



From the end papers of "Quietly My Captain Waits."

Supporting Cast in Acadia

QUIETLY MY CAPTAIN WAITS. By Evelyn Eaton. New York: Harper Bros. 1940. 365 pp. \$2.50.

Reviewed by STEPHEN VINCENT BENÉT

THERE were other heroines besides Evangeline in the troubled, early history of Acadia and, in "Quietly My Captain Waits," Miss Eaton delves into the life of a lady too gay and sprightly for hexameters. Madame Louise de Freneuse gave the gossips of Port Royal continual occupation for their tongues. Twice married, the recipient of a royal pension as "the only widow in Acadia," she had a way with governors and notables. In reconstructing her story, Miss Eaton gives us romantic fiction based on a certain amount of fact. It is a continuous and fascinating problem to the reader of history to see how living and vital human beings appear, for a brief instant, in documents and then, for lack of further documentation, vanish. The gaps in their lives, the before and after baffle us. In the case of one woman, Miss Eaton has attempted to fill in some of those gaps. She has done so, partly with genuine insight into character and background, and partly with conventional romantic filler.

When Raoul de Perrichet (imaginary) left France for New France on account of an escapade, he sailed with his uncle, Monsieur de Bonaventure (real) on the latter's *Soleil d'Afrique*. They picked up Madame de Freneuse at Kebec and Monsieur de Bonaventure rapidly discovered that she was his long-lost love. The story of the book from then on is the story of the web between these three people—of Raoul's lovesick and unavailing years spent at Freneuse in the woods—of the Indian assault upon Freneuse (very well done), and of the escape of Raoul and Madame de Freneuse to

Port Royal—of the love-affair between Monsieur de Bonaventure and Madame de Freneuse and its implications—and of the unavailing attempt of Acadia to save itself against the growing power of the English. The daily life and the petty jealousies of a frontier outpost are well-handled—every now and then a scene rings true and one gets the feeling of time and place. Every now and then but not always—the death of Monsieur de Freneuse in the arms of the miller's daughter is something a more skillful author would either have motivated or avoided—Raoul's period as an Indian chief is extremely readable but one doesn't believe a minute of it—and the last scene, to be successful, demands and lacks the magnificent charlatanry of a Victor Hugo. It's good work, readable work, on a little known period. It contains one live woman, some excellent subsidiary characters, a conventional young juvenile, a passable hero, a good deal of feeling for background and country, a number of shots of conventional melodrama, and some telling individual scenes. The lending libraries will like it, the movies already have. But, compared to a book like "Guns of Burgoyne," it remains Class B romance.

Return to China

Lin Yutang and his wife and daughters have arrived at their home in the interior of China, near Chungking, according to a radio message received by his publishers in New York. They flew from Hong Kong in one of the passenger planes which regularly fly over the Japanese lines, leaving in the middle of the night at a time kept strictly secret. They arrived in Chungking just before the Japanese began their latest and worst series of bombings of that city, which continued for four nights.

Poetry of the Earth

TREES OF HEAVEN. By Jesse Stuart. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1940. 340 pp. \$2.50.

THE towering forests on the old Sexton tract about Jesse Stuart's graveyard grove of ailanthus trees was no more thoroughly timbered than has been the harvesting in fiction of the drama of mountaineers who moved in quaintness and violence in terms of something which seemed—or was made to seem—like the lost American pioneer past. As a people they certainly are no longer "newground" but more often as worn and barren as piney old fields. It is the measure of the great talent of Jesse Stuart that from such stale earth his Bushmans and Tussies, the hard thrifty and the lusty improvident, rise as lush and strong as the sorghum cane on Anse Bushman's land.

Like the earlier work Jesse Stuart has brought from his native Greenup County in Kentucky, this is a grand book, alive, humorous, tough, in which the pretty poetry of the earth and the seasons and man bound to one and moving with the other is strengthened with blood and sweat and tobacco spittle, anger and shrewdness and knavery. Occasionally formal poetry sticks its head up a little high in his prose like a chrysanthemum in a cornfield. But such lapses are rare. If the young compelling love of Anse Bushman's boy Tarvin for Subrinea Tussie, daughter of squatters, is sentimentalized in terms of lambs and wildflowers, it is toughened, too, with poverty and labor. The deep emotion of love for a piece of earth in squatter and landowner alike is made true and hard with the dispossessed's angry shouting of "son-of-a-bitch" at the sheriff's sale. The drama of law and conflict is sounder for the humor in the sheriff's personal timidity and political ambition.

