

Herald and News Book Reviews

Literary Highlights

THE FACE OF JUSTICE, by Caryl Chessman. Prentice-Hall.

From his cell in California's San Quentin prison, where during the past nine years he has been as close as hours to the gas chamber, Caryl Chessman has written his third book. Because the state had put a ban on his writing and publishing after "Cell 2455 Death Row" and "Trial by Ordeal," this one had to be smuggled out. Since he tells how he wrote it (sandwiching it in with law work on his case), this last in his trilogy may be his last. His first told how he became a petty criminal, how he nurtured a hatred for "Authority," which he makes sound like a dirty word. The second dealt largely with life in San Quentin's Death Row, which obviously is not a pleasant place.

This third is almost a biography of his attorney, George Davis, with frequent bows, including the dedication, to his feminine counsel, Rosalie Sue Asher. It concentrates with a sort of urgent timeliness on the period from October, 1955, to this spring when he took his umpteenth appeal once more to the U.S. Supreme Court.

GETS NEW HEARING

You won't find in the book that the Supreme Court obliged him with a new lower court hearing, but you no doubt will be happy that it did.

Chessman's first book has been published in 17 foreign countries, in 14 languages. He is highly persuasive, an excellent writer given a genius rating by psychologists, an excellent pleader of his cause. He is so persuasive, in fact, that the official organ of Ireland's police made the statement, in a review of "Cell 2455":

"The tragic part of his story is that he was innocent of the crimes for which he was sentenced to death. . . . If he is, there is nothing in the

record to prove it. Chessman was convicted as the "red light bandit," a robber and rapist who used the red light of police authority to overtake and flag down cars, then take what he wanted from the occupants. Chessman denies this. A jury convicted him, and on countless appeals his convictions have been upheld.

But because the "little Lindbergh" kidnap law under which he was sentenced has since been tempered by the California Legislature to eliminate the death penalty, and because Chessman contends—with persuasive merit—that the record is faulty, the thinking reader will doubtless be glad he gets another chance.

DISPLAYS WEAKNESS

In "The Face of Justice," Chessman sets himself up as a martyr to the cause of eliminating the death penalty. Quite naturally, he would like it written off California's books. But in this crusade, he displays his greatest weakness.

He says he has smuggled out a package which contains documents in which he names the "red light bandit."

But, Chessman goes on, if California bans capital punishment, the package never will be opened. If it does not:

"I am sure a future generation will listen . . . at the expense of many law enforcement officers, newspaper publishers, prosecutors, jurists, penal officials, inflamed citizens and others. . . ."

But his date for opening the package is 50 years from the day "a moratorium on capital punishment" is defeated.

Why 50 years? If he is not guilty, if he knows who is, why not now? How can he prove wrong all those law officers, publishers, jurists and others a half century from now? If he is innocent, why wait?

Third Volume Of Churchill's English History Off Presses

A HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING PEOPLES: Vol. III: THE AGE OF REVOLUTION. By Winston S. Churchill. Dodd, Mead, \$6.

Little Wilhelmine and Peterkin asked grandfather, sitting at his cottage door:

"Now tell us all about the war, and what they fought each other for."

"The old man taught them their lesson: The countryside was laid waste, corpses rotted on the field, mothers and babies died, but 'Great praise, the Duke of Marlborough won.'"

"But what good came of it at last? quoth little Peterkin," and grandpa answered staunchly:

"That I cannot tell, said he, but 'twas a famous victory."

These familiar words were spoken by the poor benighted boy and girl in Robert Southey's "The Battle of Blenheim." They should have asked Sir Winston—who needless to say does not quote the scuffling poet. Marlborough was his, Sir Winston's, ancestor who first endowed the Churchill name with renown. No small part of this third section of the history is devoted, with Sir Winston's matchless force and grace of language, to the superb martial exploits of Marlborough and his indomitable successors down to Nelson and Wellington.

What is Sir Winston's answer to Wilhelmine and Peterkin? In the first place, that audacious sweep across Europe in 1704 was "a campaign ever a classic model of war." Sir Winston continues:

"All Europe was hushed"—if not the children—"before these prodigious events." They broke the domination of Louis XIV.

This volume opens with the reign of William of Orange and moves on quickly to the good Queen Anne. It encompasses three revolutions, in England in 1688, in America in 1776, in France in 1789. And we Americans at last, if only as a chronological necessity, enter the picture.

If a reader who had never heard of Sir Winston—if one can be imagined—studied this volume, he might conjure up at least a partial likeness of the author. There is the preoccupation with the rousing and ringing phrase, like the praise of the oratory of Pitt and Burke. There is the proprietary, jealous eye watching over the fortunes of Prime Ministers from Walpole, first with the title, to Shelburne and the "small thanks" he got for winding up the war with America. Finally there is the exalted perspective—the wonderful long view, the tremendous roll of battles, the awesome lists of kings, emperors, generals, admirals and precious few commoners—Marlborough fills pages but not a whole line apiece goes to his contemporaries Isaac Newton, Addison, Defoe, Pope, Swift and Wren, who in turn is distinguished only cursorily from Vanbrugh.

So this is history and also the legend of history—Southey's complacent grandfather would like it, but not the cynical youngsters. But it is great history and legend, and makes splendid reading.

Current Best Sellers

FICTION

BY LOVE POSSESSED, James Gould Cozzens.

PEYTON PLACE, Grace Metalious.

ON THE BEACH, Nevil Shute. RALLY ROUND THE FLAG, BOYS! Max Shulman.

