

ing Years," does not prepare us for a calm, objective study of events. The fighting editor of these "Fighting Years" has told a fighting story. But he has told it like a brave gentleman, beautifully, on the whole kindly even where bitter disillusion crowds the pages.

The young radicals who simplify life and the issues of today should read this book to know how miserably they will fail tomorrow when their time comes, if they try to play providence with tomorrow's issues. No moral rises so clearly out of Mr. Villard's story as this: that it is not the cowardice of men but the arrogance of men that wrecks the world.

William Allen White is the editor of The Emporia Gazette.

The End of Austria

SHOWDOWN IN VIENNA. By Martin Fuchs. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1939. \$3.

Reviewed by JAMES FREDERICK GREEN

THIS excellent volume, written by a personal aide to Chancellor Kurt Schuschnigg, adds to our large collection of informative, colorfully written, and one-sided literature concerning Hitlerian diplomacy. Because it deals with the interplay of European relations and Austrian politics between 1936 and 1938 and represents the views of people close to the center of power, this narrative contains the most complete and truthful story of the subject now available. Mr. Fuchs inserts at every point facts and interpretations which have not appeared elsewhere but which seem entirely accurate and consistent. Since there is no way as yet of checking such "inside information," one can only accept it as looking authentic and as fitting into the general pattern of Austrian affairs. There are a few paragraphs, however, which must be labeled fiction, for Mr. Fuchs delights in reading the thoughts of Hitler, Mussolini, and other statesmen as they pace their respective rooms and plot the downfall of their enemies.

It becomes clear from this comprehensive narrative that Hitler had planned an expansion through both Austria and Czechoslovakia early in his regime, but had postponed action until he could be sure of Italian neutrality or assistance. The fatal event of this period turns out to be the application of sanctions against Italy during the Ethiopian affair, for by seeking to uphold the Covenant in Africa the British and French lost their ally in Central Europe. No previous book has shown so well the internal disintegration of Austria through Nazi intrigue and the hopelessness of Schuschnigg's position in the face of German pressure and Anglo-French hesitancy.

No Mere Power Fight

GOD'S VALLEY: *People and Power along the Tennessee River.* By Willson Whitman. New York: The Viking Press. 1939. \$3.

Reviewed by GEORGE FORT MILTON

EVER since Congress passed the Norris Act six years ago, the Tennessee Valley has been the happy hunting ground for several different sorts of folk: officials, engineers, and scientists setting up the Tennessee Valley Authority and seeking to get it functioning; college dons with accent and vocabulary strange to these Valley folk; private utility lawyers seeking injunctions against TVA; and writers looking for the material from which to write books about the Promised Land.

These authors in search of a subject have come here from France, England, Sweden, Russia, and from all over America. Most of the visitation and much of the writing has been to the good, for it is a seemly valley, even under the spotlight. At first many of the people of Valleyland found it hard to be put under the microscope as so many guinea pigs in the laboratory of social change. By now, however, they have gotten half-way used to it. Certainly they will consider Mrs. Whitman's book one of the fairest in purpose, and broadest in treatment, of those written about TVA.

Incidentally, the author did not write it after a lick and promise visit, but after a stay here of many weeks. She went all over the TVA area, from Hiwassee, in the Smokies, to Gilbertsville, at the river's mouth. She sought the broad setting of historical background, so as to understand the region and its people. The dire

poverty resultant from the Civil War; the erosions of these eternal hills; the need for phosphate fertilizer to build up farms on the fringe of exhaustion; the great national value of an integrated region seeking to develop the latent resources, human and material—all these and a host of other things interested her and are reflected in her book.

Some of it, necessarily, is focused on the long power war. It was written before the negotiations between TVA and the heads of the private utilities had been successful. Today, from a power policy standpoint, there is peace in the Valley. This peace is based on purchase of private electrical property at a fair price, so that TVA can carry forward its great enterprise and at the same time legitimate private investors are not harmed.

This peace with honor should have the effect of correcting the misemphasis on power as the chief element in the Authority's work. Power is important, to be sure, but I believe the other elements substantially outweigh it: navigation, flood prevention, forest conservation, erosion control—such endeavors are of enormous value, and as years go on will procure more and more public attention.

It is in the attention given these plus values of TVA that "God's Valley" seems most consequential. Mrs. Whitman's treatment of them is interesting and persuasive. Her text has a number of errors of detail, and some misemphasis. The book as a whole, however, should help the nation understand that TVA is much more than a power fight: that it is a great national enterprise.

George Fort Milton, author of "The Age of Hate," is editor of The Chattanooga News.



This town's out-of-work miners helped build dams. (From "God's Valley.")

The First World Dictator

THE HOLY TERROR. By H. G. Wells.
New York: Simon & Schuster. 1939.
\$2.75.

Reviewed by ELMER DAVIS

WELLS'S eschatological writings run all the way up and down the scale from the wild optimism of "In the Days of the Comet" to the equally wild, but at present more plausible, pessimism of "The War in the Air." But by now it is possible to regard them not as a series of apocalypses, but as one single apocalypse progressively revised on the Hegelian formula. Wells publishes a thesis; the facts of life presently lay down an antithesis; from the two, Wells evolves a synthesis which is his next version of the Latter Days, the starting point for the next argument; and so on.

