

## Publisher's Gallery



—Drawn from life by Norkin.

### VII: Elliott Beach Macrae

NO PAULINE conversion has yet shattered Elliott Beach Macrae's ambivalence as "the only damyankee in my family." Since he succeeded his Virginian father, John Macrae, Sr., as overlord of E. P. Dutton & Co. in 1944, however, his policy has been "to publish any book that is good in its field, even if it gives the South a considerable rap." "But," he confesses, "one can't completely disassociate oneself from one's background [his embraced a Staten Island childhood, four VMI years]."

Dutton's third president worships three bearded gods: Edward Payson Dutton, who sired the firm (1852); J. M. Dent, British co-publisher of Everyman's Library—now rocketing toward the 1,000th vol.—, and his father, decrifier of best-seller publishing. "They had a spiritual quality generally lacking today," Mr. Macrae laments. Macrae père, though, was not averse to stirring a flame of public interest into a conflagration, nor is Macrae fils—e.g., exploiting for Dutton's "The Iron Curtain" all the publicity values of the Commie-inspired whoop-de-doo around the recent NY film première—so that he can lavish the profits on publishing "with the left hand, the heart." He is proud of the firm's back list ("Far Away and Long Ago," "The Story of San Michele," especially) and authors (Samuel Butler, Pirandello, among others).

Commuting means leisure for mss.-reading. Once home—Conn.—there are two small daughters and a garden "to fool around with." On the eve of his 48th birthday (June 13) he "still plays singles." Trout fishing lures him to Canada annually. He is slight, militarily polished and erect. He missed both wars; he doubts there will be a third—when/if, he plans "to be the first to go."—E. P. H.

repondered to the extent that the works of de Tocqueville and Bryce have been?

In style de Tocqueville was lucid and brilliant; Bryce was clear but ponderous. "The American Democracy" is sprightly, full of acid characterizations, allusive, sometimes elusive and rhetorical. Frequently the rhetoric is magnificent, but sometimes also it claims Mr. Laski as its victim. There are sentences which might be effective if spoken or even sung but which bring the reader up sharp while he tries to puzzle out a meaning. For example, speaking of the factors that formed the American spirit, Mr. Laski says:

The first is the dramatic aspect, which almost no one could escape, of a vast continent, from which were absent alike the panoply and the hierarchy of the Old World, not only being subdued by the hands of men, but being subdued by men many of whom, in that Old World,

would have been the victims of its panoply and its hierarchy.

On the credit side, however, Mr. Laski seems to have abandoned one stylistic enthusiasm. Occasionally, I admit, I am not unaddicted to the "not un-" formation, but I always try to keep in mind a sentence which George Orwell constructed when he was writing about Mr. Laski's devotion to negatives: "A not unblack dog was chasing a not unsmall rabbit across a not ungreen field." Perhaps this sentence has kept Mr. Laski's negatives from being as uninhibited as they have been in some of his past writings.

Lindsay Rogers, professor of public law at Columbia University, is author of "The Problem of Government," "The American Senate," and "Crisis Government," and editor of a number of standard works on political science.

## Taking America Apart

WHAT THE PEOPLE WANT. By Ellis Gibbs Arnall. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co. 1948. 286 pp. \$3.50.

Reviewed by WARREN MOSCOW

THOSE of us who have a tendency to look upon the "union" states of the North and East as the home of civil liberties in America will find constant reminders, in Ellis Arnall's new book, of our own various sins of commission and omission. There are continued references, from Georgia's former Governor, to the Sacco-Vanzetti case and more recent anti-Semitism in Boston; of the class distinction involved in New York's blue ribbon jury system; of other things we tend to forget when looking down on the South for its poll taxes and its segregation policies.

And for those who, consciously or otherwise, regard the management of the nation's economy as a natural function of the East, there is additional food for thought. To Mr. Arnall, it is quite apparent that the East is on the way out, bound to fade the way England did—just an empire fed by an outmoded colonial system and headed for second-class status after the colonies are developed. The effect of Mr. Arnall's new book is to make those who have their habitats in the North or the East lay down his volume with the feeling that their egos have been under severe attack, and that a healthy deflation was Mr. Arnall's goal.

To Mr. Arnall, the South and the West are the real hopes of America of

the future, the "colonies" that can and must be developed if America is to progress naturally. He sees our nation able to support a population of a quarter of a billion, living better and happier than our present 140,000,000, once the grip of Eastern capitalism is relaxed and the under-populated, under-privileged sections of the nation are given a chance. He restates at length his theory that the Negro of the South is a second-class citizen because the South as a whole is kept down by the entrenched Bourbonism supported from the North.

Mr. Arnall outlined much of his political and economic philosophy in his first book, "The Shores Dimly Seen," published two years ago. Then he wrote on a broad, national scale. Now he takes our country apart by sections, even by cities, on the basis of details and impressions he picked up on a nation-wide lecture tour. In this phase, his book suffers by comparison with his first. He indulges in the Gunther technique but goes too little into detail to rival the originator of the quick "look see."

