

Lithograph by Arnold Blanch, from "A Treasury of American Prints" (Simon & Schuster)

Two American Rivers

I. THE ARKANSAS

THE ARKANSAS (*Rivers of America*). By Clyde Brion Davis. New York: Farrar & Rinehart, Inc. 1940. 340 pp., with index. \$2.50.

Reviewed by CLARK B. FIRESTONE

IN this saga, the Arkansas, longest of all the feeders of the Father of Waters save the Big Muddy, flows through a good deal of history without contributing much to it. The history is recorded by a writer with successful novels to his credit, and this is an asset for the book. Mr. Davis paints a scene swiftly, makes his characters come alive, keeps the narrative moving. His manner is vivid, breezy, tinged with irreverence, in places legitimately jocular, frequently charged with the Western humor of calm understatement.

You think at first the book is a sort of grab-bag, for everything goes into it which the "rambunctious river"—or its biographer—has seen or heard, provided that it bears somehow on lands which the Arkansas drains. Sometimes the scene shifts to Europe, where John Law is inflating his Mississippi Bubble at the court of France. Again the author devotes a group of pages to Ozark folklore, as for instance, "If you would grow good strong pepper, you should lose your temper while planting it"—a quite plausible example of sympathetic magic. Almost at the end of his tale Mr. Davis sits down on the tongue of a wagon for a fifteen-page chat with an Arkansas Negro who lived "at the edge of a cypress swamp where a mockingbird glee club was wrapping

up the morning in gossamer song."

Yet the book has structure as well as color, and it has a strange, preposterous, and romantic story to tell. One learns that the Arkansas River "bumbles sullenly" through the Royal Gorge, and the gorge "is a job." One meets de Soto, "pendulous-lipped, bearded and sullen-eyed" (page a certain national news weekly), and hears a conversation about gold between him and a crafty Indian, which ought to have happened even if it did not. One learns much of Tabor, mine prospector, Croesus, and briefly United States Senator, who built himself a mahogany privy and had his henchmen scatter gold dust on the rump of the black stallions which drew him and former President Grant in a carriage through Leadville's streets.

The story of the great gold strikes at Leadville, Cripple Creek, and on the flanks of Pike's Peak, is in the book, and also the story of Colorado's labor wars, the Cattle Trail up from Texas, the Dodge City bad men, the Kansas Dust Bowl, the migration of the Five Civilized Tribes to Indian Territory, the Mound Builders and Cave Dwellers who lived in northwestern Arkansas, the Kansas county-seat wars, the Oklahoma land rush, the Ozarks and Coin Harvey and Opie Read, Arkansas's pre-war chivalry and post-war carpet baggers, lynchers, and sharecroppers—and plenty of other matters, most of which concern the last two generations of American history.

For just a sample, take the closing lines of the sentence of death pro-

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II. THE MOHAWK

THE BLOODY MOHAWK. By T. Wood Clarke. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1940. 372 pp., with index. \$3.50.

Reviewed by ALLAN NEVINS

IT is a short stream, the Mohawk; its deep, narrow valley stretches only a hundred miles from Schenectady to Rome. But it has cut a long line through American history. That hundred miles goes far toward linking the Hudson and the Great Lakes. From the moment the English occupied Albany in 1664 they made every effort to convert the Mohawk into the great channel of the fur-trade, just as the French made every effort to divert that traffic down the St. Lawrence to Montreal. And from the moment that Briton and Frenchman clashed in North America, the Mohawk was one of the great elements in the strategy of the conquest. It supplied the British post Oswego on Lake Ontario, and that post threatened all the French communications with the West. Its valley was inhabited by the Romans of the New World, the conquering Iroquois, and the fact that these warriors were the steadfast friends of England and enemies of France had much to do with making North America an English-speaking land. From 1609 to the end of the Revolution the Mohawk was witness to a succession of momentous events, and knew little peace.

The stream offers a good subject for a stirring essay in geographical history. Mr. Clarke, out of a long and intimate familiarity with the land,

has written it so that all may read. Its figures are real to him—the adventurous Champlain, the impetuous Frontenac, the lovable Peter Schuyler, the shrewd Jeffery Amherst, and all the rest: Walter Butler, James Clinton, Nicholas Herkimer, John Burgoyne, Joseph Brant, and Sir William Johnson, Bart. So are the great scenes—the explorations, the Jesuit missions, the fur-trading, the pitched battles, the midnight raids, the savage massacres. Here three nations contended for mastery and a fourth endured some of its birth pains. Mr. Clarke is impartial in treating their struggles. He is notably just to the Tories under Butler, and like other recent writers, makes it clear that they fought fairly and that the worst “atrocities” imputed to them were inventions. Everywhere the book reveals an expert hand, and a real skill in handling diverse threads, social, military, economic, and political.

