

deeds of their enemies as they stubbornly beat them back.

It is well to let such men speak for themselves, and these bulky volumes do it better than any writer, however skilful, could do it for them.

* * *

IN THE dramatic period between the election of Lincoln and the firing on Fort Sumter, the thinking of Northern men, for the first time, caught up with realities. Before this they had talked much about nationalism, progress, and Manifest Destiny. They had made up their minds about the extension of slavery and they had persistently worked and voted for economic programs that favored their peculiar interests. They had not, however, clearly understood the profound effects which the steady advance of finance and industrial capitalism had made on their lives and what it required of them in their relation with the South. Now the secession of the Southern states and the formation of the Confederacy forced them to discover not only what they thought but what steps they were willing to take.

It is with this fascinating evolution of Northern thinking that Kenneth Stampf deals in "And the War Came," one of the most scholarly and provocative books written in this much worked-over period. He views the Civil War as a product both of social-economic rivalry and of slavery, but he insists that it was no more nor no less necessary and inevitable than any other war. It was only a question of whether Northern men were willing to pay the price necessary to secure peace.

In this case the cost would have been the dismemberment of the Union and the continuation of slavery. Some Northerners thought at first that they were willing to pay such a price. They talked of letting the South go. They played with the idea of peaceful and legal secession. As a matter of fact, they had not thought the matter through and most of them, like Seward and Lincoln, consoled themselves by thinking that there was no real danger and that Southern conservatives would soon put an end to the whole business. The way to peace was a dignified inactivity. Even the few who talked of using force thought only of dealing with individuals, not with states.

But since Southerners were proceeding steadily along their mad way and disunion was rapidly becoming a reality, tempers rose and most Northerners began to see that the choice was either submission or the use of force. That fact, however, was "too terrible to be faced head on." Somehow the naked fact had to be covered

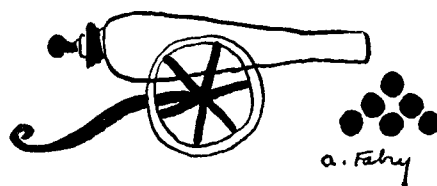
over with a bit of philosophic rationalization. The first step was to deny the possibility of legal secession; the second, to justify force only in the enforcement of law. The North must not be guilty of aggression. There must be no coercing of states as such. The National Government must limit itself to the enforcement of law and the protection of its property. Responsibility for any clash must rest on Southern men.

This was the approach which Lincoln later developed into a settled policy—a policy which permitted him to deny every Southern claim, resist every Southern move, and to appear always on the defensive. It would give him enormous strength when Southerners one day fired on Fort Sumter.

Yet even while men thought and talked this way they bitterly denounced President Buchanan for his inactivity and, in turn, praised him when he asserted national rights. Their hatred of Southerners grew apace and when compromise was attempted they refused to yield one inch. They defended their monopoly on the coastwise trade, pushed through a new protective tariff, and passed homestead legislation. They rejected every suggestion of compromise on slavery extension. They had not the slightest notion of yielding one material thing essential to their way of life even though it might be harmful to Southern interests.

Thus gradually, says Stampf, men realized that they were defending a social-economic system which required a new and stronger nationalism, and which embodied a set of middle-class values and ideals quite different from those of the English and Southern country gentlemen. Hatred of the South was justified because its people would check Manifest Destiny, hold back the cities and factories, spread slavery, and keep the Democratic Party in power. Northern efforts became a crusade to save democracy and uphold the principles of Christianity. They would also keep tariffs, build railroads, create homesteads, and bring in foreign laborers. What was patriotic was also good business. Both God and mammon would be served by saving the Union.

Avery Craven is professor of American history at the University of Chicago. His books include "The Coming of the Civil War."



Sagebrush Past

COMSTOCK BONANZA. Compiled and edited by Duncan Emrich. New York: The Vanguard Press. 362 pp. \$3.75.

