make its bid for most of Asia." Much later no less an eminence than Lyndon Johnson would describe MacArthur as "a towering intellect, right in his decisions."

The general's frustration by Washington came to an end with Truman's order of dismissal and recall. While endless "negotiations" dragged on for an armistice, the Americans left behind were committed to a "terrible blood tribute by this type of stalemated attrition. . . . Never before," MacArthur said bitterly, "has this nation engaged in mortal combat with a hostile power without objective, without policy other than restrictions governing operations, or indeed without formally recognizing a state of war."

MacArthur's memoirs were written in the last years of his life. The trumpets blow in some of his passages. The style is simple and affecting in others. The writing has an elevation that accords with great events. MacArthur was a hero, one of the great captains of history. No one was ever capable of understanding the purity of his patriotism, his selfless service and abiding faith. To most of his countrymen, however, he is a lasting inspiration, the repository of an ideal kindled in the campfires of Valley Forge.

Reviewed by GEORGE MORGENSTERN

"Theatre" or "Drama"?


If the theatre is dead," declared Eric Bentley at the conclusion of The Playwright as Thinker (1946), "long live the drama."

Nearly twenty years have passed now since Mr. Bentley made the statement, and several hundred theaters have closed around the world. Actors' Equity Association, in 1962, estimated that barely 15 per cent of its total membership could be found working at any given moment. According to a brochure issued by the National Association of the Legitimate Theatre, Inc., and the League of New York Theatres, Inc., reprinted in The Congressional Record (February 5, 1964, pp. 1950-1951), "the living theatre has been on a continuous decline for the last thirty years. Over the last decade, the plight of the living theatre has become extremely grave." A rather lengthy and somewhat depressing series of statistics followed this bitter observation.

Mere statistics to the contrary notwithstanding, Mr. Bentley—who is Brander Matthews Professor of Dramatic Literature at Columbia University—now assures us calmly, with conviction, that the drama still lives on. Whether he is to be believed depends largely upon temperament: "literary" persons affirm that drama stands alone; "theatrical" persons insist upon performance. Nevertheless, the assurance is welcome in spite of temperamental reservations—even, perhaps, in spite of all those nasty facts and figures.

Early reviewers of this book—notably Richard Gilman in Book Week and John Gassner in The New York Times Book Review—have found it very difficult to summarize; and with good reason. The Life of the Drama is thoroughly original from beginning to end, and bristling with wise, pithy remarks. In a series of no less than eighty-two individual essays—each almost the germ of a separate book—Mr. Bentley discusses Plot, Character, Dialogue, Thought, Enactment; Melodrama, Farce, Tragedy, Comedy, and Tragi-Comedy. He is plainly in love with plays and playwrights of every sort and description, and his text is a paean to the pleasures which the literary form we call "drama" can give.

But when all is said and done, a bullet is a fairly useless bit of lead without a gun to fire it. And the gun business, according to the National Association of the Legitimate Theatre, Inc., is in the midst of a thirty-year slump. It would seem, therefore, that a moderately annoying gap exists between Mr. Bentley's theorizing and the facts of our presently grave theatrical situation. The drama may, indeed, be perfectly splendid on paper, but if scarcely anyone is prepared to see it performed then there must be a kink in our wishful thinking about the drama's so-called "life." We must be fooling ourselves.

And so we are—to our cost. We may say with Mr. Bentley, "If the theatre is dead, long live the drama"; if guns go out of fashion, long live bullets. And soon we throw bullets by hand, produce our drama indifferently well to little or no avail. Yet again, we may say with Mr. Bentley, "A play is written by someone who wishes to do nothing but talk for an audience that is resigned.
to do nothing but listen to talk." Or, "The theatrical situation, reduced to a minimum, is that A impersonates B while C looks on." Of course it isn't fair to lift such jaunty little aperçus from their context merely for the purpose of denigrating Eric Bentley: one may do so only to underline the author's "literary" (as opposed to "theatrical") temperament. If you are a "literary" sort yourself, caring not a whit for theatrical experience, then Mr. Bentley is your man and The Life of the Drama is your book. But if you tend, rather, to feel that the experience of "theatre" is what makes theatre "theatre," then Mr. Bentley is not your man and The Life of the Drama is barely half a book.

Whatever your temperamental leaning, the disturbing problem remains: the American theatre—indeed, world theatre—is in a pretty bad way just at present. And unless you are prepared to say that drama need never necessarily expose itself to public view in a theatre, it seems certain Mr. Bentley will shortly discover himself with nothing left to write books about. And that would be unfortunate.

Reviewed by KENNETH PAUL SHOREY

Presidents and Powers


These two volumes reflect the growing interest of scholars in the American Presidency, an interest intensified by the fact that this office has become the vital center of the Free World. It is doubtful that serious students of the Presidency will find much that is new or profound in either of these volumes, but for the casual student or general reader they are excellent. Both are replete with those incidents in the nation's life, both domestic and international, which have found the President at their center.

Of the two, the Koenig volume is much broader in scope, treating as it does virtually every facet of the office from Washington through Kennedy, but it is complemented admirably by the Warren volume which is concerned almost exclusively with the role of the United States and its President in world affairs in this century. In each volume there is a wealth of detail that will hold the attention of the reader interested in the life and times of our Presidents and in each the great problems attending the office are set forth in a manner well designed to provoke thoughtful appreciation of their gravity and consequently of their significance for the life of the nation and the international community.

Not every reader will agree with the authors' assessments of the men who have occupied the office and the nature of its problems, but then it is doubtful whether in matters as controversial as American Presidents and their office it is possible to achieve as large a measure of consensus as in some other areas of political research. As between the "strong" and "weak" schools of thought on the subject there is apparently no bridge. Professors Koenig and Warren are firmly committed to the "strong" school of executive leadership, but it is only fair to note that their basic preferences are those found in virtually all of the serious literature on the subject.

Professor Koenig's study makes a fine introduction to the whole subject and would lend itself well to use as a text in courses on the Presidency. Beginning with the formation of the office, he treats the problems of selection and tenure and proceeds to a consideration of each of the major roles of the Presidency—party chief, legislative leader, administrative chief, formulator of public opinion, chief diplomat, commander-in-chief, head of economic administration, and leader in the quest for social justice. The concluding chapters deal respectively with decision-making, the Presidency in the face of crisis, and the Presidency compared in terms of power and stability with the executives of other major nations. The study is rich in illustrations and the presentation is crisp and interesting. There are a few errors of fact as, for example, putting the German Foreign Minister, Gerhard Schröder, in the wrong political party, but no study of this scope is likely to be wholly free of them. Serious criticism is more likely to be directed at the central thesis which is that the President is weak in certain of his roles—notably as party chief, legislative leader, and chief administrator of the executive branch—that these weaknesses give rise to other weak-