

Prison Keeper

"Warden Ragen of Joliet," by Gladys A. Erickson (Dutton. 248 pp. \$3.95), is the story of how a mild-mannered man brought order to one of the world's wildest prison establishments. Frank O'Leary, our reviewer, spent many years behind prison bars.

By Frank O'Leary

THE late Thomas Mott Osborne and Lewis E. Lawes enjoy unchallenged preeminence as the most dynamic prison wardens of this century. Clinton Duffy of San Quentin won deserved recognition. Unhappily there are a number of men in Federal and State prison service whose distinguished penological accomplishments have never received adequate national recognition. One of these, Warden Joseph E. Ragen, able and courageous chief steward for twenty-three years of the twin Illinois state prisons, Joliet-Stateville, has now been accorded his due in "Warden Ragen of Joliet," by Gladys Erickson, a Chicago newspaperwoman who practically cut her journalistic teeth on the Ragen story from its start.

In 1935 Ragen accepted the warden's post at Joliet, a forbidding old penal slum, and Stateville, an even seedier modern penal slum. Guards working for \$112.50 a month "were weak, ill-trained, and shot through with low morale—unable to cope with the convicts." There were eighty-three tar-shanties in the Stateville yard, ruled by one or another of the three tough Chicago-trained mobs in unquestioned control of the prison. Guards were barred from these shanties unless they were connection-screws (bribe-takers). From these bases, the cons operated stills and sold their product at retail. Other shanties peddled stolen food, clothing, and other prison stores. Still others were mere brothels sheltering homosexual prison prostitutes. Knife-fights, muggings, and even the hijacking of provision trucks and stripping of the convoying prison guards were common features of life in the corrupt penal empire Ragen inherited. The two prisons housed 5,675 of the toughest cons in the United States. Joe Ragen vowed he would do the impossible—clean up the mess. Even the high brass of Illinois officialdom expected the prisons to blow up in his face, but Warden Ragen swept cheap politics, internal and external, out of his prisons and seized the reins firmly.

During the fierce wave of prison

riots which swept across thirty-two states during the past decade, Joliet-Stateville remained calm and enjoying some measure of penal contentment. Many riot-torn states called Warden Ragen in as an expert trouble-shooter to help to resolve their problems.

The stories of Basil ("The Owl") Banghart, Tommy ("The Terrible") Touhy, and the Leopold-Loeb "compulsion killers" are worked into the book so neatly that the pace is always fast.

Warden Ragen is a stickler for security first, rehabilitation second. His prisons are "so tight they creak." The Lawes-Osborne school will deplore this sequence, but neither of these penological pioneers, when they took their posts, had more than one-fourth of the cons to handle that Ragen had from the outset. His system, based on prisoner equality and salvageability, has endured for almost a quarter-century.

HONEST COP: Robert McAllister, who tells his story with the help of Floyd Miller in "The Kind of Guy I Am" (McGraw-Hill, \$3.95), has perhaps

had the most extraordinary career of any member of the New York City police force. He became a rookie cop in 1921 and at the same time was a champion sprinter at local track meets. Soon newspapers were calling him the "Flying Cop." Next to being a cop, Bob McAllister's dream was to run in the Olympic Games, but when they rolled around the Flying Cop was in the Tombs under indictment for murder. How he got there makes a chair-raising account of vindictive politicians—among them, the author claims, Mayor James J. Walker—and their efforts to break an honest cop. For a time McAllister was reduced to using his clear Irish tenor in speakeasies, but certain outstanding lawyers thought he had been railroaded and got him back on the force. In time he rose to the rank of deputy inspector, and now with his second wife and children lives in Florida retirement. A remarkable document, a comforting reminder that there are still intelligent men who ask nothing more of life than a chance to work at enforcing the law.

—ALLEN CHURCHILL.



Pick of the Paperbacks



BEOWULF. Translated by David Wright. Penguin. 65¢. The heroic Anglo-Saxon epic, literary prize of the Dark Ages, in a new prose translation.

LIZZIE. By Shirley Jackson. Signet. 35¢. Beth, Betsy, or Elizabeth, by any other name they are still the same confused young lady enmeshed in too many personalities until a good-tempered doctor helps untangle her.

THE CAPTAIN'S DOLL. By D. H. Lawrence. Berkley. 35¢. Despite the disreputable jacket illustration, this volume merits attention for its seven typically Laurertian stories.

GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE AND SCHOLASTICISM. By Erwin Panofsky. Meridian. \$1.25. The philosophy of the Middle Ages as reflected in its architecture is discussed in a scholarly, readable lecture by a professor at Princeton's Institute for Advanced Study. Sixty illustrations of the architectural examples referred to are reproduced.

MIDDLE EAST CRISIS. By Guy Wint and Peter Calvocoressi. Penguin. 50¢. Manchester Guardian-lead writer Wint and the Royal Institute of Inter-

national Affairs's Calvocoressi collaborate on an explanation and interpretation of the roles played by England, France, and Israel in the recent Middle East drama.

FRANCE AGAINST HERSELF. By Herbert Luethy. Translated by Eric Mosbacher. Meridian. \$1.95. A Swiss political commentator discusses France as a nation out of joint with modern civilization.

