

After The BOOKENDS

—Fighting In Fact And Fancy— America During The War Years

Two Views Of The Dark Continent

AFRICA, LAND OF MY FATHERS. By Era Bell Thompson. Doubleday. 281 pp. \$3.75.

BLACK POWER. By Richard Wright. Harper. 351 pp. \$4.

Ice cream for a Good Humor man. Toilet paper that flush with sawdust instead of water. Recordings of American blues singers, backgrounded by jungle drums whose message many of the natives can't understand. Modern legislative halls where representatives have microphones at their desks, and a terrace in the same building where they sip cold drinks and bet on the races at the adjacent track. "Flash schools" where adolescent girls spend six months learning about the care and feeding of husbands. Telephone operators who direct the directory up to the foreigner's hotel. Discrimination, while a gainst black, black against white, and against black and black against black, along with instances in some countries where the races get along naturally and comfortably. That is the Africa viewed by Era Bell Thompson, editor of Ebony, leading U. S. Negro magazine.

HATCHET IN THE SKY. By Margaret Cooper Gay, Simon and Schuster. 500 pp. \$4.50.

"Hatchet in the Sky" is the story of David Caltrish, a Scotsman, who is one of the two or three fictional characters in a historical novel of exceeding great merit. The English and the French are at loggerheads over possession of a young continent that neither had any right to settle and, hence, the fiery Indian leader, defends his people and his lands with all the ferocity of his command.

It is amazing that the stuff of which "Hatchet in the Sky" is made should flow so easily from the pen of a woman as it is primarily a tale of adventure and of war that would appeal to men. Margaret Cooper Gay seems, however, to have been well prepared to write this novel and it is in the description of her characters and their background that the author states frankly that when she became interested in the story of Pontiac and his tragic death she was drawn closer around them, that she plainly did not believe that the English could always be right as history proclaimed them in such volumes as Francis Parkman's



Book design of HATCHET IN THE SKY

"CONSPIRACY OF PONTIAC" which is even the basis of the information given in the Encyclopedia Britannica about the great Indian chief. It outlines brilliant writing. Mrs. Gay has performed the task of seeking history straight through the adventures of David Caltrish as he sets out from New Orleans and proceeds northward to Detroit where the warring factions do themselves in trickery at the expense of the native Americans.

The English have always had reputation of "muddling through" in colonial affairs, but "Hatchet in the Sky" certainly casts the bungling Englishmen in a role of cruelty and viciousness that makes the conquest of the lakes and rivers of the north a black page in her history. Brightening an otherwise grim tale is the romantic attachment of the young Scot for Catherine, the Indian maiden, and in due course for Tranquility Steves, a Virginia girl whose family was massacred by the avenging Indians. That it all comes out happily in the end and yet becomes just a part of a truly great and neglected — if there could be such — history that is a tribute to the narrative powers of Mrs. Gay. — R. M.

SPIES FOR THE BLUE AND THE GRAY. By Harold T. Kane. Hanover House. 311 pp. \$3.50.

It has been said that the Civil War — the War Between the States, that is — was the first major conflict in history that was fully recorded or documented. From the copious records have come a novel and multitudinous narratives about the tragic internecine strife that nearly ruined a comparatively new country. One of the phases of the War Between the States that heretofore has been apparently neglected — if there could be such — is the part played by spies for both sides, both male and female. Harriet Kane, a prolific writer of novels with the Civil War as a background, has taken it upon herself to gather together some 14 narrative biographies of the more prominent spies both Union and Confederate, and a rich, readable job he has done, sub.

From the opening story on the activities of Mrs. Greenow — ladies first, madam — to the closing story of the Moon sisters. Mr. Kane carries you from Washington to Richmond to

THE TRUE DECEIVERS. By Hans Rosenhaupt. Dodd, Mead. 378 pp. \$3.50.

"The True Deceivers" is truly deceiving. The casual browser might take a fleeting glance at this, rush through the blurbs on the jacket and conclude that any novel based on the war experiences of an Army interrogator just couldn't make the grade as a sad story.

Hans Rosenhaupt left his native Germany when Hitler came to power by way of France and Switzerland, where he was taught and studied, he migrated to the United States. During the World War II he actually served his new country as an interrogator and therefore pours into the pages of "The True Deceivers" all of the heartbreak and loneliness and sense of futility that such a service entails.

There are many a sizzling phase of modern warfare that have been brought to light in the past few years but none more interesting than that of interrogation. The understanding of human nature as expressed in the methods of approach to each individual personality makes it difficult to lay this book down when you are reading it. It is a story of romance with a Red Cross girl and a devotion to buddies who leave you behind the lines of combat in the story of those who fight a war by deception because comes truly fascinating. — R. M.

FIGHTING INDIANS OF THE WEST. By David C. Cook. Dodd, Mead. 208 pp. \$2.95.

