

The Road to Susan

D. H. LAWRENCE AND SUSAN HIS COW. By William York Tindall. New York: Columbia University Press. 1939. 231 pp., with index. \$2.75.

Reviewed by HARRY THORNTON MOORE

PROFESSOR TINDALL says he first became deeply interested in D. H. Lawrence after an "encounter with several members of what must be called his cult," and in some ways this book seems to be a lecture to them and others like them. Not that it is dull: if it is the most thorough study of Lawrence's writings that has yet appeared, it is also the most stimulating. The invocation of the black cow from Lawrence's ranch near Taos was a clever device: Lawrence felt a mystic relatedness between Susan and himself, and although she never became his most important symbol, she provides this book with a convenient starting point. Professor Tindall admits that he deals "less with Susan than with the road to Susan . . . and its several byways." For those who have read Lawrence attentively it will be a fascinating journey. Within its limitations it is practically a "Road to Xanadu." Lawrence's ideas are traced to their sources, and the books that moved him most are discussed in relation to the development of his philosophy. This is the first time that authentic scholarship has made its appearance in connection with the Lawrence problem.

Professor Tindall also attempts to place Lawrence in the pattern of his age. The chapter "D. H. Lawrence among the Fascists" deals cautiously and at some length with one of the most perplexing Lawrencean riddles. Lawrence was no fascist: Professor Tindall believes he was some kind of proto-fascist theocrat, and exposes the fatuousness of the totalitarians who claim Lawrence as one of themselves. He further says Lawrence would have loathed the present fascist groups, probably because he would have wanted to be dictator of his own religion. But there is better evidence than this on Lawrence's behalf in his own writings. "Kangaroo," the book in which he examined and then rejected the equivalent of fascism, will stand in his defence.

Lawrence is singled out by Professor Tindall as the most vital recent protestant against science and reason. He is damned as a belated primitive and romanticist, and his ideal of "mindlessness" is attacked with every armament of logic. Professor Tindall uses wit as one of his weapons: Law-

rence "had . . . the impatience of Donald Duck;" Matthew Arnold "felt himself falling between two stools, one weak, the other waiting to be upholstered;" the behaviorists "seemed to be occupied with nothing more spiritual than pulling habits out of rats"—such quips help to lighten the journey, but somewhere along the way it begins to be apparent that a critic so rational and humorous is perhaps not the one to render the soundest verdict on Lawrence the artist. The very faculties that stood out so brilliantly in assailing the darkness-worshipping prophet would hardly be of the kind that would aid in the appreciation of the particular artistic imaginativeness of a man like Lawrence.

Not that Professor Tindall neglects altogether the creative aspects of his subject: he admits that Lawrence (whose novels and essays he considers "the best travelogues of our day") "enlarged the novel's field of sensitivity to include levels beyond those explored by Henry James or James Joyce, who penetrated the flow of awareness before him." But Professor Tindall is guilty of more than oversimplification, in the brief space he grants Lawrence the artist, when he abruptly dismisses such books as "Kangaroo" and "Aaron's Rod" as "all but unreadable." One of his charges against Lawrence the novelist is that Lawrence failed to assimilate properly his symbols and his source material. This would have amused Lawrence, who took or used only as much as he wanted, in his own private way. Another objection by Professor Tindall, who stands with I. A. Richards, is Lawrence's lack of form; he finds "The Plumed Serpent" the most satisfactory of the novels because it has a philosophical integration he misses in the others. But as far as form is generally understood in the artistic sense, "The Plumed Serpent" is one of the most formless of Lawrence's novels.

It is a mistake to assume, as Professor Tindall and T. S. Eliot have done, that most appreciative readers of Lawrence are fanatics or members of an unhealthy cult. (If the matter were brought to the test, how would T. S. Eliot feel about certain hosts of his own readers?) It is possible to read Lawrence intelligently without becoming his disciple. Perhaps these readers will be the first to recognize that in spite of its failure to appreciate the merits of Lawrence as a writer, Professor Tindall's is the most valuable book on the informational side that has yet been written about Lawrence.



Hans Otto Storm

The Ignobility of Humankind

"MADE IN U. S. A." By Hans Otto Storm. New York: Longmans, Green & Co. 1939. 181 pp. \$2.50.

Reviewed by LOUIS J. HALLE, JR.

MR. STORM would hardly agree with Melville's impassioned exclamation that "man, in the ideal, is so noble and so sparkling, such a grand and glowing creature, that over any ignominious blemish in him all his fellows should run to throw their costliest robes." His unique theme, in this second novellette as in "Pity the Tyrant," is the petty ignobility of humankind. With an artistry that has grown notably since he was last heard from, he again establishes that men are rats, each in his own way.

All the world, in this glass, is a cruise-steamer called the *India*, and all its men and women divided into three categories: officers representing the governing class, passengers in the collective role of the middle-class, and a proletarian crew. How these men and women behave when their ship grounds on an uncharted bank, when conventional law and morality no longer suffice for their security, is the subject of Mr. Storm's careful examination. If the reader expects a band to strike up or a clergyman to invoke God or an amateur philosopher to consider the implications of death, he is sadly mistaken. The characters, face to face with eternity for three whole days, are each exclusively intent on grabbing whatever is still coming to them from life. The old maid wants sex, the engineer wants to

tell the captain where he gets off, the captain wants to retain his personal command, the crew wants anchovies. The class-system breaks down, chaos ensues. Only the navigating officer, a man of no illusions and few if any desires, a mere observer of the passing scene, retains some semblance of moral dignity. His position in the life of the ship is somewhat like that of a novelist in the life of the world at large: he can sniff the weather, but he can do nothing about it.

