

The SRL Anisfield-Wolf Awards

ONCE again the editors take pleasure in announcing the selection of two books for the Anisfield-Wolf Awards, given each year by SRL to the best works on race relations published during the preceding year. The books chosen for 1947 are:

- "The Indians of the Americas" by John Collier (Norton)
- "The Other Room" by Worth Tuttle Hedden (Crown)

Mr. Collier and Mrs. Hedden will each receive prizes of \$1,000. As in the past, selections were made by a committee consisting of Henry Seidel Canby, chairman of the editorial board of the SRL, Henry P. Fairchild of New York University, and Ralph Linton of Yale University.

John Collier's "The Indians of the Americas" is the fruit of twenty-five years of work in behalf of the American Indian. Mr. Collier was executive secretary of the American Indian Defense Association from 1923 to 1933, and for the next dozen years served as United States Commissioner of Indian Affairs. At present he is president of the Institute of Ethnic Affairs in Washington. Besides his prize-winning book, he is the author of six volumes of verse.

In making the award to "The Indians of the Americas," the committee pointed out that it is "the first modern book to link together accounts of all the Indians from primitive Apaches to the extraordinary civilization of the Incas in Peru. It is not only an ethnological and cultural study, but a history of the dreadful series of injustices perpetrated by the whites against

the Indians, and by no means ended today. It is a book which will inform, arouse the conscience, and stimulate the well-earned pride of the Indian people.

"In addition to the indispensable requisite of being an excellent book, well written and appealing, Mr. Collier's book has the especial merit, from the point of view of the Anisfield-Wolf Awards, of dealing with a minority which has received relatively little attention, and which needs consideration most seriously. Against a background of an historical review of the contacts between white intruders and the natives of the American continents, the author tells the story of the dealings of the United States Government with its Indian wards, and discusses sympathetically the contemporary problems of adjustment and the struggle for justice. As United States Commissioner of Indian Affairs Mr. Collier inaugurated a policy which, while regarded as controversial in some of its details by other specialists, was unquestionably humanitarian in its recognition of the Indians as human beings with cultures of their own, in which are to be found many admirable features. The reader of this book will discern many justifications for this policy."

Worth Tuttle Hedden's "The Other Room" is a first novel. In writing it, Mrs. Hedden drew upon her Southern heritage and experiences. Born in Raleigh, N. C., the daughter of a minister of the Southern Methodist Episcopal Church, she is an alumna of Trinity College, Duke University. After service with the American Red Cross, Mrs. Hedden taught at Straight College (which has since been absorbed by Dillard University), a Negro institution at New Orleans. She now lives with her husband and three children in Norwalk, Conn.

In her novel [the Anisfield-Wolf Awards Committee comments] Mrs. Hedden has made use of a novel situation to project a revealing picture of Negro-white relations in the Deep South. Nina Latham,

daughter of one of the first families of Virginia, eager to escape from the stultifying atmosphere of her house, accepts a position which an agency secures for her to teach in a college in New Orleans. It is only after she has arrived there to begin her work that she discovers that it is a Negro college. At first her training and background are in horrified revolt against the situation. Only her pride and her sense of duty prevent her from fleeing for home. She does not dare to tell her family of her humiliation and her letters home are painful compositions in pure fiction.

Gradually, however, she comes to regard her students as individuals rather than occupants of that "other room" into which no Southern lady should set foot. She becomes interested in helping them with their problems, the ever-present problems of youth to which is added the extra burden of discrimination. She finds deep satisfaction in fostering the talents of the occasional gifted student. For her colleague, Professor Warwick, a true scholar and a gentleman who could pass for white in the North but not in New Orleans, she has an admiration which develops into a deep but tragic love, for they both know that there is no future for them in our society.

Through the story of one Southern girl coping with an unusual problem, Mrs. Hedden has thrown into high relief many of the difficulties of young people, both black and white, below the Mason-Dixon line.

"'The Other Room' will probably offend a great many people," Sara Henderson Hay wrote in reviewing it for SRL. "That they can be offended by the truth is to their discredit, not to that of Mrs. Hedden's honest and courageous book."

