

mental confusion, White liked him for his purity of intention and his courage. Wilson remains the man with the great vision given by God and the proud heart bestowed of the devil, and a man temperamentally unfitted for politics. "When he tried to be pleasant, he creaked." With all his heart, White fought for our membership in the League of Nations, and, in contradiction to most observers, believed that even in 1920 a popular vote would have gone against isolation.

McKinley figures as a political robot who had trained himself to be distantly agreeable in all circumstances and genuinely cordial in none. For Hoover, whom he treats briefly, he expresses special admiration. Harding—here he adds new touches to the old portrait. There is a picture of that tragic, liked, and yet despised figure coming into his hotel a day or so before his nomination with red eyes, a two-day beard, and every other evidence of a hangover. Someone spirited him away until the unsavory job of nominating him was finished. It is odd, too, to learn that in certain circumstances Hoover, whom White was supporting, might have been the candidate. A few months after Harding's inauguration White had a confidential talk with Jud Welliver, the Presidential secretary, which he evidently reconstructs from notes taken at the time. "He is weary and confused and heartsick, for he wants to do the right and honest thing. But he doesn't know!" And Welliver revealed that the President had just asked him as a university man to get some professor to recommend a treatise on taxation "not too hard to understand."

White's attitude toward politics resembled that of Philip in "Of Human Bondage" toward the waitress who ensnared him. He knew her for the shoddy thing she was, but he could not shake off her fascination for him. No honest confession of a corrupt boss could possibly comprise more stories, sordid or dramatic, of trickery, treachery, and double-crossing. He pauses once to wonder how, in face of all that, the Republic ever pulled through to greatness. But plainly the heyday of his life was the one time when he ever bolted his party—the Progressive movement of 1912-16. Here, however, something more than mere fascination was at work. Since early in the century, he had walked the Jericho road. With the other enthusiasts who sang "Onward Christian Soldiers," he believed that this was America's opportunity to purge and cleanse herself for a new era. He gives this subject almost disproportionate space. It is a dead episode now, but the vigor of the

tale, the drama of it, the manner in which he fits it, on mature reflection, into the pattern of these times—that is living matter.

His story had reached 1923 when time gave out on him. But the rest is not all silence. In one of his interesting digressions he goes ahead of his tale to discuss some strengths and weaknesses of the New Deal and of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Also he analyzes himself. It was his weakness as an honest politician, but his strength as a journalist, that he could never be wholly partisan. He always saw a

Stateside, 1941-1945

WHILE YOU WERE GONE. Edited by Jack Goodman. New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc. 1946. 572 pp. Index. \$3.50.

Reviewed by WILLIAM S. LYNCH

THE idea seems an obvious one—after someone else has thought it up: to prepare an interlinear translation of what went on at home so that the returning veteran can



catch up with the civilian world. It is another something for the boys, this time a ready reference on topics from advertising to women. Considering all that we have heard about our army being not only the best paid one in the world but also the best informed, it may be that it will seem a little redundant to men who have been supplied with as much print as they have been with ammunition. Even so, the "only yesterday" books continue to be fun. And one does not have to be a veteran to follow the chronicle with interest.

It is probably best not to read this book at that single sitting we are always hearing about. To the reader who demands smooth coherence the shift in mental gear from a discussion on race relations to one on the comics may be somewhat grinding. There is, too, a rather trying change of pace in the varied literary style

little good in the other side. In this confession he ranked himself with the great generations of liberals—in the true sense of that word, just now so much abused. Often such men see causes for which they have fought and bled crushed, as the Progressive Party and all it stood for seemed crushed by 1920. Most of them are like the Quakers, of whom someone said, "They are usually right a hundred years from now." But White lived to see most of his objectives reached by other routes. And that, in the end, was enough for him.

of the contributors—a not unusual characteristic in any volume where the authors are many and the editor has given them a free hand. The cool academic prose of the scholar will seem at variance with the gaudy phrases of Paul Gallico; the pamphleteering of a labor leader may contrast too neatly with the arrogance of Norman Corwin. But all in all this new fireside book concocted by Jack Goodman will give you as good a review of recent events as we have had issued so far.

The choice of authors is something every reviewer will feel called upon to note. In the nature of things, the historians have not yet had time to sift the records and assemble the data in properly annotated form. Hence, since this is more than a glossary of war words, the sparkle of this kind of record is in the opinions expressed. Less opinionated men than Mr. Goodman might have assembled a menagerie of more different breeds of lions than can be found here. They would have been praised for the balanced points of view represented and damned for other things. "While You Were Gone" is a family affair. Mr. Gallup would be an unhappy man polling this group. Differences would be only shades, and the whole right side of his comptometer keyboard would rust from disuse—which is all right with one reader I know. In fairness one should note that Joseph H. Ball is a registered Republican.

To state one's preferences among the different articles is to reveal one's own prejudices and intimate private life. But even at the risk of being overheard, he it said that the single piece worth the price of admission (to coin a phrase) is James Thurber's on animals, a subject on which he is now the nation's leading authority. The Bing Crosby fable of Mike, the moribund turtle, is as choice a morsel as any Bennett Cerf could masticate. And while Robert Nathan has found peculiar people in the parks of New

York, only the indefatigable research of Thurber could exhume the story of that amazing chow in Botanical Park.