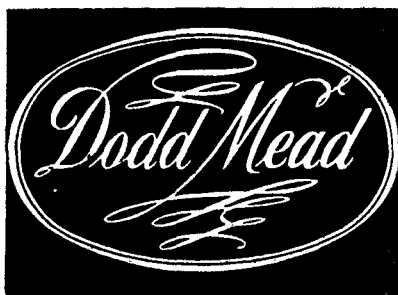
By LUCIUS BEEBE

IT IS probable that no body of legend, neither the *matière* of the Mother Lode, the heroic sagas of the earlier fur trade in the Rockies, nor even the epic of the construction of the Pacific Railroad, has ever emerged from the old American West to lay hold on the general imagination more authoritatively than has the saga of the Comstock Lode. The Virginia City Assay Office in C Street has long since fired its last button of silver from Ophir or Best & Belcher. Even the once incomparable Virginia & Truckee Railroad is now forever in the roundhouse of memories with the other bonanza railroads of yesterday. The Geiger Grade resounds no longer to the Concords of Wells Fargo but to the tooting of Saturday tourists in convertibles ("peanut brittle artists" they are known to Virginia's saloon keepers by reason of their decadent taste in comestibles).

But the legend of the Comstock is bright and untarnished. The year hasn't passed in several decades that hasn't seen at least an article in a national magazine or at best an important book concerned with some aspect of the richest of all bonanzas in the history of tangible wealth.

There is also a legend of the American West—Bernard De Voto has made note of it—that whoso drinks of its wild, sweet rivers, be it the Yellowstone, the Red, the Animas, or the Hassayampa, must someday return to them if only to die. Duncan Emrich has drunk deep of Carson Water by the margins of Empire and ghostly Brunswick Canyon, and while his person is daily within the confines of the Library of Congress, his spirit converses with the glorious past in the shadow of Sun Mountain and above the abyss of Six Mile.

The excellent and valuable anthology he has evolved in "Comstock Bonanza" is as impressive as a source book of Nevada letters as it is fascinating as a repository of the work of such Comstock notables as Sam Davis (his brother Bob was the well-remembered roving columnist of the lamented *New York Sun*) and Dan De Quille, who stands head and shoulders above any other mining-town reporter, and that includes Bret Hart and the vastly overtouted Sam Clemens. There is, in fact, around Nevada (Continued on page 56)



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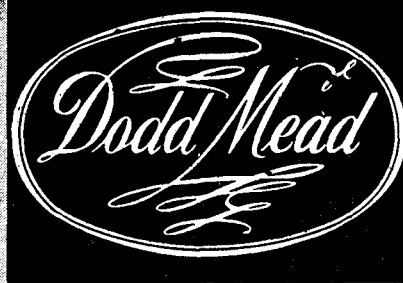
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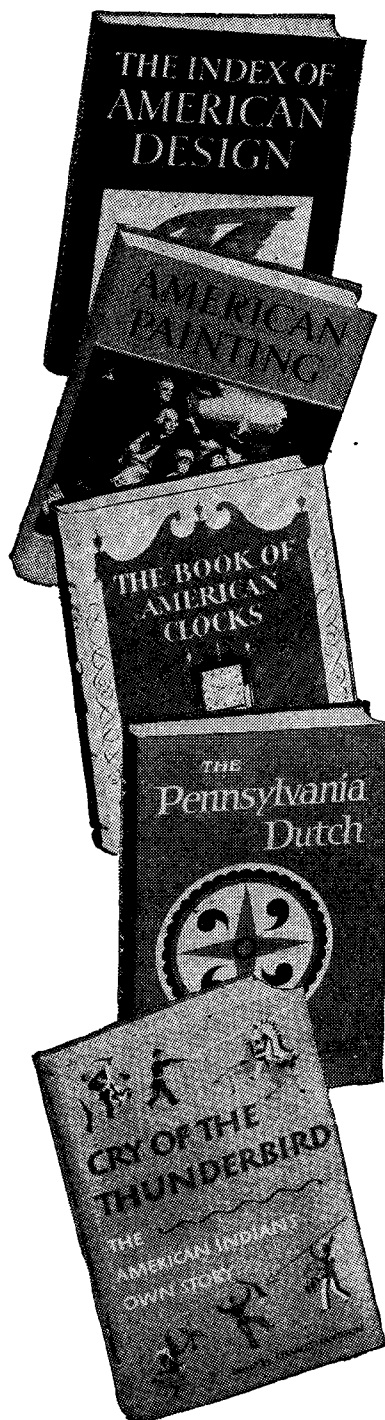
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THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

Seeing Things

POETS AND PLAYERS

"MACBETH" and **"The Lady's Not for Burning"*** would, you might think, be safely beyond coupling. The one is all terror, horror, and decline; the other is all, or almost all, bounce, fooling, and gaiety. At first it might seem that the two of them have no more in common than the fact that Englishmen wrote them and wrote them in verse. In spite of the centuries and endowments separating them, Shakespeare's tragedy and Christopher Fry's comedy share, however, another feature equally obvious and equally important. Both were written for the theatre; both, in other words, were meant to be given the benefit of a production and to be spoken by actors.