In fact, as far as living up to the title is concerned, the Arnall book does not quite come off. It boils down to the theme that the people want peace and prosperity and plenty, and that Mr. Arnall thinks he knows how to give it to them. But when Mr. Arnall goes back into our history, to tell what he likes or dislikes about America, his complete iconoclasm makes his views extremely interesting. No man hampered by the traditional would praise Warren Harding—

for his record on civil liberties—and then take his cabinet apart as follows:

No President was ever saddled with such a cabinet as that inflicted by the party leadership on Warren Harding. . . . Andrew Mellon contributed more to the wrecking of the American standard of living, to the undermining of free enterprise and to the destruction of the national economy than any other single figure in American history. Albert Fall almost destroyed the people's belief in the basic integrity of our governmental system. Charles Evans Hughes fixed upon the country a foreign policy that robbed the United States of self-respect at home and prestige abroad. Herbert Hoover elevated the science of uttering platitudes to a degree of perfection not attained by either Henry Clay or William McKinley, and spent the eight years of the Harding-Coolidge regime in seeking the presidency; he is remembered for his military victory at Anacostia over the bonus marchers.

Governor Arnall has his heroes, obvious figures like Franklin D. Roosevelt and George W. Norris, but he also lists Frank Murphy of Michigan, over whom there might be some dispute, and Roger Brooke Taney, the man who wrote the Dred Scott decision, whom the Georgian sees as an outstanding defender of human freedom. He is obviously fond of Henry A. Wallace, regards him as a man of courage and honesty, presently doing the cause of liberalism a disservice.

It is almost inevitable that Mr. Arnall, loving the South the way he does—and particularly his home state—should dig deeper to find virtues, should more often exhume its past sufferings, than he does for other sections of the nation. Maybe he errs, at this late date, in bringing up the fact that Georgia suffered a financial loss when the Continental currency was honored at par by the then new Federal government, and yet it is another reminder that in this sectional nation of ours, all sections do not read history in the same light.

New York City reminds Mr. Arnall of his home town of Newman, and he likes it, despite its "snobbish" tendency to send its middle class children to private schools and thereby subvert democracy. He thinks New York has a liberal tradition and he thinks also that it is the home of a more intelligent conservative group than any other place in the nation. Those in both camps, in New York and elsewhere, will welcome Mr. Arnall's book as honest and stimulating, even where they disagree.

Warren Moscow is using some of the information he has accumulated in reporting politics for The New York Times in "Politics in the Empire State" to be published this autumn.

**Fiction.** *It is a constant temptation to try to make sense of the weekly graphs of best sellers. It appears that the more disturbing the daily headlines the more firmly is Dr. Liebman's "Peace of Mind" riveted to the top of the non-fiction tree. Professor Toynbee's solid histories have reached third and eighth place on the list, due to those who seek understanding rather than relief. Fiction readers have a difficult escape. Seven out of sixteen listed best sellers are now historical novels. This week's reviews record a new novel by Frank Swinnerton, his thirtieth, in which the reader may flee to Victorian literary melodrama. There are several deft novels of contemporary perplexities and revolts, including Blythe Morley's tale of an adolescent who has a passionate affair with his foster aunt, aptly named "The Intemperate Season," and Markoosha Fischer's "The Nazarovs," a serious anti-Soviet novel.*

## Back-Alley Publisher

**FAITHFUL COMPANY.** By Frank Swinnerton. New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc. 1948. 310 pp. \$3.

Reviewed by HARRISON SMITH

ONLY England seems to be able to produce industrious and gifted novelists who are at the same time men of letters, accomplished editors, essayists or biographers, and who become a living part of the closely-woven texture of English literary life. Frank Swinnerton is one of these enviable figures, at sixty-four industriously writing in his cottage in Surrey, apparently aloof from the neurotic violence or madness that has seized the outside world. Editor of an admirable small publishing house for nearly twenty years, after an apprenticeship with the publishers of Everyman's Library, his latest novel is concerned with one of the dismal back alleys of British publishing which assuredly has no relation to his own experience.

Faithful House was a publishing company that came straight from the eighteenth century, started its pious magazines and textbooks in Victorian days, and was languishing and decaying in the 1930's. The Goodlebys, father and son, ruled the decrepit premises with an iron hand, living together in a musty apartment in the old building, and stealing downstairs at night to pry into the desks and the letters of their subordinates. They are a pair of tyrannous villains, straight out of Dickens. Over the years the old Tom, bald, bearded, and illiterate, had reduced his son George to sycophantic impotence. George loathed and feared him though they called each other darling and dearest. One day the old monster had a stroke, but before he died man-

aged to make a sound will, leaving the firm and everything he owned to a wife of whom no one had ever heard. George never had the courage to move into his father's massive bed; echoes of Goodleby senior's thundrous laughter seemed to pursue him from his grave.

True to the Dickensian pattern the dramatic conflict in the fall of Faithful House involves the fate of an up-standing young man, Barry Fowler,

### FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT: No. 260

*A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 260 will be found in the next issue.*

PI MBLCL'F N RGA MG AL

OGTL, P NDQNEF NFH MBL

AYFPLFM KNT PT KE SNCPFB

MG MNHL PM GT NTO PM

XLMF OGTL.

BLTCE QNCO ALLWBLC

### Answer to Literary Crypt No. 259

In every village there will arise a miscreant, to establish the most grinding tyranny, by calling himself the people.

SIR ROBERT PEEL.