

self-pity, to her sunny dotage in Italy, and to the surprising news that her son Anthony, in whom she had never been much interested, had written a novel.

All this has been told in various Trollope biographies and Mrs. Trollope herself figured as one of Una Pope-Hennessy's "Three English Women in America." Mrs. Bigland presents no new material, but she has given Fanny Trollope her first modern biography.

Here and there the American research seems skimpy. When Mrs. Bigland writes that Mrs. Trollope, "heartily sick of ordinary Cincinnati society . . . made friends with several people frowned upon for various reasons" and then goes on to identify one of those frowned-on friends as the elder Nicholas Longworth, she risks raising the hackles of the entire membership of the Cincinnati Historical Society. More serious is the apparent confusion of Frances Wright's Nashoba with Robert Owen's settlement at New Harmony, Indiana. And speaking of Frances Wright, since it was she who induced the Trollopes to visit America, she would seem to have deserved more study than Mrs. Bigland has given her.

According to "The Indomitable Mrs. Trollope," Frances Wright was a manish sort who spoke in "booming tones" or "booming asides," and sometimes in a "booming crescendo." She declared "oracularly" that Nature had made no difference between black people and white except in the pigmentation of their skins.

Now, Fanny Wright was undoubtedly eccentric, impractical, and athletic. She believed in Negro emancipation, though her ideas were by no means as simple as Mrs. Trollope believed them to be—and Mrs. Bigland has not gone beyond Mrs. Trollope. What is hard to accept is that the Fanny Wright of Mrs. Bigland's unappetizing caricature could have been adored, as the real Fanny was adored, by Lafayette, Jeremy Bentham, Robert Dale Owen, and young Walt Whitman, to name four.

Like Mrs. Trollope, Eileen Bigland is the author of many novels and vivacious travel books. "The Indomitable Mrs. Trollope" is a book by one traveling Englishwoman about another, and the results are amiable. Mrs. Bigland writes smoothly, and understands her heroine. She has sketched perceptively Anthony's relationship to his mother. (It is perhaps too much to wish that she were not so fond of the word "ploy.") Nevertheless, a wonderfully lively old girl has been brought to life here, in all her briskness and bossiness, and for that let us be truly grateful.



—Jacket by J. G. Farris, for "The Prophet Armed."

Trotsky—"one of the great makers of the history of our time."

## The Rejected Revolutionist

**"The Prophet Armed: Trotsky, 1879-1921," by Isaac Deutscher** (Oxford University Press, 540 pp. \$6), the first of a two-volume biography, carries the career of a maker of the Russian Revolution from his birth to his service as Commissar of War. Below it is reviewed by Bertram D. Wolfe, author of "Three Who Made a Revolution."

By Bertram D. Wolfe

HAVING done one book on Stalin's life and one on his death, Isaac Deutscher has now turned his attention to Stalin's great antagonist, Leon Trotsky. "The Prophet Armed" carries Trotsky from birth to the year 1921, when, as the powerful Commissar of War, he had just brought the Civil War to a victorious conclusion and was urging his party to use the same methods of command, conscription, and militarization on the organization of the labor force and the recovery of Russia's ruined economy. In the offing is a second volume, "The Prophet Unarmed," which will recount Trotsky's downfall, exile, and murder.

The three books so far published make clear the author's approach to the protagonists of his biographical-historical trilogy, and to the revolution of which they were prime mov-

ers. His approach to Stalin is at once critical and apologetic. The critique was largely borrowed from Trotsky's polemical writings against Stalin, so that Mr. Deutscher's own critical faculties dwindled to ineffectuality, when he had to deal with the years after 1940, the date of the murder of Leon Trotsky. In the "quickie" Mr. Deutscher wrote about Stalin's death and what followed, he sought to prove that Stalinist totalitarianism was a benevolent if cruel and despotic necessity forced upon the dictator by the backwardness of his land and subjects, but that by his forced collectivization and industrialization he had so raised the level of Russia's economy and mass culture that this totalitarianism had become unnecessary by 1953.

The latest Deutscher book does not argue, but takes for granted the essential rightness of the Bolshevik seizure of power in 1917. He likewise takes for granted the wrong-headedness, perversity, and baseness of all liberal democrats and democratic and agrarian socialists who opposed that seizure of power and urged instead that Russia was ripe for democratic modernization and not for socialist revolution. Where Deutscher is critical at all of Lenin and Trotsky, he is critical only of some of their utopian illusions, which the hindsight that comes from having outlived them enables him to confute.

