

come great scientists. But one thing can be demanded of every serious scientist: he must be guided in his work by no other thought than to know the truth. He must have no other interest but science, whether that other interest be his religion, his state or his people. Otherwise his work is valueless; valueless even for religion, state or people.

These are very commonplace words in the intellectual sphere of the West, but they have a revolutionary sound in the Germany of today. Were they not spoken by an old man under the influence of his pre-Nazi culture but by a member of the present generation who would have derived such wisdom from his own experiences, one might hope that the new dawn is breaking. For this awakening of Germany the world will, however, still have to wait.

Birds East of the Rockies

NATURAL HISTORY OF THE BIRDS. By Edward Howe Forbush & John Richard May. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1939. 554 pp., with index. \$4.95.

Reviewed by LOUIS J. HALLE, JR.

NOTABLE both for their text and for their portraits of American birds by Fuertes and Brooks, the three volumes of Forbush's "Birds of Massachusetts and Other New England States," issued by the Commonwealth between 1925 and 1929, immediately took a place of major importance in the literature of Eastern birds. No bibliography, however brief, has since been considered complete without them. Other important regional publications have appeared in the meantime, but none have excelled "Forbush" or lessened its importance with the passing years. Two factors, however, have combined to lessen its actual usefulness to the general public: first, the accepted classification of North American birds has been thoroughly revised since its publication; then, the complete work itself has become so rare on the market that, at this writing, a dealer in second-hand books is advertising it for thirty dollars. All bird-students must, therefore, be grateful that the best of "Forbush" is again available, at a relatively modest price, in one superb volume, with revisions that bring it up to date, and with the original ninety-two full-page paintings of New England birds—all this supplemented by four new color-plates of Southeastern birds, from paintings by Roger Tory Peterson, and textual accounts of over one hundred additional species by Dr. May to justify the new and broadened title, "Natural History of the Birds of Eastern and Central North America."

Such an accomplishment could not, of course, have been achieved without radically altering the character of the original work. This is not the classic

The French Empire

FRANCE OVERSEAS THROUGH THE OLD REGIME: A STUDY OF EUROPEAN EXPANSION. By Herbert Ingram Priestley. New York: D. Appleton-Century Co. 1939. 393 pp., with index. \$5.

Reviewed by CRANE BRINTON

PROFESSOR PRIESTLEY'S ponderous title sets the tone for his book. This history of French colonial activity from Roger Guiscard to Napoleon I makes no concessions to the Graces. Whether these ladies have snubbed Professor Priestley or Professor Priestley has snubbed them, it is at any rate clear that they are not on speaking terms. The book is crammed with facts, well-known or

obscure, strung neatly along together with no regard for their possible effect on the reader's emotions or interests. It has footnotes, plenty of them, not hidden in the back of the book, nor even apologized for. It seems to contain no sociological theories, and it makes no attempt to prophesy the future of France as a colonial power. It is, in short, a solid, sober piece of historical writing in the professional historical tradition established in the nineteenth century.

That tradition has its shortcomings. Not the least of these, as Mr. Allan Nevins never tires of pointing out, is that professional historians writing in the tradition lose touch with the general reader almost as completely as if they were specialists confined to a technical jargon, like mathematicians or chemists. Certainly the general reader will not be drawn to Professor Priestley's book. Yet the book, like the tradition of which it is a part, has its good points. It brings together, sorts out, and verifies as far as possible a great many facts about French colonial activity. It presents these facts clearly and unemphatically. For the English reader, much of Professor Priestley's material is wholly new, gathered from the sources, from professional French historians, and from articles in learned journals in half a dozen languages.

Professor Priestley ventures no great new interpretations. France failed in her colonial struggle with England for numerous reasons, notably because in the eighteenth century she fought on land and sea on too many European and world fronts; but the first French colonial empire was in some senses a success, and led to the second, or present French colonial empire, which is one of the major factors in the current world war. Professor Priestley rightly insists that before we crusade against Imperialism, predatory Nationalism, and other evil abstractions, we should study the facts of the past expansion of European states. These facts, for France, he has faithfully given us. And if the dull facts about French fisheries bulk larger than the exciting facts about the attempted French settlement in Florida, we need not complain. It would be hard to improve on Parkman's account of Ribaut's defeat and de Gourgues' vengeance.

Perhaps this book is no more than a work of reference. But people do refer, often for quite a while, to good works of reference, and they frequently allow the bright new work of interpretation to accumulate dust, once it has had its day near the top of the best selling non-fiction. And, ponderous though Professor Priestley's title is, it makes no false promises. This is no "Romance of France Abroad" or "The Sun Never Set on the Fleur-de-lys."

Crane Brinton is the author of "The Lives of Talleyrand."

"Forbush," but it is something just about as good in its own way. The informal essays that Forbush wrote for each bird are here epitomized in such a manner that, though their rambling, conversational quality is lost, the basic information and style are, to a great degree, kept intact. The technical data preceding each essay in the original are merely summarized here, but what is left out will be missed less by the general reader for whom this edition is designed than by the serious student. The most unfortunate omissions, from the point of view of the general reader, are of the paragraphs describing each order and family, and parts of the introductory chapters to the three original volumes; except for one paragraph on birds as a class, no text has been retained that does not deal exclusively with the individual varieties. To counterbalance this loss are Dr. May's numerous additional descriptions of species, which adhere closely to the type set by Forbush.

