

Can Britain Win the Peace?

FOR WHAT DO WE FIGHT? By Norman Angell. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1940. 327 pp. \$2.50.

Reviewed by JOHN C. DEWILDE

ONE would like to give this book an unqualified endorsement. It comes from the pen of a man who has devoted his life to a crusade on behalf of genuine peace. It has, also, a provocative title which arouses interest and great expectations. Unfortunately, this latest product of Sir Norman is rather disappointing. It might have made a good pamphlet, but little more. Much of it is a familiar story, already told too often by Eden, Churchill, Duff Cooper, as well as a host of journalists, publicists, and minor writers. Sir Norman once more belabors the thesis that the British shirked the responsibility for the maintenance of peace after the last war, that their own inaction in Manchuria, Abyssinia, and Czechoslovakia led straight to the present conflict. All this is true and by now generally accepted. Perhaps it still bears repetition, but certainly not at such great length.

Despite this major fault, the book has positive merits. Sir Norman is a convinced and sincere liberal and firmly believes in the necessity of this war. Like many of us, he fears that the next peace, too, may be lost. He has written this volume primarily to make the British people realize their responsibilities for the reconstruction to come. The central problem, in his opinion, is political security. The present conflict is not primarily one between "haves" and "have nots." That people and statesmen often consider it in such light is due to a widespread misconception about the economic ben-

efits of empire. The struggle for power has little justification beyond that of security, of self defense. Sir Norman is perfectly willing to see outside nations share whatever economic benefits the British Empire has to offer, but he thinks the principal task for the future is to provide for common defense against aggression. Only when countries stand ready to act with complete unity against every act of lawlessness, can peace be secured.

When he writes of the shape of things to come, Sir Norman has no pet projects or new international constitutions to offer—at least not in detail. He realizes that the will and understanding to make international machinery work is more important. He does examine the conditions under which a new order might best be established. A dictated peace or a war à l'outrance are rejected; instead, he would maintain the present stalemate on the war front and utilize it to build up the nucleus of a federal system under Franco-British auspices. The cooperation between the two allies would not be simply for war purposes, but its institutional framework and the scope of its work would be gradually extended to include all the social, economic, and political problems that would have to be tackled in a broad effort at reconstruction. Into this economic and defensive alliance neutrals would be free to enter. Meanwhile, the blockade would keep Germany from access to the world's richest sources of raw materials and foodstuffs. The Germans would face growing scarcity and privation, unmitigated by spectacular military victories. Seeing the Anglo-French picture of peaceful and fruitful cooperation, the German people might turn their "dynam-

ism" against Hitler and set up a new regime capable of partnership in the new federal society.

Proposals like those of Sir Norman are always easy to criticize. One may consider this one a bit chimerical. Still, there is substance to the thesis that the close Anglo-French coöperation necessitated by this war may continue after the conclusion of the hostilities and become the foundation for the establishment of a more constructive order in Europe.

Transient Aristocracy

CHRONICLES OF CHICORA WOOD.

By Elizabeth W. Allston Pringle.

Boston: The Christopher Publishing House. 1940. \$2.50.

Reviewed by JONATHAN DANIELS

THEIR own charm was reason enough for reprinting these memoirs of a South Carolina patrician in the swift Civil War transition from grace in wealth to grace in poverty. But beyond charm, I think the reappearance of this picture of the aristocratic South in our times (which have been more concerned with the problem and plebeian South) points the fact that "truth" in literature is often only the current response to reader boredom with what was presented as truth in the past.

Plenty of slop about the South has been written from the vantage of the piazza, and a good deal also from the corn crib and the cotton row. It is the persisting virtue of Mrs. Pringle's book that it stands years after it was first published as one of the little company of writings, from left or right, up or down, which are the items to be cherished regardless of the current clichés of literary consumption as together making a whole picture of a land. Mrs. Pringle's book does not belong with those of Thomas Nelson Page, who also wrote about aristocrats, but with the best of Erskine Caldwell who writes about the under-men and the oppressed.

Romance has multiplied them but the aristocrats did exist, not merely rich and landed but creative and conscientious. They had faults (so did Jeeter) but their virtues were not merely romantic. And almost the best and most credible picture we have of them at their richest in the Carolina low country and at their poorest, too, is in this gentlewoman's very gentle story. It is free of dramatics, though Sherman's bummers ride through it and slaves stir ominously in misguided freedom in a land in which food was scarce for all the free. It is devoid of pretentiousness and of all but the purest pride. It is honest and frank—artless even—but good and true.



From "A Cartoon History of Our Times," by David Low.
Silence

Spotlight on the Pacific Northwest

SWIFT FLOWS THE RIVER. By Nard Jones. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company. 1940. 440 pp. \$2.50.

Reviewed by GEORGE R. STEWART

SINCE 1930 Mr. Nard Jones has published six novels. In these books he has remained constant to a single background—the Pacific Northwest. He has, however, experimented widely in fictional method, and has ranged from his complex-patterned “All Six Were Lovers” to a detective story, “The Case of the Hanging Lady.” One type of novel seems to be of special interest to him, for both in “The Petlands” and “Wheat Women” he has essayed the panoramic story of three generations with backgrounds respectively of Seattle and the Northwestern wheat country.

