

## Indian Leader

*TECUMSEH AND HIS TIMES.* By John M. Oskison. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1938. \$2.75.

Reviewed by FLETCHER PRATT

THE story of Hannibal against Rome, wrapped in an Indian blanket. The great movement into the Northwest Territory has grown to heroic proportions in our history as the winning of the West; but the actual record was in some respects so discreditable that it moved Jefferson to "tremble for my country when I remember that God is just." It is quite easy for any writer who takes even a half-way view of the proceedings of the pioneers to enlist his readers' sympathies on the side of the Indians. Mr. Oskison takes slightly more than a half-way view—the only white man in the book who emerges with a shred of reputation is Anthony Wayne—but he is not beyond his rights, for he is producing the biography of one of the leading actors, and it is incumbent upon him to justify, or at least to explain, what his man did.

And he did plenty—formed a great Indian confederacy that reached from the Lakes to the Gulf, rooted it in a basis of combined religious fanaticism and hope of present material gain, held at bay for a long space the young republic which could bring to bear many times his resources in man-power and overwhelmingly more than his resources in mechanical skill, changed the living habits of a race. With a few more years of peace Tecumseh might have won his game but his prophet brother had made the fatal

promise that the faithful should be immune to bullets, and when William Henry Harrison produced a premature clash of arms, the new religion which was the pivot of the whole combination died with those of its followers who fell at Tippecanoe.

At this point the defect of an otherwise excellent book appears. Things are a little too simple. Mr. Oskison presents the last years of the great chief's life as a kind of duel with Harrison in diplomacy and war. This is no more accurate than to call the last years of the Second Punic War a duel between Hannibal and Scipio; rather, both Harrison and Africanus were special organisms called forth from an amorphous body by external stimuli, unable to function without the pressure of that mass behind them. Captain Croghan and Richard Mentor Johnson, whose roles were as important as that of Harrison himself in bringing Tecumseh down, barely walk across the stage; Daniel Dobbins, who was very important, is not mentioned; and the comment on the Prophet is offhand. The personal and political interrelations of all these persons were in the last degree complex and interesting, but there is not much about them here.

Still, this is admittedly a somewhat carping criticism which is practically a request for a book twice as long. The difficulty of all Indian history is the lack of information on which to base it; and if Mr. Oskison has not altogether overcome this difficulty, he has gone farther than most in producing an excellent piece of biography from what must have been the most exiguous and disappointing materials.

## The Romantic Soldier, but Not the Dictator

*NAPOLEON, SOLDIER AND EMPEROR.* By Octave Aubry. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company. 1938. \$3.75.

Reviewed by CHARLES DAVID ABBOTT

TWO years ago American readers were provided with a translation of Octave Aubry's "St. Helena," a study of Napoleon's last years. It was an impeccable narrative, smooth, graceful, justly informative. It divulged no new evidence, it suggested no fresh interpretation of the tragic and anti-climactic six years that closed the Emperor's life; it was simply a vivid and honest retelling of the familiar story in an idiom attuned to the ears and minds of the 1930's. Its popularity has had the inevitable effect of inducing its author to capitalize on his former success with a complete biography of the man whose decline he had so adroitly chronicled. The result is a book which reproduces the merits of its predecessor—a succinct and accurate account of Napoleon's career, nicely modulated to contemporary taste. It is neither so brief as to exasperate the glutton for detail, nor so long as to frighten the mentally indolent. It is well planned and well written; it misses no opportunity for dramatic effect, and it includes not a single tedious paragraph. It is, in fact, a painlessly readable life of Bonaparte, but so are several others which have by no means been outmoded.

So much for the book's merits. On the surface they are considerable. To make already overworked materials into an exciting narrative, as M. Aubry has done, is a feat not to be too lightly condemned. But anyone, other than the most undemanding of readers, is likely to ask for something a little more solid than narrative dexterity, if he is to read for the *n*th time the saga of Napoleon's victories. Some current of interpretive thought is needed to give vitality to such a book, some concept of history which does not relegate Clio to the company of mere reporters, no matter how brilliant they may be.

