

literature was still that of Tennyson in "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After":

Authors—atheist, essayist, novelist,  
realist, rhymester, play your part,  
Paint the mortal shame of nature  
with the living hues of Art.  
Rip your brothers' vices open, strip  
your own foul passions bare;  
Down with Reticence, down with  
Reverence—forward—naked—let  
them stare.  
Feed the budding rose of boyhood  
with the drainage of your sewer;  
Send the drain into the fountain,  
lest the stream should issue pure.  
Set the maiden fancies wallowing in  
troughs of Zolaism,—  
Forward, forward, ay and back-  
ward, downward too into the  
abysm.

But there was a large group of books—many of them are listed in the catalogue—about sex and its manifestations which escaped the ban because they purported to be "scientific" and at the same time dealt with the question in a "pure" manner. These books, dragging in God, the Bible, and purity, are obviously the reverse of scientific. They were written and bought primarily for their appeal to the puritan mind as pornography. Pornography indeed of a particularly scabrous kind and dirtier than the writing of jokes on lavatory walls; sootier than the laughter of yokels at a burlesque show; filthier than the talk of boys in a livery stable, because throughout these volumes the voice is allegedly the voice of God.

A significant incident of this period is the visit of Maxim Gorky to the United States in 1906. He and Madame Gorky were given a warm welcome on arrival and the great Russian writer was soon to be the guest of honor at a dinner to be attended by Mark Twain, William Dean Howells, and other famous figures in the American world of literature and politics. But hardly had the Russian couple settled down in their rooms in the Hotel Belleclaire in New York before they were ejected because "the revolutionist was unable to satisfy the proprietor that the mother of Gorky's two children, who is still in Russia, had been divorced and that his present companion is his legal wife."

The Gorkys, it seems, were a menace to the sanctity of the American home, and were hounded from hotel to hotel and forced to deposit their luggage for safekeeping in the unopinionated luggage room of the Grand Central Terminal. Finally, the couple found asylum in the home of a friend on Staten Island. The dinner to Gorky was canceled and Mark Twain gave the following statement to the newspapers:

"Gorky came to this country to lend the influence of his great name—and  
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## The Forces that Wrecked the Peace

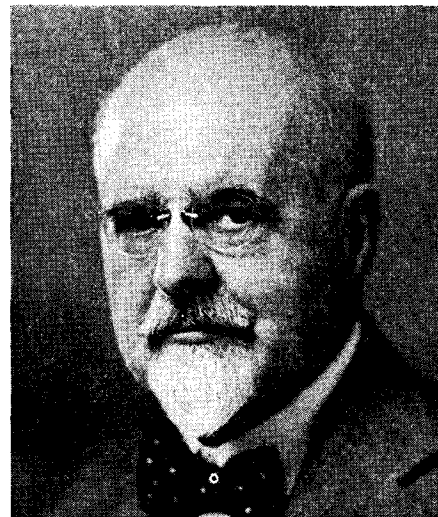
*THE STORM BREAKS. A Panorama of Europe and the Forces That Have Wrecked Its Peace. By Frederick T. Birchall. New York: The Viking Press. 1940. 366 pp. \$3.*

Reviewed by JAMES FREDERICK GREEN

FREDERICK T. BIRCHALL needs no introduction to readers of *The New York Times*. After twenty-seven years with the *Times*, including six as Managing Editor, Mr. Birchall took charge of its European service in 1932. For the next seven years he acted as roving correspondent throughout Europe, winning the Pulitzer Prize in 1934. Keen, alert, and wiry as a fox terrier, he managed to turn up for most of the exciting events of this exciting period. His articles, like those of Walter Duranty, were (and are, for Mr. Birchall is now in Canada) conspicuous in *The New York Times* for their personal and subjective style, easily identifiable even if not signed. Mr. Birchall, in fact, achieved such a remarkable success as foreign correspondent because he broke most of the formal rules taught in our schools of journalism.

