

## Another Yesterday

*THE DAY BEFORE.* By H. M. Tomlinson. New York: G. P. Putman's Sons. 1939. 297 pp. \$2.50.

Reviewed by JOHN SCOTT MABON

THE similarity of Mr. Tomlinson's new novel to "All Our Yesterdays" is not confined to the title. Like that earlier work, "The Day Before" is the chronicle of an era, indeed, of roughly the same era as that with which Mr. Tomlinson has already dealt. The present novel covers the period extending from the turn of the century to 1914, and ends with the seemingly inevitable reference to that unheard-of place, Sarajevo. Moreover, just as the central figure of "All Our Yesterdays" was a journalist, so Clem Venner in "The Day Before" is a journalist; and his chief function is the same as his predecessor's: to serve as a springboard for the author's fancy.

The criticism that the "characters" in Mr. Tomlinson's novels are not characters at all but simply disembodied voices has been made too often to need repeating, even though it is probably truer of the present work than ever before. And that defect alone would not necessarily be a grave matter if the device were frankly acknowledged as such. But Mr. Tomlinson's use of characters is not a help but a hindrance. They (and the reader) are at the mercy of a wayward plottiness that is obstructive and confusing. Situations are introduced, a set of circumstances is established, the stage is tantalizingly set for the most dramatic developments; the entire structure is then breezily bashed in and forgotten and the quasi narrative is swirled along on a stream of prose that knows no direction save that of unpredictable caprice. Strange that a writer with so distinguished a sense of the form of a sentence and the continuity of a paragraph should be so lacking in a rudimentary sense of narrative form and continuity; should, indeed, wilfully misuse narrative elements merely to the bemusement of the reader and to the detriment of what he really has to say.

It is a pity. For Mr. Tomlinson has something to say. If, in his retrospective absorption with a period in the past that may seem to us more remote and less urgently related to our present preoccupations than it was a dozen years ago when he published "All Our Yesterdays," he is sometimes trite, he yet remains the master of a style that can clothe even the commonplace in shining verbal raiment and that can, at times, catch a fancy, create a mood, or forge a description of memorable beauty. Out of

a brief glimpse into a London tenement at the time of a dock strike he fashions a masterpiece of vivid and eloquent restraint. The icy precision of his account of the fateful sinking of the *Titanic* stamps the tragedy indelibly in the mind.

Despite its shortcomings, here is a book for all those who cherish the great heritage of English prose and delight in its increase.

## Ned and the Devil

*LIVE AND KICKING NED.* By John Masefield. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1939. 477 pp. \$2.50.

Reviewed by BASIL DAVENPORT

LAST year there appeared a novel by Mr. Masefield called "Dead Ned," which seemed to be one half of an excellent adventure story. It was told in the first person by a young eighteenth-century doctor, who was falsely accused of murdering a benefactor, convicted, and hanged—but then resuscitated, and smuggled out of England aboard a slaver, obviously bound for trouble. Here the book ended, with the hero not safe, the real murderer not disclosed, and nothing further said about that mysterious tribe of white savages whom one of the characters had once encountered in Africa and had described for us at great length. Of course, a sequel was to be expected; but in these post-"Anthony Adverse" days there is little excuse for making us buy our adventures on the installment plan. So it is pleasant to be able to say that Mr. Masefield has repented of his original plan of issuing the book as a trilogy, and has combined the second and third parts, "Live Ned" and "Kicking Ned," in the present volume.

The three parts, taken together, make up a first-rate adventure story. In much of this Masefield is at his best; the early scene when the drunken captain, believing that he is haunted by the ghost of a man he has killed, forces his black mistress to work voodoo and raise the Devil to banish the ghost, is one of the finest pieces of foreboding you will find anywhere. All the scenes on shipboard, like all of "Dead Ned," combine a brooding premonition with a vividness and conviction that recall Defoe. But later we leave the world of Defoe for that of Rider Haggard. And after the hero returns to England, still a convicted murderer and in danger of his life, the earlier mood of perilous reality is never quite recaptured. Still, the world of Rider Haggard is one of the best of all possible worlds, and if this book does not altogether fulfill the romantic promise of "Dead Ned," it remains enter- tainment of the finest.

## Recommended Reading

(This column is prepared by the editors of The Saturday Review by way of registering continued interest in books previously reviewed in these pages. It will include only current books, but none published less than a month ago.)

**SHAKESPEARE.** By Mark Van Doren. Unconventional criticism, from a poet's point of view, of the plays and poems of Shakespeare, not as documents in literary history but as works of art. (Reviewed October 7.)