It is plain that the author does have two great favorites. One is the Iroquois people, the doughty Five Nations. They possessed noble qualities, and deserved a better fate than overtook them when their British allies were defeated in the Revolution. It is interesting to speculate on what their organizing capacity might have achieved had white men not invaded their domain so early. They had shown themselves capable of building up a great barbaric empire. Mr. Clarke's other favorite is the man whom the Iroquois themselves liked best, the great-hearted Sir William Johnson. Gifted with a captivating manner and dominating personality, alert in war and statesmanlike in peace, he made himself master of the valley. After Montcalm's death he gave it fifteen years of prosperity and quiet. It was a happy fact that the great pioneer died just before the Revolutionary struggle which would so have pained him. He had faults of sensuality, temper, and pride, and left a son who was so deservedly hated; but he looms up as the most striking of the Mohawk's many arresting figures. Mr. Clarke does well to make him the largest figure in a remarkably well-painted panorama.

“Let the Buyer Beware”

The story of how a little band of seventy men and women keep New York City's consumers protected from short-weight merchants, misleading advertisers, and frauds of many kinds, at a yearly cost of less than half a cent per capita is being written by the New York City WPA Writers' Project for early publication. Working title for the book is “Let the Buyer Beware.”

What Kind of

THE QUEST FOR PEACE. By William E. Rappard. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1940. 516 pp. \$4.

A FEDERATION FOR WESTERN EUROPE. By W. I. Jennings. Cambridge: The University Press. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1940. 208 pp. \$2.50.

Reviewed by CLARENCE K. STREIT

IN these reeling days it is a comfort to know that the presses of democracy are still turning out books on peace. The thoughtless smile pityingly. The disillusioned political romantics and the poor in spirit tell us it is no use reading such books now. And, of course, books on peace were never more timely. With every disaster our need to invent the means of securing peace grows more urgent. If necessity is the mother of political invention, too,—and surely it is,—we need not despair. But we do need to turn more often from our newspapers to our books.

We can turn with great profit today to “The Quest for Peace,” by William E. Rappard, and “A Federation for Western Europe,” by W. I. Jennings. Both men have much to say, and both are in a position to say it with authority. There are surely few if any Swiss more widely known to Americans than Dr. Rappard, Director of the Graduate Institute of International Studies at Geneva, an outstanding member of the League of Nations Mandates Commis-

sion, and for many years a Swiss delegate to League Assemblies. Today's book contains the latest of the lectures he has delivered at Harvard. Dr. Jennings, reader in English law in the University of London, has specialized in constitutional law.

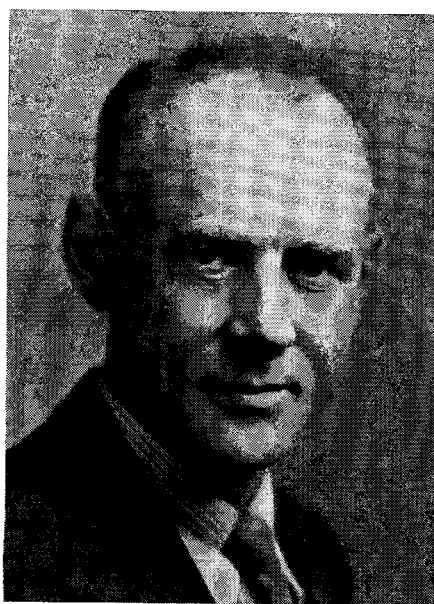
It is noteworthy that they give a common basic answer to the problem of peace. That answer is that there can be no peace where there is no effective, inter-state government, and that our best hope for such government lies in Federal Union. Dr. Rappard supports that answer with a volume of detailed proof of how the only other system of inter-state government, the state-to-state system of diplomacy and the League, failed at Geneva. Dr. Jennings begins where he leaves off and submits a detailed plan and constitution for a European Federal Union.

For the scholar Dr. Rappard provides three big chapters, tracing through the past twenty years the history of three major ideas on which the League stood. One is a compact history of arbitration in that period. The next records the fluctuating destinies of collective security, and the curtain falls on “The Tragedy of Disarmament.” Dr. Rappard speaks usually as an eye-witness and he crams these chapters with a wealth of salient citations from documents and speeches. Only those who have labored through the piles of paper that the League has produced, and that Dr. Rappard has reduced to their grain, can appreciate how valuable these chapters are,—and what labor they entailed.

For the general reader as well as the scholar Dr. Rappard has three other chapters. Two tell of the quest for peace during the last World War and at the Peace Conference. The final one sums up the book and glances at the future. The former make most interesting reading now, especially the chapter dealing with peace as a war aim in 1914-18. It gives us a basis for comparing this war with that one, as regards the rise and progress of the idea of organizing peace. The comparison is an encouraging one, says Dr. Rappard:

When we consider that the quest for organized peace during the World War was really led by only one statesman of the first rank; when we consider further that this one leader, although supported by the inarticulate masses everywhere and by the ardent convictions of a relatively small group of devoted followers in various countries, met with indiffer-

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Clarence Streit thinks it improbable that a Federal Union can be established without American help.