

**HAWAII UNDER  
THE RISING SUN**  
by John J. Stephan  
Univ. of Hawaii, 1984  
228 pp. \$16.95

Following their successful December 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbor, many Japanese military leaders succumbed to "victory disease." Under the aegis of the Rising Sun, the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere would, they believed, unite the nations of the Pacific basin and rid them of Anglo-Saxon colonialism. Stephan, a University of Hawaii historian, details the plans of Combined Fleet commander Admiral Yamamoto's staff to conquer Hawaii and make it the keystone of the new Pacific order. Roughly equidistant between Japan and the United States, the Hawaiian archipelago was deemed essential to control of the Pacific. The large Japanese population already on the islands (160,000 in 1941, or 40 percent of all inhabitants) made conquest, and a smooth transition afterwards, seem feasible to Yamamoto's staff. They counted on anti-American sentiment among the local Japanese, who were denied jobs by the U.S. firms (the Big Five) which dominated the territory's economy. (From 1937 to '39, Hawaiian Japanese contributed more to the Japanese National Defense Fund than did native Japanese.) Plans for the "liberated" islands included dissolution of the Big Five, land redistribution, and revival of the Hawaiian monarchy. Japan's disastrous setback in the Battle of Midway on June 5, 1942, grounded such flights of fancy.

**CANNIBALISM AND  
THE COMMON LAW**  
by A. W. Simpson  
Univ. of Chicago, 1984  
354 pp. \$25

On September 6, 1884, Captain Tom Dudley and Mates Edwin Stephens and Ned Brooks of the shipwrecked yacht *Mignonette* arrived in Falmouth, England, after drifting 24 days in an open dinghy. The three Englishmen admitted, without shame, to killing and eating their shipmate Richard Parker, the youngest and sickest survivor, in order to save their own lives. They had no idea that their cannibalism—sanctioned by maritime custom in an era of frequent shipwrecks—would lead three months later to the conviction of Dudley and Stephens on charges of premeditated murder. (Brooks, who became the prosecution's major witness, said he had no part

in the decision to kill Parker.) Queen Victoria immediately commuted the death sentence to six months imprisonment, but the verdict set a major legal precedent by rejecting "defense of necessity" in favor of a more "honorable," though perhaps less practical, moral code. Simpson, professor of law at the University of Kent, explains this legal development as an offshoot of "Victorian parlor morality." He refers to contemporary editorials, letters, ballads, and sea chanteys to show how popular sentiment (which condoned the sailors' decision) differed from that of genteel society. Though cannibalism at sea is all but unheard of today—the invention of the steamboat resulted, for one thing, in far fewer shipwrecks—*Regina v. Dudley & Stephens* is still cited by American and British lawyers and judges in cases of killing under extreme provocation.

### Arts & Letters

**MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ:**  
**A Life and Letters**  
 by Frances Mossiker  
 Knopf, 1983  
 538 pp. \$22.95



The letters of Marie de Rabutin-Chantal, marquise de Sévigné (1626–1696), have long provided historians, including Mossiker, with an insider's view of the glittering court life of Louis XIV, the Sun King. Here, Mossiker weaves a narrative of Madame de Sévigné's life into the correspondence, permitting her subject to speak for herself. The wit that fills these letters (many of which were devotedly written to her "cold, aloof" daughter) was, it seems, a paternal legacy; her noble ancestors were so deft at verbal exchange that *rabutinage* had become, by the 17th century, synonymous with repartee. Wealth came from her mother's family, newly rich members of the Paris bourgeoisie. Marie's husband, the marquis, might have squandered it all had he not been killed, in 1651, in a duel. Madame de Sévigné bloomed during the 1650s, the years in which Louis consolidated power by turning once-independent noblemen into petty court intriguers, desperate for royal favor. Sévigné's wit and beauty were both assets at a court so viciously competitive that men vied