**MEN UNDER THE SEA.** By Edward Ellsberg. Commander Ellsberg's story of salvage and rescue on the ocean floor has a special timeliness in view of the importance of the submarine today. (Reviewed October 7.)

**THE FINE ART OF PROPAGANDA: A STUDY OF FATHER COUGHLIN'S SPEECHES** (prepared by the Institute of Propaganda Analysis). Edited by Alfred McClung Lee and Elizabeth Briant Lee. An exposure of domestic propaganda, recommended to those who think it all comes from Europe. (Reviewed October 7.)

**THE HERITAGE OF AMERICA.** Edited by Henry Steele Commager and Allan Nevins. American history as it was made, in personal narratives and first-hand accounts of observers and participants. (Reviewed September 30.)

**AFRICAN MAJESTY.** By F. Clement C. Egerton. The human side of a village in the Cameroons, revealed with sympathy and humor. King N'jiké of Bangangté is worth knowing. (Reviewed August 5.)

**FAMILY ALBUM.** By Humphrey Pakington. Unpretentious but not to be overlooked, this humorous family history quietly evokes the enduring quality of English life, which can be at its best when it is at its funniest. (Reviewed August 19.)

**CHILDREN OF GOD.** By Vardis Fisher. A stirring, panoramic novel of the Mormons, sound as history and convincing as fiction. (Reviewed August 26.)

**THE REVOLUTION OF NIHILISM.** By Hermann Rauschning. A "warning to the west," plotting the course of Nazi dynamics from the Reichstag fire to the "world revolution." (Reviewed September 9.)

# "Good talk

## Do you know . . . ?

- .... that Mussolini wanted Mr. Untermeyer to regard him not as a politician but as a violinist?
- .... about the fervent admirer who, unable to possess D. H. Lawrence during his lifetime, tried to steal his ashes—and how she was forever thwarted?
- .... why Amy Lowell's guests had to take their after-dinner coffee with bath-towels draped across their knees?
- .... that Louis Untermeyer "discovered" Nathalia Crane as a poet in a five-and-ten-cent store?
- .... why Vachel Lindsay determined to make Springfield, Illinois, the cultural center of America after seeing Rimsky-Korsakow's "Coq D'Or"?
- .... that H. L. Mencken once tried to cure Mr. Untermeyer's cold by sending him a stolen Bible inscribed "with the compliments of the Author"?
- .... that Robert Frost once tramped through the Carolinas looking for work and that he and Louis Untermeyer *almost* established Utopia in the South Seas—and didn't?
- .... that Art Young, savage cartoonist, couldn't keep awake when he was on trial for his own life?

is rare, and getting rarer. Here is a book of it, with valuable subject-matter and no let-down from beginning to end."

—Henry Seidel Canby,  
*Saturday Review*

"Gusto unflagging, wit perpetually effervescent, no lack of entertainment." —*Babette Deutsch, Nation*

"Like stepping into an old familiar room echoing with well-known and beloved voices . . . sufficient to arouse tears and cheers."

—Herbert Gorman, *N. Y. Times*

"Witty and profound, richly satisfying." —*Dallas Times*

"People are talking about the charm of Louis Untermeyer's FROM ANOTHER WORLD." —*Vogue*

## Louis Untermeyer's autobiographical excursions **FROM ANOTHER WORLD** \$3.00



*Second large printing!*

**Margaret Irwin's**

beautiful, romantic novel of Stuart England—  
growing daily in popularity

# THE BRIDE

"... the kind of book we ought to mean when we speak of historical novels. Everything in it is true, and it is told as fiction simply for the sake of greater emotional force." —*N. Y. Times*, \$2.50

HARCOURT, BRACE AND COMPANY, NEW YORK



The Finest Novel  
in Many  
Years by

**H. M.  
Tomlinson**



1912  
THE SEA AND THE JUNGLE

1919  
OLD JUNK

1927  
GALLIONS REACH

1930  
ALL OUR YESTERDAYS

**AND NOW —**

A Novel of the London  
Docks, Fleet Street, the  
English Countryside, and  
the Open Sea

# THE DAY BEFORE

A story with action, suspense, adventure, and drama such as Mr Tomlinson has not written since his famous *Gallions Reach*. A rich, colorful and important book by a man who, as Henry Seidel Canby says, has "one of the most beautiful and expressive prose styles of our times."