Napoleon was a dictator, one of the most extravagantly successful of all dictators. We are today forced to be interested in dictators. Whether we admire them or hate them, we cannot possibly refuse to consider the political theories of which they are the manifestations. We cannot fail to be anxiously curious about the conditions which beget them and about the ends towards which they direct their energies. Much that is psychologically pertinent to such thought resides in the story of Napoleon, but from M. Aubry's treatment we should never know it. For Napoleon the dictator he has neither approval nor disapproval. Napoleon the dictator simply does not exist. He is replaced by a romantic soldier and benevolent ruler around whom a mawkish sympathy has thrown a mantle of undiluted glory.

C. D. Abbott is librarian of the University of Buffalo.

## The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	Crime, Place, Sleuth	Summing Up	Verdict
SOME BURIED CAESAR Rex Stout (Farrar & Rinehart: \$2.)	Orchid show gets Nero Wolfe to upstate N. Y. town, murder—involving taurine champion—holds him there.	Ingenious plot, Nero's eccentricities. Archie Goodwin's wise-cracks keep story on Stout's best level.	Unbeatable
ANTIDOTE TO VENOM Freeman Wills Croft (Dodd, Mead: \$2.)	Elderly British pathologist found dead from apparently accidental snake-bite. Slight discrepancy piques Insp. French, and hunt is up.	Run-with-the-hare and hunt-with-the-hounds affair, beautifully constructed, well characterized, and dexterously elucidated.	Peerless
THE CHAMELEON Harry Stephen Keeler (Dutton: \$2.)	Mysterious gentleman with different moniker on almost every page indulges in fantastic semi-criminal high-jinks in Mid-West.	You know what it's all about—maybe on last page, and the rest is sheer—but, dammit, interesting—lunacy.	Delirious
THE GREAT GAME H. C. Bailey (Crime Club: \$2.)	Dead bat in belfry where untimely bells tolled for skull-cracking sets R. Fortune on grim trail of triple murder.	Evil doings in English hamlet keep rubicund Reggie busy plumbing mixture of motives and bringing megaloccephalic killer to book.	Enthralling
DEATH BOARDS THE LAZY LADY Ruth Darby (Crime Club: \$2.)	Pleasure cruise of gay theater-movie group to Virgin Islands marred by murders which test skill of insular detective.	Scandinavian serenity of sleuth Christensen blessed relief after hysterical emoting of other characters. Solution has questionable moments.	Passable

## The Upper House

THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES. By George E. Haynes. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1938. 2 vols. \$8.50.

Reviewed by LINDSAY ROGERS

GLADSTONE once described the Senate of the United States as a "remarkable body—the most remarkable of all the inventions of modern politics." The statement is still true but the adjective may cut two ways. Observers may think of the Senate as remarkable in its successes or remarkable in its failures. In either case, the most powerful upper chamber in the world merits the extended and detailed consideration which it receives in Mr. Haynes's two large volumes.

Under preparation for a number of years, they have obviously grown by accretion. Comprehensive, even encyclopedic in their nature, they deal with every phase of Senatorial activity—not only with the spectacular functions in connection with foreign affairs, nominations to office and investigations, but with minor matters such as the ventilation of the chamber, the mortality rate in comparison with that of the House of Representatives, and the allowances for mileage and stationery.

Here in ample detail are the incidents—some of them dramatic—which throw light on the manner in which the Senate does its work and uses its powers. Here is a history of the ways in which Presidents have gotten along and have failed to get along with the body which probably has more *amour propre* than any other legislative chamber in the world. The role of the Senate as a high court of impeachment receives extended treatment. Mr. Haynes is concerned not only with corruption, alleged or real, which brought about the use of what someone called the most cumbersome gun in the Congressional arsenal, but he pays fastidious attention to fine points of procedure. Despite its scope and its excessively factual character, the work is not dull. Mr. Haynes has a feel for the humorous and the picturesque. He has filtered the facts through a sympathetic and trained intelligence.

