

THE CHECK LIST

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SARATOGA TRUNK, by Edna Ferber. \$2.50. *Doubleday, Doran*. A swashbuckling romance of the 'eighties played by Clint Maroon, the debonair Texan, and Clio Du-laine, the beautiful daughter of a New Orleans aristocrat and his French mistress. Clio, a Scarlett O'Hara at heart, descends on fashionable Saratoga like a whirlwind with her strange entourage of Negro maid and duenna and dwarf footman. Bart Van Steed, the weakling millionaire with the dominating mama is her legitimate prey, and Mrs. Bellop (Elsa Maxwell in disguise) helps her. Clint makes a fortune though, so Clio lets her heart rule her brain. Lots of fun, especially when at the age of ninety Clint becomes sentimental and gives back to America all that he stole from her.

WINDSWEPT, by Mary Ellen Chase. \$2.75. *Macmillan*. Windswept is the name of the house off the coast of Maine, which shelters three generations of the Marston family from 1881 to the present day. Sorrow comes into their lives, but never evil. It must be the effect of the good, clean, open spaces. Written with Miss Chase's usual competence and full of an appreciation for nature.

WILD IS THE RIVER, by Louis Bromfield. \$2.50. *Harper*. Romance in New Orleans during the Civil War, when the damyankées were occupying the city. Major Tom Bedloe is torn between three women: La Lionne, a high class madam; the young Baroness de Lèche, a New Orleans aristocrat; and Agnes Wicks, his fiancée from Boston, who is more liberal than the usual run of such ladies. In the end, the great lover is left by one who has gotten all she can from him; deserted by another who falls in love with a better man; and shot by the third. Good escape literature.

SEASON'S GREETINGS, by Herbert Clyde Lewis. \$2.50. *Dial*. This is not the cheery little number that might be deduced from the title. It concerns five lonely people living in Mrs. Fanjoy's boarding house on Eighth Street in New York on Christmas Eve. Overwritten in spots, it belabors its point, yet it holds the reader's interest.

NON-FICTION

LIVING BIOGRAPHIES OF GREAT SCIENTISTS, by Henry Thomas and Dana Lee Thomas. \$1.98. *Garden City*. Brief and very readable sketches of the lives of Archimedes, Roger Bacon, Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, Lavoisier, Dalton, Humboldt, Faraday, Darwin, Huxley, Agassiz, Mendel, Pasteur, Kelvin, Haeckel, Steinmetz, Marie Curie, Banting, and Einstein. There are illustrations by Gordon Ross.

ARMIES ON WHEELS, by S. L. A. Marshall. \$2.50. *Morrow*. Mr. Marshall reviews the significant battles of the present war since Dunkirk, drawing from them lessons for ourselves. He emphasizes the part industry plays in modern warfare and the extreme importance of protecting it from attack in time of conflict.

CIVILIANS MUST FIGHT, by Raymond Daniell. \$2.50. *Doubleday, Doran*. Mr. Daniell, chief of the London bureau of the *New York Times*, now on vacation in this country, here reports some of his experiences and observations. He has nothing new to say about the British war effort, but he writes pleasantly and with considerable persuasion about the folly of men like Senator Wheeler and Charles Lindbergh. "To me the argument of the isolationists seems utter, arrant nonsense." There is a preface by Somerset Maugham.

LINCOLN AND THE RADICALS, by T. Harry Williams. \$3.00. *University of Wisconsin*. This is perhaps the most detailed study of Lincoln's long struggle with the Jacobins within and without his party, a struggle he lost in the end when John Wilkes Booth's bullet hit him. Mr. Williams, who is assistant professor of history at Louisiana State University, writes with uncommon facility for an academician. A bibliography and an index are appended.

CHARLES de GAULLE, by Philippe Barrès. \$2.00. *Doubleday, Doran*. The first comprehensive account of the work of General de Gaulle and his free French movement, by the former editor of *Le Matin* and *Paris Soir*. M. Barrès writes simply and forcefully, especially when relating de Gaulle's futile struggles with the French politicians and general staff to see the value of the armored division, the idea of which he perfected, only to have the Germans lift it and use it to destroy France.

DOCTOR WOOD, *Modern Wizard of the Laboratory*, by William Seabrook. \$3.75. *Harcourt, Brace*. Professor Robert Williams Wood of the Johns Hopkins has won an international reputation for his researches in physical optics, which have done so much to advance the theory of atomic and molecular spectra. He is now in his seventies, but he continues his work with the same zest as when he started forty years ago. Mr. Seabrook's biography of him, unfortunately, is verbose, and occasionally, in fact, he writes like an intellectual Junior Leaguer. There are several illustrations and a bibliography of Dr. Wood's scientific publications.