The Anisfield-Wolf Awards were established a dozen years ago by Edith Anisfield Wolf and her late husband, Eugene E. Wolf. They provide \$1,000 for each of the two books adjudged to be the best in the field of race relations, either in creative literature or in the social sciences. To be considered for the award for 1948, three copies of a book in published form should be sent to Professor Henry P. Fairchild, New York University, Washington Square, New York 3, N. Y.

Arrival of War Bride, Pier 97, Hudson River

By Howard Griffin

EACH taxi is a poem in her honor,
tied-up and neat, elegant as a bird;
the cheap store windows gleam like malachite
and through the causeway night falls with its glitter.

The fabled towers greet her and she tries
to cheer her prince recovered in this port,
clasps her child tighter, climbs the army van
and on the black street turns her golden eyes.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unwholesome Plunder

SIR: Did two critics collaborate in the review of my Washington novel, "Plunder" [SRL May 8]? Or was it a case of a single reviewer who fell asleep halfway through (absit omen!) and awoke to the consideration of a couple of other books? The result is confusing. The reviewer, before his supposititious nap, allowed certain merits to the work, but found it "a sexy, noisy, ribbing comedy." Forty winks, and Presto! "I think there is a place" he writes, "in the national economy for novels of this sort. They are Wholesome. They show how valuable Patience and Kindness are. They put down all the expected words in the expected places on the page." Horrible examples of how not to write are then adduced, citing the words of characters named Fulmer, Parris, and Laurel. Nowhere in "Plunder" is there a Fulmer, a Parris, or a Laurel. Incidentally, there is, I fear, mighty little Patience or Kindness. "It is useless to protest," the critic continues, about the children to whom he objects. It is, so far as I am concerned. They are no children of mine. I am willing to undergo a literary blood-test in proof of my non-paternity. And, without wishing to claim for my novel any specially shining vices, I do resent Fulmer, Parris, Laurel, and the children being advanced as a reason for stigmatizing "Plunder" as Wholesome—with a capital W, at that.

SAMUEL HOPKINS ADAMS.

Auburn, N. Y.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Critic Jonathan Daniels was not asleep. We were. Fulmer, Parris, Laurel, and children are indeed no pen kin of Mr. Adams, but strays from a paragraph about "Parris Mitchell of King's Row" [SRL May 15] by Reviewer Howard Mumford Jones, who is probably surprised, too. To Mr. Adams, our apologies for the epithet Wholesome. We didn't mean it.

Author: Folks

SIR: Howard Collins [SRL Apr. 17] says that "Snow White" is by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, and that "Cinderella" is by Charles Perrault. These stories are folk tales, of which there were versions in nearly every known language, and Perrault and the Grimm Brothers merely collected them and wrote them down. Their authorship could no more be established than Mother Goose.

M. P. KEELEY.

Columbia, Mo.

