

BOOKS

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conclusion that the Pope can err. Meinecke has now discovered that Ranke could err.

One author outlines the *via dolorosa* of the civilian spirit in Germany and another explains that the German wars, unlike most other wars (sic!) benefited no one. Apart from these commonplaces there is also a great deal of muddled thinking. One writer says that the problem before German historians is "how to write history that the future will not invalidate." I gather that he advises German historians not to take it for granted that the power-state is the goal of all history because events may prove them wrong. To my naive way of thinking such assumptions are not the historian's business, anyway.

Last, but not least, there is the irritating habit of the American editor to explain all obvious historical references in footnotes. The book must be intended for a historically illiterate public. With such a public it is likely to foster the illusion that Germany is now safe for Nato. The more perceptive reader will take it as proof of instability. Meinecke, one feels, would consider himself entitled to withhold his support from Germany's new institutions every time he changes his mind about the merits of Ranke. Suppose our support of parlia-

mentary institutions were dependent upon the precarious judgment that Mill was a better man than Carlyle. . .

—Peter Munz

DEATHS AND DISAPPEARANCES

THE COATINE CASE, by A. J. Colton; Robert Hale, English price 9/6. *ANNA, WHERE ARE YOU?* by Patricia Wentworth; Hodder and Stoughton, English price 10/6. *LADY LOST*, by Desmond Cory; Shakespeare Head. *THE WISHFUL THINK*, by Bernard Newman; Robert Hale, English price 9/6. *THE TOFF AT BUTLIN'S*, by John Creasey; Hodder and Stoughton, English price 7/3.

A CONFIDENCE trick is the basis of *The Coatine Case*, by an Australian professor who writes under the name of A. J. Colton. This detective story, refreshingly new in scene and treatment, is another sign that Australia is building up a literature of her own in this genre. A young Australian aviator is drawn into the net, and a murder taxes all the ingenuity of the police, whose disposition and methods you may amuse yourself by comparing with those of Scotland Yard. The young man displays remarkable powers of deduction and observation, but would so smart a chap have been deceived in the first instance?

No detective story writer maintains a more uniform level than Patricia Wentworth, and *Anna, Where Are You?* showing Miss Silver again in action, is one of her best. The story is tense, with real surprises at the end, and the psychological condition that causes Anna

to disappear is deep and startling—and, sad to say, paralleled in real life.

In Desmond Cory's previous story his amateur detective was living openly with a mistress in Oxford, and no one seemed to mind. In *Lady Lost* he is about to marry her, but his involvement in a thriller hunt for criminals causes her to back out on the ground that he seems to prefer corpses to matrimony. Perhaps the wedding bells will ring in the next instalment. That the book opens with the detective getting out of bed in the morning fully dressed and with a bad hangover after a party, makes me fear that Raymond Chandler may be influencing his English rivals. There is plenty of excitement here, but the plot is absurd, and Desmond Cory's undeniable wit is persistently smeared with vulgarity.

Bernard Newman has Stalin's successor, Mr. Malenkov, die in hospital, and describes the complications that follow the seizure of power by an almost unknown man. The basis of the story is the power of a young Englishman to read from London the thoughts of the new Russian ruler, and the use made of this by the British Government. Including Sir Winston Churchill and Mr. Eden, living personages are introduced. The telepathic idea is ingenious, but the working out is prolonged and dull. It is questionable whether, in the public interest, such a book should be written.

The Toff at Butlin's is the third "Toff" story I have read, and the worst.

There are incredible happenings in a permanent holiday "camp" in Wales. I wish the "Toff" would get married and stop casting a roving, though I must admit, an ultimately innocent eye, over the face and figure of every personable young woman he meets. —A.M.

STONE AGE PEOPLE

ADAM WITH ARROWS, by Colin Simpson; Angus and Robertson Ltd., Australian price 25/-.

COLIN SIMPSON'S excursions with Australian officers whose work lies in exploring and pacifying the remote parts of the trusteeship territory of New Guinea have given him unique opportunities for observing the culture of tribes still in the stone age. Solid ethnological work in this field has been done by Miss Beatrice Blackwood, of the Pitt Rivers Museum (Oxford) who, in 1936, lived for some months with the Kukukuku tribe, then only a few years removed from cannibalism. Mr. Simpson draws on this material where necessary. His own book does not pretend to be research, but is a tale well told of what he heard and saw since 1949. It is written both with insight into the nature of the native problem, and with understanding of the size of the task Australia has undertaken. Ten fine colour-plates, numerous photographs, and sufficient sketch maps add greatly to the interest and value of the book. —L.J.W.



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