

## Blimp sans Reproche

ANOTHER SUN, ANOTHER HOME.

By Rupert Croft-Cooke. New York: Henry Holt & Co. 1949. 164 pp. \$3.

Reviewed by ANN F. WOLFE

WHEN the news reached India that England was to have a Socialist government Wilkie said: "Well, I've always wanted to see more done for the fellow who gets his living by hard work. Used to call me a Bolshie when I was at Sandhurst. And in the Regiment. Sorry to see Churchill go, of course, but we must have new blood. Ever read William Morris?"

The key to the tragedy of Wilkie's life lay in that reference to a poetic Victorian Socialist. Wilkie—Colonel Richard Wilkes, D.S.O., O.B.E., late of the 12th Gurkha Rifles—was a romantic and a traditionalist. The best part of his life had been spent in India turning Gurkhas into spit-and-polish soldiers of the Empire. He had counted on seeing action with the crack 12th, if ever war came, but when his battalion was sent to the front, Wilkie, then in his fifties, was rated too old for combat.

The thing that saw Wilkie through that catastrophe was his dream of joining his son and settling down in England. The widowed officer had been away from his native land since 1920, the year Roger, his only child, was born. When the lad was fifteen he spent a month or so in India with his father. Now he was in commando service. To his father Roger meant not only all that was left of life but explanation of all the past loneliness, hardships, and disappointments.

Wilkie retired from service and got back to England in the spring of 1946. He had thought himself prepared for

the New Order when, in fact, his heart had stayed with the Old Order, with the way of his youth. Wilkie was "a pitiful piece of jetsam thrown ashore from the past." With his childlike trust in the goodness and generosity of life, how could he have foreseen that he would not be needed?

The person who needed him least was his son. Charming, soft-mannered Roger needed no one, never had. Wilkie, the Blimp who was a throwback to Bayard, had for offspring a Dorian Gray, chromium model—tubular chromium, for the man was hollow. The only emotion of which he was capable was derisive contempt for the human race. He devised a bookish racket by which he could, at one process, rake in easy wealth and make sordid fools of his fellow men. Exposure of his ghoulish commerce made little difference to Roger, but it did to the man who for twenty-five years had lived not only in but by anticipation of filial comradeship. Convinced at last that, except in the most sterile statistical sense, he had no son, Wilkie made a dramatic change in his life plans.

The story of "Another Sun, Another Home" is told from three points of view, the author's, Wilkie's, and Hugh Greenock's. The latter is Roger's best friend. Thanks largely to Greenock's misanthropy, Roger and Socialist England come out an inky black. Wilkie—not without the affectionate connivance of the reader—emerges effulgent in white, ever the *chevalier sans peur et sans reproche*. His idealistic optimism regarding England pales before the fury of Greenock's pessimism.

Mr. Croft-Cooke is an acutely perceptive social reporter and a master of broad satire. We shall not soon forget his monumental Miss Marshall, for whom time stopped with Victoria's jubilee, or Pyeworth Rectory, where religion hustled about in the guise of Committees, Boards, and Councils.

The English can write of India's dusty roads and Himalayan foothills somewhat as the Irish write of Kerry twilights or noontday hush on Dun Aengus, with a kind of exalted and psychic romanticism. It is descriptive writing in the grand manner, and there is a feast and flow of it in "Another Sun, Another Home." Not since I read "The Wild Sweet Witch" a season or so back have I been so impressively reminded of the Englishman's nostalgia for "the old, the incalculably old India, who had turned over once more in her sleep. . . . Changes, conquests, creeds—what difference would they make to this people? Our own intrusion of two or three centuries' duration seemed already as forgotten as the invasions of Alexander the Great."



—Clay-Warren.

F. L. Green — "the characters are meager."

## Pattern of a Crime

MIST ON THE WATERS. By F. L. Green. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1949. 250 pp. \$2.75.

Reviewed by WALTER HAVIGHURST

ON A breathless midsummer afternoon Pelancy and Barty Fingal climbed the creaking stairs in a Belfast wholesale house. Pelancy was a big, simple man with a wistful memory of the Irish bogs and mountains. Fingal was a little man, weakly cunning, with practically no memories at all. Ten minutes later they were on the street again, with the motley life of Belfast flowing round them. But everything was changed. For they had blackmailed a man by means of a letter, twenty years old, found in the lining of a coat left at Pelancy's dry-cleaning shop.

Mr. Green's novel carefully explores the changes that followed from that few minutes in the office of the victimized Jimmy Malloy. The change first appeared in the minds of the two petty criminals. Pelancy found that, instead of broadening and enriching his life, the thick roll of money in his pocket only complicated his existence. Fingal discovered that his share of the money narrowed and restricted his life and put him on his guard in unguessed ways. When reports of Malloy's suicide appeared in the newspapers, their mutual relationship began to change. Vilifying each other, yet growing more interdependent, they came to realize that they were sharing a desperation.

In the several days which this novel embraces the two criminals discover changes in all their human relation-

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—Maurice Ambler.

