

across a piece of catgut and coax the birds from the trees, along with some mighty honeyed prose from Mr. Gipson; for the pre-med students there is old Doc Cole, bibulous, frontier style, and a wild ride to save a life; for dog-lovers, and show me a man who doesn't like a dog and I'll show you a man who has never been one, there are Blackie's old Drum and Rock, bugle-voiced and tireless, little Snuffy, the feist dog which could dam' near climb a tree, and Nigger, the one-man dog that was willing to settle for a boy. For those who insist upon a happy ending, little Cotton Kinney gets his dog at last; and for those of us who like a book to end on a note of tragedy—Dony Waller marries Blackie, bell, book, and candle, and the moonlit, 'coon-haunted gullies will presumably see him no more.

All this is told in a pleasant, homespun Texas drawl, in the first person, by a little boy. There are some unaffectedly lyrical passages, and some in which Mr. Gipson tries too hard, as in the case of Fiddlin' Tom. The hunting scenes in the crisp night air and the moonlight are the best things in a book which would, and should, have been a nice short story, a short story of a little boy who went on a hunting trip.

For the record, and because I have thought about it a great deal, I should add that "Hound-dog Man" is announced by its publishers as a "find," and is a selection of a major book club.

**The War.** When Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan published his "Influence of Sea Power Upon History" in 1890, he not only advanced a doctrine that profoundly influenced the course of events in Western Europe, Japan, and the United States; he began a great tradition of writing on Naval affairs. That tradition is being perpetuated today by the Naval historians of World War II in such works as S. E. Morison's "History of the United States' Naval Operations in World War II," W. D. Puleston's "Influence of Sea Power in World War II," William Karig's "Battle Report," C. Vann Woodward's "Battle for Leyte Gulf," and Fletcher Pratt's "The Marines' War." Neither of the books reviewed below are major works, but they do provide illuminating sidelights.

## Der Fuehrer's Folly

**HITLER AND HIS ADMIRALS.** By Anthony K. Martienssen. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1949. 275 pp. \$4.

Reviewed by FLETCHER PRATT

IN THE days of the strategy of terror, the Germans never ceased talking about their own cold, ruthless military efficiency; how everything was foreseen, every step planned with the precision of an off-tackle slant on the football field. The current totalitarianisms are trying to feed us with much the same legend today; and a book like this is important not only for the light it sheds on the past of a doctrine, but also for the shadow it

throws across the future. The implicit statement here is that one cannot be precise with regard to details of "the sea affair"; the explicit account is of the vacillation, fumbling, disagreements, inability to grasp essentials, which led to the Nazi failure to achieve the one point they had to achieve in order to win the war—the defeat of Britain on the sea.

The plans were there—several of them. Mr. Martienssen, who edited the documents of the Fuehrer's conferences on naval affairs, has gone into all the records and painstakingly collated them. (He would have made a better book, by the way, if he had quoted less extensively from those documents and provided us with a little more connective tissue of his own, especially with regard to operations.) No one who studies Raeder's Plan Z can doubt that it would have been much more dangerous to Britain than the strategy actually adopted. When a variation on that plan was tried against the Murmansk convoys, the Allied losses became nearly insupportable.

It is also clear that if Doenitz's unrestricted submarine war with full air support had begun in 1939, the Battle of the Atlantic would have been a much nearer thing than it actually was. The naval men saw clearly enough that Gibraltar was the key of the East, and that unless Malta were taken anything that the Afrika Corps accomplished in the desert would be futile.

The trouble was that no one plan was tried to the hilt; that not only Hitler but his admirals as well allowed themselves to be distracted by incidents. The combined air-surface-submarine attacks on the Murmansk convoys were given up because one failed, though the two previous assaults had sunk twenty-four out of thirty-four cargo-carriers and thir-

## Your Literary I. Q.

By Howard Collins

A PHONETIC PUZZLE

Edith Addison Thomas, of Duluth, offers a brief narrative which, if read aloud, will be found to contain the last names of sixty English and American poets. How many can you catch? Do your own scoring. The answers are on page 29.

The wild but wily wolf coming softly and noiselessly through the maize field thought, "The field is brown, browning fast. Soon there will be frost, and the very hues of that gray nest, winter, set me achin' all over. The season does not sit well with me. Had I been less hardy last year I should have been a corpse in my coffin and buried in the graves of the earth. All we need are dry dens for homes, but how can we hunt a house—man or beast?"

"I envy the swift column of fairies and the gay flamingoes flying south the way they do. I am wittier than they and am not one who burns his bridges behind him for I happen to be a wolf, but I marvel at those long fellows. I wish I had been less of a spender, but consider the lilies. What is done is done and I can do little more."

"Well," said he, "what are words worth? No use gnashing my teeth. I still can chaw, sir, and without fletcherizing, either. I can keep my eye peeled, and in the hood of darkness I have heart enough to pound around and rustle my own food. I can drink water in the brook, and in the master's barns and the hen leads all in numbers, the cow pursues her cud, and the lambs and suckling pigs are gathered in."

teen out of thirty-nine. The Gibraltar attack was given up because Mussolini didn't like it; the taking of Malta because it would consume too much time and Rommel thought he could emancipate his supply lines more quickly by the capture of Cairo.

Raeder, Doenitz, Goering, Hitler, all wanted immediate large results from every move undertaken. None of them ever considered the fact that sea-power exercises its effects slowly, over the long pull, and through a

wide variety of incidents, some of which are bound to be adverse. Raeder came nearest, but even he never thought in the naval terms so clearly set forward by Mahan—that the sea is a highroad which can be used for any purpose when control of it is gained. The German effort and all the German plans were negative, not to win control of the sea, but to prevent it; and this is the fundamental reason why they lost the war. If you doubt it, read this book.

