

the natives' lives. The ghosts of their fathers, the spells of the wizards, witches, and warlocks, the dangers from devils are still omnipresent, for with the African the dead are as real as the quick.

Miss Rooke's novel tells of Bengé, a crippled Zulu boy who wavers between accepting his hunchbacked reality or believing, as so many do, that he is a Magic Dwarf. His mother tries to make him remain a child for fear that once it is noticed he is a man he will be destroyed—either for his deformity or because of his cleverness in hunting, both considered attributes of a wizard. After a series of ordeals he becomes sure he is Bengé, sure that his bewitchment is over, that he is now a real man—no longer a Magic Dwarf.

By her treatment of native life and custom Miss Rooke has brought Africa nearer than most anthropologists are able. Rich with the poetic beauty of Zulu imagery, hers is a true reflection of the African soul.

—STUART CLOETE.

"The Bridge," by Pamela Frankau (Harper, \$3.75), is the story of middle-aged David Neilson who relives the most significant moments of his life as he is led across the bridge from this world to the next. In a series of brilliant backward flashes we learn about his childhood, his success as a writer, his wife Anne and their unstable marriage, and the tragic death of their only daughter. This picture of two mixed-up, self-tormenting souls, with its backward, turn backward, Oh time in your flight, message is not soon forgotten.

—ROSEMARY C. BENÉT.

"It Is a Dream," by John Manson (Holt, \$3.95), is a first novel about Cam Williams, who in the first chapter lays eyes on lovely dark-haired Lise and for the succeeding twelve years forgets quite a few things in his long obsession for her: studies, one marriage, two children, and a pretty fair career in advertising. Naturally enough, when he finally has Lise he finds it's not worth the bother—she's a thoroughgoing alcoholic mess, and Cam's stuck with her in the slums of Rome wondering why. Glumly entertaining, the novel lacks plausible motivation for its characters, who in turn don't emerge as particularly interesting people.

—DONALD R. BENSEN.

"The Angel in the Corner," by Monica Dickens (Coward-McCann, \$3.75), is the story of a lonely young English girl pitted against a competitive mother. The plot careens more or less inevitably toward doom as Virginia, the heroine, becomes involved in a bad marriage, ending in an attempted

murder and suicide. Miss Dickens, great-granddaughter of Charles Dickens, has a fondness for the melodramatic situation without the richness or power to command it to reveal her characters with compassion.

—PATRICIA DONEGAN.

"The Honorable Rocky Slade," by William Wister Haines (Little, Brown, \$3.95), is a record of the decline and fall of the wealthy Maynard family as seen through the eyes of the young attorney who managed its affairs and fell in love with its pretty and sole survivor, Lucy. Rocky Slade becomes a United States Senator because Mr. Haines is bitterly convinced that "hatred, fear, envy" were the three tried and true steps to political power during the New Deal. We can only hope that the simple-minded, ambitious young Rocky Slade will be unmasked in the Senate as a boob too primitive even for that tolerant large-minded body of gentlemen.

—DAVID KARP.

"Pride of Innocence," by David Buckley (Holt, \$3.95), recounts the story of Dunne, a young and innocent G.I., who is thoroughly appalled by the frank hedonism of the army of

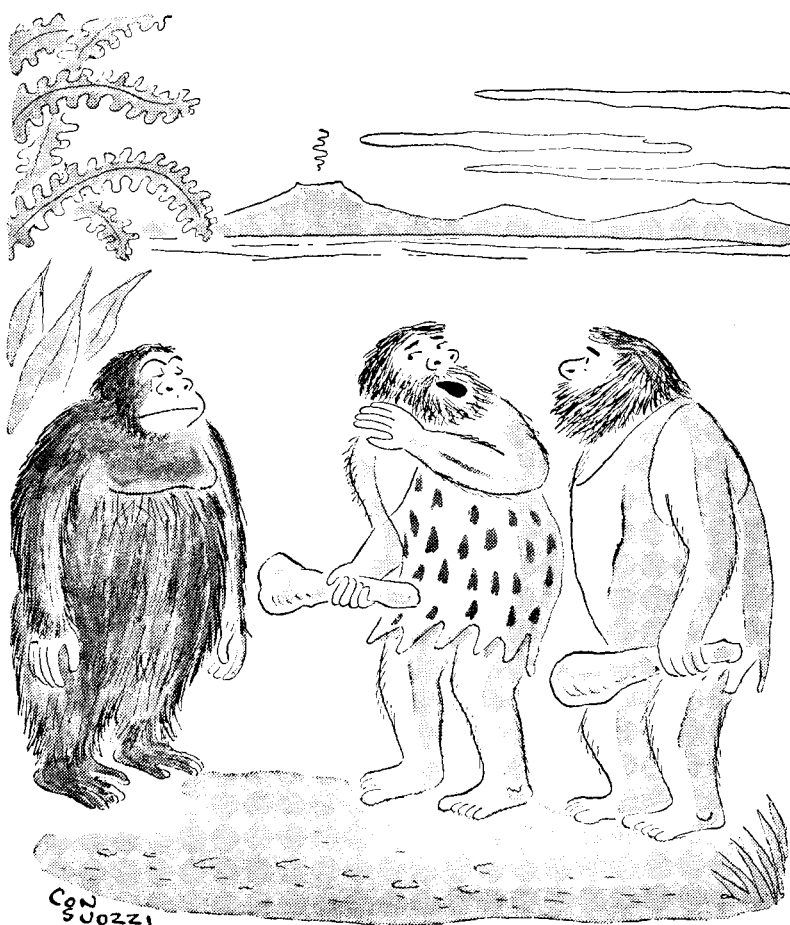
occupation in Germany after World War II. As inevitable complications set in, he is torn between his disintegrating sense of decency and the demands of his emancipated libido. Perhaps at times Mr. Buckley's discipleship to Ernest the First is too obvious. The sinewy poetry of Hemingway is impossible to duplicate, and the tale improves when it escapes the impossible demands of the bearded specter's taurine romanticism.