Despite this unpromising moral and  
(Continued on page 30)

## The Saturday Review



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## The Anisfield-Wolf Awards

SOME years ago Mrs. Edith Anisfield-Wolf of Cleveland, Ohio, established in memory of her father and her husband an award to be bestowed upon the book or books which in the opinion of a board of judges cast special light upon racial problems. The award of two thousand dollars is made annually under theegis of *The Saturday Review* and can be given either to a single volume or divided between two works, and may be for either fiction or non-fiction.

Probably there has never been a time in the history of the world when relations between nations have been of as much import to humanity as at the present, or when there is more pressing need of all the light and leading that competent observers can cast upon them. But hasty impressions are misleading, and if we are to achieve the sort of understanding which alone will serve as a fulcrum to a more harmonious world it will be through a knowledge which penetrates beneath the surface of manners and customs to the traditions, the ambitions, and the ideals of peoples. It is in the belief that Vernon Bartlett in his "Struggle for Africa" illuminates the conditions and problems of a continent which is constantly assuming greater importance for the world in general that the selecting committee has bestowed one of the Anisfield-Wolf awards upon it. Mr. Bartlett's book is an analytical, though lively, work; a careful portrayal of a continent and its problems. Writing of the book, Henry Pratt Fairchild, chairman of the committee, says:

The concentration of contemporary world tensions in Africa has been accompanied by the appearance of a large number of books,

many of them excellent, dealing with one or another aspect of that strategic continent. More than one such volume has in previous years been honored with an Anisfield-Wolf Award. Now another work calls for similar recognition.

This is "Struggle for Africa" by Vernon Bartlett. The author has a long and impressive record as a journalist, foreign correspondent, member of the British Parliament and of many diplomatic missions. He has visited Africa three times since the war, and accordingly writes from firsthand experience and observation. Although he modestly says that his book is "not for the expert," it is an invaluable source of understanding, as far as that is possible, of the complex problems that vex that vast area. The distinctive value of the book is that it is an overall survey of practically the entire continent, marked by an exceptional ability to see and to portray the various points of view and approaches, each legitimate in itself, and yet involving conflicts and antagonisms arising inevitably out of the enormous diversity of races, cultures, political systems, and types of relationships with extra-African powers. One who wishes to improve his comprehension of such very timely topics as 'Mau Mau' (although, says Mr. Bartlett, no one seems to know the meaning of the word), 'Apartheid,' 'Kenya,' etc., can hardly do better than to turn to this scholarly and engrossing volume.

THE second volume on which the Anisfield-Wolf award has been bestowed, Langston Hughes's "Simple Takes a Wife," is as far removed from it in character as are the African Negroes of whom Mr. Bartlett writes

from the American Negroes who are the subject of Mr. Hughes's volume. It is in the form of a colloquy, a series of seemingly light-hearted conversations which under their gay manner contain as much wisdom upon the problem of the Negro's position in American society as is to be found in many a solemn tome. Of "Simple Takes a Wife" Mrs. Ralph Linton, who filled out the term on the selecting committee left vacant by the death of her husband, has the following to say:

Mr. Jesse B. Semple, known to his many friends as Simple, first came to life in the columns of the *Chicago Defender*, a Negro weekly with a wide national circulation. "Simple Takes a Wife" is his second appearance between hard covers, the first being "Simple Speaks His Mind." The humorous, baffled protagonist of these books has become a new kind of folk hero, the spokesman for the rooming-house set of Harlem society.

Simple's conversations with the author, usually over a beer at Paddy's Bar, cover a wide range of topics: love and landladies, politics and chitterlings, prejudice and bebop. Langston Hughes has a fine ear for idiom, and Simple's talk glows with the authentic color and rhythm of Harlem speech. The entire community comes alive through his humorous, perceptive chatter. The dialogues are loosely strung together on the knotty thread of Simple's love affair with Joyce, the lady he hopes to marry. However, his path to the altar is beset with obstacles. There are the dismaying difficulties of obtaining a divorce from his previous wife; the machinations of the respective landladies of the affianced pair; Joyce's social aspirations and the diverting wiles of Zarita, Simple's bar-hopping lady friend.

Although there are humor and sparkle on every page of this book, an undercurrent of serious concern with racial problems flows through it also. Many of Simple's tartly funny comments are tinged with bitterness. The reader feels here, expressed in warmly personal terms but with universal implications, the striving and frustration of the urban Negro trying to take his place in a white world.

To be considered for the Award a copy of the book in published form should be sent to each of the judges: Professor Henry Pratt Fairchild, New York University, Washington Square, N. Y.; Miss Amy Loveman; *The Saturday Review*, 25 West 45th Street, New York City, and a third judge whose appointment will be announced shortly.

—A. L.