

confession ever published, probably, with the exception of Boswell's *Journals*. It makes the famed confessions of Rousseau and St. Augustine seem like the reports of adolescents. Culbertson is a versatile genius, talented in many more ways than in playing bridge. Although he often seems like a

braggart, his brags (on careful thought) have justifiable bases, and no writer in the world has been more shamelessly humble in setting forth his weaknesses and shortcomings. This is truly the story of a man who not only wants to make his peace with God but with men and with himself.

THE CHECK LIST

Continued from p. 4

FICTION

CONVERSATION, by Conrad Aiken. \$2.50. *Scribner's*. A painter's marriage is going on the rocks because he doesn't want to paint portraits; unlike Rembrandt, Holbein, Leonardo and a few other pretty good portrait painters, he considers it a prostitution of his gifts. He prefers to moon about a gal he has just concluded an affair with and mingle with a bunch of Greenwich Village parasites. Meanwhile his wife cooks his meals, takes care of their kids, shoos away creditors and wonders, quite naturally, what is going to become of them all. The painter doesn't like to be reminded of things like that: it interferes with the work he hasn't any intention of doing. So there is a bout of a quarrel, the hottest and nastiest one in fiction since the one in Thomas Wolfe's *Time and the River*. Then they go into a clinch. Q.E.D.: True Love. Mr. Aiken, who is a distinguished poet, states on the jacket that he is "an ardent movie fan." This novel on the screen ought to make a good Grade B.

THIS LAND OF OURS, by Louis Zara. \$2.75. *Houghton, Mifflin*. One of a season's

bumper crop of good novels with our country's historical background as the principal theme. This is a story about the people who pushed West of the Appalachians even before the early colonials got mad with George III. You will be surprised how much you can learn from this novel about places you have been through on the train or stopped at, on a motor trip, for five gallons of gas. Quiz: Who or what was Pontiac? You will find out, from this novel, that Pontiac wasn't just a good car.

BETHEL MERRIDAY, by Sinclair Lewis. \$2.50. *Doubleday*. If you are a pretty girl, aged fifteen, and stage-struck, here's about the whole history of your life if your dreams of going on the stage come true. Our Nobel Prize winner is a master of detail. He omits nothing (well, almost nothing) about what you will run up against, including the slightly nauseating smell of grease paint and the even more nauseating smell of the hair oil of the theatrical Casanovas who will try out their repertoires on you. If you are not fifteen and want to know the low-down on troupes,

here's your Baedeker, prompt copy, almanac, dictionary, and thesaurus. And, if you have got the notion that Mr. Lewis is a has-been, that's where you are wrong. The old maestro can still write rings around 90 per cent of the younger fictionists. A novel mellow and entertaining, as well as informative.

WILD GEESE CALLING, by Stewart Edward White. \$2.75. *Doubleday*. Another historical piece, about Alaska in the 'Nineties, this time. Mr. White has written 47 books and may overtake Heinz before he is through. If you are ignorant of Mr. White's books, you are sure ignorant — or very young. This novel has plenty of gun play and the shivers of the frozen North. If you pretend you don't care for that sort of foolishness, why are you always looking through the papers to discover at what neighborhood movie house a good western might be showing?

FOLLOW THE DRINKING GOURD, by Frances Gaither. \$2.50. *Macmillan*. This novel is so good that one can only wish — without expecting — that it will have a wide audience. It is about the Negroes and whites in ante-bellum days in the Black Bottom Land of Alabama, — not in the Old Massacrinoline-marigold-and-jasmine school of romance about the South, but honest, authentic and memorable.

SCATTERGOOD BAINES RETURNS, by Clarence Budington Kelland. \$2. *Harpers*. This character, beloved by millions of readers, is in the great tradition of American literature — the tradition of Ben Franklin and Mark Twain. This is a new collection of stories in which the Vermont shopkeeper is the chief cook and bottle-washer. That's all Scattergood's fans need to know, and they are a discerning crowd of people.

MR. SKEFFINGTON, by Elizabeth. \$2.50. *Doubleday*. Magnificent story of what happened to a woman at fifty who suddenly

realized that she was no longer the great beauty she once was.

THE TWENTY-FIFTH HOUR, by Herbert Best. \$2.50. *Random House*. A novel in the best early H. G. Wells tradition about life in the future. Totalitarian wars have wiped out nearly all vestiges of civilization, except a former British army captain, his mistress and his command of soldiers. There is a plague, too, and survivors on a desert island. It is also crammed with "gravy," i.e., with the way of a man with a maid and vice versa.

221B, STUDIES IN SHERLOCK HOLMES, edited by Vincent Starrett. \$2.50. *Macmillan*. The Baker Street Irregulars contribute an illuminating volume of Holmesiana. Such subjects are discussed as *The Care and Feeding of Sherlock Holmes*, *Was Sherlock Holmes an American?*, *The Other Boarder*. A must for followers of the greatest detective.

NON-FICTION

WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO EUROPE, by Geoffrey T. Garratt. \$2.75. *Bobbs-Merrill*. This member of the Cassandra Club in London (whose members tear the hides off Chamberlain in a refined British sort of way) and excellent foreign correspondent and commentator for the Manchester *Guardian*, tells us just who are running things in England and just what kind of rackets they run. He advises Americans to keep out of the war; but he thinks we ought to give England moral support. A valuable book.

FAMILY CRISIS, by Sherlock Bronson Glass. \$2.50. *Reynal & Hitchcock*. Our nomination for the best non-fiction book of the year, so far, except Carl Snyder's "*Capital: the Creator*." This autobiographical fragment by a man who is now professor of English at the University of Nebraska, supplements, in a strangely human way, Snyder's chief contention: that a capitalist is not necessarily an ogre. Nine hundred and ninety-nine times out of a thousand, in this country, he is a fel-