## *"Howling Mad" Has His Say*

CORAL AND BRASS. By General Holland M. Smith. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1949. 289 pp. \$3.

Reviewed by FRANK O. HOUGH

THE American people are prone to look for a great deal in their military leaders. A general—or admiral—is expected to be a holy terror in combat, and everywhere else to combine the suavity of Lord Chesterfield and the knightly virtues of Sir Galahad. But Marine General Holland McTyeire ("Howlin' Mad") Smith is no such paragon. He is strictly a fighting man—the sort of high officer who wins wars but whose contributions toward winning the peace are likely to be something else again.

With surprising forbearance he has suffered torrents of half-baked criticism and abuse. "Butcher" and "cold-blooded murderer" were some of the more printable epithets applied to him. Upon completion of perhaps the most ably conducted operation in the Pacific, he had the extraordinary experience of being called "incompetent" to his face by an Army general (his nickname was "Nellie") who never held a major combat command. He was judged in absentia by an Army board which consulted no evidence from Navy or Marine Corps sources, and the board's findings conveniently "leaked" to the press while considerations of high policy gagged Smith in his own defense. Now retired, "Howlin' Mad" has his say in "Coral and Brass" and lives up to his nickname in saying it.

Few leaders in any service contributed more toward winning World War II than did Holland Smith. His fine performance as a commander in the Pacific tends to overshadow the years of solid, unspectacular work which made victory possible. For it was the Marine Corps, virtually single-handed and in the face of inertia and often outright opposition, which developed the theory and prac-

tice of amphibious warfare as we know it today, together with much of the equipment used in Europe and Africa as well as in the Pacific. And within the Corps, Smith's part was crucial. When the Army finally got around to recognizing the existence of such a technique (adopting the Marine amphibious manual in toto in 1941), it was he who supervised the training of the first infantry divisions to be classed as amphibious.

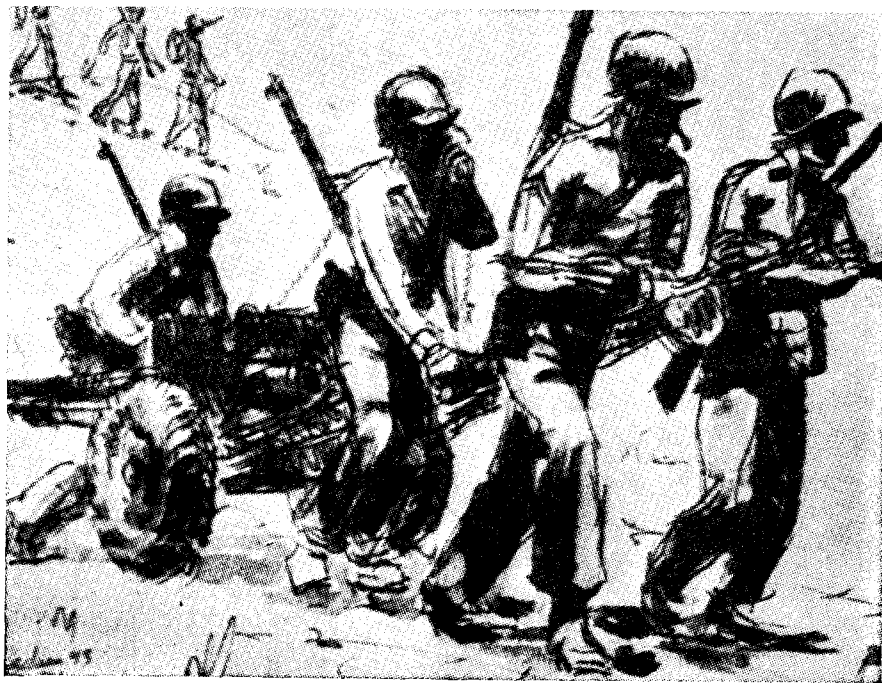
To this reviewer's mind, this is the significant aspect of the book. Unfortunately, the average reader, looking for fireworks—and there are plenty—may find it dull by comparison and perhaps too esoteric to hold his interest. The honest historian, however, cannot overlook it.

This book is one man's story, and that man tells it in his own way. His literary weapon bears no resemblance to that favorite of the Marines, the high-precision rifle. General Smith uses a shotgun, and with fine impartiality; no sooner has he let go a blast

at the Army than he gives the Navy the other barrel. Yet it would be inaccurate to say that he is anti-anything; Holland Smith is simply pro-Marine. His choicest invective is reserved for what he considers machinations against his Corps, whether the barnacle-encrusted Bureau of Ships' partially successful efforts to frustrate the development of adequate landing craft, the Navy's early insistence on commanding operations ashore (Admiral Kelly Turner "always had suppressed ambitions to be a general"), or the failure of certain Army units to measure up to his own exacting standards of battle conduct. He is free with praise of individuals and units in all the services. His tribute to the Army's General Harbord is moving in its simple sincerity, while his truly penetrating analysis of Admiral King verges on eloquence.

General Smith is an opinionated man and prone to second-guessing, which weakens the historical value of his war sequences. The sensational aspects of the book are easily overstressed, notably the "Smith Versus Smith" controversy (his relief of the Army's Major General Ralph Smith on Saipan), an unfortunate interservice feud which the great majority of Marines, more interested in future development than historical minutiae, would be happy to see permanently buried. Rambling, repetition, and sloppy editing mar the literary performance; yet the general's collaborator, Percy Finch, has succeeded in conveying the flavor and personality of the man.

Frank O. Hough wrote "Island War: The U. S. Marine Corps in the Pacific."



"Gun Crew," by Harry A. Jackson, USMC.