple, human, provocative studies of people not altogether free from the "bourgeois hangovers."

My Own, My Native Land, by Thyra Samter Winslow, *Doubleday, Doran & Co., Inc.*, Garden City, N. Y. \$2.50. Forty little stories of a small town done in a dead-pan style, many fine and emotional in spite of a seeming monotone treatment.

The Best Short Stories of 1935, Edward J. O'Brien, *Houghton Mifflin*, Boston. The 21st annual selection from American magazines; indispensable if you keep up with new writing.

Mr. Aristotle, by Ignazio Silone, author of "Fontamara," *McBride*. \$2. Five long stories including the one, "Journey to Paris," which was published in *STORY*. Frankly-told tales of Italian poverty-stricken peasants, superstitious, anarchistic and at times very earthy.

A Study of the Short Story (Revised), by Henry Seidel Canby, editor of the *Saturday Review of Literature* and Alfred Dashiell, managing editor of *Scribner's Magazine*. *Henry Holt & Co.*, New York, \$2. A fine historical survey of the short story together with selections from Chaucer to F. Scott Fitzgerald, the latter represented by the superlative "Babylon Revisited," first printed in the *Saturday Evening Post* and also included in the Best Short Stories series (1931) of O'Brien.

A Book of the Short Story by E. A. Cross, Ph. D., head of the department of Literature and Languages, Colorado State Teachers College. History and technique, but mainly great stories, from the Prodigal Son to Katharine Brush. Weighs several pounds. *American Book Co.*, N. Y. \$2.40 F.O.B.

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reality nothing more than a potted extract of novel—or in other words, novels in miniature. The English nineteenth-century novel being what it was, a discursive, exhaustive, and often tedious thing, these short stories were also discursive, exhaustive and in the case of Dickens, so tedious that nine out of ten readers never trouble to finish those short stories which he sandwiched in, for some obscure reason, between the chapters of his novels. For the English nineteenth-century novelist the short story was a kind of orphan literary slavey—very useful for cleaning up the odd scraps of ideas which were too good to be thrown away yet not good enough to be the subjects of novels. So that the true short-story writer, the artistic teller of tales, was almost unknown, though it is possible that he existed in the guise of essayist. It is interesting to note that at this time Turgenev was writing *A Sportsman's Sketches*, Tolstoy such masterly short stories as *Family Happiness*, Mérimée such forerunners of the modern surprise story as *Mateo Falcone*, and Poe his masterpieces of imagination and pathological horror.

This famine in short stories continued in England almost down to the end of the nineteenth century. The short story, when it was considered at all, was a thing to be held in unspoken, if not spoken, contempt. The novel was large, therefore it was great; the short story was small, therefore it was insignificant. But meanwhile Turgenev had been succeeded by Chekhov, Mérimée by Maupassant, Poe by Ambrose Bierce—three writers who, more than all others, were to influence and enrich the short story with vitality and beauty. In England, Dickens had been succeeded by Arnold Bennett, who made the astounding confession that it was Turgenev who had taught him to write, and Hardy by Galsworthy, in whose work the influences of Turgenev was so obvious that he did not need to make the confession that Bennett had done. These men wrote short stories. H. G. Wells, Conrad, George Moore also

wrote splendid short stories. But these writers were regarded primarily as novelists and only secondarily as story writers, and though the confidence for the short story had lessened, it remained.

This was the state of the short story at the end of the Great War. It is interesting to recall that we were living, then, a poetical and dramatic renaissance. A great epoch of national suffering, we were assured, had always been followed by an epoch of poetical fervor: the young men would pour out their songs; the flame of courage fed by blood, would burn richly. Unfortunately for these expectations, a great many young poets could not sing because they were dead, and a great many dramatists had acted in a come-and-go realistic that their own plots seemed sordid and pointless beside it. The poetical renaissance hardly materialized. But a new generation of poets sprang up in the most unexpected renaissance did take place. It was the renaissance of the short story.

It was an unexpected event, though the most natural one, for the short story more than any other form was the perfect outlet for the creative energy of an artist who had been born in a world of darkness and blood and yet had life in him. The young poet of another generation less troubled generation had sung in lyrics. But the poets' voices of the Great War generation had broken early, though they had songs to sing, they had not the voices with which to sing. How were they to express themselves? They wanted a medium through which they could express both their joy and their disillusionment, both their criticism and their delight in it. The short story was the only medium in literature that would satisfy their need. More than that it was the perfect medium, and the Great War short-story writer made the confession that Chekhov and Maupassant had made before him, that the short story was the most flexible of all prose forms; it could be anything from a prose without a plot or character to an analysis of the most complex human emotion; that it could deal with any subject from the sun, from the death of a horse

