

turns, *An Unofficial Guide to Your Income Tax Problems*,⁴ and before finishing three pages fell out of bed in a fit of hysterical laughter. I don't suppose it will ever find its way into an anthology, but it is full of up-to-the-minute explosions. It should be read aloud and read rapidly. The point at which I fell out of bed is this:

At your salary, you use a tax schedule known as Form 1040. Now, you are allowed fifteen hundred for your wife. This is obviously a ridiculously high appraisal because, by adding \$60, you could have got yourself a Chevrolet convertible which has a definite resale value."



FICTION

LONELY PARADE, by Fannie Hurst. \$2.50. *Harper*. Miss Hurst's story begins at the turn of the century and carries three lonely but emancipated women through the next thirty years in New York. Despite varied interests and friends, these three strangely assorted females—a rich social worker and two who live by their wits—realize that they have missed the best things that life has to offer, in this case a husband and children. Richly and entertainingly written, though it is a theme the author has used frequently.

SEVEN TEMPEST, by Vaughan Wilkins. \$2.75. *Macmillan*. A lusty historical romance

which takes place in the early years of Queen Victoria's reign. Those who enjoyed the author's "And So—Victoria" are sure to find this novel equally pleasing to the palate.

PIED PIPER, by Nevil Shute. \$2.50. *Morrow*. A seventy-year-old English gentleman enjoying a vacation in France finds himself caught in the débâcle. He starts for England with two English children, whose parents are working in Switzerland, and before he manages to get them homesafely, he picks up three other unfortunate children. Their trials and tribulations amid the disorganization which was France in those days makes exciting and sympathetic reading and once more demonstrates the courage and the see-it-through spirit of the English. A masterful, gripping story.

WELCOME TO THE CITY, by Irwin Shaw. \$2.00. *Random House*. Once more Mr. Shaw shows his sympathy for the little man and woman in this collection of short stories. Without great drama or excitement, he takes minor incidents in minor lives and makes them unforgettable. Warmly, precisely and discriminatingly written.

SEVEN FOR CORDELIA, by Catherine Macdonald Maclean. \$2.50. *Macmillan*. Sketches of seven children evacuated from the slums of Edinburgh and Glasgow to a farm in the Highlands where they are cared for by Cordelia Kinross, the Mistress of Tharrus. Written with vigor, honesty and a love of nature and children.

NO MATCH FOR MURDER, by Jean Francis Webb. \$2.50. *Macmillan*. Fast moving story of murder on the polo field. Ted Perry, ex-reporter, didn't care whodunit until suspicion pointed to Lacy Burnell, whom he loved.

NON-FICTION

BLACK LAMB AND GREY FALCON, by Rebecca West. Two volumes. \$7.50. *Viking*. Already hailed as the outstanding non-fiction work of 1941, to mention only one of its

⁴ *Simon and Schuster*. \$1.00

numerous accolades, Miss West's *tour de force* probably needs no further critical illumination. However, now that Pearl Harbor has sharpened American perspective and some citizens are seeing the world as a globe for the first time, it may be added that puzzled minds seeking to make sense out of universal confusion will find the ingredients thereof in these two brilliant volumes. Geography, people, politics and history are blended in an indirect examination of the human struggle toward self-government. The writing is uniformly superb. There are numerous photographic illustrations and an index at the end of the second volume.

A GUIDE TO RECORDED MUSIC, by Irving Kolodin. \$3.00. *Doubleday, Doran*. Of the several guides extant for collectors of music on discs, this handbook appears to combine the best virtues of the others along with some special ones of its own. It is by far the most handy, from a typographical standpoint. Its criticisms are generally sound, never dogmatic, and written with the gentle wit peculiar to the New York *Sun's* music critic. The encyclopedia does not cover jazz, but an adequate treatment of that field would require another book. The five thousand recordings it *does* cover represent musical literature more than adequately.