"The story holds interest . . . Conspicuously well written . . . The work of an impressive personality."—*Amy Loveman in Book-of-the-Month Club News*.

\$2.50

**G. P.  
PUTNAM'S  
SONS**

2 W. 45th St., New York

## Recipes for Neutrality

(Continued from page 4)

the cultural and democratic ideals of England than of Imperial Germany. Our native optimism and idealism, probably in part a product of our advancing frontier life and of our great natural resources and fortunate geographical isolation, made us genuinely believe in our mission to make the world safe for democracy—before later events made the very phrase a cause for cynical laughter. But those whose memories are good know that this idealism, as expressed in the President's speeches, was a very real thing to the men who went overseas and to those who stayed at home. As Alice M. Morrissey well says in her excellent study, "American Defense of Neutral Rights, 1914-1917": "American neutrality was never more than a legal status cloaking factual partiality for the Allies."

This American sentiment and idealism perhaps should be put at the head of the list, because it partly explains why we were more angered by German than by British disregard of our rights, why we were so shocked by German methods of war, and why our soil proved so much more fertile for Allied than for German propaganda.

4. Allied propaganda, highly successful because abundant and skillful, and still more because it fell on ears already conditioned to receptivity. German propaganda, on the other hand, clumsy and ineffective abroad then as today, was more of a boomerang than a success.

5. Economic influences — bankers, munition-makers, profit-seekers — which have been discussed above.

6. Fear for our own ultimate safety if the Kaiser should triumph in Europe—a fear that was emotionally increased by the appearance of German submarines in our waters and that was naturally stronger along the Atlantic seaboard than inland west of the Alleghanies.

In the discussion of peace legislation there are two important points on which opinions differ sharply: how far shall the President be allowed discretionary power, and whether the present embargo on munitions shall be repealed.

As to President Roosevelt's discretionary power, Mr. Grattan would have as little of it as possible.

It cannot be too strongly emphasized that the President's power in foreign relations is tremendous in scope. It is a striking example of a delegation of powers under the republican theory of government which is fateful with disastrous consequences to the American people. . . . When President Roosevelt and his supporters demand that the

curbs on his authority be removed that he may resume the traditional authority of his office, one can only be suspicious that the aim is to facilitate the job of getting this country into war. . . .

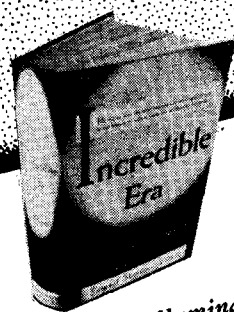
Messrs. Dulles and Armstrong think that if Congress wants to take the responsibility of legislating *ad hoc* to meet each and every particular situation as it arises, and is prepared to remain continuously in session for that purpose, it can almost eliminate Executive discretion altogether. But they also believe, absolutely correctly we are convinced, that

the difficulties and risks of that course must be evident to anyone who thinks twice. And when Congress proposes to legislate in general for all wars, present and future, it should pause to study the experience of the past. Then it will realize that in this field the legislation of today is the headache of tomorrow. . . . As between the risk that the Executive may possibly abuse this discretion and the risk inherent in a policy which ties the Executive with legislative restrictions in the conduct of foreign policy, the former alternative seems to us preferable.

As to the embargo on munitions, Mr. Grattan's general line of thought seems to indicate that he wishes to retain it. But we do not find anything clearer and more definite on this point than his statement that our policy should include "the tight control [but not embargo?] of the export of arms, munitions, and all lethal weapons of whatever character with the aim of preventing the sale of them from becoming a reason for even deeper involvement in the fortunes of the nations purchasing them. This task shall be given to a strengthened Munitions Control Board." Dulles and Armstrong give a careful and clear summary of the arguments for and against repealing the embargo on munitions. Their conclusion, with which we are again in complete agreement, is that "the arms embargo should be eliminated from our neutrality legislation."

*Sidney B. Fay, professor of history at Harvard, is the author of "Origins of the World War."*

Appeal to Reason. By J. B. Moore. In *Foreign Affairs*, July, 1933.  
Neutrality for the United States. By Edwin M. Borchard and W. P. Lage. Yale University Press, 1937.  
American Diplomacy During the World War. By Charles Seymour. Johns Hopkins University Press, 1934.  
Why We Fought. By C. H. Grattan. Vanguard Press, 1929.  
Road to War. By Walter Millis. Houghton Mifflin, 1935.  
America Goes to War. By C. C. Tansill. Little, Brown and Co., 1938.  
Propaganda for War. By H. C. Peterson. University of Oklahoma Press, 1938.  
Propaganda in the Next War. By Sidney Rogerson. London, 1939.  
British Propaganda at Home and in the United States from 1914 to 1917. By J. D. Squires. Harvard University Press, 1935.  
Giddy Minds and Foreign Quarrels. By C. A. Beard. The Macmillan Co., 1939.  
The American Defense of Neutral Rights. By Alice M. Morrissey. Harvard University Press, 1939.

