

A Leaf Out of History

SECRET SOURCES. By Wythe Williams and William van Narvig. Chicago: Ziff-Davis. 1943. 336 pp. \$3.

Reviewed by STRUTHERS BURT

A LITTLE over ten years ago a monstrous and extraordinary man with an absurd moustache, one Adolf Hitler, set out to prove to the world that fact can be far more fantastic than fiction. By now almost everybody agrees with him—in that premise, that is—except a few of the less intelligent members of the United States Senate and House of Representatives who, in their way, are as fantastic as he is. This book of Wythe Williams and his mysterious collaborator, Colonel William van Narvig, formerly of the Russian Imperial Army, and at one time an officer in the army of Finland, is a cold and unembroidered recital of something that happened. It is presented as a document. A leaf out of history. And no one can doubt its authenticity because of three conclusive reasons.

First, the reputation of its senior sponsor, Wythe Williams. Second, and what is always more important, the interior evidence, that is to say, the context of the book itself. Third, and the final proof, the fact that if what Wythe Williams relates had not taken place, he would not have been able to do five years ago what he did.

What he did, beginning somewhere in 1939, and continuing until Germany's declaration of war upon us, was to predict, month after month, and with uncanny accuracy, and to the amazement of all other newspapermen and especially the foreign correspondents still in Berlin, just what Hitler and his armies and his politicians were going to do, and what the results were going to be. In August, 1939, for instance, questioned by his friend Lowell Thomas on a radio program, and the question, incidentally, was ad lib, he predicted that within three weeks, during the first week of September, the Germans would invade Poland. He also predicted what the Germans knew, but nobody else, that the Poles would last about twenty-one days. In the same manner, he predicted the invasion of Denmark, Norway, Holland, and Belgium, and the vulnerability of the Maginot Line, and what the intentions of the German generals were regarding it. Long before anybody but the traitors themselves and the German High Command knew about it, he disclosed the treachery in certain French army circles and in French business and politics. But this was only the beginning, for he continued to predict

any number of other events in the making and disclosed any number of other secrets subsequently proven true, and he predicted and disclosed all this in a matter-of-fact manner as if the night before Hitler had dropped in upon him and said, "Wythe, I'm going to tell you what I, and the Party, and my generals are going to do. Of course, it's off the record, but if you want to use it . . . well, you know what my off the record means. It's worth no more than anything else I say."

Month after month, and sometimes day after day, this happened and it was very embarrassing to the great metropolitan dailies, and on a couple of occasions the governments in Washington and London flatly contradicted Wythe Williams only to be contradicted themselves a day or so later by what occurred. The entire performance was eerie, clairvoyant, magical, and the most eerie thing about it was that the magician, the clairvoyant, spoke not from Berlin, or Paris, or London, or even Washington, but from Greenwich, Connecticut; either from Greenwich, or from some radio station in New York. For the most part the revelations appeared in *The Greenwich Time*, the small paper Wythe Williams had bought a couple of years earlier upon his return from Europe, where for two decades he had been a foreign correspondent for *The New York Times*, the Northcliffe Press, and the United Press, but, once a week or so, Wythe Williams put on his felt hat and went into New York, like

any other commuter, and shook the world. Or, rather, he should have shaken the world, and, if he had, the world would have saved itself endless misery, but as usual the world preferred not to be shaken until the bombs actually fell. Now, in this book, Wythe Williams tells the source of his information, and, because the explanation is so simple and human, it is not only all the more interesting and fascinating, as Lowell Thomas in his foreword says, but all the more amazing.

Wythe Williams does not mention the implications of this final revelation of his, although as a newspaperman he must be acutely aware of them, for newspapermen belong to a realistic profession which knows that back of all the mumbo-jumbo, and elaborate plans, and high-sounding

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SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 482)

GEORGE MEREDITH:
HARD WEATHER

All her* mind
Is vowed to thresh for stouter
stock.

Nor.....
Peruse her with the craven nerve,
But even as she from grass to
corn,
To eagle high from grubbing mole,
Prove in strong brain her noblest
born,
The station for the flight of soul.

*Earth's.

Your Literary I. Q.

By Howard Collins

CRIMINALS IN LITERATURE

Not all of the criminals in literature are to be found in detective fiction. Here are ten well-known characters who were guilty of various crimes other than murder. How many of them do you recognize? Allowing 5 points for each one whose name you can recall, and another 5 for the author who created him, a score of 60 is par, 70 is good, 80 or better is excellent. The answers are on page 24.

1. To prevent the coronation of the King of Ruritania, this half-brother drugged and kidnaped him.
2. This Chinese boy and his father discovered that a delicious repast resulted from burning down their dwelling, and became habitual arsonists.
3. This U. S. naval officer was convicted of treason in connection with the Aaron Burr conspiracy.
4. Convicted of adultery, she was forced to wear a scarlet A on her dress at all times.
5. Daily practice enabled him to become the most proficient one of a gang of boys who pilfered handkerchiefs from unsuspecting victims.
6. Always ethical, he never swindled a Midwestern farmer without giving him at least a gold brick or some phony stock certificates to show for his money.
7. This one-legged sea cook led a mutiny aboard the schooner *Hispaniola*.
8. For dueling in the streets, he was exiled by the Prince of Verona.
9. Condemned to death for flirting, he was reprieved when the emperor appointed him Lord High Executioner.
10. On the spur of the moment he stole the life savings of the village weaver.