The latest version differs from the rest in a concentration on means rather than ends, as is natural in a time when people are wondering, not what the Golden Age might be like, but how we are ever going to get it. Wells no longer hopes to get it through the magic influence of some regenerating comet, nor yet by the common agreement of men of good will as in "The World Set Free." To make a new world, says one of the characters of this novel, "the leader must be a fundamentally destructive man"; and another concludes that "civilized men can't clean up" because "the old order won't deal with reasonable men." There is considerable support for this gloomy view in current history (and ancient history, too, for Augustus had a bad reputation while he was working his way up). So now Wells envisions the world set free, more or less accidentally, by a Tough Guy, a Holy Terror whose dictatorship enforces the world unity and world peace that must come before pre-history will have ended and history can begin.

Nothing very novel about this, even though Wells uses a little sleight of hand at the finish to bring about the passing of the dictatorship and "withering away of the State," which the communists seem unable to manage. What gives "The Holy Terror" its novelty and its merit is the extraordinarily acute and convincing psychograph of Rud Whitlow, who became the first (and perhaps the last) world dictator. That Wells has borrowed what

he needed from the character and history of Hitler is of no consequence, for the insight of the artist creates a better picture of the Dictator than any amount of autobiography or I-knew-him-when reminiscences—not merely Hitler (or Rud Whitlow), but any dictator, the *Führer an Sich*.

Rud Whitlow, ugly and feeble, who looked a little like Napoleon and a little like Donald Duck; so weak and timid, as a child, that he came to hate and fear all power in others with an intensity that could not relax till he had gathered all the power in the world into his own hands. In childhood, the family physician saw nothing unusual in him but "an excess of go and a lack of self-restraint," but there turned out to be a good deal more than that. There was in manhood the ora-

torical power that transcended any conscious reasoned intention; there were the interludes of scheming treachery born of fear; there were the moments of swift and lucid planning and execution; there were above all those occasional clairvoyant flashes of insight in which Rud Whitlow could sum up and short-cut all of an immensely tangled situation, so that his followers never

had any doubt that he, and nobody else, was the Leader. And there was, incidentally, the "autosexuality" that concentrated all emotion on himself, because he was afraid of letting himself go, of giving himself, to any woman.

But how can Wells suppose that such a creature could bring on the Golden Age? Well—and here we deviate from modern though not from ancient history, where the group around Augustus was for a long time more respectable than he was—Rud Whitlow had attracted a group of men who saw a vision of a better, a truly civilized world; men in short who seem to have read and been profoundly influenced by the earlier works of H. G. Wells. Rud was destructive, the movement was constructive; behind him grew up a World Civil Service officered by "secret natural aristocrats"—the new Samurai, they used to be called. They needed the Tough Guy to clear away the jungle of outworn governments, institutions, creeds; but when he had integrated the world, and had begun to show the suspicious tyrannical cruelty that commonly follows on despotic power, they managed to get rid of him with sin-

gularly little fuss; and he found no successor.

It would be pleasant if a world dictator showed such good taste in picking his inner circle, and if he could be got rid of so easily when he had served his purpose. The forecast based on evidence at present available could hardly be so cheerful; but maybe it will be fair and warmer tomorrow.

Time Is Not Money

THE MIDAS TOUCH. By Margaret Kennedy. New York: Random House. 1939.
\$2.50.

Reviewed by BASIL DAVENPORT

KING MIDAS had the gift of turning everything he touched into gold; he also had the ears of a jackass. Is it possible to have the golden touch without the ass's ears? At first, in this novel of Miss Kennedy's, it almost seems so. Her hero, Evan Jones, is the charming cad who lives by his wits and his charm; he sees every one's weak point, and how it can be turned to gold for himself. But he has also the gift of enjoyment, which is the gift of detachment. Evan recognizes that his financial gift is a potential curse to him, like a craving for liquor in the blood; he has always prevented himself from staying too long in one place or accumulating too much; at the beginning of the book, he has still escaped the ass's ears.

Against him is set the figure of Corris Morgan, the great, unscrupulous, acquisitive financier; and how Evan is led to take part in his schemes, and so to sink from a vagabond adventurer to a respectable swindler, is one of the stories of the book. For there are a number of other narrative threads and characters. There is a shabby-genteel medium, who is for three-quarters of the time a fake, but who has flashes of genuine clairvoyance; and there is Lydia Jekyll, the wife of an impoverished country gentleman, who loses her standards bit by bit because she accustoms herself to sponging on the Morgans. These stories and others, woven together with the greatest skill, make the book one of the most successful diversions of the season.

However, it leaves the reader with an uneasy feeling that it was meant to be something more, and that it does not succeed in reaching that goal, or even in precisely defining it. It seems to be written on the theme of Money, which conditions all the characters. Miss Kennedy seems always on the point of saying something more significant than the statement that money is powerful, and never quite to get it said. Perhaps one should only say that Miss Kennedy has recognized Money, as being one of the two mysteries whose solution presses on us with peculiar heaviness (the other one is Time), and so adds a little in depth to what is essentially first-rate entertainment.



From the jacket of "The Holy Terror"