

THE CHECK LIST

HISTORY

MY THREE YEARS WITH EISENHOWER, by Captain Harry C. Butcher, USNR. \$5.00. *Simon and Schuster*. This is the diary kept by the naval aide to General Eisenhower in 1942-1945. The relationship between the two men was most friendly, hence the diary is filled with enormously interesting personal observations of the *Supreme Allied Commander in Europe*. Eisenhower comes out of it a modest, even shy, man, but also one of tremendous determination and diplomatic skill. On one occasion he battled with Churchill for hours on a point of strategy. "Ike said no, continued saying no all afternoon, and ended in saying no in every form of the English language." Eisenhower also disagreed with Roosevelt on unconditional surrender. In other words, he was not a yes man; yet he knew how to say "maybe," and the manner in which he made the British, the Americans and the French work together on the western front was little short of a miracle. He once said sadly, "If I could get command of a battalion and get into a bullet battle, it would all be so simple." Captain Butcher does not reveal many startling "secrets" about the conduct of the war or about any of the personalities involved; to that extent his book is rather disappointing. But as a collection of observations about a world figure by an admirer who also has an eye for colorful incidents, it makes good reading, and historians probably will consult it to get the "feel" of the people in Allied military headquarters in Europe.

WRATH IN BURMA: *The Uncensored Story of General Stilwell and International Maneuvers in the Far East*, by Fred Eldridge. \$3.00. *Double-day*. After surviving the barrage of propaganda which the War necessarily evoked, it seems that we must withstand a protracted assault of debunking before achieving some degree of balanced understanding of the hectic years of battle. In that assault, this story of the Burma campaigns is

a major foray. It follows the efforts of General Stilwell to get someone to do a little fighting against the Japanese — efforts which British imperial and Chinese domestic interests allegedly made very difficult. Chiang, it seems, sold both FDR and Chennault a bill of goods, while Wedemeyer tended to fall for Mountbatten's line. It's not quite as bald as that, and indeed the book is often impressive and revealing, but you could hardly call it even-handed.

SUITORS AND SUPPLIANTS: *The Little Nations at Versailles*, by Stephen Bonsal. \$3.50. *Prentice-Hall*. A continuation of the same author's *Unfinished Business*, this book presents more selections from the brilliant diary which Mr. Bonsal kept while serving as Colonel House's right-hand man at the Versailles Conference. Arranged topically, most of the book deals with negotiations on the Balkans and the Middle East. Mr. Bonsal's terms are largely human ones as he follows the spokesmen of a dozen national causes, listens to their pleas, and notes the treatment which the Big Four meted out to them. Beyond the spectacle, which he enjoys, and the story, which he tells with ease, he does not venture far. Between the facts of conflict and his hopes of harmony, he finds no resolution. Across the years, *Suitors and Suppliants*, with its thin, pervasive note of Wilsonian idealism, sounds more than archaic: it is saddening.

LAST CHAPTER, by Ernie Pyle. \$2.50. *Holt*. This is Ernie Pyle's last book of dispatches. It deals with the Pacific theatre where he was during the first few weeks of 1945; he was killed on Ie Shima on April 17. "Covering the Pacific War," he said, "was, for me, like learning to live in a new city." But it didn't take him long to know the soldiers and sailors — their fears, dreams, hopes, their courage and basic deficiencies. No one has written about the American fighting man with more warmth and under-

standing than Ernie Pyle. He attempted no philosophizing. He thought it was sufficient to tell honestly how soldiers live and die thousands of miles away from home. His present book is as good as his previous two; which is to say, it is one of the best books published in the last decade.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

PUBLIC MEN IN AND OUT OF OFFICE, ed. by J. T. Salter. \$4.00. *The University of North Carolina Press*. Twenty-seven biographical essays on American political leaders, more than half of them congressmen. The rest are governors and diplomats except for Truman, Willkie, Wallace and Frank Hague. The authors are professors, newspapermen and civil servants. All of the pieces cover the bare facts of their subjects' career and record well enough. Few of them probe much deeper. Some are panegyrics. The volume seems to have taken an uncommonly long time getting through the press; since it was written, one of the men under discussion has become President, another died, and others have had sundry changes of fortune.

I SEE THE PHILIPPINES RISE, by Carlos P. Romulo. \$2.75. *Doubleday*. General Romulo, the Resident Commissioner of the Philippines in Washington, returned to his homeland in MacArthur's invading entourage, and it made him very happy. Unfortunately, he also wrote a book about it. The book is neither report nor analysis nor proposal. Its information on military operations is limited to a few of MacArthur's communiqués, which it solemnly reprints in full. It also quotes from a number of speeches by the author and other people. The rest reads like a Fourth of July oration — an extravagant, windy and fulsome glorification of the great American people, the great Philippine people and just about everybody else except the Japanese. A double dose of unrelieved and uninformative patriotic uplift.

DEW ON JORDAN, by Harold Preece and Celia Kraft. \$2.50. *Dutton*. Mr. and Mrs. Preece have spent much time among the folk who belong to such organizations as the Pentecostal Holiness Church, The Assemblies of God, the Saints of the Solid Rock, the Duck River

Baptists, the Two Seed in the Spirit Predestinarian Baptists, and the Conquering Church of God. They write about them with warmth and understanding, and the result is a document that is at times depressing and at times exhilarating. Altogether a valuable contribution to the study of contemporary religious cults.

FICTION

INTIMATIONS OF EVE, by Vardis Fisher. \$2.75. *Vanguard*. In this, the third of his gigantic series of novels, Mr. Fisher enters properly into the domain which he proposes to survey — the evolution of human morality. The two preceding books brought prehistoric man from the primal depths to a fearful consciousness of the supernatural. Here he makes his first efforts to understand and — by means of magic — to regulate the invisible forces which cause his incessant pains and troubles. Thus Raven, a lazy, philosophic soul driven to his duties of hunting by the family matriarch, begins to suspect her of control over supernatural forces, and devises means of protection against them. The cruelty of Mr. Fisher's portrait of primitive behavior is matched by his ingenuity in reconstructing primitive motivation. Sometimes his almost sadistic absorption with the former leads to considerable digressions from the latter. Nevertheless, both help to make an engrossing and noteworthy volume. If only for its immensity and fixedness of purpose, this stunning project deserves far greater recognition than it has met thus far.

THE BRIDGE OF YEARS, by May Sarton. \$2.75. *Doubleday*. The years which Miss Sarton bridges are those between the two world wars. From that time, she selects four interludes in the life of a Belgian family — a family engaged in resolving the conflicts among its separate members and in battling the moral and physical threats which fascism and impending war raise against its whole existence. A quiet, gentle tale, the book makes up in unity of mood for what it loses by an episodic looseness. It is warm, humane and understanding, but it is also so leisurely that the dominant themes sometimes lose their way in the delicate embroidery which surrounds them.