All this is set forth by Mr. Storm so succinctly and incisively, with such finished craftsmanship and such acrid irony, that it eats into the reader's consciousness and becomes lodged there. As a long short-story, it is an excellent piece of work, but it leaves this world we have to live in a badly shriveled and diminished planet.

The War at Sea

SEA POWER AND TODAY'S WAR.

By Fletcher Pratt. New York: Harrison-Hilton Books. 1939. 237 pp. \$3.

Reviewed by EDWARD ELLSBERG

MR. PRATT'S book is required reading for every thoughtful American citizen interested in the safety of his own country. Carefully written, carefully documented, "Sea Power and Today's War" was prepared last summer for the non-technical reader, and it is published just when the safety of the Western world against the totalitarian powers rests only on one thing—sea power.

Written in language over which the non-nautical reader will not stumble, Fletcher Pratt presents most clearly the whys and wherefores of sea power. The best account I have seen in print of the forces surrounding the Washington Conference for the Limitation of Armaments back in Harding's day is here set down. What happened to be the battleship in that agreement is startlingly illuminated, and its effect on the navies of the world since (and the effect was tremendous) is made very plain.

What every nation has in the way of warships, and why they have the types they have concentrated on, Fletcher Pratt relates fully and un-

THE BIBLE OF THE WORLD. Edited by Robert O. Ballou in collaboration with Friedrich Spiegelberg, with the assistance and advice of Horace L. Friess. New York: The Viking Press. 1415 pp., with index. \$5.

Reviewed by ERNEST SUTHERLAND BATES

THIS is a work which tempts one to extravagant praise. What can be said with sober truth is that never before has so much of the world's greatest religious literature, so well selected and so admirably translated, been made so easily available to the general reader. The recently published "Bible of Mankind" had the great advantage of including the valuable Bahaist scriptures, not

touched upon in the present work, and it also had fuller introductions to its various sections, but "The Bible of the World" includes twice as much material. The "Bible of Mankind," put out with a distinctly religious purpose, properly stressed in its selections the underlying unity of all the great faiths and creeds; the "Bible of the World," aiming rather at intellectual interest, emphasizes equally the patent divergencies and contradictions. So we have here, together with the loftiest ethical counsel and subtle philosophical arguments, the most illogical bits of folklore and charmingly puerile legends. The book is equally suitable simply for happy reading, assisted immeasurably by its attractive format and method of presentation, and for close study with the aid of forty pages of fine-print notes, a glossary, and a cross-reference index to parallel passages.

Presumably, the felicity of general treatment is to be credited to the journalistic ability of Mr. Ballou, and the specific selections, the choice of translations, and the preparation of the notes attributed to the outstanding scholarship of his colleagues, Dr. Spiegelberg and Dr. Friess. Mr. Ballou nobly assumes sole responsibility for the most debatable feature of the book—its presentation of the life and sayings of Jesus as a kind of "synthetic story" put together by picking out passages from each of the gospels and arranging them in a vaguely chronological sequence. The unfortunate aspect of such an arrangement is that the reader who does not happen to peruse the introduction will fancy that he has found another egregious "Harmony of the Gospels," of the type that used to be popular thirty years ago. While Mr. Ballou admits that the Fourth Gospel has "fewer evidences of historicity" than the others and that it "reflects a somewhat different theology"—which is certainly putting it mildly—he defends his procedure on the ground that the average reader "attaches equal authority and the same theological significance" to each of the Gospels. Since the purpose of the whole work is enlightenment, and not the perpetuation of popular errors, Mr. Ballou's reasoning on this particular point seems rather strange.

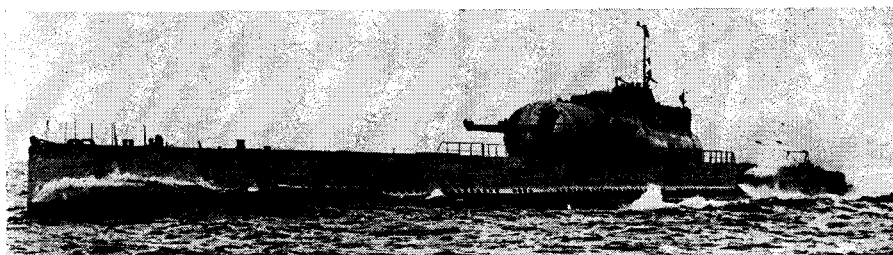
The work is also justly open to criticism for giving a disproportionate amount of space to the most familiar material. But aside from questions of relative value, it may be said that there is almost nothing in the book that does not well deserve inclusion on the score of intrinsic interest.

derstandingly. The book covers the strategic problems facing Britain and France on one side, and Germany on the other, and their attempts with different classes of warships to get for themselves what each considers security.

What faces the neutrals—America, Russia, Italy, the Scandinavian countries—in this battle of the giants which is going ultimately to be resolved at sea, forms the major part of "Sea Power and Today's War." The fleets of each are analyzed, their difficulties weighed, their hopes and fears unemotionally dissected.

A more timely book cannot be imagined. Americans, following closely the debates in Congress over our neutrality position, cannot afford to miss "Sea Power and Today's War" if they wish really to understand what lies behind the debates and how the safety of their own lives and the security of our institutions are bound up with the battleships, the cruisers, the submarines, and the ungainly tramp freighters that make up sea power. Fletcher Pratt, for long a close and discerning observer of naval matters, has done an excellent job.

Edward Ellsberg, Commander, U. S. N. R., is the author of "Men under the Sea" and "Hell on Ice."



The French *Surcouf*, largest submarine in the world.