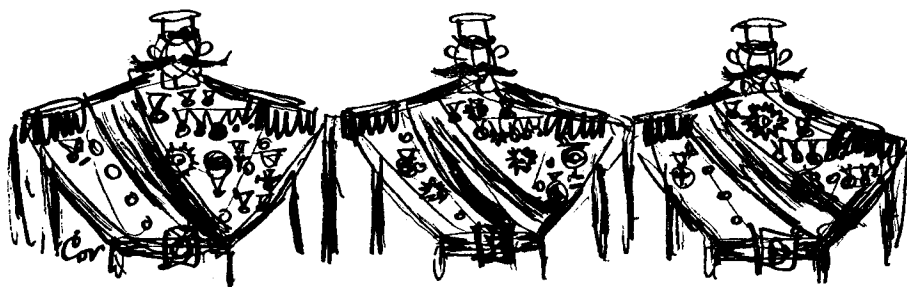


but Germany lost much ground during the Nazi regime. The United States has taken a large leap forward and is well ahead for the period since 1933, with Britain taking second place. France has not, by this standard, been eminent in science, a fact the author attributes largely to the niggardliness of the French state in its attitude toward scientific research. The effect of totalitarianism on the scientific spirit is impressively suggested by the record. "Soviet science has not yet produced a single Nobel prize-winner."

For some time to come this difference in scientific ability must be given considerable weight in any calculations of political power. At this moment there is only *one* world power, for the United States alone possesses the atomic bomb. But this final weapon carries with it its own nemesis. In the not distant future the differences of power between the countries of the world will be greatly reduced, may even cease to count in any realistic calculation. There is no question that, apart from a world authority, the bomb, in a yet more devastating form, will be in time available to any country that devotes itself to the business. It will be by far the cheapest, measured by its "productivity," of all the weapons of war. It is a "saturation weapon," so absolute that

**THE AUTHOR:** SRL nominates Eugène-Marie Friedwald, whose "Man's Last Choice" is marked by the absence of a single perpendicular pronoun, as the person most unlikely to write an autobiography. Even a transatlantic cable from his American publishers, the Viking Press, pleading for data, failed to beguile Mr. Friedwald into revealing anything fleshier than "Eugène-Marie Friedwald studied at the University of Toulouse and received his degree of Engineering in Chemistry and *Licencié ès Sciences* in 1931. He turned from scientific research to writing on international affairs fourteen years ago as a result of having followed lectures on political science at the *Collège de France*. Mr. Friedwald left France in July 1940 on the last boat to England, where he worked for the Political Intelligence Department the remainder of the war. He is married to an Englishwoman and lives in London." SRL asked for more information. His agent replied: "Friedwald knows more about oil and its influence on war than any other living writer. Was research worker in France. Now writing book on Russia and world power." R. G.



size of population, wealth of resources, and even expanse of territory will not suffice to give any country any degree of security. Consideration of "geopolitics," meaningful up to our time, must now be discarded. Furthermore, even a "victorious" state could not hope to enjoy its "victory." The author quotes the speculation of Dr. Irving Langmuir to the effect that an atomic war might render our planet "permanently uninhabitable."

Those who pride themselves on being realists about war and political power prove to be the worst victims of illusion. Science increases political power, is in our days a precondition of political power, but science has already, for the past thirty years, made war "a senseless thing without an object," completely useless as an instrument of policy. At the same time science has confuted nationalism, even though in this period the creed of nationalism has received a devotion never equaled before.

What then is the conclusion? Mr. Friedwald addresses himself here solely to the problem of atomic control. The main difficulty that blocks its solution is not a technological, but a political one. Given the requisite authority with the requisite power, including the power of inspection, atomic warfare can be prevented and atomic energy applied, without unfair discrimination between countries, to beneficent uses. The Baruch proposal presented a reasonable program for the accomplishment of this end. Russia's intransigence has barred its acceptance. The most satisfactory way of breaking the deadlock would be a change of attitude on the part of Russia, so that she would be willing "to merge a small part of her sovereignty" for the greater good of all. Failing this, the next best thing is that the five-sixths of the world lying outside the Russian zone should set up its own authority, leaving the door open to the Soviet Union.

It is a conclusion narrower than the argument that leads up to it, and to this extent disappointing. The control of atomic energy is certainly an urgent issue, and some scheme more or less resembling the Baruch plan is imperative. But this issue cannot be dissociated from others, and it cannot be effectively settled by itself alone.

No authority to control atomic energy will serve so long as there is not also an international authority to prevent war itself. The destructive potentialities of science are not limited to atomic warfare. War, as Mr. Friedwald points out, has become in every sense unlimited. Moreover, even if the Baruch or some similar program were accepted, it would be effective only during peace. The outbreak of war would put an end to all that, and within a year or so after the outbreak belligerents would probably be producing atomic bombs—unless they found other genocidal weapons.

Throughout history calculations of military power have been a series of visions that nearly always in the end deceived, even if at first their promise seemed to be fulfilled. In the past such calculations tempted dominant, aggressive men, who launched great conflicts to win their ends. Today they can tempt only fools. *The ends cannot be won.*

## Contract vs. Coercion

**A CONCISE HISTORY OF THE LAW OF NATIONS.** By Arthur Nussbaum. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1947. 361 pp. \$4.50.

Reviewed by ASHER BRYNES

ONE of the unrecognized achievements of the twentieth century is a simplification of the terms in which we must think about peace if we are ever to deal effectively with the problem of war. Men are now roughly divided between those who would rely on world government, or police power, for the enforcement of peace; and those who would rely on the rule of law ("open agreements openly arrived at," in Wilsonian phrase) to accomplish the same end. Actually the issue is between contract and coercion: it is that simple.

According to the Communist conception of Russia one world means one government, maintaining peace by administrative order. That basic idea was sharply defined by F. A. Voigt a few months ago:

All nations in the world are prospective members of the Soviet  
(Continued on page 30)

**Fiction.** *The most significant of the three novels reviewed this week is Ross Lockridge's "Raintree County." The critics will doubtless fight over its 1,066 pages for some time to come, for in lyric and powerful prose it tears the history of an American family to fragmentary pieces and reassembles it like a cross-word puzzle. "The Earth Beneath" is another several-generation novel describing the dismal existence of a family of British coal miners. The genealogical tree as the theme of novels is so common today that there must be some reason compelling writers to find some solidity in the roots of present-day life. Norman Katkov's passionate story of the interplay of religious prejudice on the marriage of a Jewish boy and a Christian girl belongs wholly to this generation, but its significance is as old as history.*

## Indiana Reflection of U. S. 1844-92

**RAINTREE COUNTY.** By Ross Lockridge, Jr. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1948. 1,066 pp. \$3.75.

Reviewed by HOWARD MUMFORD JONES

**L**AATEST candidate for that mythical honor, the Great American Novel, "Raintree County" displays unflagging industry, a jerky and sometimes magnificent vitality, a queer amalgam of pattern and formlessness, and an ingenuity of structure that is at once admirable and maddening. The engineering of this huge volume arouses one's admiration, although the problem of organic form is by no means solved.

Let us examine the engineering, or physical, structure of this enormous edifice. The work is an amalgam of at least four major elements: events in a day in the life of the Shawnessy family, living in Waycross, Indiana, and proud of their county; biographical and autobiographical memories and narratives of the past of this family, but principally of John Shawnessy, the father, poet, and family man; Esther his wife, and their daughter Eva Alice (named from "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and "Alice in Wonderland"); a subjective and lyrical history of the United States from 1844 to 1892, seen principally from an Indiana angle of vision; and the ironic interpretative comments on all this by one "Perfessor" Jerusalem Webster Stiles, a character whose function is that of Enobarbus in "Antony and Cleopatra" and whose name springs from the nomenclature of frontier humorists.

The frame which contains the whole and from which, as drying corn hangs from a crossbeam in a barn, some fifty-two "flashbacks" depend is the events of a Fourth of July celebration at Waycross in 1892, in which J. W.

Shawnessy plays a leading part. To this celebration there return (among others) two boyhood companions of his youth, a local politico, Garwood B. Jones, now become a pompous U. S. Senator, and a local entrepreneur, one "Cash" Carney, become one of the predatory financiers of the nation. Both in 1892 and during events preceding this day conversations among the four principal male characters illumine action and value—that is, Jones brings to the problem of interpretation the views of a practical politician in America, Carney those of finance, the "Perfessor" the view of an uprooted intellectual (he becomes a newspaper reporter), and Shawnessy the optimism of the shy idealist-teacher, poet, lover, and writer.

More than half a hundred flashbacks of varying length tell us of past events in domestic and public life.



—Basil Green.

Ross Lockridge, Jr.'s book "has gusto, ribaldry, vision, beauty, and narrative skill."

The author has obligingly furnished a list of these in chronological order, for they are not in chronological order in the body of the book, and, in fact, one is sometimes a little puzzled to know why they are arranged as they are and not otherwise. Through these flashbacks we watch the parallel histories of a series of private lives, North and South, and of crucial public events like the anti-slavery agitation, the Civil War, the assassination of Lincoln, the Philadelphia Exposition, the Homestead Riots, and the like. Each of these episodes is attached to the main frame by an ingenious mechanical device resembling what the Japanese in their poetry call a "pillow word"—that is, a sentence uttered or meditated by a character in 1892 contains a characteristic word which becomes the first word (in altered meaning) of the flashback. Furthermore, the titles of the flashbacks are sometimes a carry-over of these sentences. Jointure of history and fiction is, I think, more smoothly made here than in the case of John Dos Passos.

Despite these mechanical neatnesses, the novel (in the old tradition of English fiction) is fundamentally amorphous. There are dramatic episodes; narrative episodes; lyrical meditations reminiscent of Tom Wolfe; dream distortions like the verbal ballets in the third part of "Ulysses"; long passages of interpretative comment; frequent selections from a prose epic supposed to be under construction by the hero; pieces from imaginary country newspapers; a small anthology of popular songs of the American nineteenth century, and much more. Characters must be clearly conceived to keep their outline and depth against this mounting flood of words, and it cannot be said that they always do so. They display only a fitful vitality.

John Shawnessy is the principal character. His boyhood, youth, and young manhood are clearly seen, the village life of Midwest America rises around him in these earlier scenes, and one rejoices in his three-dimensional solidity. But he is pushed by his creator into an improbable marriage with a Louisiana girl, Susanna Drake ("Susanna" from the Foster song, and "Drake," I assume, because of overtones from the name of Temple Drake in Faulkner's "Sanctuary"); the girl, fearful that she is herself the product of miscegenation, goes mad and disappears with her baby; and the grief-stricken husband enlists in the Union Army under U. S. Grant, fights at Chickamauga, and marches with Sherman to the sea. But he ceases thereupon to be an individual, becoming merely an-