

most vexed question of all, Halsey's decision to turn north at Leyte Gulf, the authors content themselves with giving statements of the admirals concerned and some of the dispatches on which they formed their judgments, without one word of speculation or opinion. But there is a good deal to be said for a form of history in which the reader is given most of the relevant facts and is allowed to draw his own conclusions.

OSS Entrance Exam

ASSESSMENT OF MEN. By the OSS Assessment Staff. New York: Rinehart & Co. 1948. 541 pp. \$6.50.

Reviewed by LEONARD W. DOOB

DURING the last war approximately 20,000 persons of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds were employed by the Office of Strategic Services to collect intelligence, engage in sabotage, lead resistance groups, conduct "black" propaganda against the enemy's morale, and compete with other American organizations in the battles of bureaucracy. About one-quarter of these were approved as more or less good psychological risks by a staff of psychologists and psychiatrists under the leadership of Drs. James A. Hamilton, Donald W.

MacKinnon, Henry A. Murray, and many others. Candidates for the OSS were examined at special observation stations located in or near Washington, in California, and in different parts of the CBI Theatre. The examination, which in the United States lasted three days at two of the stations and one day at another, always included a psychiatric interview and variety of paper-and-pencil tests. Whenever possible, the final assessment of a man also depended upon the impression he wittingly or unwittingly gave to a team of trained examiners, as well as upon his performance under test conditions (like an obstacle race or a drinking bout) which stimulated those about to confront him in actual service, and which simultaneously revealed some of his personality traits. The rationale of the procedure was relatively simple: a carefully obtained sample of the candidate's personality and behavior in artificial and natural situations could serve as the basis for predicting his future performance and his relations with other members of the OSS.

This thoroughly conscientious, honest volume describes the OSS assessment program in complete detail. It indicates the difficulty of the task: predictions were required which were based in many instances on a hasty survey of the personality and which were to be validated almost always under unforeseeable circumstances. An individual assessed as emotionally stable, for example, might perform poorly because he was confronted with an extremely difficult and dangerous mission; whereas another person observed under similar conditions and considered to be less stable might be rated the best performer in a unit with a routine function. The writers of the report frankly expose their rather impossible assignment, dramatically outline their fumbblings and mistakes, and yet modestly indicate their pioneer accomplishments.

What were these accomplishments? The program cannot be fairly evaluated because, among a great many other reasons, the hurly-burly of war prevented the testing staff from securing accurate reports on the performance of the men and women who had passed through the testing stations. "There is no tangible proof," the writers of the report say, "that the OSS assessment staffs produced effects which more than balanced the expenditure of time and money." Such a conclusion is too sweeping. Although it is true that the correlations between assessment and rated evaluation of performance tend to be quite low, almost no seriously wrong prognostications were made. The neuro-psychiatric - breakdown rate among



My Current Reading

We present below a list of the reading of General **Omar N. Bradley**, famed commander of the Twelfth Army Group during the war in Europe, recently administrator of veterans affairs, and now Chief of Staff:

THE MEANING OF TREASON, by Rebecca West (Viking)
WRITE SORROW ON THE EARTH, by Charles C. Wertenbaker (Holt)
BACK HOME, by Bill Mauldin (Sloane)
SPEAKING FRANKLY, by James F. Byrnes (Harper)
THE GALLERY, by John Horne Burns (Harper)
RUSSIA'S EUROPE, by Hal Lehrman (Appleton-Century)
THE GLADIATORS, by Arthur Koestler (Macmillan)
THE GREAT REHEARSAL, by Carl Van Doren (Viking)

those assessed was lower than among the OSS personnel who had not been screened. In spite of the exigencies of war and the rather unsystematic "multiform" theories that guided the testing program, very significant and numerous insights into our knowledge of human personality and its measurement gradually emerged.

The report itself is permeated with statistics, as indeed it would have to be. But the writing sparkles with the urbane wisdom and wit of Dr. Murray, and it always concentrates upon the exciting problem at hand, the predicting of behavior. The program, moreover, is not an historical curiosity. It offers suggestions to any organization employing large numbers of people which seeks to select fewer square pegs for round holes. In fact, it is tempting to say that the volume is a breach of national security since it is potentially so useful.

Leonard Doob, Yale psychologist with extensive wartime experience in the OWI and OSS, is the author of the current book "Public Opinion and Propaganda."

FRASER YOUNG'S

LITERARY CRYPT: No. 258

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 258 will be found in the next issue.

FMX LKJJXHXGEX DXFCXXG

B ZHXYWLKEX BGL B

EVGTKEFKVG KP FMBF RVW

EBG XOZNBKG B EVGTKEFKVG

CKFMVWF SXFFKGS QBL.

DBZFKPF QXPPBSX

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 257

If in the last few years you haven't discarded a major opinion or acquired a new one, investigate and see if you're not getting senile.

GELETT BURGESS.