If you're somewhat at a loss when the names of Victoria or Nana or Red Cloud or Chief Joseph are mentioned in connection with the history of the West, this little book will do much to clear the air. The author, David C. Cook, has written about 10 of the more famous of the warrior leaders among the Indians of the western United States. He has done some of the more famous accounts of the doings of the lesser known chiefs named as Cochise, Geronimo, Sitting Bull. The youngster in school and the not-so-young past school age can benefit equally from this one. — J. R.

Firm Plans GE Showing

The new 1955 General Electric products will be displayed Monday at Radio Center for over 200 GE dealers of Western North Carolina sponsored by the Walker Martin Inc., Distributors of General Electric.

Southern Bell Names Brannon

Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Co. has announced the appointment of W. H. Brannon, La., has been named division representative for North Carolina, with headquarters in Charlotte. Mr. Brannon, a graduate of Louisiana Polytechnic Institute and a former member of the staff of the United States Army in World War II, will have charge of relations between Southern Bell and the other 57 telephone companies in the state. He replaces J. A. Stewart, who has been named division staff assistant to state Manager C. L. Lott's staff.

Crowd Greet Miss Skinner

Presenting five sketches in an evening of monologues, Connelia Otis Skinner performed for a large audience at Davidson College last night. Her performance was a whirlwind of the rare interludes when Stern is in non-entertaining, the couple lives in an

Belmont Park Men Get Club Charter

A new organization of Methodist Men in Belmont Park Methodist Church has been chartered by Methodist's General Board of Lay Activities in Chicago. Officers of the new group include William G. Jones, Jr. president and Ray D. Helms, secretary. The local group is one of more than 7,000 Methodist Men organizations of a total goal of 10,000 clubs which the board plans to charter by 1955. It is estimated that 2,000,000 men in the Methodist Church are prospective members of Methodist Men Clubs.

Isaac Stern Due Here Tomorrow For Concerts

Isaac Stern will arrive in Charlotte tomorrow afternoon for two appearances with the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra, directed by James Christian Pfohl, on Monday and Tuesday evenings of next week. Mr. Stern completed about 10 days ago his second around-the-world concert tour in the past 16 months and is now beginning his 13th North American concert tour. The only major violinist whose training is exclusively American, Stern received instruction in his home town, San Francisco, from Naum Blinder. He began piano lessons at six, turned to the violin at eight and made his debut at 11. For more than a decade he has ranked as one of the world's great musical artists.



MR. STERN

Stern's career is perhaps a bit more diversified than that of some concert artists. He has been a frequent guest on the Jack Benny Show; has appeared in several motion pictures, and on the serious side, he was one of the distinguished musicians from many countries who received the honor of an invitation to appear with Pfohl and the orchestra at the 1950 Festival at Prades, France, when the great cellist broke his vow not to appear in public again until the Franco government was overthrown. He has also appeared with the orchestra in the state capital with Casals again the following summer in Perpignan and again in Prades in 1952.

Typically American, Stern is an ardent baseball fan who follows sports and music news with equal interest. Often traveling with her husband is Vera Stern, a former U. N. employee whom the violinist married in Israel in November, 1951, after a whirlwind courtship. In the rare interludes when Stern is in non-entertaining, the couple lives in an

apartment overlooking Manhattan's Riverside Drive.

Stern's engagements with the orchestra next week will take place at the Piedmont Junior High School Auditorium, beginning at 8:15 p. m. Tickets are available at the symphony office.

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Masonic Club To Hear Imperial Potentate

Frank S. Land, Imperial Potentate of the Shrine, will speak to the Masonic Fellowship Club Dec. 8, it was announced at a weekly luncheon of the club yesterday.

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Shipp-Shape Job Done On Mr. Sennett

KING OF COMEDY. By Mack Sennett. as told to Cameron Shipp. Doubleday. 284 pp. \$4.50.

When "Madame Bovary" first appeared in 1857, Flaubert was hailed as a racy, readable and frequently humorous account, the general picture. Richard Wright, the moody, brilliant Negro writer who was born in Mississippi poverty and authored "Native Son" and "Black Boy," presents a detailed account of the old African country, the Gold Coast.

The story of the Gold Coast is the story of Kwame Nkrumah, a U. S.-educated prime minister, a Marxist Socialist who has outwitted the Communists and ruling Englishmen to become the popular and effective leader. This he has done by fusing tribalism with modern politics. Here's how it works, in Wright's words:

"I want to see your party and how it works," I said to the Prime Minister. "He nodded but did not answer. 'Free — doom! Free — doom!'"

"The roar came from all sides. Gratitude showed in the eyes of those black faces for who had taken their hand and told them that they had no need to fear the British, that they could laugh, sing, work, hope and fight again."