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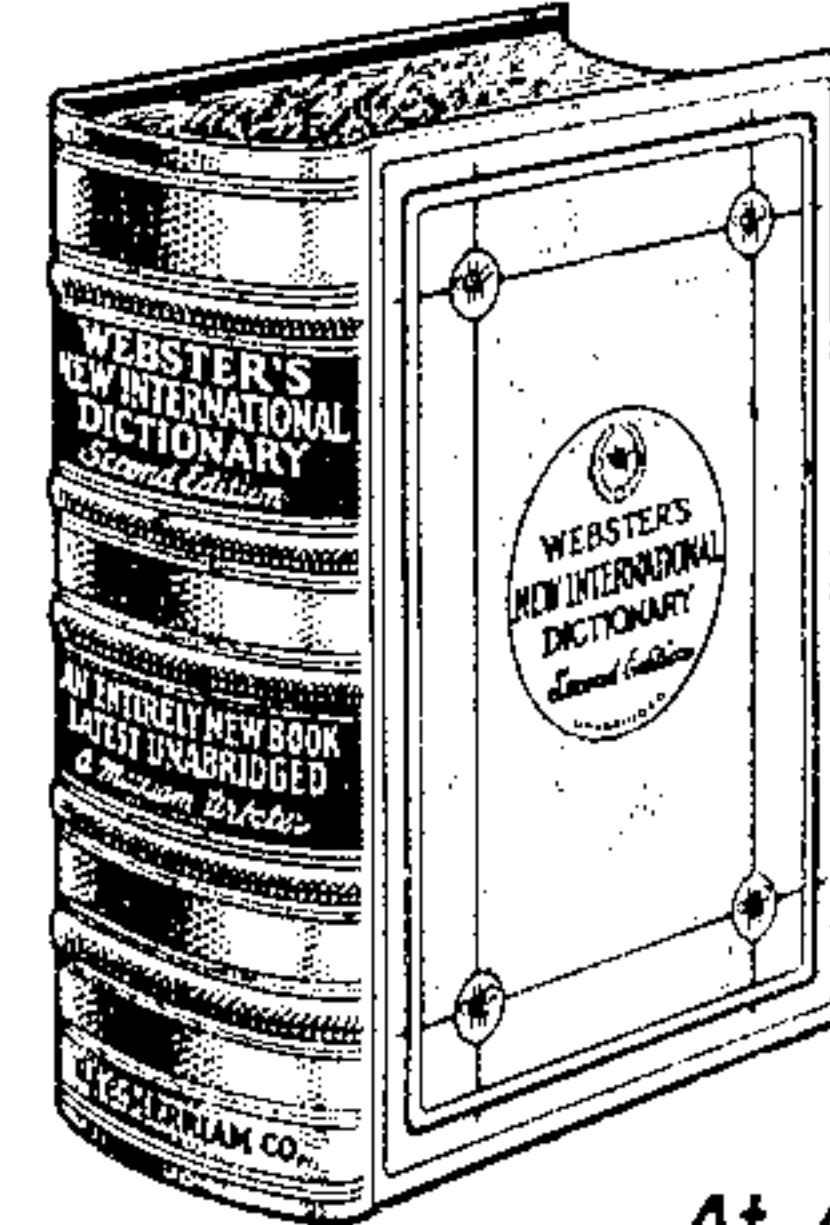
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NOTES

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 young girl's first love affair, and for the first time in English literature the short-story became something more than a novel in miniature.

But curiously the old indifference, the old lack of public taste for the short story, remained. People still took back to their lending libraries volumes of short stories, unread, which they had mistakenly borrowed as novels. Publishers still held up their hands in commercial horror at the suggested publication of a volume of tales. The editor who printed a story of literary value was rarer than such a short story itself had been fifty years before.

Today that indifference for the short story has vanished. Ten years ago the existence in England of a daily newspaper publishing a short story each morning would have been a miracle. Today there are ten newspapers offering a short story each day to a public that has at last grown tired of serials it never read. The policy of the newspapers seems to me a significant one. It would not surprise me indeed if the novel, during the next ten years, lost its position of popularity to the short story. There could be no more refreshing literary revolution.

◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ HIRED MINDS IN ITALY

Ignazio Silone

IGNAZIO SILONE, a native of the Abruzzi mountain region of Italy, is at present living in Zurich, Switzerland, where he has for some time been active in anti-Fascist activities. His first published short story in America, "Journey to Paris," which appeared in *STORY* in April 1935, created considerable discussion. He is the author of the novel "Fontamara." In connection with the appearance of his new book in this country, "Mr. Aristotle," (Robert M. McBride & Company) the Editors of *STORY* believe Silone's comments on his Italian fellow-writers will be of interest. The following passage is included in his new book and printed here with permission.