U.S.A. *The last fifteen years have seen a remarkable growth in the power and breadth of books written by American journalists. The moral earnestness, the vigor of Duncan Aikman's "The Turning Stream," reviewed below, can perhaps be traced still further back, to the early twentieth-century period of the muckraking journalists like Lincoln Steffens, and Ray Stannard Baker of McClure's Magazine. But the broad sweep of Aikman's work belongs to a later development among journalists' books, a development which really dates from Vincent Sheean's introspective, highly philosophical "Personal History" of 1935. "The Turning Stream" is, of course, less personal, more historical than Sheean's book, since Aikman is primarily a political reporter. It seems clear, however, that our abler journalists are beginning to penetrate the field of ideas, politics, and history, without losing the freshness of their reportorial approach.*

Spoiled Giant at the Great Bend

THE TURNING STREAM. By Duncan Aikman. New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc. 1948. 440 pp. \$5.

Reviewed by
HOWARD MUMFORD JONES

MR. AIKMAN'S volume is a prodigious book—prodigious in the way information has been stuffed into it, prodigious in its amalgam of informal history and present (and often, I am happy to say, prejudiced) discussion, prodigious also in that it is a kind of enormous *apologia* for being a liberal American of wide newspaper experience, acquaintance with men in public life, knowledge of international issues, and deep concern for the state of mind of the Republic. The Republic is, in Mr. Aikman's insistent figure, a Spoiled Giant; and his thesis is that you can't go on being a Spoiled Giant in the twentieth-century world. Finally, this is a prodigious book because of the enormous gusto with which it is written. Mr. Aikman's style invokes nostalgia in us who knew the elder LaFollette's time and remember the dear dead days of *The Smart Set*, for it is in the full-blooded tradition of the Great Mencken, and lifts its barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world with much the same orchestral noises.

There are sixteen chapters to this combination of encyclopedic lore, passionate disgust with little men, and devoted admiration for the possibilities latent in the Republic. In front of each chapter Mr. Aikman has thoughtfully provided a short passage in italics—a kind of rubric-cum-summary of what follows—and I am almost tempted to write my review by amalgamating selected passages from these preludes, but the fear of God and Aikman prevents me. I shall begin by noting the significance of the

title. "This book, then, is about the Great Bend where, it now seems, the Stream of Time may turn for us." The problem before the Republic is how to pass around the bend. Arteriosclerosis has set in, and we don't welcome change. But unless we recapture the old flexibility of mind and spirit, we sell out to the neo-Fascism.

Mr. Aikman notes how the frontier initiative passed into the buck-private initiative of two world wars; he recognizes the service that a *laissez-faire* philosophy did us in our youth; but he warns us against the latest form of infidelity to that initiative—that stolid, stupid form of "Americanism" which insists that because our forefathers succeeded with their set of values and their patterns, these values and these patterns must be defended by the NAM, the Republican Party, the Democratic diehards, the



—Harris & Ewing.

"Duncan Aikman has a sardonic strength of invective and passion of belief."

House Committee on un-American Activities, and the DAR until the end of time. And in chapter after chapter he scores, by observing how the vitality of one generation becomes the Byzantine rigidity of its grandchildren. I shall steal enough from his introductions to indicate the scornful honesty of his diagnosis:

The USA people fell in love with the bigness of their operations, and above all with the bigness of success itself. They were so much the world's greatest nationalistic success story that too many of us nowadays come close to believing that nothing but success can happen to us.

USA education . . . is organized to teach complacency and complacent patriotism rather than adjustments to technological and world political changes.

A large segment of USA press and radio, the public statements of our business and political leaders, the proceedings of the majority in the Eightieth Congress, are rank with nostalgic passions. . . . Such leaders and spokesmen cannot face the practical issues of economic or political reorganization, of socialization, of world peace and security, or the world Communist challenge, because, for good and evil, any decision which threatens drastic change is an intolerable shock to the nostalgic values.

. . . perilous is the rigging of USA's economic system to provide profits for investments and speculations at the expense of mass job security and the steady flow of purchasing power and consumer demand.

. . . the fond hopes of getting our isolation back by checkmating or crushing Russia account for much of the popularity of current prescriptions for getting tough with USSR.

What is needed for a clear view of the many socialization issues which may confront the USA people in the next few years or decades is to divorce each project, as it comes up for practical decision in local or national politics, from the prejudices, phobias, and fears of the Socialist, Marxist, and free-enterprise religions. With or without socialization, our job for the rest of the twentieth century will be to make our complicated technological economy work. Increased socialization is likely to be required. . . .

In these crowded pages there is a discussion of a Soviet-American war that makes more sense than anything I have seen in print. Mr. Aikman takes up all the possibilities — win, lose, or draw, and shows the complete uselessness in every sense—military, diplomatic, financial, economic, industrial—of such a war, the utter folly of our recruiting any and every ally in pseudo-, neo-, and plain Fascist states against Red Fascism. He demands with great good sense (and knows that nobody will pay any attention to him) that we should be-