Leaving the Thurber document in time to avoid violation of the copyright law, it might be worth suggesting that our not too gentle reader will enjoy the mordant treatment Wolcott Gibbs uses in handling the theatre front. Gibbs is still steamed up about Steinbeck's "The Moon Is Down" (see the much more logical statement of the case by Lewis Gannett), but he has a lovely way of putting things, and next to Richard Maney, the apocryphal press agent whom *Life* and others have apotheosized, he was the perfect choice for the assignment.

In general the arts and sciences come off best in this book—even



though music and painting are treated only incidentally. The graphic arts are represented by Milton Caniff on the comics in a thrilling discourse on the adventures of the insufferable Orphan Annie, the self-righteous Superman, the drab Blondie, and the others who people our national legend. Caniff's scholarly address could have been improved only if he had been allowed the brush as well as the pen. Lewis Gannett does the books politely; Bosley Crowther the movies with sufficient reverence, and

Norman Corwin the radio with the resonance you would expect.

When it comes to the heavy dogmatists, the halos are set with neon lights. Labor, industry, the war agencies have their spokesmen who speak with the tongues of angels—R. J. Thomas, Donald Nelson, Henry F. Pringle. The imperfections pointed out are merely the flaws which make the diamonds more precious.

Captain Joe Thompson, who suggested the idea while stationed on lonely assignment in the Pacific, has got his wish. And the rest of us can be grateful for a truly superb idea. The only thing that can bother one seriously is the element of haste which accompanies any fudge which is cut before it hardens. By the by, there is an appendix which tells how your Congressman voted.

In This Corner—

The Newspaper

Lester Markel, Sunday editor of The New York Times, discussed "The Newspapers" in "While You Were Gone." Eric Hodgins, a vice-president of Time, Inc., discussed "The Magazines." Mr. Markel was shown the galley proofs of Mr. Hodgins's chapter, and

By LESTER MARKEL

I HAD not thought of the news weekly as another one of these Mortal Threats to the newspaper until I read the chapter by Mr. Hodgins in this same volume. Mr. Hodgins seems to believe that the news weeklies, not the newspapers, did the real news job during the war; that they are, in peacetime as well as wartime, the only true expositors of the news because they excel (a) in coverage, due to their "huge" staffs, and (b) in perspective, because they do not have breathlessly to meet deadlines.

I shall not attempt, speaking of coverage, to compare the comprehensiveness and the authority of the news report in the newspaper with the condensation and the casualness of the news weekly. . . .

I shall not attempt, speaking of perspective, to compare the delectable details and the frothy footnotes that the news weeklies call "background" with the solid interpretive article of the newspaper. Nor to contrast the orderless presentation of the news weekly with the orderly arrangement of the newspaper—especially the play of the news on the first page, which is, in its way, an index to current history.

I shall not point out that the breathlessness of the newspaper is as nothing compared with the frenzy of the news weekly trying to guess on Monday what Thursday's news will be. . . .

I shall not be so immodest as to call Mr. Hodgins's attention to such productions as *The New York Times Review of the Week* or the weekly summaries in other newspapers where the "background" job is done with balance and without bias.

No, I shall content myself with putting this question: Why, if the newspaper has so little value in Mr. Hodgins's eyes, why does Mr. Hodgins's *Time* buy from its news dealer every day 135 copies of *The New York Times*—every day, weekdays and Sundays?

—and in This Corner

The News Magazine

introduced into his own chapter certain comments, herewith reproduced, on news magazines. Mr. Hodgins then, in fairness, was shown Mr. Markel's comments, and replied in an extended footnote, which is also reproduced.

By ERIC HODGINS

I REALLY don't know, Mr. Markel; I should think two copies would be plenty. But two copies of the *Times*, weekday and Sunday, are certainly invaluable, as are the copies of 163 other U. S. newspapers to which the diligent editors of *Time* subscribe, and which they read, clip, and file every day to supplement their own world-wide staff of newsgatherers and the full news and picture services of the A.P. I am no more a traducer of newspapers than any of my colleagues; with them, I venerate the *Times* as I do my grandmother. As a matter of fact, your figure of 135 copies, daily and Sunday, is incorrect; it's actually 151 copies—plus 91 others for *Life* and *Fortune*. Accuracy, terseness, accuracy, Mr. Markel.

Your other points, I suppose, will have to go unanswered, since you say you are not making them. You certainly would have had me at a disadvantage about the *orderless presentation of the newsweekly* compared to the *orderly arrangement of the newspaper* if you had mentioned it out loud. *Time*, just to pick it at random as an example of a news-magazine, doesn't put the story of the little girl who has lost her bunny on page one, where every newspaperman over fifty knows it belongs, alongside of MacArthur's latest orders to the Mikado, and the bit about the newest two-headed calf to be born in Winsted, Conn. . . . If you had been so immodest as to speak of *The New York Times Review of the Week*, I guess I would have had to be so immodest as to mention that *Time* began publication in 1923, whereas your invaluable summary, *The Review of the Week*, in 1935.

