

BOOK REVIEWS

by

GERTRUDE MARTIN

"Empire By Mandate" by Campbell L. Opthegrove was written in 1941 perhaps as a doctoral thesis if one may judge from its over-academic language. The book's chief merit is from a historical point of view in its analysis of the mandate system. But since it was published only this year it is unfortunate that it was not brought up to date. The thirteen years between 1941 and the present have been crowded with events and even revolutions of one kind and another in some of the mandated colonies.

The Trusteeship Council of the United Nations is of course, to a degree a continuation of the Mandate system. Had the author included a discussion of the functioning of this Council his book would have been far more valuable. In the case of each of the mandated territories such as Palestine so much has happened since the book was written that one cannot but wonder why it was not revised.

"Empire By Mandate" is written in a dry as dust style. It is not a book for the layman but even so it might have been more interestingly presented.

"Empire By Mandate" by Campbell L. Othegrove; Bookman Associates; 34 E. 23rd Street; New York City 10; 1954; \$3.50.

"OUT OF BOUNDS"

This short paper novel published in a pocket sized edition is the story of a Negro soldier in Germany. Its author is Ernest L. Matthews, a private with the 86th Army Band at Fort Devens. He has written of several a few dramatic and tragic months in the life of his principal character. In fact, the book's chief fault is that it is overcrowded with action and one sees the author pulling strings.

This is a first novel, but its author has avoided one common failing of such writing-style. His writing is far better than his melo-dramatic story. I have read several other novels by Negro soldiers about life in Germany. As in those the principal character here falls in love with a white girl, but Pvt. Matthew has other twists to his plot. His writing shows some promise and if he improves in plot improvisation his work will be more worthy of notice.

"Out of Bounds" by Ernest L. Matthews; a Uni-Book published by the Universal Publishing Company; 211 East 37th Street; New York 16; 25c

ALAIN LOCKE

One of the foremost Negro men of letters, Alain Locke, died in New York last week. Dr. Locke was Professor of Philosophy at Howard University from 1917 until 1953 when he retired. Among his writings were: "Race Contacts and Inter-Racial Relations," 1916; "The New Negro," 1925; "The Negro In America" 1953; "The Negro and His Music," 1936; "The Negro In Art," 1941.

WELCH AND "STRANGE FRUIT"

Anyone who has seen or read about the McCarthy hearings (and who hasn't) is familiar with the whimsical and very able Army counsel, Joseph Welch. I was interested to read in Harvey Britt's column in the New York Times Book Review last Sunday that the same Mr. Welch defended Lillian Smith's novel, "Strange Fruit" when it was banned in Boston. What's more he was successful in having the ban removed.

ELLISON SHORT STORY

We've intended mentioning here before the short story by Ralph Ellison called "Did You Ever Dream Lucky?" in the 5th Mentor selection of New World Writing.

It is an amusing story, a vignette of Harlem life.

As in each of the previous selections published under the title New World Writing, the material here is well above average. This volume includes poems by William Carlos Williams, Robinson Jeffers, Nelson Bentley and Wallace Stevens, among others. In addition there are a number of interesting Arabic poems selected by Desmond Stewart. There are also pages from An Autobiography by John Lehmann and unusual stories by Harvey Swados and Clare McGrath Butler.

These Mentor selections of contemporary writing are excellent bargains at 50c. The publisher is the New American Library.

FREEDOM OF UNION

The New York Times Magazine last week published an article by Vannevar Bush, a noted scientist, under the title, "If We Alienate Our Scientists." Among other things Dr. Bush states that we do now have thought control and that "a free people when it is afraid tends to abandon its liberties." It is a provocative article that needs to be read by all who are interested in preserving the traditional American freedoms.

There are also good articles in the same issue on Harlem's Northside center ("Where Troubled Children Are Reborn" by Gertrude Samuels) and on Burma and Vietnam by Chester Bowles.