"I was astonished to see women, stripped to the waist, their elongated breasts flapping wind-dilated in a sort of weaving, circular motion with their bodies, do a kind of queer shuffling in which they expressed their joy in a physical manner. It was as if they were talking with their necks and torsos, as if words were no longer adequate as a means of communication, as if sounds could no longer approximate their feelings, as if only the total movement of their entire bodies could indicate the intensity of their consciousness, their surrender, their approval."

"And then I remembered: I'd seen these same swaying, shuffling dances before. Where? Oh, God, yes: in America, in store front churches, in Holy Baptism Tabernacles, in God's Temple in unpainted wooden prayer-meeting houses on the plantations of the Deep South. And against a background of a surging nationalistic political movement!"

Nkrumah's political rally techniques rival anything dreamed up by Madison Ave. publicists. "A speaker," trained to his audience to respond verbally by telling them: "When I say — then you say —" The speaker then chanted his words and the audience responded. "And when the crowd discovered that they had been unknowingly led into chanting a political slogan or hurling a stinging insult at their opposition, they literally howled their approval."

"To Nkrumah's orders the party men reacted quickly, keenly; here, less than 500 miles from the equator, amidst an appalling heat and humidity, these blacks whose the world has branded as being any and different went about their duties with a zeal that would have put even Communists to shame. Nkrumah's brand of politics, based on emotionalism, is dangerous. But, so far at least, he has a right to legitimate aspirations of long-subjugated people. Time after time Mrs. Thompson was asked: "When are the Negroes of America going to help us?" The natives know that American Jews help their homeland — that Indians help their nationals in Africa. She could not give them a satisfactory answer. Wily Nkrumah is supplying his own answer. — V. O. R.

Noticed In Passing

Bottom Shelf

RED PAWNS. By George Griswold. Dutton. 194 pp. \$2.75.

Mr. Griswold and his very unreal characters contribute little to the already over-crowded field of spy novels. The locale is different, the plot perhaps a bit more believable, but on the whole this is just another cloak and dagger spy, mulling with Soviet agents, smuggled weapons and a tawny blonde.

The Best

THE BEST PLAYS OF 1953-1954. Edited by Louis Kronenberger. Dutton, Mead. 433 pp. \$5.

It is apparent that last year's "best plays" offering by Dodd, Mead was a solid success, for the formula has been repeated in this year's offering. This one contains six diverse dramas: "Take A Giant Step" and "The Teahouse of the August Moon."

In addition to the ten selected plays reproduced, there are such "bonus" items as a comment about the season throughout the country; indices of authors, plays, casts and allied efforts; statistics about books on the theater and availability of texts of other plays. It is a mighty though, pleasing job. — J. R.

Not Hers

HE WAS NOT MY SON. By Madeleine Joyce. Rinehart. 155 pp. \$3.

From time to time there appears in the press a story from the filing of the heart-rendering consequences of mistaken identity and in most cases the happy ending as those who suffered the pangs and uncertainty came to know and accept the "truth."

—Still Palatable— History Juggled

ROANOKE RENEGADE. By Don Tracy. Dial. 367 pp. \$3.99.

Sir Walter Raleigh's Lost Colony has become history's lost page. Don Tracy is the newest player to turn time back to the Elizabethan era and write about the puzzling fate of that first permanent English colony which was "lost."

Violence

MORNING, NOON AND NIGHT. By Lars Lawrence. Putnam. 340 pp. \$3.95.

On the outskirts of the mining town of Rialta, New Mexico, lies the little Spanish hamlet of LaCienega, a cluster of cracker shacks built by miners, refugees from company rents in the coal fields of Montana. They are immigrant Mexicans, with a sprinkling of Negro, Slovak, Polish, Greek and Italian exiles from Eastern mines, and a few natives of Spanish-American descent. These are the inhabitants of LaCienega, and this powerful novel of tyranny and revolt is about them.

The story begins when a local politician buys the town on which LaCienega is built and attempts to collect rents from the inhabitants. The poverty-stricken miners and the protest in front of the courthouse. Their intentions are peaceful but an accidental clash with the local police touches off a riot; there is bloodshed and in the conflict a man is killed and another wounded.

A reign of terror follows, led by a frightened and unscrupulous sheriff and his volunteer deputies. There are harsh reprisals against the miners and the restraining efforts of the more enlightened townspeople are brushed aside as the story sweeps on to its climax. — E. C.

Merry-Go-Round

VENUS RISING. By Charles Grayson. Holt. 277 pp. \$3.50.

When Dr. Alan Sayre met a movie actress, Venus Mitchell, he fell in love with a woman incapable of returning his love. He mounted a merry-go-round to please her and found, at the end, he had just been taken for a ride.

The young obstetrician and the vacillating actress who wanted nothing more than a career are the main characters in this rather dull book. The story is non-descript. — S. B.

Simon and Schuster reports that the late Joshua Loth Liebman's best-seller, PEACE OF MIND, has just gone into its thirty-first edition. The book was published in 1946, and sales are now approaching the million-copy mark.

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