Thank you for yielding the space on this page, which the publishers kindly lent me. . . . I hope I haven't distracted anybody's attention from your excellent piece; it's a little rough on the newspapers, but it's all worth saying.

Their War in Their Words

REPORT AFTER ACTION. *The Story of the 103d Infantry Division.* By Ralph Muller and Jerry Turk. Illustrations by Bill Baker. Innsbruck, Tyrol, Austria: Wagner'sche Universitäts-Buchdruckerei. 1945. 166 pp. Subscribed to and distributed to members of the 103d Division. Copies soon to be made available in the United States.

Reviewed by COLONEL JOSEPH I. GREENE, U.S.A., RETIRED

MANY a fighting soldier complained vividly in World War II because the papers at home so seldom mentioned his particular unit. The fact that there were ten thousand differently designated regiments, squadrons, and other outfits in the Army, or that until almost the end of the war there were still good security reasons for not mentioning a number of units by name and number, didn't register clearly with most fighting men. When the men of the "1st Battalion, 561st Infantry, 109th Division" took the town of Grand Pain sur Terre, they would have thought it reasonable to see a detailed account of their fight in the next day's *Stars and Stripes*. But especially did they feel that in a very few weeks a clipping or two about their battle from hometown papers should be coming in their letters. Everything a young American does from making his first touchdown as a freshman on his high-school football team is something he reads about in the papers. So why not his plays, or at least his military unit's plays, in the real game of war?

A great deal was done, of course, to get the fighting Army specifically into the news. In the Army, the Air Forces began early with tremendous coverage. The Ground Forces began late, far too late. But its Special Information Section, with such able soldier writers as Colonels James Warner Bellah and Edward Hope Coffey, and Warrant Officer E. J. Kahn, Jr., was catching up fast as the war ended, with chief credit of course to the host of Infantrymen who were making the most of their news. The war correspondents worked overtime to send home news about hometown men for hometown papers.

But altogether there was never enough news to suit the troops. And now they are making up for it in some measure by writing and publishing histories, detailed "unit histories" for the most part, telling where and how they trained for combat and where and how they fought.

There are a great many of these books. Some, like "Report After Action," have already been printed in France, Germany, Austria, the Philippines, or elsewhere. Many are in production in the United States or are still in process of writing here or overseas. And others are yet to be begun. The total copies of unit histories published will eventually



pass the million mark and probably a second and third. The greater part of the ninety infantry divisions alone are publishing from 5,000 to 25,000 copies each of their histories; and of the hundreds of regiments and similar units, scores are already going forward with their unit books. In the Air Forces the picture is somewhat different, since there the emphasis is on the histories of the different Air Forces, which were units much larger than an infantry division. Many smaller air units, however, are also producing unit histories, and the same thing is true in the Service Forces. And some of the large ground units, the corps and the armies, have completed histories or have them under way.

None of these books are official War Department histories published at government expense. They should not be confused with the eventual products of the Army's thorough historical program, which is now shaping up under Major General E. F. Harding, chief of the Historical Section of the War Department Special Staff. The official histories form a quite separate project. The "histories" I am referring to are the books being written and published essentially by the members and former members of the Army units themselves. The same situation obtains in the Marine Corps and in the Navy. Certain Navy and Marine units are producing books for themselves, entirely aside from the official history projects of these services.

The "unit histories" taken together were simply a writing and publishing project far too large to be entertained officially. The job would have required a staff of at least several hundred writers and illustrators, and this at a time when the major official history projects were just getting well under way, yet thought had to be given to the general paring down of staffs of all kinds. So the units that wanted a history have written their own or have a book on the way, or at least clearly in mind.

Books about military units have, of course, been produced after many wars. Hundreds were published after the Civil War by units of both sides. After World War I, all the infantry divisions and many other units eventually went to press. In World War II, most of the high commanders were men with service in the earlier war, and held the idea of a unit history in mind from the beginning of the war or earlier. There was no allowance for historians of any kind in the divisions and regiments and in units of similar size in the Air Forces; but many commanders saw to it that the official records on which to base an informal history were carefully kept. And a few put selected men to writing while their units were still fighting, or even before they had begun to fight.

Major General C. R. Huebner, for example, who was commanding general of the V Corps (which at one time in France had ten divisions in it), established an historical group in his corps headquarters while D-day preparations were still going on. General Huebner had seen much combat as an officer in the First Division in World War I, and had regretted through the years that no fully adequate history of his division in that war had ever been published. He vowed that in his second war his outfit would have a complete and accurate published history. "History of the V Corps" was accordingly written day by day from D-day on, and the result is a leather-bound folio published in Paris containing several hundred thousand words, a hundred or so large maps, and two or three hundred photographs and sketches.

The V Corps history is a larger book than most of the other units are putting out, and a somewhat more formal one. "Report After Action: The Story of the 103d Infantry Division," published in Austria, is more typical, though briefer than many division books. Its excellent narrative is particularly informal, which is well indicated by the first paragraph of its foreword: "This book was produced with a minimum of interference from