

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.

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The New Books

Fiction

A GOOD HOME WITH NICE PEOPLE.
By Josephine Lawrence. Little, Brown.
1939. \$2.50.

It was said of one of Sinclair Lewis's books (we think it was "The Man Who Knew Coolidge") that he had transferred his character to the page in all of his unadulterated dullness. Miss Lawrence has achieved this same dubious feat in "A Good Home with Nice People," which is a book about the troubled relations between suburban women and their maids. It is made up of long, interminable dialogues in which the women are saying how difficult it is to get a good girl these days, and how they don't appreciate a good home with nice people, etc.—and also in which the girls are saying how these women expect you to work like a dog for next to nothing and no time off, and don't they think you're human, too, etc. Now this is no more interesting on paper than it is in the next compartment on the train, nor does it in fact seem to make a novel. The subject is not really discussed seriously from any recognizable social angle, and has no direction, unless we consider the farcical ending, in which the girl ties and gags her mistress "because she wouldn't stop talking," as a climax. The book is simply one long headache about the servant problem, and will probably have a special nostalgic appeal for those to whom this headache is a personal matter.

N. L. R.

THE GENTLEMAN WITH THE WALRUS MUSTACHE. By Guy Gilpatric.
Dodd, Mead. 1939. \$2.

The thing that has always left us transfixed with wonder is the superhuman constitution of Mr. Colin Glencannon, chief engineer of the S.S. *Inchcliffe Castle*. We have long ceased marveling at his exploits with the brass knuckles—at his Elizabethan gift for repartee and at his

unparalleled Scottish shrewdness. But how that organ which in other men is called the stomach withstands the constant assault of spirituous liquors to the amount and variety which he consumes will always remain one of the great mysteries of modern fiction.

The admirers of this musty old sea-dog who pops up at regular and frequent intervals throughout the year in the *Saturday Evening Post* must easily run into the millions. You find him in this new group of adventures at peak form. His spirit was never more valiant, his chicanery never more astute, and his humor never more exhilarating.

R. S.

TODAY IS ENOUGH. By Ruth Lininger Dobson. Dodd, Mead. 1939. \$2.50.

This is the story of Judy, who marries John. Hers is a city background with vague and naive overtones of luxury and social gaiety, and he is a young minister, who talks about people's "lovely homes." He takes her to his new parish, a small village somewhere in the Middle West, and their adjustments to marriage and life take place. It is an ingenuous, wholly undistinguished little novel, at its best with the farm and village people, at its worst with social problems, the brittle, brittle world of the gilded rich, and the more subtle forms of grammar. One guesses that the author is part of the exact group of women for which she writes, and that should make a happy combination.

F. W.

A VISIT TO PAY. By Isabella Holt. Bobbs-Merrill. 1939. \$2.50.

Standing with unreluctant feet where the cat and kitten meet, Towny, Chicago debutante, is the most entertaining figure in Miss Holt's often extremely entertaining book. Towny's generation consider it *vieux jeu* to drink, swear, or rebel; they are time's revenge on the clumsy, naive war generation who thought themselves such devils and who now seem to their children merely messy. How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a Victorian child—especially a child who like Towny is Victorian on the surface only, and has manners but no scruples!

Martin and Peg, however, though they belong to Towny's generation, are very different, for they are sensitive and desperately loyal. But even Martin and Peg are too intelligent to be comfortable to themselves or their parents: they see too much and they have not enough experience to give them charity or cynicism to make them stop caring.

Thus Peg's mother, Mrs. Morlock, who has to deal with them all, is baffled. She is one of those beauties whom a capricious Providence enjoys marrying to ugly and clever men by whom they invariably have clever and dish-faced daughters. Assured of her rightness through consciousness of her beauty, Mrs. Morlock really wants to be a good mother, and a

good aunt to Martin. But she is always being checked in her generous impulses by the memory that the world seemed to promise her perfection in return for the pleasure her face gave it; and she finds herself losing the trump without winning the game.

The dark and luscious Katharine, Martin's step-mother, does better with the younger generation because she is too egotistical to let it bother her. She struggles with an air of greatness, a New England conscience, and a flair for the third rate, and ends by deciding she had always wanted too much, and accepting life and an inferior husband. The conclusion is spoilt by the feeling that Bertram was much the best thing she'd ever captured; so that she ended as obtuse as she began.

Thus, with all her intelligence and wit, Miss Holt cannot make her ending compare with her brilliant beginning. The real pleasure of her book is in the characters of Peg, Martin, and Towny, and in the vivacity and observation of her descriptions with which she depicts home life in the suburbs, a career on the airwaves, or coming out in Lake Forest.

K. S.

International

WAR, PEACE AND CHANGE. By John Foster Dulles. Harpers. 1939. \$1.75.

Books on the causes of war and the possibilities for peace are likely to be composed of either pyrotechnic oversimplifications or closely reasoned abstractions applied to current world problems. In the former category falls the vast array of panacea proposals; in the latter, the rare, careful analysis of the most vital and baffling issue confronting humanity today. To this scanty literature Mr. Dulles has made a notable addition. He has begun by investigating the methods used to eliminate violence within the state—methods compounded of the ethical sentiments of mankind, which stress the emotional desire for unselfishness and the social good, and of political organizations operating through law, which preserve a tolerable balance between the aspirations of those who desire change and those who oppose it. From these factors springs the modern state. Paradoxically, however, the centralization of authority in the state and the will to self-sacrifice for its good have created a world of anarchy as between states themselves. No simplistic solution like those embodied in the Kellogg Pact, the League of Nations, or the philosophy of national isolation can alone suffice to prevent war.

Something far more difficult to achieve is needed. On the ethical plane the tendency to excoriate certain foreign nations as if they were diabolic personalities must be overcome. A spiritual ideal transcending national lines must replace the latter-day religion of nationalism. Excessive economic and political compartmentation behind national boundary lines resembling Chinese walls must be discouraged. And in the political field steps must be taken to avoid the rigidities giving rise to "have-not" psychology. Something approximating the changes which would be made by an effectively func-

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