GRAND STRATEGY, by H. A. Sargeant and Geoffrey West. \$2.00. *Crowell*. The authors define grand strategy as "the development of a human experience dependent at once on the heritage of nation and race, and also upon personality and personal reaction," and from that point of view they discuss the grand strategies of Napoleon, Wellington, Bismarck, Hitler, Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin.

THE ATLANTIC SYSTEM, by Forrest Davis. \$3.00. *Reynal & Hitchcock*. A detailed and heavily documented account of the diplomatic and naval relationships between the United States and Great Britain — "our natural, though not our formal ally," in the words of Admiral Mahan — from the earliest beginnings of the American Republic. Mr. Davis agrees with the admiral, with Henry Adams, and with all others who claim that the future of this country and of world peace is dependent upon the Atlantic being in control of the two English-speaking nations.

YOU PAY AND YOU PAY, by Maurice M. Goldman. \$2.50. *Howell, Soskin*. A thorough and lively exposé of such rackets as are practiced by many personal finance companies, easy payment schemes, collection agencies, nurses' registries, and investment counsellors. Mr. Goldman was formerly assistant to the Attorney General of Massachusetts, and has had considerable experience as an investigator of these rackets.

YOU TOO CAN HAVE A BABY (A Plan for Parenthood), by Abner Weisman, M.D. \$2.00. *Liveright*. After a short outline discussing conception and the birth cycle, Dr. Weisman disposes of the fears and phobias that clutter up the layman's mind in regard to the inability to conceive, and also discusses the newest advances science has made in regard to fertility. Clearly and simply written.

SUCCESS IN COURT, by Francis L. Wellman. \$3.50. *Macmillan*. One of the most successful trial lawyers of our day here relates his experiences in court with a view to helping the fledgling lawyer to make a name (and money) for himself without committing too many mistakes. Nine other lawyers offer the same advice. They are John W. Davis, Frederic R. Coudert, Floyd E. Thompson, Henry A. Uterhart, Joseph DuVivier, Martin W. Littleton, Emory R. Buckner, Luther Day, and Weymouth Kirkland. Professor Samuel Williston of the Harvard Law School contributes a brief foreword.

THE OPEN FORUM

CONCERNING DEMOCRACY

(In the November issue, the MERCURY printed an Open Forum letter from Edgar C. Riebe, of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, which questioned the soundness of "democratic ideology." We asked for an expression of views from other readers and the response was heavy. Herewith we offer a cross-section of the correspondence. — THE EDITORS.)

SIR: Mr. Riebe is of course entirely correct, and American, in his attack on democracy. He also uses the word in its correct sense, meaning majority rule. I applaud him heartily for this. The current use of the word "democracy" to mean everything from liberty to dictatorship comes largely from the communist campaign based on Lenin's instruction, "First confuse the vocabulary."

All the present jabber about democracy is totally meaningless, since no democracy exists in the world today and no one anywhere advocates establishing a democracy. But under cover of this now meaningless word, an increasingly successful effort is being made to destroy the basis of this Republic, which is individual liberty. . . .

Anyone who will read even a little history, even superficially, will not ask a question so absurd as, "Is the democratic idea sound?" No democracy has ever worked, and the reason is apparent from any of the many attempts to make it work.

The reason is this: Life-energy and its control are in the individual. That is not an idea; it is a fact. Every individual has inalienable liberty just as he has inalienable life; neither can be alienated from him, neither can be transferred to any other person. All energy, including living energy, is by its nature self-controlling. Because self-control cannot be separated from energy, every living person is self-controlling.

He is not a controlled unit in a larger whole, like a cell in a body, as worshippers of pagan gods believe. (Including communists, Nazis,

fascists, who name their gods Economic Determinism, Historical Necessity, Race, The State.) The fact is that each human being is a dynamo generating energy that is self-controlling; he is self-governing; that is, he is free and responsible. When, in order to escape responsibility, a man tries to escape from his freedom, he can only obey an authority that does not in fact exist, an authority that is a false image in his own mind.

Therefore, when a large number of people believe that such an authority exists, they must either obey, like savages, an intangible tabu, or they must submit to some living man. When they vote, they will choose this man . . . because at the moment some common passion or interest sways a majority. And because a majority obeys him, nothing checks this man's power to destroy the few men who do not submit to him. The demagogue therefore quickly becomes a tyrant, and that is the swift and violent end of the democracy. This has always occurred whenever majority rule has been tried. . . .

The sound and scientific idea, based on facts, is the idea of the American revolution for human rights.

ROSE WILDER LANE

Danbury,
Connecticut.

SIR: One of the prime reasons why democracy does not function in a large group is that many citizens do not know their rights, and education is largely controlled by factions. Many persons are too lazy and indifferent