"Americans are
always moving on"



...THIS IS THE FIRST LINE OF THE GREAT NEW NARRATIVE POEM

WESTERN STAR

BY *Stephen Vincent Benét*

AT THE OUTBREAK of war Mr. Benét had completed the first book of what he had planned to be a long narrative poem in several parts. He laid aside his work on the later sections because he believed that there was writing in connection with the war which was more important for him to do. However, with the publication of *Western Star*, the finished book of the projected work, the publishers believe that Mr. Benét will make perhaps the greatest of all his great contributions to America in war or in peace. For *Western Star* is the spirit and the beginnings of America. There is in it the essence of what America is and the sure knowledge of what it will be.

Western Star is for all those who love *John Brown's Body* and for all Americans who "are always moving on" whatever their race, creed, color or heritage. Dual Book-of-the-Month Club Selection for July. \$2.00

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the
appointment
of
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David Appel, distinguished newspaperman, editorialist, and lecturer in Modern American Literature at Cleveland College of Western Reserve University, has been appointed Literary Editor of The Chicago Daily News.

Mr. Appel, long director of the book pages of the Cleveland News, brings to The Chicago Daily News a background of brilliant literary editorship in keeping with the traditions of America's most book-conscious newspaper. With his appointment, readers, writers, publishers and sellers of books may look forward with continued assurance to new and bright days, for books in the Chicago area. For the ablest and most authoritative news and reviews of books, turn to the Book Pages of . . .

**THE CHICAGO
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Chicago's HOME Newspaper

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phrases, in the final analysis everything comes down to men and women and human motives. We laugh at the movies for their insistence upon this fundamental truth, but in their own naive way they are correct, and they are correct because they are naive. The only trouble is that they continue to present the fundamental truth naively.

Wythe Williams quite by chance, and through the mysterious Colonel van Narvig, built up a small and unofficial organization of German spies who functioned perfectly and in the most intimate relationships with Hitler, Goering, Von Ribbentrop, and all the other murderers of Berlin. It was as simple as that and as terrific. Or rather, it was not Wythe Williams who built up this organization, but the mysterious Colonel van Narvig who apparently knows everyone in Europe, and whose brother-in-law, now dead, was a leading Nazi. Wythe Williams was merely the receiving end, the editor, the announcer, to whom the reports came in with fair regularity and astonishing speed. He gave the news out to the world, which didn't want to believe it. How he first met Colonel van Narvig during the World War and then didn't see him again until the edge of the present global war, is a story in itself and what we choose to call a coincidence. But the point is that more than half of life is made up of coincidences for those wise enough to know their determining value. Once again, being a newspaperman, Wythe Williams knows what a coincidence is. Once again, he is one of those people to whom coincidences happen, which is extremely important. That is genius in itself.

The organization back of the "editorial rabbits" pulled from the hat of the small paper, *The Greenwich Time*, was composed of two women and four men, all Germans, all originally believers in the Nazi salvation, all, because of what had happened to them, eventually loathers of it and Hitler, so much so that they were willing to risk torture and death to satisfy their hatred. One of the women was a member of Hitler's secretarial staff at Berchtesgaden—the man to whom she had been secretly married had been assassinated during the blood-purge of 1934. The other woman, a beauty, was one of Hermann Goering's 10 secretaries and lived at Karin Hall. She believed that her father, a leading Nazi, had been killed because he knew too much. Two of the men were Gestapo agents. One of these Gestapo agents had, together with other agents, the especial duty of guarding Hitler's life. The other two men were equally close to the

Nazi leaders and the Nazi government. Each of these had had his bitter and disillusioning experience. In addition to these six was a mysterious messenger.

So that's the plot of this actual story, this fantastic document made up mostly of decoded letters, and the soberly related story is as exciting and as filled with intrigue as any book Phillips Oppenheim ever wrote, or Oppenheim's modern and improved successor, Eric Ambler. I hope a great many Americans read this book. Until the painful facts of life were forced upon us, too many of us led a remote, pleasant, and sheltered existence in which the cornerstone of philosophy was a disbelief in the existence of evil. We were like those three stupid little Japanese monkey-gods, or like the girl who didn't know she had a baby until it was old enough to ask her the name of its father. We have now learned—most of us—that the only way to fight evil is to know about it. I hope, also, this book will fall into the hands of Adolf Hitler. That eventually it will fall into the hands of some of his companions goes without saying. They will be astonished by another of the oldest truths known to man; the truth in which lies the nemesis of all tyrants; the inevitable handwriting on the wall.

Torture, cruelty, injustice, insolence make enemies even of followers, even of slaves. There comes a day when these turn upon the tyrant and he dies terribly.

FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. "B" for instance may stand for "E" and "M" for "I." The experienced cryptographer seeks first to spot the vowels, and looks for letters that recur frequently to give him his clue.

No. 1

V DZKX UGSOG HXSHFX JS
QJSH ZGB APN ZG ZHHFX
SG JDX YSIGXI ZGB JDXG
OZFU ZOZN ZQ VC JDXN
DZB QSFKXB JDX ODSFX
PGXTHFSNTXGJ HISAFXT.

DXNOSSB AISPG—

"YDPTTN YDZIFVX"

The solution to Crypt No. 1 will be found in the next issue.