

Viscount Cecil, of Chelwood

A GREAT EXPERIMENT. An Autobiography by Viscount Cecil. New York: Oxford University Press. 1941. 390 pp., with index. \$3.50.

Reviewed by JAMES FREDERICK GREEN

THE name of Viscount Cecil of Chelwood, better known as Lord Robert Cecil, is more closely associated with the League of Nations than that of any other man. In 1916, Lord Cecil—then Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs—submitted to the Cabinet a memorandum entitled “Proposals for the Maintenance of Future Peace,” adumbrating the collective security provisions of the League Covenant. At the Paris Peace Conference, Cecil collaborated with President Wilson in drafting the Covenant, which incorporated the three principles of his 1916 statement: revision of treaties, compulsory settlement of disputes, and military and economic sanctions. During the whole life of the League, until the outbreak of war in 1939, Lord Cecil served it devotedly and diligently, first as delegate to the Assembly from the Union of South Africa, later as chief British delegate, as Britain’s representative at technical committees and disarmament conferences, and as leader of the British League of Nations Society. In 1937, while visiting the United States, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for his contributions to world peace. This militant peacemaker was not content to rest on his laurels, however, for in September 1940 he was busy—despite his seventy-six years—drafting a “Memorandum on World Settlement after the War,” included in the appendix to this volume.

“A Great Experiment” is thus both an autobiography of a statesman and the history of an institution. In an all too brief introduction, Cecil tells of his childhood in London, his education at Eton and Oxford, and his early career at the Bar and in the House of Commons. Scion of one of England’s oldest and most celebrated families and son of Lord Salisbury, three time Prime Minister in the late nineteenth century, Cecil knew and worked with the leading statesmen of his time. Although nominally a Conservative, he was always an independent in politics, frequently in disagreement with the government of the day. In February 1932, when this writer heard him address the World Disarmament Conference at Geneva as President of the Federation of League of Nations Societies, he was applauded by almost everyone in the auditorium except the British delegation. In 1935, Cecil organized the gigantic Peace Ballot, securing the votes of over 11,500,000

Britons, which was largely responsible for the Baldwin government’s rapid shift to a pro-League position at the general election that year and for its support of economic sanctions against Italy.

It is perhaps unfair to suggest that this book contains too much League and too little Cecil, for that is the intention of its self-effacing author. Unlike many other envoys to Geneva, Lord Cecil—with his familiar stooped

shoulders, thin, lined face and benign smile—was solely concerned with promoting the interests of the League. One wishes, however, that Cecil had given a fuller and franker description of men and events, and had revealed more of the conflict over policy in both Cabinet and Parliament during the twenty years between wars. With rare exceptions, including a characterization—made after spending several days at the White House—of Roosevelt as “a very great man,” he is almost too gentlemanly in refraining from judgments on his contemporaries.

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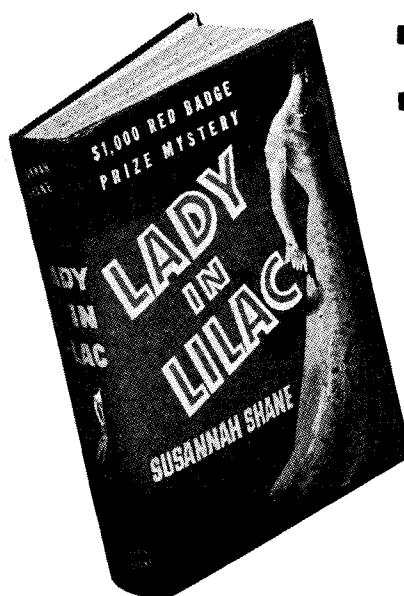
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The editors of *The Gory Gazette* and Inner Sanctum Mysteries went into a huddle about *The Trial of Vincent Doon* by Will Oursler. The editor of I.S.M. said, "Forget about *The Gory Gazette's* Policy. This is one time you have to lay it on the line. *The Trial of Vincent Doon* is completely different. It is the most exciting, the most baffling. Besides, the manner of presentation makes it a standout. Why don't you just say so?"

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PERSPECTIVES AND ARCHAEOLOGY

(Continued from page 4)

protection of what he calls his rights, no longer knows the terms upon which his species inhabits this earth.

I daresay these are the signs of a civilization that is in its last throes. The soul is dead; the spiritual aspiration has found its expression, but has not survived it. And man, using the technique he has gained in the process to insulate himself against the fearful reality of the outer world, has lost even his knowledge of that reality. He lives in his citadel now, forgetful of the enemy, concerned only with his artificial domestic economy. For generations he has posted no sentinels beyond the walls.

When men conceive of themselves as soulless animals once more, yet have lost their knowledge of any limitations imposed from without on the free satisfaction of their appetites, chaos follows. The medieval unity was a unity of spirit and purpose, self-imposed and forged in the struggle of inspired men to lift themselves above the world of nature. Even in their warfare men agreed to certain rules in keeping with their dignity as creatures transfigured by the possession of souls. But where considerations of honor, faith or charity no longer limit men in their behavior, unity must be forced on them from above. For lack of a better arrangement, the almighty state

arises to enslave men, rules are imposed by the strong on the weak; individualism, no longer founded on the dignity of the individual and bound by accepted rules, is condemned to perish by the sword. The human being who no longer conceives of himself in the image of his god, who has lost sight of the perfection he had set as his goal, is no longer worthy of freedom, nor capable of supporting the responsibility. The almighty state then attempts to plan society by the use of force, as one might attempt to give a dead body the semblance of life by moving its limbs in the motions that had once been spontaneous, free, and voluntary. Supreme force, at last, is all that remains to uphold the lifeless structure of civilization, and even that is turned inward in the scramble to loot what remains. The Roman legions could not preserve by the mere force of their arms the integrity of the empire they commanded. The great military empire of Mexico, which inherited the civilization of the Mayas, collapsed in ruins with the landing of a little force of Spaniards on its shores, even before a blow had been struck. The Inca empire, under a military dictatorship, disintegrated and vanished like dust in the wind upon the capture of its chief by a band of European adventurers.

Something happened indeed to bring about the fall of these vast civilizations. What happened was simply that men lost the struggle to possess their souls. The wilderness, waiting eternally on the outskirts of human achieve-

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	Crime, Place, and Sleuth	Summing Up	Verdict
MURDER IN MINK Robert George Dean (Scribner's: \$2.)	Lingerie shop sells to erring husbands, bills at blackmail prices. Tony Hunter investigates; and floozie swaps mink coat for wooden box.	Occasional un-draped dame OK in mysteries; but strip-tease is burlesque's asset. Denouement, dialogue à la Mr. Bones.	Passable
IF THIS BE MURDER Ruth Darby (Crime Club: \$2.)	Apprehensive wife summons American sleuths to Mexican hacienda, but fails to prevent murder of husband and other crimes.	Sprightly people, snappy dialogue, rich background, and plot that is pretty well doped out.	Gets by
THE TWENTY ONE CLUES J. J. Connington (Little, Brown: \$2.)	Ostensible "suicide pact" of English cleric and parishioner's wife stump local detective, who very properly calls in Sir Clinton Driffeld.	Methodical and painstaking investigation of ingeniously-planned crime should please those who care more for deduction than action.	Well thought-out
A TOAST TO TOMORROW Manning Coles (Crime Club: \$2.)	British spy loses memory and turns up decade later as high Nazi police official. He makes up for lost time.	Bit too episodic to equal its excellent companion, "Drink to Yesterday," but thrilling enough to please most readers.	Recommended