"The Storm Breaks" is distinguished by the same accurate reporting, vivid description, and personal sentiment that marked Mr. Birchall's daily articles. Perhaps the best example of these qualities, including Mr. Birchall's mildly Anglophile attitude, may be found in the chapter called "Two Sovereigns," describing the funeral of King George V and the abdication of King Edward VIII. He manages to contrast the two personalities, to reflect the popular emotions in each instance, and to interpret accurately the place of the monarchy in British life. For some reason, Mr. Birchall omits entirely the coronation of King George VI, upon which in May, 1937 he lavished his most colorful sentences. There are many scenes that stand out in the reader's memory: the opening of the Disarmament Conference in 1932, Clara Zeitkin's address before the Reichstag, the first Nazi congress at Nuremberg, the suppression of the Vienna Socialists in 1934 and murder of Dollfuss in 1936, and the Munich conference. These are Birchall at his best.

Mr. Birchall's gift for description proves, however, to be something of a weakness, for it leaves little room for analysis. His book resembles a newsreel, offering many separate pictures of men and events rather than a connected narrative. While Germany remains the central point of discussion, it is treated episodically and not comprehensively. The weaknesses of



Wide World

Frederick T. Birchall

British policy are suggested but never thoroughly investigated. France and Italy figure only occasionally in Mr. Birchall's reminiscences; the Soviet Union almost never. The Spanish civil war is scarcely mentioned in a period dominated by its diplomatic and military developments. While enjoying the many brilliant portraits of human beings—individual and in the mass—and the graceful style, one is disappointed that Mr. Birchall fails consistently to scrape the surface of events and to relate and interpret his observations. As the subtitle suggests, this is a panorama but not a guide-book.

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## Ashes of Prophecy

*EUROPE TO LET. By Storm Jameson. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1940. 282 pp. \$2.50.*

Reviewed by N. L. ROTHMAN

MISS JAMESON subtitles her novel "The Memoirs of an Obscure Man" and suggests that the narrative is being told by a common man of earthy stock who has somehow become a writer. We had better begin by disregarding this. The idea of sifting the muddle of war and hatred through a simple, questioning mind is in all probability a good one, but that is not the idea of this book. From the first, the fiction of "I am a peasant; my bones ache in a north wind—" is whisked out of sight by the quality of the mind we see in operation. It is subtle, sophisticated, keenly sensitive to the shifting of forces super- and subterranean, and in the

process of achieving, out of the European welter, a difficult and mystic philosophy. I have read this philosophy in the work of an American poet; no one has defined it better. In a poem called "A Little Scraping," Robinson Jeffers ends with these lines:

God is here, too, secretly smiling,  
the beautiful power  
That piles up cities for the poem  
of their fall  
And gathers multitudes like game to  
be hunted when the season comes.

and he speaks again, in "Rearmament," of the

Disastrous rhythm, the heavy and  
mobile masses, the dance of the  
Dream-led masses down the dark  
mountain.

This is the burden of Miss Jameson's book, a poet's view of a dark Earth-tragedy in which all are blameless and fated, all moving in and yielding to a rhythm that gives mysterious release, hunting and hunted when the season comes.

Granted this overlooks all the reasoning we have laboriously built up to explain history: economics and politics, class-interest and class-struggle, the logic of materialism, never-

theless it does begin to explain some few of the things Miss Jameson has found in Europe. She has found men in every corner of the continent conscious, above all else, of a large pattern of mass behavior more psychic than reasonable, that draws them into it, commands their lives. They do not see it whole, but they feel its power.

Sometimes they see its meaning, and cry out, as a young German does here:

We get past ourselves. Then you begin to hate us. But you don't think of helping us. You punish us. One of these days, no doubt, we shall set fire to the house; we shall burn it to the ground, with everything in it—Chartres, the Black Forest, Vienna, Prague, Cracow. How you will hate us then. And in our hearts we shall blame you.

Miss Jameson has traced the ashes of half of this prophecy through Prague and Vienna, Cologne, Budapest, Paris, in terms of the psychic atmosphere, the mounting tension, the release, dream-led and violent. It is exciting, haunting reading. It is a view of life that will irritate the purely rational; yet it had better be taken account of.