Essentially and fortunately this is not local color literature—not more business about the "folk." People are "folk" only to strangers. They happen here to be the neighbors of Jesse Stuart who writes in terms of his known world. Such a man writing about his own country ends by writing about the world. And this story of life in a corner of the Kentucky mountains is no more bound to Kentucky than the poetry of Burns is limited to Scotland. But individual Stuart's writing certainly is. It is an exciting book from beginning to end with the promise of more violent drama which never materializes and yet does not disappoint. All together, including his short stories and his autobiography, this is the best prose work that Stuart has done. Not much better work is being done by anybody anywhere in America.

Variegated Neighbor

CANADA: AMERICA'S PROBLEM.
By John MacCormac. New York:
The Viking Press. 1940. 278 pp.,
with index. \$2.75.

Reviewed by JAMES FREDERICK GREEN

THE most unpopular person in Canada, next to Adolf Hitler, is Colonel Charles A. Lindbergh. By questioning Canada's right to declare war, which endangers the neutrality of the United States, Colonel Lindbergh raised—albeit somewhat tactlessly—one of the most vital issues in American foreign policy. The United States quite obviously cannot pretend to be isolated or even neutral so long as Canada remains a belligerent, and one of the most important belligerents, in the European war. The Dominion is manufacturing airplanes, training pilots, and dispatching expeditionary forces behind the shield of the Monroe Doctrine and the American navy. What happens to Canada if Germany wins a decisive victory over Britain and France this summer? Should we expand our defense preparations for a future conflict and coördinate the Canadian economic and military effort with our own? Or should we recognize the Nazi peace settlement and pull Canada—even against its wishes—into a Western Hemisphere system?

All these questions, and many others, are intelligently discussed by John



Photo: Benson Weeks
John MacCormac

MacCormac, who for five years was the Montreal correspondent of *The New York Times*. His book fills a long-neglected gap in our political literature, for American journalists have concentrated too exclusively on Europe and the Far East. Even the Canadians themselves, until recent years, have been reluctant to attempt comprehensive studies of their national life. With an occasional telling epigram and bit of humor, Mr. MacCormac writes wisely and well of our variegated neighbor to the north. He touches upon almost every aspect of Canada's domestic affairs, party politics, and foreign relations, and offers the American reader a remarkably accurate and objective picture of the senior Dominion in the British Commonwealth. Since Canada may become even more of a problem for America, because of the fortunes of war, his book deserves a large public in this country.

The only discernible flaws in an otherwise excellent volume occur in emphasis and balance. Mr. MacCormac devotes a chapter to the French Canadians, but fails to make sufficient allowance for the impact of Quebec upon every issue in Canadian life. He discusses the Prairie Provinces and their wheat economy, but likewise never fits the Western problem into the national life. British Columbia, too, deserves a little more attention that it here receives. Writing with the pro-British and pro-Empire outlook of the English-speaking inhabitants of Ontario and Montreal, Mr. MacCormac perhaps underestimates the effect of both Quebec and the West in Canadian foreign policy. He introduces these subjects indirectly, however, in his entertaining and informative description of Prime Minister Mackenzie King, a statesman who maintains national unity by avoiding issues and postponing decisions.

James Frederick Green is a member of the staff of the Foreign Policy Association.

Karl Schurz Prize

The German-American Writers' Association, an anti-Nazi organization of writers, artists, scholars, and musicians, announce a \$100 Karl Schurz Prize for the best contribution appearing in a Year Book to be issued this Fall in celebration of the second anniversary of the G.A.W.A. Judges will be Carl Zuckmeyer, Ferdinand Bruckner, and Bruno Frank. Short stories, essays, and poetry are eligible for consideration; manuscripts are to be submitted under pseudonyms. Further details may be obtained from the German-American Writers' Association, 15 East Fortieth Street, New York, New York.

White Book of Spain

FREEDOM'S BATTLE. By Julio Alvarez del Vayo. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1940. 381 pp., with index. \$3.

Reviewed by JAY ALLEN

SPAIN'S great Foreign Minister has done a job that is cool, detached, and candid yet of awful timeliness.

It is indeed, as the publishers say, "the first book on the Spanish war by a major figure of that remarkable Republican Government whose three-year-long resistance against mounting odds astonished friend and foe alike." It is more. It is the White Book of the Spanish Republic in Exile and of those doomed millions in the Western world who knew *at the time* that the betrayal of Spain was their betrayal, who fought that betrayal as best they could but now, with the enemy upon them, are dumb. And it is the Black Book of the Fascists and of their sympathizers in Britain, France, and the United States who regardless of whether in those years they were bought or merely bemused, gave the help without which the Spanish bastion could never have been taken.

The shocking timeliness of this book is, in a measure, the result of accident. The manuscript was all but finished weeks before that day last September when, as many people persist in say-

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Photo: Robert Capa
Julio Alvarez del Vayo