What leads me to bracket two plays so dissimilar is that within a few days' time I chanced to sit before them as they were being performed in very different ways under very different circumstances. **"Macbeth"**† was being subjected to a recital or a reading (call it what you will) by Dr. Edith Sitwell at the Museum of Modern Art, and **"The Lady's Not for Burning"** was being acted in a regular theatre by such superior professionals as John Gielgud and Pamela Brown. The question raised not only by these methods of presentation but by Monroe Wheeler's introduction of Dr. Edith was whether poets or actors can do greater justice to the words of a poetic dramatist.

Mr. Wheeler, the Museum's director, told us that Dr. Edith had always dreamed of performing **"Macbeth"** "in one way or another." Her intention was to give a poet's conception of Shakespeare's dramatic verse. That she had had no training as an actress was, one gathered, a mark in her favor since Mr. Wheeler next proceeded to comment on the bad eloquence of actors. With a good deal of relish Mr. Wheeler told the story of how Dr.

Johnson had once corrected Garrick's misreading of his lines and had further offended him by insisting "the players, Sir, have got a kind of rant, with which they run on, without any regard either to accent or emphasis." Considering what was to come, such a prelude seemed in the nature of a calculated risk.

The morning dress rehearsal of this **"Macbeth,"** which I attended, was an experience I shall not soon forget. Although ostensibly given for the working press, the audience was composed mainly of those worshipful followers Dr. Edith and Sir Osbert Sitwell have won for themselves in New York. No incense was burned, yet the scent of it seemed to hang heavy in the air, for those who know the Sitwells love them with a love which is utter adoration.

At a few minutes past eleven Dr. Edith's three assistants trooped down the aisle and took their places at a long table to the left of the stage. These assistants included Glenway Wescott, the novelist, who also enjoyed the assumed advantage of not being a member of Equity, and Bernard Savage and Gertrude Flynn, two professionals who had their courage with them. Mr. Wescott, the recital's **Macbeth**, was innocent of the horned

helmet, heavy armor, and kilts favored by tradition. He wore a dinner jacket. So did Mr. Savage, who served as a sort of accommodator, capable of changing without batting an eye from Banquo to the Doctor. Miss Flynn, a pretty young woman condemned to sit like Patience on a monument until she appeared as the Gentlewoman in the sleep-walking scene, wore a gray evening dress. These three helpers seated themselves behind microphones and glasses of water. And there they sat, looking for all the world as if they were engaged in a Prohibitionist production of **"The Cocktail Party,"** until Dr. Edith made her entrance.

The entrance she made was a considerable one. Preceded by Mr. Wheeler, she moved through the darkened auditorium like a priestess approaching a pagan altar. She was tall, turbaned, and impressive, a figure deserving reverence and expecting it. It was only when she appeared under the platform's lights, pale of face, queenly, and acknowledging with upturned, swallowlike flights of her beautiful hands the applause of her devotees, that it was possible to appreciate the splendor of her singularity. It was only then, too, that the rich brocade in which she was tented could be appreciated.

SOON thereafter she sat down to the right of the stage, a personage mysterious and mighty, until with a poet's proper defiance of period details she opened a very modern black handbag, reached for a very modern handkerchief, and covered her fine but small and piercing eyes with some very modern horn-rimmed spectacles. While Mr. Wheeler was providing his



—Graphic House.

Pamela Brown and John Gielgud—"poetry gains as it leaves their lips."

***THE LADY'S NOT FOR BURNING**, a romantic comedy by Christopher Fry. Directed by John Gielgud. Setting by Oliver Messel. Presented by Atlantis Productions (The Theatre Guild, Tennent Productions Ltd., John C. Wilson). With John Gielgud, Pamela Brown, Richard Burton, Penelope Munday, David Evans, Nora Nicholson, Richard Leech, George Howe, Eliot Mahcham, Peter Bull, and Esme Percy. At the Royale Theatre, New York City. Opened November 8, 1950.

†**MACBETH**, by William Shakespeare. Recital of scenes by Dr. Edith Sitwell, assisted by Glenway Wescott, Bernard Savage, and Gertrude Flynn. Presented by the Trustees of the Museum of Modern Art on November 16, 1950.