## Music as You Like It

*THE WELL-TEMPERED LISTENER.*  
By Deems Taylor. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1940. 333 pp., with index. \$2.50.

Reviewed by IRVING KOLODIN

TO deal properly with "The Well-Tempered Listener" one should possess the urbanity, learning, good-humor, and slight tinge of intellectual speciousness which are combined, among those writing on music in America, only in Deems Taylor. Since it happens that Mr. Taylor is the author of this book, and it is not likely that he could be dragged into that chore (though he did once report on a concert in which a work of his was played, and commented bitterly on the composer's lack of adroitness in bowing) the less-gifted reviewer must necessarily begin under a handicap. He will admire the urbanity, respect the learning, enjoy the good-humor, and be provoked by the side-stepping that is a recurrent motive in the book. In any case, he must concede, however grudgingly, that every page has its interest.

These pieces are based primarily on Mr. Taylor's radio talks during intermissions of the Philharmonic-Symphony orchestra's Sunday broadcasts. This means, judging by the medium, that they must be entertaining, infor-

mative, and sound (in that order). Sometimes, as in the essays entitled "Guesswork," "Sir James's Umbrella," and "Euterpe and the Gestapo," Mr. Taylor achieves the requirements of his medium easily, artfully, and with a good deal of shrewd sense. In others, as in "The Twilight of the Gods" and "The Great Divide," one has the feeling that Mr. Taylor has deliberately suppressed the evidence that disturbs his basic point in order to preserve the unity, however specious, of his argument. In both instances, the unobedient facts are finally brought forth, but only as a tag-line, in case somebody should think of them.

If it is conceded, however, that symphonic broadcasts must have commentators, it is obvious that Mr. Taylor is better suited for the job than anyone else who comes to mind. His tendency to over-simplify the personality of the great men with whom he deals is offset by his broad background, and his method of presentation makes as interesting reading as it does listening. One only wishes that he would be as rigorously true to himself as he is to the medium he serves.

Incidentally, and apropos the chapter "Finders-Keepers"—Francis Toye, the eminent English critic, a dozen years ago wrote a book entitled "The Well-Tempered Musician."

## Bourbons of the South

*SPRING WILL COME AGAIN.* By Florence Glass Palmer. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company. 1940. 421 pp. \$2.50.

Reviewed by FRANK DANIEL

SOLID gold buttons from his father's Confederate uniform were William Day's only tangible evidence of the past glory whose memory mitigated his Spartan childhood. That extravagant legend was the heritage of his generation of Southerners, born during the Civil War, suckled on conflict, weaned on defeat, schooled in humiliation, and thrust early and ill-equipped into manhood's impoverished estate.

William's ambition was not to be beguiled. He sold his gold buttons and moved from Mississippi to Alabama's Black Belt. In 1880 the land was famous for its dark fertility; and freed slaves provided abundant labor. Here, for the next twenty years, William and his loyal wife, Ardisia, labored to make their legend a reality for their children. "Spring Will Come Again" is an affectionate account of the Day family and their neighbors in Douglasville, "situated at the highest point between the Alabama and the Tombigbee, fed by the purest water, the sweetest air, the blackest land that God Himself limed." But the novel is more ambitiously a wise and appreciative story of recovery—not recovery of an antiquated way of living—but recovery of the strength to order life with new comfort and spaciousness.

The author's "Life and Miss Celeste" showed her insight into provincial character; "Spring Will Come Again" shows her comprehension of broader influences which shape the character of a section. She has shrewd knowledge of the Bourbons, those who salvaged material advantages from the Civil War, and who not always invested their capital wisely. These Bourbons anticipated the deterioration of farming, leaving their lands for unskilled labor to deplete. They were less concerned with training Negro labor than with the exploitation of the poor white, the south's future mill-hand.

These grasping landowners of shrewd foresight and no breadth of vision provide dramatic contrast to the hero, who offers this self-portrait to inquiring Northern investors in the region: "Plenty of poverty in a Reconstruction childhood, a few traditions of happier times, a pretty wife both good and clever, and five children. Does that explain my overalls?"