Rupert Croft-Cooke — "master of broad satire."

**The World.** *He who seeks evidence of the way World War II continues to shape the interests of modern man should take a look at the three books reviewed below. Few Americans knew—or cared—a whit about the history of North Africa until thousands of our men landed there in 1942 and helped free it from the forces of Fascism. Galbraith Welch's "North African Prelude" is a lively, if not too successful, attempt to appease the interest stirred by that episode. The problems the war left all citizens of the world are probed, but scarcely solved, by Paul McGuire in "There's Freedom for the Brave." Dr. Alexander Mitscherlich's and Fred Mielke's "Doctors of Infamy" not only details the shocking story of the degradation of the medical profession under the Nazis, but it points up the task we face in dealing with postwar Germany.*

## Scolding the World

**THERE'S FREEDOM FOR THE BRAVE.** By Paul McGuire. New York: William Morrow & Co. 1949. 309 pp. \$4.

Reviewed by PHILIP E. MOSELY

**T**HIS is a book about the problems which face mankind today. It is, also, and inevitably, a book about Paul McGuire's personal likes and dislikes.

In the men of today McGuire, an Australian-born political economist and historian, senses a disturbing lack of moral purpose. He sees the absence of personal fulfilment in most forms of industrial work and in business. He feels an absence of moral unity in the personality of urban man. He denounces the apparent decline in the feeling of individual responsibility towards the society. At times he seems to attribute this decline to the growing power of the state or even to that easy scapegoat "bureaucracy." At other times he half-way admits that an industrial society turns to the state to achieve necessary aims of stability and welfare which can no longer be assured for large groups by individual efforts.

When Paul McGuire sets out to scold, he goes the whole way. Not satisfied to reject the recent growth of state regulation and control, he goes all the way back to the first protective tariffs as the original falling away from virtue. Here he appears as a Hayek or a Von Mises. Unlike them, however, he is also beset by nostalgia for a society in which production is infused with a community interest, expressed in art and morality, instead of being a mechanically depersonalized round of work executed by unknown and faceless automatons. It is not clear whether McGuire's ideal society is something which has existed

at some earlier time, for he avoids localizing it in time or place, or whether it is still to be striven for in the future. Too honest with himself to call the whirlwinds peace, too little the artist to resolve in his mind the conflicts which he finds in men and among men, Mr. McGuire's essay transmutes his impatience with the present world into scolding.

Now, there are scoldings and scoldings. The patient scoldings of a loving mother help to make clear to the child the difference between "I" and "not-I," to point out paths of merit and demerit. Other scoldings may express only the inner frustration of the scolder, and neither enlighten nor guide. Mr. McGuire's scoldings are not very enlightening, nor do they offer much of a guide to action. It is clear that he is suspicious of the claims of the big state, but he believes mankind is on the verge of achieving a world community, which may turn into the biggest state of all. He admires the British Commonwealth as an example of unplanned achievement (apparently he has not heard of Wakefield and the other "planners" who laid the basis for the development of New Zealand), but he also approves of the Monnet plan for modernizing the French economy, despite the leading role which it assigns to the state. In American affairs the author chides the Roosevelt decade because of the growing role of the



state; he writes with even greater contempt of the economic nationalism of the Republican Twenties. His one enthusiasm is for the Christian democratic parties of postwar Europe, with their emphasis on respect for the individual, on economic humanism, and on the reinvigoration of a sense of moral purpose in men and in society.

Mr. McGuire is for the Marshall Plan, the Atlantic alliance, the Hull trade-agreements program, cooperation with the British Commonwealth and with Western Europe, the development of backward areas, freedom and opportunity for a variety of human energies and intelligences. He is against the police-state, economic regimentation, laissez-faire, Marxism, and the moral loneliness of industrial society. This wholly admirable and sympathetic catalogue of likes and dislikes, presented with many a flourish of well-turned phrase, still adds up to a rather undigested and confusing minor Jeremiad.

Philip E. Mosely is professor of international relations at Columbia University.

## Negro Kingdoms

**NORTH AFRICAN PRELUDE.** By Galbraith Welch. New York: William Morrow & Co. 1949. 650 pp. \$6.

Reviewed by CARLETON S. COON

**I**T was high time that someone wrote a general history of North Africa for American readers, and the enthusiasm with which "North African Prelude" has been received may reflect, at least in part, this need. As the author states, the book has no competitor. In no other popular book that I have seen can one find an account of the rich and complex civilization of the Negro kingdoms of the Sudan during the Middle Ages. For the general reader a door has been opened into a new, colorful garden.

The perfume from this garden, however, is not always sweet. Much attention is paid to corpulence, to sex aberrations, and to madness. All the ingredients of the best-selling costume romance are present. While this may make juicy reading, it is highly selective history. Miss Welch races through the private lives of North African historical characters like a Winchell in a jellaba. The style keeps pace with the text; many sentences start off in blank verse and then end in a cluster of short syllables, as if one had fallen off a hidden step at the end of the garden walk. All of this may be fun, but it is hardly history; instead of continuity we find a chopped-up