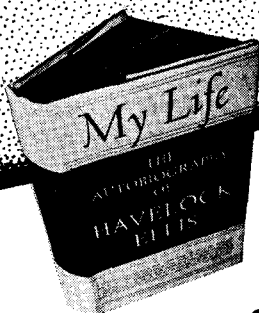


"Sagacious, illuminating,  
completely engrossing." —  
Alexander Woollcott

## Incredible Era

By SAMUEL HOPKINS ADAMS

THIS is the story of our Great Speakeasy Age and its rococo leader; the lush, swifter of the rum-runner, the flapper, the get-rich-on-cocktail, the complex paper finance. Political graft was reaching its maturity, oil got thicker than blood, and, day by day, the whispering campaign grew stronger. Highlighted against this lurid backdrop is the figure of Warren Gamaliel Harding, winning, futile and tragic, a man in a job too big for him — the fair weather president who got caught in a twister. Illustrated, \$3.00



## My Life

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF  
HAVELOCK ELLIS

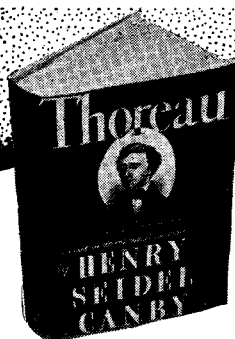
"I SEE life, whole, coldly, nakedly, all around, and though I am glad it is over, though I would not live it again, yet now that I seem to view it whole I view it with joy, even with ecstasy."

THE overtones of "My Life" are those of a surpassing love story. In friendship and in passion it was given to Havelock Ellis to attract and hold the worship of women. Both for its frankness and for the extraordinary distinction of the writing, this book may well stand as one of the great autobiographies. Illustrated, \$3.75

## LIGHTWOOD

By BRAINARD CHENEY

A VIOLENT and beautiful story of a battle for land and life in the Georgian pine barrens by an author whom Caroline Gordon calls: "A major American novelist in the making if not already made." \$2.50



## Thoreau

By HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

"CLEARLY the best biography of Thoreau and may well prove to be the author's calling card on posterity." *Howard Mumford Jones in the Boston Transcript.*

"Last year Carl Van Doren made clear to thousands of readers who knew nothing about Benjamin Franklin what a varied great American he was. This year Henry Seidel Canby makes available to other great Americans." — *Irwin Edman in the Saturday Review.* \$3.75

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY



# The Dilemma of Defense

OUR MILITARY CHAOS. By Oswald Garrison Villard. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1939. 202 pp., with index. \$1.75.

Reviewed by R. ERNEST DUPUY

NEARLY three years ago—January 30, 1937, to be exact—*The Saturday Review* published a criticism of Major General Johnson Hagood's "We Can Defend America," in which this reviewer made the statement that the book contained "juicy missiles for pacifists to hurl." The chickens have come home to roost in Mr. Villard's latest work, a book rather difficult for a soldier to review, because of the temptation to leap into debate rather than analysis.

Perhaps the best start would be to examine Mr. Villard's keystone argument. Here it is, *italics* his:—

*What will it avail us to arm to the utmost limit, to subordinate our national and industrial life to preparations for war, if thereby we lose our democratic soul—that soul we are supposed to preserve by pouring out armament expenditures without end?*

Mr. Villard is a sincere pacifist. He proved his sincerity during the years 1914-18, somewhat to his personal discomfort, if my recollection of those turbulent times is correct. Unfortunately, his type of pacifism revolves in a very narrow orbit, ignoring the realities of life, ignoring, too, the fact that American soldiers and sailors are themselves pacifists in the true sense of the word. In consequence, in his efforts Mr. Villard pulls back on the stage all the puppets and clap-trap of his stock in trade, making full use of the half-truth—always a favorite device in specious argument.

