

port that all the instructions are provided, right down to what the precinct worker should do after the polls close on election night (eat a sandwich).

THE STRICKEN LAND, *The Story of Puerto Rico*, by Rexford G. Tugwell. \$4.50. *Doubleday*. This is Mr. Tugwell's lively and provocative report on his governorship of Puerto Rico, together with many personal animadversions on President Roosevelt, the New Deal, a number of Washington political personalities, and the future of democracy. He tells in considerable detail how his efforts to bring the New Deal to poor and neglected Puerto Rico made little headway against the opposition of the sugar interests and the apathy of the Puerto Ricans. He does not endorse independence for the island, but has hopes that within its present framework Puerto Rican government can more and more act as "an instrument of and for the people rather than the élite."

FICTION

THE AERODROME, by Rex Warner. \$2.50. *Lippincott*. More parable than novel, this story (first published in England during the second year of the war) relates how an Air Force establishment, "The Aerodrome," took over a village adjacent to it and proceeded to alter every aspect of the villagers' life. Where the village way had been wasteful, traditional, sentimental, confused and sensual, the Air Force's way was ruthless, aseptic, planned and efficient. The Aerodrome's chief expresses the "airmen's" contempt for a civilization "which, wholly indefensible as it is, it is yet part of our duty to defend. . . . We aim . . . also to transform it." The hero airman, told that he is to be freed from the "bondage of the future" no less than that of the past, concludes finally that "We had abolished inefficiency, hypocrisy, and the fortunes of the irresolute or the remorseful mind; but we had destroyed also the spirit of adventure, inquiry, the sweet and terrifying sympathy of love that can acknowledge mystery, danger, and dependence." The allegory, set forth in a skilled if highly mannered way, has the unreal, abstract atmosphere of a Kafka story.

MY PAST WAS AN EVIL RIVER, by George Millar. \$2.50. *Doubleday*. A disappointing first novel by the author of two first-rate personal-history war books. Whereas *Waiting in the Night* and *Horned Pigeon* were convincing and dramatic accounts of Millar's experiences with the Maquis and the Nazis, *My Past Was an Evil River* comes out as a contrived and flat story of one week in postwar Germany. The scene is the Tyrol; the characters include a de-emotionalized and de-Frenchified Frenchman and some diehard Nazis. The story carries little conviction.

WHAT D'YA KNOW FOR SURE, by Len Zinberg. \$2.50. *Doubleday*. A small-time assistant director in Hollywood falls in love with a star actress suffering from schizophrenia, and tries to help her. In doing so he gives up his job and opportunities. It is not until the star finds him washing dishes for a living that she is finally cured and begins again to believe in the honesty of the human race. After a torrid love affair, they get married, produce a picture that puts them both at the top of the Hollywood heap and then the actress retires to the home. Third-rate as a novel, but what a movie it would make!

GENTLEMAN'S AGREEMENT, by Laura Z. Hobson. \$2.75. *Simon and Schuster*. Philip Green, a feature writer, is assigned the task of writing a series of articles on anti-Semitism. In order to write an interesting series he pretends to be Jewish and is astonished to find himself reacting like a Jew to the various symptoms of anti-Semitism with which he comes in contact. While the story may be a little too pat, it is simply and honestly told, and reveals considerable insight.

ANTHOLOGIES

THE COLLECTED WRITINGS OF AMBROSE BIERCE, with an introduction by Clifton Fadiman. \$4.00. *Citadel*. This collection of Bierce's writings does not contain any of his political essays or other non-fiction, but it does include the best (and what must be some of the worst) of his fiction. The stories deal mainly in such themes as mutilation, murder, torture and parenticide, and are uniformly gloomy except for occasional flashes of sadistic wit. *The Devil's Dic-*

tionary, however, is still fun to browse through, though too large a percentage of the writer's epigrams tend to seem labored and overblown.

STORIES OF CHINA AT WAR, edited by Chi-Chen Wang. \$2.50. *Columbia*. Chi-Chen Wang, an Assistant Professor of Chinese Literature at Columbia University, is a recognized authority on the letters of present-day China. In the present volume, Professor Wang has assembled a small but interesting collection of stories, all written since 1937, and a few of which have already appeared in American magazines. There is considerable variety both in the substance and literary quality of the offerings. "Beyond the Willow," a story by Tuan-mu Kung-kiang, for example, is little more than a frothy, though charmingly told, juvenile. "The Red Trousers" by Pien Chih-lin is a humorous tale about Chinese intrepidity and craftiness against the Japanese foe; it is ably done.

DISCOVERY OF EUROPE, *The Story of American Experience in the Old World*, edited by Philip Rahv. \$5.00. *Houghton Mifflin*. Mr. Rahv is rapidly becoming one of our more industrious anthologists. In the present instance he has assembled a formidable volume of American writing about travels on the Continent, both fiction and non-fiction. (The latter category includes some excellent reporting on post-1917 Russia.) On the whole his selections are excellent.

POETRY

LORD WEARY'S CASTLE, by Robert Lowell. \$2.50. *Harcourt, Brace*. As was the case with Karl Shapiro, Mr. Lowell is now being overpraised by some of his eager fellow poets. He is really not the most wonderful thing that has happened to American poetry since Emily Dickinson or Carl Sandburg or Vachel Lindsay. He is an able craftsman with a sharp sense of the evanescence of things, as witness "New Year's Day" and "Mr. Edwards and the Spider," but he can also be brittle and girlishly intellectual, as in "The Ferris Wheel" and "Between the Porch and the Altar." Besides, the religious atmosphere that surrounds most of the poems is more offensive than elevating, more irrelevant than spiritual.

LEADING WITH MY LEFT, by Richard Armour. \$2.00. *The New Leader*. When the New York *New Leader* began publishing the satirical verse of Richard Armour in 1941 it was doubtless with the intention of using his short poems merely as fillers. Now, after five years, Armour's poetry has become popular enough to merit a volume of its own. His verse is dedicated mainly to political issues of the moment, but the collection still makes superb reading today. His commentary on the absurdities of current politics is often penetrating and consistently funny. Max Eastman contributes an introduction and Joseph Forte a dozen caricatures.

MISCELLANEOUS

WHEN THE GOING WAS GOOD, by Evelyn Waugh. \$3.00. *Little, Brown*. Mr. Waugh is now 43, and feels the need to winnow as well as collect some of his earlier writings. Here are reprinted sections from four travel books written between 1929 and 1935. It is astonishing how much these now read as though they had come from another world: the youthfully mature and urbane Englishman abroad, no passport or visa difficulties, no transportation discomforts, the British lion still everywhere all-powerful. Mr. Waugh's travels took in the Mediterranean, Abyssinia, East and West Africa, and South America. They make pleasant reading: "I was simply a young man, typical of my age; we traveled as a matter of course. I rejoice that I went when the going was good."

THE YALE COLLECTIONS, by Wilmarth S. Lewis. \$2.00. *Yale*. Founded with a collection of books in the early eighteenth century, Yale University today possesses thousands of other collections. They are, indeed, so vast that they are little known even to Yale men. Mr. Lewis has given an account of some of these collections, which comprise not only books and manuscripts, but also art objects and materials in the domains of anthropology and natural history. His survey is brief, but also revealing and well-written. Among the hundred great English books listed by Princeton University, ninety-two may be found at Yale in their first editions.