It was to be expected that the color-plates, already used in two publications, would not reproduce the paintings as clearly as when they were new. The loss of quality, however, is scarcely noticeable in most cases except by direct and close comparison of the present illustrations with those of the original publication. The four additional paintings by Peterson have the competence demanded by their association with the work of Fuertes.

Rarely does a mere revision of an earlier book, however drastic, have as much importance in its own right as an entirely new publication. That is the case here, however, and to such an extent that it is doubtful whether anyone at all seriously interested in the birds of Eastern North America, even though he possessed the original volumes, would willingly be without a copy of this one.

Louis J. Halle, Jr. is the author of "Transcaribbean" and "Birds Against Men."

The Leveling Process

THE ENDING OF HEREDITARY FORTUNES. By Gustave Myers. New York: Julian Messner. 1939. 395 pp., with index. \$3.50.

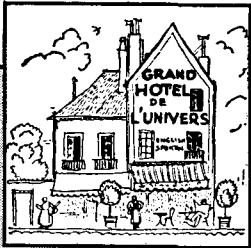
Reviewed by WILLIAM O. SCROGGS

MR. MYERS established his reputation as a castigator of plutocracy many years ago in his "History of the Great American Fortunes." In this latest volume he resumes the chastisement, citing scores of instances of the foolishness, extravagance, and callousness of numerous folk whose wealth has smelled to high heaven. His "case histories" range all the way from the Bradley-Martin ball and the Harry Lehr monkey party in the gay nineties down to the latest marital troubles of a chain-store heiress in our own era.

Most of this material has already been published somewhere, and not a little of it seems quite irrelevant to the theme indicated by the title of the book. Actually this theme is dealt with in the sketchiest fashion. The author, however, starts out well with a description of the disappearance, early in our history, of most of the hereditary privileges which were part of our heritage from the Old World. Even before the end of George Washington's first term as President, for example, the last vestiges of primogeniture and entail had disappeared from the United States. Mr. Myers

sees a survival of privilege due to birth in our laws dealing with inheritance, although this privilege has been considerably modified of late by taxes on inheritances, gifts, and incomes. He believes that this leveling process should be carried to the point where the inheritance of any great amount of wealth would be impossible.

The increasing control over private wealth by the State is an obvious fact in modern economic life, and a matter of such far-reaching importance calls for painstaking objective study. Mr. Myers's book does not meet this requirement. It is in no sense a scientific treatment of a vital social problem. The issues raised by its proposal are many and complex, but they are ignored. The author merely seeks to establish a case by showing that the very rich sometimes misbehave. His judgment is apparently warped by a soul-searing hatred for people who have accumulated large fortunes. Their properties are denounced, without qualifying exceptions, as "legalized spoliation," the results of special privilege, exploitation, corruption, and thievery. Self-indulgence is "largely their main pursuit," and if they make gifts to charity or other worthy causes it is only to escape "complete odium." Such a book will be a useful manual for soap-box orators and rabble-rousers. It is largely propaganda and muckraking, a smearing of the "haves" in order to bolster a plea for sharing the wealth. The late Huey Long would have given this work his unqualified approval.



Timetable for Tramps

BY TIBOR KOEVES

"It is neat, witty, and playful." - Clifton Fadiman in The New Yorker. "Ranges all the great cities of the West, darts into the past, and pauses to consider the flitting loves of that great traveler Casanova. Sophisticated entertainment . . . a shrewd, wayward, and charming book."

Lewis Gannett \$3.00

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	Crime, Place, Sleuth	Summing Up	Verdict
OVER MY DEAD BODY Rex Stout (Farrar & Rinehart: \$2.)	Nero Wolfe is back to solve mystery of who stuck épée through customer in N. Y. fencing school, followed by another lethal impalement.	Stooge Archie Goodwin at funniest, and two murders plus transplanted Balkan intrigue can't get him—or his boss—down.	Swell
THE AFRICAN POISON MURDERS Elspeth Huxley (Harpers: \$2.)	Reign of terror on mid-African farm culminates in two gruesome killings and almost finishes Vachell of C. I. D., who unsnarls case.	Obscure venom, maniacal mutilations, deadly bush fire, thrilling climax compose major opus—at which purists may raise eyebrows.	Top-flight
THE CASE OF THE DEADLY DIARY William DuBois (Little, Brown: \$2.)	N. Y. newspaper owner pushed from lofty window. Scandal-mongering columnist conked. Gossip gal plugged. Star reporter solves all.	Feverish activity from Manhattan start to Florida finish. Author plays premier clue bit too close to vest. Otherwise jake.	Good grade
DEATH AT THE BAR Ngaio Marsh (Little, Brown: \$2.)	Puzzling death of barrister in quaint English village bar-room presents nice problem to Alleyne of Scotland Yard.	Prime case of "now you see it—now you don't," with rich local color and much lively talk.	Required reading
TURN ON THE HEAT A. A. Fair (Morrow: \$2.)	Donald Lam runs boss Bertha Cool ragged hunting vanished wife and solving murder in California town.	Unprincipled, involved, and mighty clever affair—mental acrobatics of Mr. Lam being something to marvel at.	Very good

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN

Literary Fellowships

FOR PROMISING authors who need financial assistance to complete a literary project. After five successful years, the publishers are now able to increase both the initial payment and royalty terms. In 1940 they offer two Fellowships of \$1500.00 each. Closing date: September 15. Details from Houghton Mifflin Co., 2 Park St., Boston.



Houghton Mifflin Company, Publishers