“Swift Flows the River” represents a third venture in the panoramic novel. The story is confined to one generation; even so, it covers a period of about twenty years following 1856; its subject is the development of the Columbia River country from the Cascades to Lewiston. It begins with an exciting use of that always reliable property of the novelist of the frontier—the attack on the blockhouse. Its main theme is the establishment of steamboat traffic, but it utilizes such interesting sub-topics as the discovery of the Idaho gold mines. Among the characters are an Irish ex-soldier, a Nez Percé named Cutmouth, a gambler with an iron hand, and the gambler's mistress. The chief character is Caleb Paige who develops in the course of the story from

a young boy to a mature steamboat captain.

In recent years the writings of H. L. Davis, Vardis Fisher (in his earlier novels), Archie Binns, and others have brought the Pacific Northwest into fiction. Even yet, however, in comparison with the countless novels about past and present California, the novels about Washington, Oregon, and Idaho are curiously few. And this lack cannot result from any failure of basic interest in the settlement and growth of those states. “Swift Flows the River” is therefore to be welcomed for the spot of light which it throws upon a region which has as yet been so inadequately represented in our fiction. Mr. Jones gives evidence of having worked carefully upon his history. His is not any profound interpretation. He does not seek to solve the problems of the frontier or to mull over its enigmas. But he presents carefully the surface of life in his region, sometimes with much elaborate and painstaking detail. Once he devotes a whole page to the menu of an early banquet, reproducing it even to the misspelling of the French words.

There are a good many technical difficulties into which the story falls. The story is not always well thought out—as when a flintlock pistol metamorphoses itself into a revolver. Yet, like the course of its river, the novel moves steadily from rapid to rapid, and most readers will undoubtedly find themselves carried swiftly along.

Newspaper Man in the Nation's Capital

CHIP OFF MY SHOULDER. By Thomas L. Stokes. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1940. 568 pp. \$3.

Reviewed by CHARLES McD. PUCKETTE

MR. STOKES has been a Washington correspondent who has been before the public from the administration of Warren G. Harding. A keen observer, a writer

with a crisp journalistic style, and, more significant than that, a correspondent sympathetically alive to the social importance of the national political events and trends he has witnessed, Mr. Stokes has set down an interesting record of his years in the capital. His story is also a convincing one of the education of this young Georgia newspaper man who went to Washington

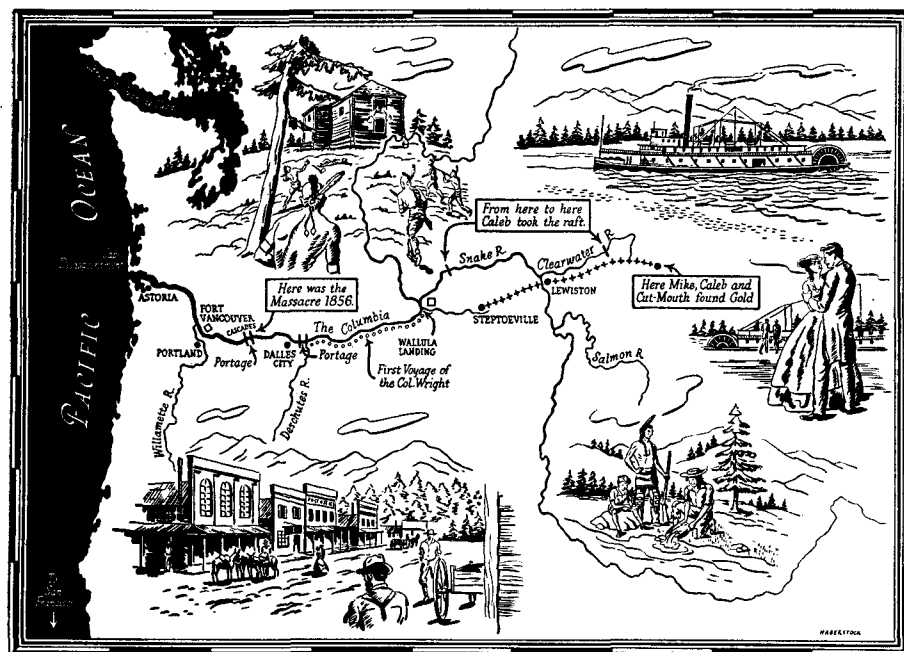
without any rock-bound convictions, and whose political and journalistic philosophy grew and broadened through experience.

Mark Sullivan once told Theodore Roosevelt that it was hard to see how any man under forty years could be against him, or any over forty could be for him. The social transitional period embraced in the Harding-Coolidge-Hoover-Roosevelt administrations has been an ordeal for any newspaper man whose journalistic or social arteries were hardening; the adjustment has been difficult. Mr. Stokes has remained essentially clear headed, and has kept his perspective. Some of his early judgments of men were revised, and he is candid in indicating the progress of his own political education.

Mr. Stokes's story does not furnish any “revelations.” No good newspaper man's book should do so; any news gathered should be written for his newspaper when it is fresh. But his characterizations of the national figures with whom he was in such close contact are interesting and revealing, and such material does not belong in objective news reports. His volume is a good source book on democratic processes. He is not uncharitable to near-statesmen who are merely human, but he reserves his admiration for men of courage and conviction who fight for what they believe to be the common welfare.



Thomas L. Stokes



Map from “Swift Flows the River”