Upon General Hagood he leans heavily, perhaps more heavily than the General, himself a sincere, patriotic soldier, would like. For our higher command, both military and naval, Mr. Villard has little use. A literary Farragut, he steams against the tide of preparedness, damning not torpedoes but admirals and generals. "Given large military and naval es-

tablishments," he cries, "and some enemy invariably lurks round the corner." Again—"To be healthy and normal the Navy cannot exist unless it can prove that some other fellow menaces it and is building more ships than it has." *Vieux jeu*, Mr. Villard. What extensive military establishments have the Scandinavian countries? How fare the souls of Finland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania?

An entire chapter is devoted to "The Huge Growth of Our Military Forces." Would it were true! The author nimbly skips the fact that even the present emergency increases authorized by the President merely provide for the Regular Army enlisted strength of 280,000—the strength provided in the National Defense Act of 1920, but not appropriated for by Congress. The Regular commissioned strength—Mr. Villard insists our Army is over-officered—is still some 4,000 below the 18,000 written into that Act.

Mr. Villard notes, as if it were something to be proud of, that at the outbreak of the World War we had no Officers' Reserve Corps and only a handful of enlisted Regular Army reserves. He forgets to mention the thousands of white crosses that stand today in mute testimony to that lack. In his zeal to prove our alleged overarmament he states flatly that "No less than eighteen infantry divisions [of National Guard] have been completely organized," a statement that falls somewhat short of truth.

He argues that armaments lead to fascism. One interesting proof—in his opinion—is the recent deportation by England of "the law-breaking members of the Irish Republican Army," which act, he holds, was "in direct violation of the principles of individual liberty of the citizen." One might well pursue the argument to the *reductio ad absurdum* that incarceration of criminals is equal violation of principles of individual liberty.

The American Legion comes under heavy fire from Mr. Villard in his efforts to decry any and all preparedness moves as pernicious. "Nazi stuff," is his appellation for remarks by the

editor of the *Infantry Journal*, and by Major General Douglas MacArthur. He makes much of the unfortunate episode of General Moseley testifying before the Dies Committee.

One cannot help feeling that Mr. Villard in his most laudable zeal for peace has put the cart before the horse throughout the book. One quarrels not with his motives but with his opinions.

## Australian Nature

KOONWARRA. By Charles Barrett. New York: Oxford University Press. 1939. 315 pp. \$3.

Reviewed by CLIFFORD H. POPE


ALTHOUGH Australia is the smallest of the continents, it holds greater interest for the naturalist than any other part of the world. Long isolation has allowed so many archaic types to survive there that it is justly called the land of living fossils. Not only are ancient groups of higher animals such as the marsupials dominant, but even among the invertebrates primitive forms prevail. The fierce, carnivorous bull-dog ants, for example, abound to represent the prototype of all ants.

For decades Charles Barrett has traveled over the island continent observing and photographing everything from the giant earthworm of Gippsland, which rivals the boa constrictor of the American tropics in length, to tree burials of Groote Eylandt aborigines. He stalked the duckbill platypus with camera in its native wilds and saw it tamed and living happily in a platypussary; on the Great Barrier Reef he observed *Tridachna*, the clam with a shell a mere yard long and powerful enough to hold a man imprisoned and helpless, to be drowned by a rising tide. Nothing escapes the notice of this trained naturalist, who writes without sentimentality in spite of being such an ardent lover of wild life that he has always used a camera instead of a gun. Some two-score excellent pictures testify to his skill with the former. Nearly a dozen additional photographs by H. T. Reeves and others are included. Among these are striking portraits of the spotted cuscus, the spiny anteater, a baby wombat, the tree-kangaroo, mother and son koalas, and the bearded dragon.

A tribe of Victorian aborigines, now extinct, called the stately black swan "Koonwarra." This swan, discovered by a party of Dutch sailors in 1697, was the first native Australian bird to reach Europe. Its euphonious name is well chosen for this book in which birds perhaps hold the center of interest. The presence of the author on every page and a seasoning of personal philosophy give an autobiographical tone to the whole book.

The format is pleasing and there is a good index.

Clifford H. Pope is the author of "Snakes Alive and How They Live."



## The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	Crime, Place, Sleuth	Summing Up	Verdict
<b>A COFFIN FOR DIMITRIOS</b> Eric Ambler (Knopf: \$2.)	English detective-story writer in Istanbul fascinated by corpse fished from Bosphorus, traces its crime-stained past.	Nothing was too bad for Dimitrios, and his investigator's final discovery will make your eyes bug out.	<b>Masterpiece</b>

This is the first time  
in four years that the *Saturday Review of Literature* has called a mystery a masterpiece, and only the fourth time in the entire life of the *Saturday Review of Literature*