

shown clearly in the continuity of the novel, but are revealed in cut-backs which appear awkwardly and in spell-breaking pauses. Those who follow Faulkner, and like myself maintain an unflagging interest in the work of an artist, can dismiss such disappointing turns, and once more find it pleasant to adventure into the imagination of the curious gentleman from Mississippi.



### *True to the Navy*

THE PRICE OF PEACE, by Frank H. Simonds. \$3.00. 8 $\frac{3}{8}$  x 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ ; 376 pp. *Harper & Brothers*.

MUST WE FIGHT IN ASIA?, by Nathaniel Peffer. \$2.50. 5 $\frac{1}{2}$  x 8 $\frac{3}{8}$ ; 244 pp. *Harper & Brothers*.

FRANK SIMONDS' book is really a tract, but it is a valuable one, and I wish it were notched like a dictionary. Naturally it would have been impossible for such a book to have been written without embodying immense masses of controversial opinion. He writes that "with the League of Nations itself nothing is wrong; with the assumptions upon which it was established, everything." Here is a statement already debated for fifteen years and an argument for perhaps a thousand years to come. The author's superb facility in controlling masses of material gives the book its value. From start to finish, "The Price of Peace" is a swiftly moving strip of the last fifteen years of diplomacy.

Fascism constitutes "the revolt of the capitalistic and new middle classes against the apparent purpose of the masses, under the inspiration of the Russian Revolution, to exploit the machinery of representative democracy to establish Communism." This is also ground for debate. However, one is only concerned with a man's instincts for civilized decency when he is writing any-

thing whatsoever regarding the political state of the world. I respect Simonds as a liberal, and am not greatly concerned that he is one. The skill with which he makes a *tour de force* is the pith of his work.

Communist or Fascist will agree with Simonds that the world "will presently be condemned to witness new struggles between the great powers, some seeking to acquire, others to retain those resources in raw materials and minerals essential to modern industrial life." In a time when any thinking man must challenge everything, his book is welcome for its urbanity and temper. Liberalism may be bankrupt of ideas, but at least one idea no longer listed as an asset is the purge of a Hitler or a Stalin. For a long time the liberal was a harassed man, actually fearful for his life. Just now he must be in danger of laughing himself to death.

The price of peace must be paid for by those nations "of which the United States is the most striking example"; whose material resources bestow the largest measure of economic self-sufficiency. Simonds thinks that "the American Pacifists are the true profiteers in peace, for they are seeking by means of pacts, covenants, and disarmament agreements to insure for themselves the undisturbed exploitation of approximately monopolistic control of material resources which were originally acquired by the very means they are now seeking to outlaw. All such undertakings are foredoomed to futility, however, because the economic necessities of many nations have become irreconcilable with the sovereign rights of all."

The book is an excellent background against which to consider Nathaniel Peffer's work. If Simonds takes a long view of the world, Peffer puts Manchuria under a microscope. Californians will rejoice to know that the possibility of a naval duel be-

tween the United States and the Japanese battle squadrons is a close probability. Downing Street can be once again assured that still another country will pull its chestnuts from the fire. Stalin, who knows a great deal better than Stimson how to deal with the East, can go serenely on with the building of his socialist state, confident that admirals, not of his making, will make unnecessary a step-up in steel production at Kuznetsk.

Nathaniel Peffer does not actually say that we are bound to fight in Asia, and to fight very soon; but he does say that we shall have a battle there almost immediately if we do not go in for planned economy on a scientific basis, and learn to trade jack-knives with ourselves. This, to anyone who has scrutinized the Roosevelt Academy in its trend towards that economy—and the race in Tokyo away from it—is tantamount to the salvos of sixteen-inch guns. Peffer is a realist. His book in its frank dealing with the aims of the great powers is superbly callous. He assures us England dreads the spectre of the thick Red line reaching down through Tashkent even now, and will, no matter what the cost, see to it that the apostles of the next Comintern are not knocking at the other side of India with the gospel of Lenin. He knows of course that Japan, by every rule of Western chicanery, has a divine right to partition China to suit the needs of its gimcrack salesmen. Nor is Peffer deceived by the false hopes of those who think that the Japanese middle class will suddenly put aside its ingrained love of militarism and show. And he assures us that America, as long as the assembly lines run in Detroit and oil gushes in Oklahoma, will go to the mat for a few Hong-kong dollars.