THE Italian author, in his relation to society, has remained what he was during the time of the Renaissance—a courtier. The Italian people have never shown an interest in their own literature. In the Italy of today, the pre-revolutionary Russian authors—and above all Dostoevsky and Gogol—are the fashion. Whoever among the bourgeoisie, the artisans, the peasants, or the workers, wants to find in literature an echo of his own hopes and needs, looks for it among the Russian classics. Italian literature offers

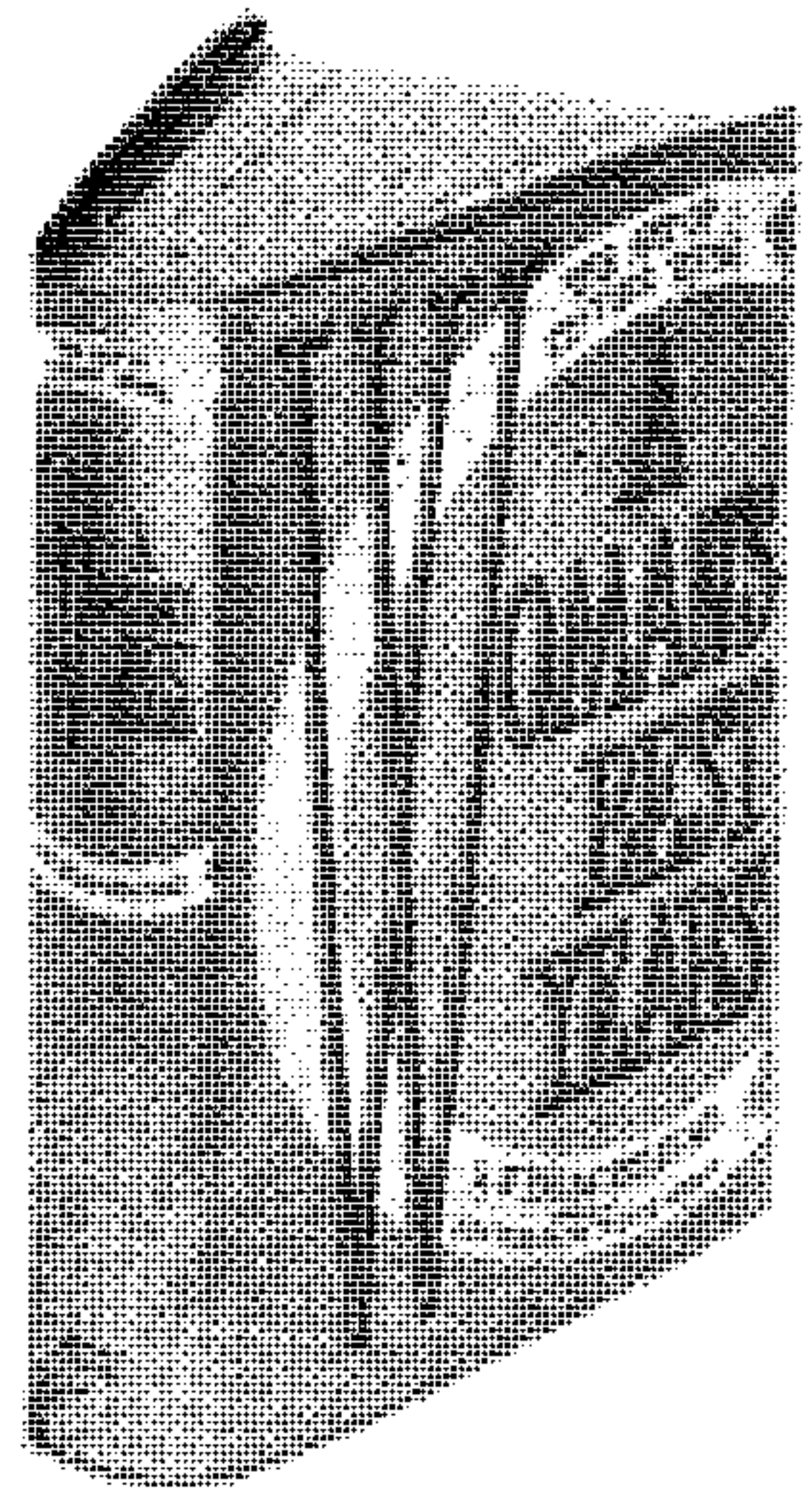


Ignazio Silone

him nothing, for it is a literature of sycophants.

Before Fascism, there was a so-called Liberal literature, and under Fascism there is a so-called Fascist literature. But in reality the former was as little Liberal as the latter is really Fascist. How many authors who made a profession, not to say a good thing, of Liberalism, have remained Liberal under the new regime? None. Not one. For Benedetto Croce, and Guglielmo Ferrero are not literati, but historians. Neither were P. Gobetti nor M. Vinciguerra, who were really essayists; and Robert Bracco had retired from literary life at the time of the

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