—DANIEL B. DODSON.

"The Strange Enchantment," by Geoffrey Cotterell (Lippincott, \$4.95), is a long family novel centered about the eldest daughter, Isabel, a child prodigy who longs for a career as a concert pianist. Her first marriage to an impoverished ensign ends with his death in World War I. Renewed interest in her concert career is interrupted when Isabel marries a German who proves himself to be a liar and a cheat. The central theme of the novel, the will to failure, the constant belief that nothing will come out right, is expressed with a craftsman's skill.

—HARRISON SMITH.

"The Deep Range," by Arthur C. Clarke (Harcourt, Brace, \$3.95), de-



"Is he one of us, or one of them?"

picts the world of the twenty-first century in which science leavened with humanism has prevailed, and man has moved, inevitably, back to the sea for earth's sustenance. The hero, Walter Franklin, having risen through the ranks of the Bureau of Whales to become its director, is caught between conflicting interests: loyalty to his own bureau or a more universal respect for all life. It is a comforting and happy world that Mr. Clarke predicts, a world in which Captain Nemo might have shed his distrust for humanity.

—D. B. D.

"Early Stories of Willa Cather," selected and with commentary by Mildred Bennett (Dodd, Mead, \$4), were written between the author's nineteenth and twenty-sixth years. Half a dozen were composed during her campus years, another batch consists of hack work, and a few were published in a long defunct literary magazine. The pickings out of the rocky garden of Miss Cather's literary youth are indeed slim. These stories which are signposts of literary trial-and-error can add nothing to Willa Cather's reputation.

—LEON EDEL.

"Take a Number," by Armando Perretta (Morrow, \$3.50), is a guided tour to Hartford, Connecticut's Italian section in the Twenties and Thirties—a world with provocative aromas of garlic, provolone, and less attractive slum odors. The novel is constructed about the times and talents of the Head Collector of the Italian Lottery, Don Peppino Fazzone, a lover of wine, music, and disputation, whose work involves him in the lives of nearly everyone in the district. Although the interest centers more upon the action than upon the development of character, on the whole the tales have the rich anecdotal quality of a good yarn spun over a bottle of chianti.

—JOHN FANTE.

"The Obsession of Emmet Booth," by Martha Albrand (Random House, \$3.50), is a psychological novel centered in a young widow and a multimillionaire bachelor who is obsessed by the desire to possess her and the child she would bear him. Booth's tenacity, his incredible knowledge of her past life, his overpowering will, are finally too much for Miranda. The last tragic sentence is Miranda's: "Why don't you drop in for a drink this afternoon?" The battle is won! There are only two major characters who move through this simple but fascinating plot, the victory of a ruthless man, consumed by a strange love for a gentle woman.

—H. S.

THE WORLD

The American Age

"*The Coming Caesars*," by Amaury de Riencourt (Coward-McCann, 384 pp. \$6), is a discussion by a Frenchman long resident in the United States of the probable development of world history and the role of the United States in it. Professor Hans Kohn of the City College of New York, our reviewer, is the author of a forthcoming book called "*American Nationalism: An Interpretative Essay*."

By Hans Kohn

AMAURY de RIENCOURT's excellent new book carries an ominous title. "*The Coming Caesars*," however, belies the Spenglerian overtones of its name. When Spengler, the German, predicted the rise of an age of Caesars he was convinced of the doom of modern Western civilization and above all of the inevitable decline of the United States, which he justly regarded as the most typically modern Western society. But Riencourt, native of France and resident of the United States for the past decade, not only believes in the validity and resilience of the West; he has no doubt about the leadership of the United States in the near future. Nor does Riencourt believe, as Spengler did, that the course of history is predetermined, though he too has a penchant for drawing and overemphasizing analogies from the historical past. Thus he comes to identify Europe with Greece and the United States with Rome. Whatever validity this parallel may have, it overlooks the fact that the Romans were a people entirely different in origin from the Greeks and that they received from the Greeks a civilization in the development of which their ancestors had no share. The people of the United States are of European descent and the settlers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries shared fully in the common English and Western European cultural life. Milton and Locke, the theologians, jurists, and political thinkers of that time were as much the heritage of the Anglo-Americans as of the English in the old country.

Within this general framework, the book presents one of the most balanced and appreciative views of Euro-



—From "*The Herblock Book*."

"Shall we say grace?"

pean-American relationships. Americans will gain from it a better understanding of the importance of the fundamental trends of their development; Europeans will find it a most helpful guide, leading them from senseless irritation with America to a better founded appreciation of common destiny.

"What makes Americanization irresistible," Riencourt writes, "is that it presents the natural conclusion of a thousand years of European history and the inevitable standard of the future. Whether one likes it or not, mass civilization is today no worldwide thing. The choice is no longer between European Culture and American Civilization because the European Culture is moribund. The choice lies between the high marks set by America or the increasingly shabby standards set by contemporary Europe."

The practical genius of America, which pays more attention to reality than to abstract theory, has the ability to let institutions grow organically over long periods of time rather than attempt to plan them logically. Therein the United States resembles its English mother country and is sharply distinguished from continental European nations, above all from the French. In its Presidential structure, the United States devised a plastic system that can provide executive leadership in an age of mass democracy. M. de Riencourt believes that