A DICTIONARY OF POLITICS. By Florence Elliott and Michael Summerskill. Penguin. 95¢. A valuable guide to have at hand while reading the daily newspaper is this alphabetically arranged handbook with references and cross-references from A.F. of L. to Zionism.

ITALIAN PAINTERS OF THE RENAISSANCE. By Bernard Berenson. Meridian. \$1.35. A distinguished art historian presents the span of Renaissance art in Italy from Cimabue to Corregio.

THE WHEEL OF FIRE. By G. Wilson Knight. Meridian. \$1.35. Essays interpreting Shakespeare, with special attention paid to the themes of the tragedies.

MR. DULLES AND HIS FOREIGN POLICY



—Pierre Boulat.

When Secretary of State Dulles faced reporters at a recent press conference, he found them full of questions about a new book. The newsmen had been looking at Time reporter John Robinson Beal's **"John Foster Dulles"** (Harper \$4.50) in which the author says that he "received insight" into his subject's official actions through interviews with Mr. Dulles himself. In view of what had happened the last time Mr. Dulles had given special interviews to a Luce writer (the now-famous "brink of war" article in Life), many of the reporters were obviously hoping for further spectacular revelations about Mr. Dulles's intricately calculated diplomatic moves. They seized on Mr. Beal's statement that America's abrupt withdrawal last fall of the offer to finance Egypt's construction of the Aswan dam was a deliberate slap in Nasser's face, intended to show all neutralist nations that they cannot play on both sides of the Iron Curtain. Noting that Mr. Beal claims that the withdrawal was made in full knowledge that it involved grave risk of war, the reporters wanted to know how much the author was relying on Mr. Dulles's words in this interpretation. Mr. Dulles refused to answer saying, "I don't care to comment on articles written about me."

But the question of just how official were Mr. Beal's interpretations of the Secretary's acts remained unanswered. Within a couple of days the whole "brink of war" controversy had revived around the Aswan dam incident, and around other crises, too. For Mr. Beal maintained, just as had the original Life article, that Mr. Dulles's willingness to risk war had pulled the West out of tight spots in the Korean armistice negotiations, the Viet-Nam settlement, and in the Quemoy-Matsu island affair. Amid cries of "Brinkmanship!" on one hand and "Statesmanship!" on the other, it became evident that two images of our Secretary of State were before the public eye. In one he is a cagey lawyer, enchanted with his own cleverness, and eager to convince the public of it with the aid of a friendly press; in the other he is a dedicated Christian, turning his skill at advocacy and his masterly chess-player's brain to the task of outwitting a ruthless and clever enemy. Herewith, two evaluations of Mr. Beal's controversial book.

"STATESMAN"

By JOHN FRANKLIN CARTER, newspaper columnist, radio commentator, co-author of *"The New Dealers,"* *"The American Messiahs,"* *"Our Lords and Masters,"* and other books.

WITH the possible exception of John Hay, no American Secretary of State since John Quincy Adams has come to office with a finer preparation than did John Foster Dulles. And no Secretary of State since John Jay, with the possible exception of William Jennings Bryan, has been more bitterly attacked and ridiculed than has Secretary Dulles.

As adumbrated in Thomas E. Dewey's foreword and spelled out in detail by John R. Beal, author of *"John Foster Dulles,"* Mr. Dulles's achievements in office have been formidable. Among other things, they have kept us out of war and checked Soviet expansion at the expense of the Free World. The

reasons for the wide hostility to his conduct of our foreign relations are only (and properly) hinted at in the text of this thoroughly informed and extremely friendly appraisal of the attempt of one extremely durable man to achieve a just and durable peace.

The best part of the book is that which recounts the years of preparation. Dulles comes of old American, though not Mayflower, pioneer stock—chiefly Scottish and English. His grandfather, John Foster, and his uncle, Robert Lansing, had been Secretaries of State and he was suckled on world affairs, with special emphasis on the Far East. As a young man, he hesitated between the career of missionary and diplomat, but decided to be a lawyer and ended by being both. He accompanied his grandfather to the Hague Conference on International Peace in 1909, representing Imperial China; he studied philosophy at the Sorbonne on a Princeton fellowship; he got his law degree in Washington and joined the great Wall Street law firm of Sulli-

van & Cromwell. He went to the Versailles Conference for the War Trade Board. Later he practised international and corporate law with great success.

This "biography" is but prologue to a spirited defense of the foreign policies this many-sided, much-traveled man has developed. The reasons for hostility to his conduct of our foreign relations are only indicated: journalistic antagonism to his personality; his knack for expressing bold thoughts in brutally frank terms—"agonizing reappraisal," "massive retaliation"—and his bold actions, dubbed "brinkmanship," in risking war to save peace; and the undisguised desire of one of our powerful allies that no one so well-versed in world affairs as Mr. Dulles should be allowed to serve as Secretary of State.

His diplomatic achievements, as recounted by Mr. Beal, are most impressive: successful "brinkmanship" in Korea, Indo-China and Formosa, the liberation of Austria, economic and atomic unification in Western