Nathaniel Peffer having decided all this—and the decision is perfectly accept-

able to me—the only speculation left concerns just what manner of conflict this will be. I do not think that we will make it a crusade this time. The Annapolis gentlemen who were so severely slighted in the late one will have their innings. Peffer, I think, dismisses too lightly the task our government will face in creating a popular demand for an unpopular war with Japan. I would prefer a confidential report from the Chambers of Commerce along the Pacific slopes; but that the new generation will go with a high heart there can be no possible doubt. I would like to see an estimate, based on present armament, as to the possible length of time our superdreadnoughts could stay afloat in a theatre of naval warfare somewhere between Luzon and Yokahama. It might very well be that such a battle would rehabilitate war with much of the glamour it has lost. Naval battles are magnificent spectacles. The principals conducting them are usually gentlemen addicted to excessive courtesy. The thing may make a very great spectacle some day.

At any rate here in Peffer's book is the finest possible matter for a tap-room debate; indeed, emprising makers of parlor-games might well re-design their parchesi boards using Peiping for a home-place and in the four corners four little men, Russian, Japanese, English and American, each accompanied by an automobile salesman, a textile engineer, and a missionary—unless the miracle happens and we immediately solve the riddle of production and distribution. The Japanese are a polite people and they are going to do China over in a polite manner. The factory-owning samurai have decided to let loose a few almond-eyed Shermans to emancipate the Chinese coolie from those harsh masters who have no manufactured goods to sell him.

*Young Men With a Past*

PERSONAL HISTORY, by Vincent Sheean.  
\$3.00. 6 x 8¾; 403 pp. New York: *Double-day, Doran & Co.*

THINGS TO LIVE FOR, by Francis Stuart.  
\$2.50. 6 x 8¾; 278 pp. New York: *The Macmillan Co.*

MOSCOW CARROUSEL, by Eugene Lyons.  
\$3.50. 5¾ x 8¾; 370 pp. New York: *Alfred A. Knopf.*

YOUNG MEN just now turning into their thirties have survived remarkably a chaos which was not of their making. Hardihood is evident in all their writings, and most clear in those which attest their personal records. The men past forty—who made the world these thirty-year-olds must live in—are not adapted for survival in this new environment which they themselves adjusted; but the successor generation has shown wonderful adaptability, rapidly acquiring protective characteristics much as a child moving into a new neighborhood, if he is hardy, soon gains the key to the street.

The most vivid newcomer among these hardy ones is Vincent Sheean, and the title of his book indicates that he knows exactly his own worth. It is a personal record, and no more, of his search for maturity and mastery in the bedlam bequeathed him by his elders. This book is in no sense the research magnificent along the Wellsian line which was the vogue of 1914; for not scrutiny, but *tourism*, has been Sheean's method. And it has also been an immensely fascinating one, with Sheean a good enough writer to communicate most of this fascination to the reader. He has been a driving, excited reporter, living the good reporter's life in half the saloons of the world. His accounts of moving accidents and persons in China, Russia, Arabia, Morocco, convey to the reader the temper of the generation whose un-

fortunate privilege it was to follow on the heels of the world's legionnaires.

Sheean is a believer, in the sense that any newspaperman worth his salt, whenever he enters the realm of politics, considers himself in infidel parts. Sheean has the definite flair; and his account of the fighting in the Riff will adorn many an anthology list.

There is still another young Irishman, Sheean's contemporary, who tenders a personal record; he too is in his thirties, but there the resemblance ceases. "I have gained a little wisdom and not much else" says Francis Stuart. When Sheean left a university to become a roving reporter, Stuart was sitting in Maryborough Prison awaiting his turn before the firing squad of an English regiment. Readers may remember, notably, his "Pigeon Irish" of a few seasons past.

Stuart's autobiography is a series of vignettes and *pensées*—things which the French are supposed to do so superbly and which old George Moore actually did better. Stuart posts his record in a more or less senseless fashion, and writes with the disarming simplicity that was once Sherwood Anderson's. He is addicted to public houses and the society of nobodies, chiefly those to be found around the minor Irish race-tracks. His list of attainments would gladden the heart of a Kentuckian; he is a breeder of horses, a gambler, a good drinker, a judge of beautiful women and a man who likes to live in his own county.

Stuart has survived much more than Sheean, has seen incredibly less, and yet he is much the wiser young man, for he has within himself induced some rational synthesis out of an awry world. He is a rare bird, and his book is a rare thing. I think no book on the new list illustrates more vividly the difference between the young men of thirty and those who are graying past forty; for Stuart