

mentary upon her age. Those of Mlle. de Lespinasse have in them nothing of the romantic abandon which has made her later letters a monument to passion. They are, however, the documents in the case, and they explain, more fully and less conjecturally than has hitherto been possible, the beginning and the end of a chapter in the lives of two fascinating women. Mr. Smith has edited them with consummate skill, and has provided an introduction which is a model of succinct exposition.

Political Leader

MAXIMILIEN ROBESPIERRE: NATIONALIST DICTATOR. By James Michael Eagan. New York: Columbia University Press. 1938. \$2.75.

Reviewed by CRANE BRINTON

MR. EAGAN'S sub-title is important. He has not written another life of Robespierre—there are plenty of them, and for all tastes—but a careful analysis, based on much original research, of what Robespierre did as a political leader, and how he did it. The book is an excellent example of the fruitful monograph.

Those who feel that in history comparisons are odious, may find that Mr. Eagan overdoes a bit his parallels with the contemporary world. Chapters headed "Towards the Totalitarian State" and "The Jacobin Blood-Purge" are perhaps a little too much like yesterday's newspaper headlines. Yet the facts as Mr. Eagan presents them are impressive. Robespierre was neither a Stalin nor a Hitler. For one thing, as Mr. Eagan points out, he never possessed the undivided leadership they seem to have attained. His aims and his speeches are, however, much like theirs, and his Jacobin "machine" presents all sorts of parallels with the Bolsheviks and the Nazis.

To separate the unique from the repeated event, the particular from the general, has always been a nice problem for the historian. Our immediate predecessors were perhaps a little too insistent on the unique. Mr. Eagan is only helping to redress the balance. If the present wave of dictatorship is regarded as quite without precedent we are bound to be helpless before it. Once we realize that there have been other blood-purges, other attempts to achieve the totalitarian state, we may be able to take an attitude at once more profitable and more comfortable than the forlorn yammering so common nowadays in democratic countries.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S
DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 254)

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Imperialism in Action

GERMANS IN THE CAMEROONS, 1884-1914. By Harry R. Rudin. Yale University Press. 1938. \$4.

Reviewed by JAMES FREDERICK GREEN

THE theory of Germany's "moral unfitness" to govern colonies served at Versailles—like the theory of "war guilt" underlying reparations—as a convenient justification for the transfer of African and Asiatic possessions to the Allies. Since this charge of moral incapacity is now revived as an argument to preclude restoration of the colonies to Nazi Germany, it deserves more scientific attention than it has thus far received. It remained for Professor Rudin, of the Yale history department, to investigate the alleged Hohenzollern misrule in terms of one specific colony. His brilliant study of the Cameroons, based upon both travel

and archival research, is a model analysis of imperialism in action.

Professor Rudin examines with great care the international rivalries in West Africa, the German penetration into the Cameroons, the control of policy in Berlin, and the task of administration in the colony. He concludes that German exploitation and management were quite similar to that of other European colonizers, that it was steadily improving in quality, and that its defects were excessively advertised by the opposition parties in the Reichstag. In effectively disposing of the Versailles canard, Professor Rudin contributes important chapters to the history of European imperial politics and to the story of African development. His account of the domestic pressures and propaganda which forced Bismarck and later chancellors ever further into colonial expansion is one of the most interesting features of an interesting book.

James F. Green is on the staff of the Foreign Policy Association.

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Genetics and Crime

CRIME AND THE MAN. By Earnest Albert Hooton. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1939. \$3.50.

Reviewed by RAYMOND G. FULLER

ONE gathers that the author will be surprised and perhaps disappointed if sociologists, welfarers, and the like do not jump upon his pages with cries of denunciation. The book is really not quite so shocking as all that. It will be irritating chiefly because of the wisecracks in which Professor Hooton occasionally indulges at the expense of those who emphasize—in his opinion, overemphasize—environmental factors in the causation and treatment of crime. He gaily puts himself on the defensive.