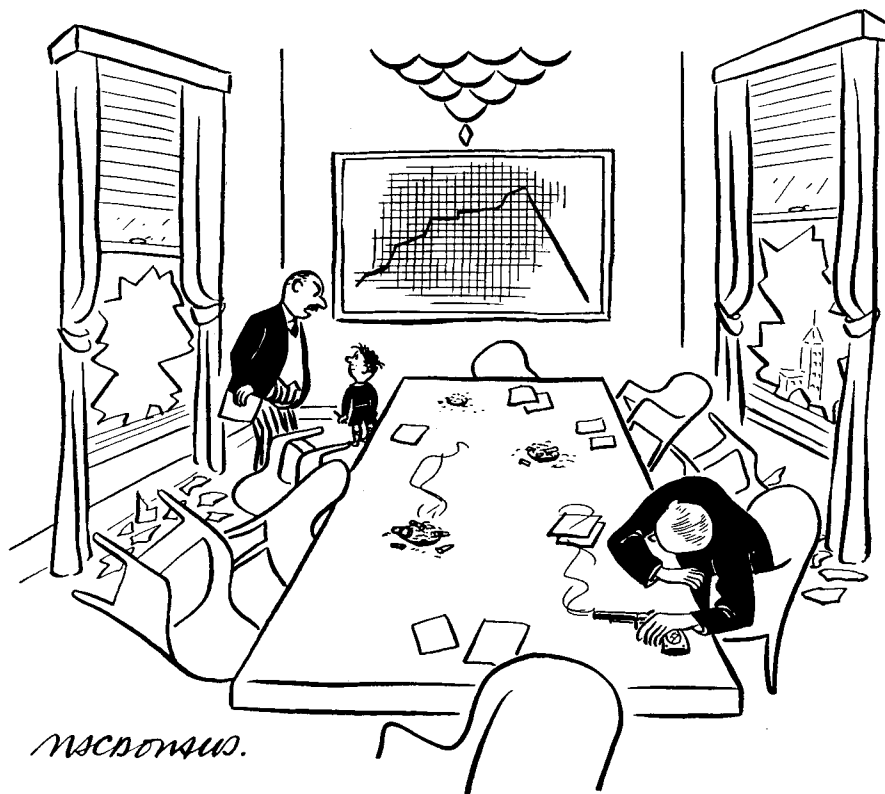
But, for Sure!

SIR: Is the phrase "for sure," meaning definitely or positively, condoned by grammatical authorities? It crops up repeatedly in recent reading and I've even found it among your august pages.

V. H. STUART.

Philadelphia, Pa.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Oxford Dictionary, quoting from Milton, Rosetti, and



"Junior! Have you been playing with daddy's chart again?"

Stevenson, supports acceptance of the phrase as grade-A grammar until the end of the nineteenth century, when, capriciously, it became colloquial. It doesn't bother us—one way or the other.

Modern Dr. Bell

SIR: "The Incredible Dr. Bell" [SRL May 1] is a nice piece of work. Give us more essays for readers by readers. Too often I feel we are given studies by scholars for other scholars.

There is a story around that a modern Dr. Bell was riding in a Pullman club car and, over a highball, was explaining his ability on short acquaintance to catalogue a man as to occupation. He had gone around the group with great success. A lawyer here, a salesman on the left, a banker in this corner, an editor by the window. Then his eyes fell on an interesting face, a little pale, slightly drawn, with a certain glassiness in the eyes. "Here," said the extrovert, "is a preacher—a Methodist preacher." A moment's hush, and then the answer—softly spoken. "You got me wrong, brother, I'm no preacher; I just have stomach ulcers."

W. OTIS FITCHETT.

Caldwell, N. J.

"The Shrouded Woman"

SIR: I wonder what led you to publish such a bull-in-the-shop diatribe as Miss Marjorie Brace's attack on Miss Bombal's exquisite little masterpiece "The Shrouded Woman" [SRL May 1]. The tone of the review was

shockingly cheap, and there was no sign of a temperamental equipment to recognize the intention of the book.

For those who do not agree with Miss Brace that human emotions can be measured only against a background of Nash automobiles, bathing beauties whose "busts publicly measure thirty-six inches," and "the soothing hum of electric refrigerators," a reading of "The Shrouded Woman" will be sufficient evidence of its high merit.

ROBERT HILLYER.

Greenwich, Conn.

Cambo

SIR: For an answer to the question raised by John T. Winterich April 17 under "Bookmarks," I turned to my copy of Shipley's "Dictionary of Word Origins" and found that "akimbo" may stem from the old Celtic "cambo," bent back, crooked.

B. E. VON FRANKENBERG.

San Francisco, Calif.

Lost-week-ender's Mrs.

SIR: Has anyone ever told the story of the wife of a "lost-week-ender"? Especially a wife whose "week end" covers years—and years, a wife of average intelligence, a wife who could find no escape, and whose capacity to endure grew with the burden.

LORENA LINDEMAN.

San Francisco, Calif.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Try "The Story of Mrs. Murphy" by Natalie Anderson Scott (Dutton).