THE WORLD OF SUZIE WONG, Richard Mason.

NONFICTION

BARUCH: MY OWN STORY, Bernard Baruch.

THE HIDDEN PERSUADERS, Vance Packard.

THE NEW CLASS, Milovan Djilas.

STAY ALIVE ALL YOUR LIFE, Norman Vincent Peale.

THE DAY CHRIST DIED, Jim Bishop.

Draft Riots Offer Topic For History

JULY, 1863. By Irving Werstein. Julian Messner. \$3.95.

In the manner made famous by Bishop's "The Day Lincoln Was Shot," and Lord's "A Night To Remember," Werstein has endeavored to recreate the five bloody days of the Draft Riots in New York City in July, 1863. That it is less successful than those memorable works is due more to a lack of records than to any flaw in Werstein's book.

The riots started as a protest against the military draft. They were not wholly spontaneous, but the mobs quickly got out of hand, killing, burning and pillaging. Not until five regiments of New York troops were recalled from the Union Army was peace restored.

CROWDED ONE-MAN SHOW

NEW YORK (AP)—The producers of "Mask and Gown," one of Broadway's early season stage offerings, have come up with an off-beat explanation of what kind of show it is. Stressing that the vehicle which stars T. C. Jones is "not a revue, the explanation adds: 'It's a one-man show a la Victor Borge, but instead of the piano Mr. Jones is using additional people.'"

Author Of The Week



WINSTON S. CHURCHILL writes Volume III, "The Age of Revolution," in his "A History of the English-Speaking Peoples." What can be said about this already known? He is statesman-author that is not probably one of the most widely read of modern authors. He previously published, among other works, a six volume history of World War II.



LADY UNDER GLASS: London art dealer Leonard Koetser, whose judgments on the authenticity of paintings have startled the art world three times in the past two years, examines a recent purchase, "Lady in Blue With Sunshade."

Fake Painting Finds Establish Collector

By RONALD THOMSON

LONDON (AP)—Leonard Koetser stared at the painting, then sighed sadly and shook his head.

At that moment, the value of the picture fell from \$100,000 to \$100.

Koetser had discovered another fake or worthless copy which had previously been attributed to an Old Master.

Three times in the past two years the Dutch-born London dealer has rocked the local art world with startling verdicts on costly paintings.

His judgments were bitterly fought by other experts at first. But each time they finally accepted his opinions.

Koetser, a burly, quiet spoken man of 50 with a grave smile, looks at Old Masters with a new eye and defies the world's greatest authorities on painting if he feels they have made a mistake.

That takes a heap of nerve in a highly competitive trade where dealers stand to lose small fortunes if they unwittingly make false claims for a picture.

Koetser, who operates from a small, bare studio on a side street off Piccadilly, claims he uses no special methods to evaluate paintings.

"When something is wrong with a picture, I feel as though I had run into a barrier," he said in an interview. "It's like a brake suddenly being applied."

"I sense a mistake. So I look again, carefully studying the quality of the paint, the draftsmanship, the detailed construction of an ear or an eyelid. Gradually one is able to pin down the faults."

"In one respect it is easy. One knows that the great masters are incapable of error. Therefore, if one can detect error, the painting is not by a great master."

HONOR FRENCH FILM

NEW YORK (AP)—This year's Grand Prix du Cinema Francais has been awarded to Rene Clair's new film, "Porte des Lilas." Chairman of the board of judges was Andre Maurois.

FIRST NOVELS SELL

NEW YORK (AP)—Average sale of 40 first novels published by Doubleday in the last five years has been 4,654 copies, says the publisher.

page news here recently over what has become known as the "Holbein Hullabaloo." The case concerned two portraits attributed to Hans Holbein the Younger in a Royal Academy exhibition.

Koetser went along to see the show and found himself in doubt about the authenticity of the painting and the descriptions in the academy catalogue.

After much research and consultation with colleagues he announced his findings that one of the portraits — of a former Archbishop of Canterbury — was a copy made by some unknown artist 20 or 30 years after the original was painted in 1527.

Koetser described it as a "very poor and worthless painting" worth about 50 pounds (\$140) instead of its previous valuation of 60,000 pounds (\$168,000).

The other portrait — of a 16th Century English nobleman — was described by Koetser as the work of pupils studying under Holbein, not the master himself.

Koetser admitted that this portrait, nevertheless, had artistic merit. He said it was worth about 10 per cent of its previous valuation of 50,000 pounds (\$140,000).

Members of the Royal Academy's selection committee later conceded the dealer's case.

The Holbein affair was dwarfed, however, by Koetser's discovery two years ago that Britain's August National Gallery had harbored a forgery for 20 years in the belief that it was a great classic painting.

The discovery paid him handsome dividends. It tripled the value of a grimy painting he bought at a London auction for 6,000 guineas (\$17,640).

The picture bore a strong resemblance to Francesco Francia's "Virgin and Child," a 15th Century classic supposedly owned by the National Gallery and valued at about 20,000 pounds (\$56,000).

Koetser decided his was the real Francia and the gallery's a fake.

Koetser took his find along to the gallery and invited experts to compare the two paintings. After a lot of argument and a series of chemical and X-ray tests, the gallery admitted that Koetser's painting was the genuine article.

Koetser's 23-year-old son, Brian, is training as a dealer under his father. "Recently he paid a small sum for a painting I believe is worth 300 guineas," Koetser said. "The boy is coming along."