Some years ago Mr. Haynes published a monograph on the election of senators. Then the country was tremendously concerned by the controversy over whether the choice should be by popular election rather than by the state legislatures. The latter method had permitted seats to be purchased. The Senate was spoken of as a millionaires' club, and in that era of pre-war "progressivism" indirect election seemed undemocratic. So a constitutional amendment provided for popular election. Mr. Haynes (and many observers agree with him) cannot see that the character of the Senate has changed greatly. Scandals there have been in connection with campaign expenditures. Demagogues are certainly no less numerous. Whether the level of ability has risen and fidelity to the national interest has increased are wide open questions.

Mr. Haynes has written a treatise and not a tract for the times. He limits him-

self to expounding and does not bother to exhort. Hence there are few suggestions concerning what changes, if any, Mr. Haynes would propose to make in the position that the Senate occupies in the American constitutional scheme. Other representative systems of government deliberately exclude an upper chamber which can be as powerful and as independent as the Senate of the United States frequently is. Everywhere the task of representative institutions is to act so promptly and so intelligently that those who advocate totalitarian regimes of one sort or another will have little that is serious to complain of. A powerful upper chamber makes for delay but it may also make for greater intelligence. Some comfort may also be derived from the fact that in the two crises of the World War and of the 1933 depression, the Senate surprised many observers by displaying little of that *amour propre* which they expected it could never conceal, and by abandoning personal and factional attempts to obstruct.

Lindsay Rogers, professor of public law at Columbia University, is the author of several books, including "The American Senate" and "Crisis Government."

## Courtier and Poet

SIR WILLIAM D'AVENANT: *Poet Laureate and Playwright-Manager*. By Arthur H. Nethercot. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1939. \$4.

Reviewed by ALLARDYCE NICOLL

IN the fall of the year 1650 the English Admiralty received news that one of their licensed privateers, Captain John Green, had captured "a Gunder bark of Jersey." Presumably the worthy naval officers imagined this to be some new kind of armed merchantman; had they been inclined to the reading of contemporary literature they might have guessed that what Captain Green had captured was the author of "Gondibert," none other than Sir William D'Avenant, servant to King Charles II in exile. Later examination revealed the truth, revealed, too, the fact that the seizure of D'Avenant's ship had cheated Maryland of a new lieutenant-governor, for D'Avenant was carrying secret orders to take over the control of the colony from Lord Baltimore. This was a stirring time, when poets perforce became men of action and men stood leagued to fight for unthroned king or usurping parliament.

Through the tortured course of political events in the seventeenth century Sir William D'Avenant steered an exciting course, and that course has been entertainingly told by Professor Nethercot. His book is a genuine contribution to our knowledge of life during this time. D'Avenant himself touched many facets of the age. He was a courtier and so associated with events of high political import; he was a poet and so related to nearly all the literary men of his generation; he was a playwright-manager and so responsible for much of the theater's fortunes in the mid-century; he was, too, something of a buffoon, one whom contemporaries

never ceased to laugh at because an unfortunate escapade had left him minus a nose. Even when he lay in the Tower and the House of Commons debated whether he should die, a contemporary newspaper reported that "when it was put to the Vote, some *Gentlemen*, out of pity, were pleased to let him have the *Noes* of the House, because he had none of his own."

Professor Nethercot is to be congratulated both upon the thoroughness and upon the freshness and vitality of his biography. D'Avenant deserved such a meticulous study as this, for was he not the reputed son of William Shakespeare and did he not, in his age, contribute towards saving John Milton from a traitor's death? No man could wish for greater honor.

Allardyce Nicoll is chairman of the department of drama at Yale.

## Fascinating Life Histories of America's Best-Sellers

HOW did such books as "Anthony Adverse," "Gone With the Wind," "The Story of Ferdinand" and "David Harum" get their start toward fame? Here is many a captivating inside story, replete with facts and figures that should do much to overcome generally mistaken ideas about books and book publishing. By the editor of *The Saturday Review*. Illustrated. At all bookstores, only \$1.

## Lincoln's Doctor's Dog

And Other Famous  
Best-Sellers

BY  
GEORGE  
STEVENS

J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY