

to show his own superiority. Mr. Bullett and Mr. Brown are not bad men who use the tools of criticism in vain. They are good men who do not use the tools of criticism at all. They use the tools of something that purports to be criticism but isn't—the tools, in the one case, of belles-lettres and, in

the other, of academicism. They are "cabin'd, cribb'd, confined" by their procedures.

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Resistance Literature

NEGRO VOICES IN AMERICAN FICTION. By Hugh Morris Gloster. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 1948. 295 pp. \$3.50.

Reviewed by JOHN WOODBURN

ONCE, in argument, I stated flatly that any Negro in America knew more about Fascism than any American white man, a remark which was met with the porcellian indifference which, it seems to me, greets so many of my pearls. My point, so crystalline to me and so opaque to my opponent, was merely that there was a sharp, dramatic difference between firsthand experience and peripheral observation. I mention this because I was reminded of it while reading Hugh Morris Gloster's "Negro Voices in American Fiction," a scholarly, dispassionate inspection of the novels and short stories written by Negroes from the beginnings, in 1853, down to 1940, and of the shifting social backgrounds out of which this expression arose. It occurred to me that here, in fact, was a true Resistance Literature, an articulation of protest, propaganda, bitterness, hatred, and hope, written in the midst of the enemy and inevitably, because of its material and authorship, of the greatest conspicuity. Flawed, biased,—baroque and pompous in the fashion of its time—these early writings, emerging from an enslaved and illiterate people, nevertheless constitute an important and distinctive contribution to our literature; and, to return to my point, bear a resemblance, in courage and circumstance, to the Resistance writing which appeared in the countries oppressed by the Nazis in the recent war. The Frenchman writing for *Les Editions Minuit* and Richard Wright at work on "Native Son" were each writing out their separate and related captivities. There are those of us who await, with fluctuating hope, the arrival of V-A Day.

The first novel by an American Negro was "Clotel, or The President's Daughter," by William Wells Brown, which was published in London in 1853. If its literary quality was not of the highest order, as Mr. Gloster sug-

gests, its author showed an impressive readiness to grasp the nettle. Not only did he write boldly of miscegenation, still a thirteen-letter dirty word in some parts of the South, but unhesitatingly attributed his mulatto heroine to Thomas Jefferson's rumored color-blindness where a woman was concerned. The American edition, published in Boston in 1864, demoted President Jefferson to anonymous Senatorial status and made other discreet revisions, but still presented for the first time in American fiction the legal marriage of a woman of color to a white American citizen, on location.

This theme of the tragic mulatto, which runs like a mordant thread throughout nineteenth-century as well as contemporary Negro writing, occurs frequently, almost antiphonally, in the work of white Southern writers. The insistent, not always oblique, accusation of the Negro writer is answered, over and over, by the nagging, obsessive guilt of the white, from Thomas Nelson Page and the rabid Thomas Dixon through a host of obscure writers of the magnolia school, down to Faulkner and Caldwell. A puzzling omission, incidentally, in the list of novels of Negro life by white writers, is Haldane MacFall's magnificent "The Wooings of Jezebel Pettyfer."

Beginning with the isolated, almost inaudible voices of William Wells Brown and Frances Ellen Watkins



—Collier.

Frieda Lawrence "rather miraculously preserved" 200 of her husband's manuscripts.

Harper, whose "The Two Offers" was undoubtedly the first short story by a Negro writer ever published (1859), Mr. Gloster in this tranquil, well-ordered study, discusses the growing list of Negro authors in terms of their time. Among them are such well-known names as Charles W. Chesnutt, James Weldon Johnson, W. E. B. DuBois, Countee Cullen, Claude McKay, Langston Hughes, and Richard Wright, writers whose work is of such distinction that they should be listed simply as American writers, unsegregated by the racial adjective. Throughout their work, and the work of their Negro *confrères*, the parallelisms with white writers are constant and clear. The plantation tradition, Nordicism, realism, naturalism, primitivism, proletarianism, Freudianism—all the major movements in American literature are reflected synchronically in this darker mirror, sometimes savagely, sometimes colored by racial emphasis, but also sometimes with more ruthless honesty than in the case of the white contemporary. Like it or not, the work of the Negro writer has established itself firmly, in less than a hundred years, as a sinewy, distinctive, but nevertheless important branch of American literature which describes a significant aspect of our American life from a valid and indigenous point of view.

Lawrencean Remains

THE FRIEDA LAWRENCE COLLECTION OF D. H. LAWRENCE MANUSCRIPTS. By E. W. Tedlock, Jr. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press. 1948. 333 pp. \$3.50.

Reviewed by HARRY T. MOORE

THIS "descriptive bibliography" is a thorough examination of some 200 D. H. Lawrence manuscripts—of published and a few unpublished stories, plays, novels, poems, essays, fragments—rather miraculously preserved through the Lawrences' extensive travels and retained by Mrs. Lawrence since her husband's death in 1930. These items have been partially collated and catalogued before, first by Mr. and Mrs. H. K. Wells for the Harvard exhibit of 1937, then by Lawrence Clark Powell for a Los Angeles Public Library booklet that year.

Mr. Tedlock's study, which goes deeper into the material, will chiefly interest those well versed in Lawrence, though many students of contemporary literature in general will find this book a valuable revelation of a modern writer's working methods. As such it cannot quite be compared

with the recently published "Note-books of Henry James," which has a definite continuity and is self-sufficient in its intricate discussion of one story-idea after another. Mr. Tedlock's listing of the Lawrence manuscripts does not strictly follow a chronological pattern, and his explanations in regard to them will be best understood by readers having a wide knowledge of Lawrence's works, most of which are at present unobtainable. Even he had a hard time acquiring some of them.

Because he approached this project from the outside, Mr. Tedlock was also handicapped in other ways: he was not sufficiently steeped in Lawrence's work to be completely equipped for his task, and his errors of omission and commission are numerous enough to be at times vexing. He seems unable to make up his mind whether (Mrs.) Catherine Carswell is "Mrs." or "Miss." He too easily accepts the notion that Ford Madox Ford instead of his friend Violet Hunt actually brought Lawrence's first novel to the house of Heinemann. He is apparently unaware of the names of some of the girl friends of the youthful Lawrence (Jessie Chambers, the Miriam of "Sons and Lovers," whom Mr. Tedlock seems to know only as "E. T.," and Helen Corke, the Helena of "The Trespasser" and the Helen of the early poems, whom Mr. Tedlock designates only as the "H. C." of the Huxley edition of Lawrence's "Letters," though she used her full name when she wrote her book about Lawrence). He gives the wrong dates for Lawrence's Croydon school-manship.

These and other little faults which may be blamed on Mr. Tedlock's unfamiliarity with the whole subject are considerably less important than his positive achievement, his extremely competent survey of the problems within the manuscripts themselves. For example, a holograph of the story "Odor of Chrysanthemums," whose first page was reproduced in Dr. Powell's booklet as a specimen of Lawrence's youthful handwriting, was sent by Mr. Tedlock to an expert who determined that the calligraphy was not Lawrence's (it is probably Jessie Chambers's). And in the case of "See Mexico After, by Luis Q.," which some Lawrence authorities said was not genuine Lawrence when it appeared in the "Phoenix" omnibus in 1936, Mr. Tedlock presents evidence for its authenticity. He skilfully describes most of the manuscripts in this collection, by far the fullest of Lawrence's remains; he not only includes full bibliographical data but also compares variant drafts of the manu-

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Personal History. *In recent years the difference between commercial publishing houses and the university presses has been minimized. True, the latter continue to publish textbooks and learned treatises, as they should. But the heads of the great university presses nowadays are often men who have had some experience in the commercial publishing field, and an increasing proportion of the books they publish can no longer be distinguished from the wide-selling products of the commercial houses. There is Rutgers' best-selling "Lincoln Reader," for instance. And in the field of recent "personal histories," besides the two books reviewed below, one thinks of Yale's authoritative biography of Emanuel Swedenborg, by Signe Toksvig, or Syracuse University Press's "A Wandering Student," by Sir Bernard Pares. Elsewhere in this issue we review two other university press biographies, of General Gage and General N. P. Banks.*

Puritan in a Pagan Land

ZULU WOMAN. *The Story of a Modern Woman's Rebellion Against Polygamy.* By Rebecca Hourwich Reyher. New York: Columbia University Press. 1948. 282 pp. \$3.

Reviewed by BERGEN EVANS

WITH a minimum of explanatory comment Miss Reyher has set down in a simple narrative the story of Christina, the first wife of Solomon, the king of the Zulus, as she had it from Christina herself.

Few women have had to face greater tribulation. Missionary reared, Christina at fifteen was "a Christian puritan in a pagan land, a stranger among her own people." Her innocence was, no doubt, a strong element in the attraction that she had for the young King but it was hardly an adequate preparation for living with him. Custom required the King to have many wives, but the going to bed with two at a time was a personal inclination of his own. Christina, by the way, as an acknowledgment of her position as first and (for a while) favorite wife

was permitted to lie on the bed while his majesty regaled himself with other consorts on the floor.

She accepted this, as she accepted the venereal disease with which the monarch infected all his wives and maimed and killed his children, with an anguished stoicism. She was loyal and devoted. She tried to make him happy (there is a charming glimpse of Solomon pedaling eagerly away at the sewing machine, making his wives' petticoats under Christina's direction). She attempted, in so far as etiquette would permit her, to steer him through the hissing factions of his sullen harem and to uphold his power and dignity. But when his brutality and, particularly, his neglect, convinced her that he no longer cared for her, she forced him to grant her a divorce. It took years to accomplish, years during which she was exposed to privations and humiliations that few men or women could have endured. Her own kinsmen were frightened and would not support her. She knew that if she won her suit she would lose her children and all means of support. There was no precedent to guide her. Divorce had never been granted except for adultery. The King was cunning and malicious and had made it known that he did not wish the divorce to be granted. She had never heard of Shaw or Ibsen or the Feminist Movement. She had nothing to gain but her integrity and no power but her persistence and the righteousness of her cause. The other wives sneered and sniggered. The elders were horrified at her unorthodoxy. The terrified judges whined and begged her to drop the case. But she kept firmly on until she walked out of the kraal a free woman, doomed to a life of loneliness and poverty, but captain of her own soul.



Rebecca Hourwich Reyher's Christina "had never heard of Shaw or Ibsen or the Feminist Movement."