But after all, nobody need be, and few will be, seriously disturbed by this very important contribution to the literature of criminology. Most students of the subject will cordially welcome it. Even the author says in spots that it is far from his intention "to belittle the efforts of the sincere, intelligent, and conscientious workers who have poured out their blood and other people's treasure in investigating the causes of crime and in devising methods of preventing delinquency and of reclaiming the criminal. Prison reform, probation, the juvenile court, the cleansing of the Augean stables of the city slums, the draining of familial and neighborhood cesspools which spawn criminality—all of these are notable achievements which must not be decried."

However, he himself has another and a different tale to tell, based on years of patient study and volumes of yet unpublished statistics regarding crimi-

nals from the standpoint of physical anthropology—all sorts of measures and indicia. In this book he leaves out the statistics, and presents his valuable, indeed invaluable, interpretations and conclusions. He manifests always the care and caution of the true scientist, lest he be misunderstood. Hasty readers had better beware.

Now the simple and essential reduction of results comes to this, that the primary cause of crime is biological inferiority. "To the human being who is organically sound—physically and mentally fit—the savior of society (a role to which I assuredly do not aspire) might say, 'Thou art Peter and upon this rock will I build my social order.' Certainly the penitentiaries of our society are built upon the shifting sands and quaking bogs of inferior human organisms." Mr. Hooton says that "the bad organism sullies a good environment," and that only the less severely flawed specimens of humanity are much amenable to environmental treatment. He goes on to say that at present "crime prevention is centered upon the treatment of juveniles, and that when it gets to be really scientific, it will have to start earlier still and concern itself with familial heredity."

A great deal of research is still necessary, he thinks, before we can learn what types of human beings are worthless and irreclaimable, and what types are superior and capable of biological and educational improvement. And the practical application of such knowledge must wait upon further knowledge of *how* to control and predict the nature of the human organism as determined by its heredity.

"We must begin at once to fill that vast and shameful hiatus in our knowledge of man—human genetics."

Borrowing on the Open Market

THE COMMERCIAL PAPER HOUSE IN THE UNITED STATES. By Albert O. Greef. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938. \$5.

Reviewed by WALTER E. SACHS

IT is remarkable that a phase of banking developed in the United States, so-called "open market commercial paper," which for many decades has furnished industry with money amounting to hundreds of millions of dollars annually and which is considered by many leading businesses as an essential instrument in their operations, yet has been so little familiar to the larger group of business men and to the public. Articles in trade periodicals, addresses before bankers' conventions, brief comment in books on banking have appeared occasionally. The present volume, however, is the most painstaking and comprehensive study of the subject that has been published.

Supplemented by frequent footnotes, many of which carry material fully as interesting as the body of the text, the first two parts of this readable book trace the development and the operation of the commercial paper business from the close of the eighteenth century to the present day. No similar system of open market borrowing on single name promissory notes exists elsewhere. Leading European nations rely on the bank overdraft, the trade and bankers acceptance, for extension of commercial credit. In those geographically compact countries, concentration of banking capital in a few large banks with numerous branches makes such a method logical. In this country, widely scattered and relatively small unit banks have helped to develop to a high degree of safety and efficiency this unique American method of borrowing on the single name promissory note.

The third part of the book sets forth convincingly the place of commercial paper in our banking system. It concludes with an appreciation of its value both to borrower and to lender. While referring to somewhat isolated instances of criticism by larger banks of open market borrowing, the author vigorously defends the place of commercial paper in American banking.

The statistical material might lead the reader to conclude that the volume of outstanding market paper is permanently declining. A more accurate interpretation of the figures is, however, that the decline in volume has been due to depressed business conditions, which have curtailed the present-day needs of short term borrowers. With increased business activity, carrying with it the necessity to expand operations and inventory, the need for commercial paper will again increase. Certainly Mr. Greef leaves the reader with the impression that the business is conducted on a safer and sounder basis than ever before, and that it will continue to hold its place in the American banking system.

The book merits the attention both of students of banking and of business executives.

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