KING NEWS, by M. Koenigsberg. \$3.50. *Stokes*. One of the country's veteran newsmen here relates the extraordinary incidents which have made up his life. As organizer and manager of many Hearst services, he saw from the inside the half-mad world of the '20's and, as a result of his far-ranging efforts, he profoundly influenced the journalism of his own time and of today. At the close of his book is printed "A Newspaperman's Seven Commandments," which the author proposes as a code for the profession. Editors, particularly, would do well to read it.

MR. CHURCHILL, by Philip Guedalla. \$3.00. *Reynal & Hitchcock*. Though this book has all the marks of a hurried job, written

chiefly for the man who reads as he runs, it is nevertheless the best biography of the British Prime Minister in print. Occasionally it rises to real stature, especially in the sections dealing with Mr. Churchill's hard, cold and lonely twenty years preceding the present war. Mr. Guedalla effectively works in quotations from the Prime Minister's speeches before and after his assumption of office at 10 Downing Street. There are many good reproductions of photographs and a fair index.

RAINER MARIA RILKE, by E. M. Butler. \$4.50. *Macmillan*. The first full-length biography of the least popular yet perhaps greatest of modern German poets, by the Henry Simon Professor of Germanic Language and Literature in the University of Manchester. As criticism, the book leaves something to be desired, since it is not clear that Mrs. Butler fully understands Rilke's work, but she is a conscientious biographer and her study is easily the most thorough in this special field to date.

RADIO GOES TO WAR, by Charles J. Rolo. \$2.75. *Putnam*. Here at last is a fully documented and interestingly written history of radio as "the fourth front" of war. Mr. Rolo was one of the original staff members of the Princeton Listening Post and he obviously knows radio warfare intimately, its tactics, personalities, successes and failures. There is an introduction by Johannes Steel, which, alas, says nothing.

A TREASURY OF BIOGRAPHY, edited by Edgar Johnson. \$3.75. *Howell, Soskin*. An anthology, in digest form, of the autobiographies and classic biographies of Wolsey, Thomas More, Hakluyt, John Donne, Bunyan, John North, Gibbon, Samuel Johnson, Boswell, Benjamin Franklin, Trelawny, Scott, Thoreau, Dickens, John Stuart Mill, John Ruskin, Henry Adams, Gosse, Strachey, and Steffens. Each digest is prefaced by a brief biographical note of the subject. A good piece of editing.

DOWN TO EARTH

BY ALAN DEVOE

White-Footed Mice

THESE are the first words written for this corner of the *MERCURY* since the country became officially a participant in war. There is temptation, naturally enough, to put aside for this occasion the pre-occupation with birds and beasts and trees, and to join in the general outcry of martial sentiment. But it is a temptation, I believe, better resisted. If a naturalist has any useful role at all, in times like these, I take it to be the role of providing in his work two things: first, a certain distraction and refreshment as counter-measure to the blare of frightfulness which pours upon the reader in ample measure, God knows, from myriad other sources of print and speech; and second, and more importantly, a reminder of those deep and constant biological currents — those persisting rhythms and rituals of primordial earth — which survive even such planetary catastrophes as this war, and which it is important, if any kind of lasting peace is ever to be built, that we cherish as a foundational remembrance.

Man has always seen dimly — and explicitly since the burst of light accomplished by Charles Darwin — that he is himself an animal, an earth-creature (whatever additionally the theologians and philosophers may surmise him to be) and he has known that in the promptings of the primordial instincts and protoplasmic conscience that pervade all earth life there are discernible precepts for the welfare of his own body and his wayward spirit, no less than for the bodies and spirits of the more rudimentary-cortexed animals which perforce follow unelectively this ancient guidance that Burroughs was moved to call the cosmic wisdom. There is a deeply needed information for us, both physical and spiritual, in the life patterns of the natural creatures with which we fellowly inhabit the earth; there is a lore we need, for our practical success, and an “animal faith” for our hearts’ assuagement. There resides significance for us, and a wisdom we shall imperatively need when this war is done, in these