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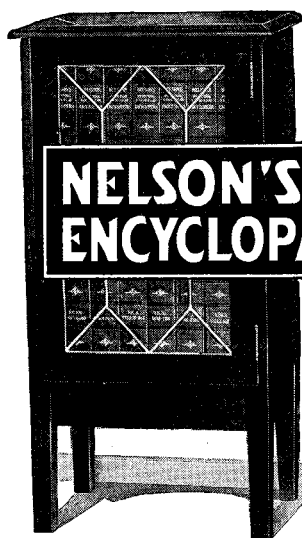


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many of what religious groups did both for the ideal of freedom and for the current habit of intolerance. Finally, such a problem as this surely needs to be seen in a comparative spirit; and Mr. Bates may not unfairly be accused of having bounded over the tyrannical narrowness which formerly characterized legislation in nearly all the states and of having attributed to Europeans a liberality they do not possess. In short, this is a fine, spirited book which will be read to the accompaniment of sincere repartee.

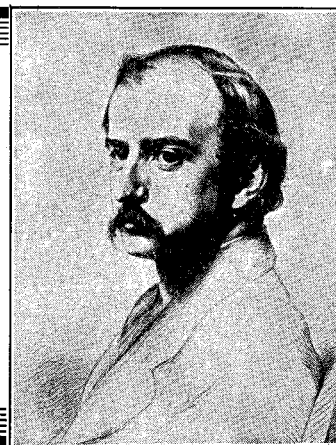
Bloody Frontiers

THE OUTLAW YEARS, by Robert M. Coates; Macaulay, \$3.00.
Reviewed by R. L. DUFFUS.

THE HISTORY of the lower Mississippi Valley between 1800 and 1835, the years covered by Mr. Coates' book, is gruesome, fantastic, and almost incredible in many of its details. People who like violence and bloodshed dished up in craftsmanlike form will find all they want of them here. Mr. Coates is a master of suspense and of vivid narrative. He finds plenty of use for these gifts. The wildernesses of Kentucky, Tennessee, and Mississippi were mad, dark places in those days. The savage Indians had been largely subdued or driven out, but some of the whites who had come to take their places were far more barbarous. No Indian camp was ever so charged with hate and violence as Natchez-under-the-Hill, which was at the southerly end of the short-cut from the Ohio to the Mississippi.

Mr. Coates gives us with considerable gusto some pictures which make the later days and the further West seem a little tame: Steigal slowly cutting off Harpe's head with a butcher knife; Samuel Mason, doughty soldier under Washington, turning robber and murderer, then killed by his own men and his head brought back to the authorities in "a large, lumpy ball of clay"; Murrel's bloodthirsty depredations and the equally bloodthirsty vengeance taken by law and order when his plot to raise the slaves and set up an outlaw republic was discovered.

The trouble with this phase of the story is that the usual reader can stand about so much blood, after which his capacity for being horrified tends to diminish. If Mr. Coates' story were just a recital of atrocities, as at times one fears it is going to be, it would not be half so good. But Mr. Coates has also a sense of atmosphere. He sees the wilderness itself as a kind of evil *deus ex machina* inspiring to ungodly deeds men who might have remained within the law had they lived in a less terrifying region. Just how far he is justified in so placing the blame must be a matter of opinion. Perhaps the dense-

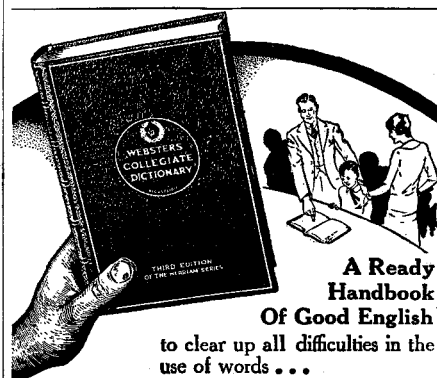


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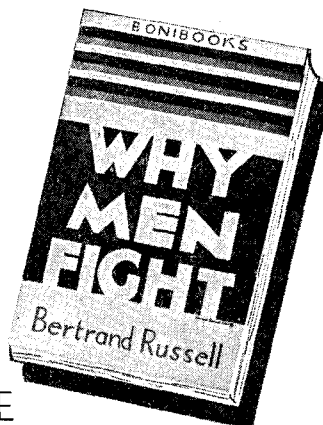
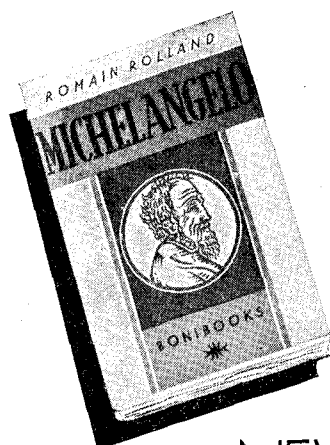
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