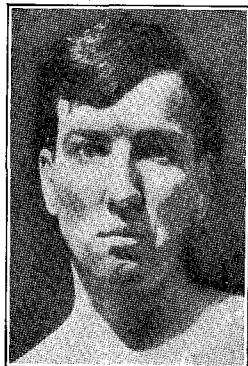


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## Books

sort; even the separate episodes, with the exception of Maynard's invasion of Novobombia, are given us in fragments. But in the end, when the war is over, we have some sort of comprehension of the whole to which the fragments belong. The war is over. The reflective men are more puzzled than ever; the boisterous are silenced; the hopeful are dead; the brilliantly radical are debauched. Maynard and the narrator, standing by Charley's grave, watching empty-headed tourists picnicking among the crosses, look at each other and wonder. They voice a hope, a faith that good has somehow triumphed; but what, the reader wonders, can be its justification?

We have had more harrowing pictures of the war and more explicit denunciations of Victorian stupidity as its cause; we have not, I believe, been given so oppressive a sense of the ineluctability of war, of individual helplessness in the face of collective stupidity, of collective helplessness in the face of individual greed. This is somber music that Mr. Tomlinson has made of his artful prose, and it is written in the same key as that dark passage whence comes his title.

### Aristocratic Bias

THE GOTHICK NORTH, by Sacheverell Sitwell; Houghton Mifflin, \$5.00.  
Reviewed by JOHN CHAMBERLAIN.

THIS BOOK is subtitled "A Study of Mediæval Life, Art, and Thought," but there is little of mundane life in it, almost no thought that is worthy of the name, and what art there is seems almost pure Sacheverell Sitwell. It is by no means a worthless book, for, after all, Mr. Sitwell is a poet, even in those off-years when he deliberately and condescendingly turns to prose. Two chapters in it deserve removal from the rubble that surrounds them. They are "The Visit of the Gypsies" (in which the impact of music on a static and perpendicular world is measured) and "Dialogue in the Apple-Wood" (in which Mr. Sitwell writes freshly of an age of heraldry when "rich young men wore their cloaks and sleeves cut like the sharp edging of a leaf or a fish's transparent fin"). These chapters might be rebound and added to a permanent library, for they give unalloyed pleasure. In them the prickly and unconvincing prejudices of a very self-conscious aristocrat are subdued to the artist that justifies Mr. Sitwell's tiresome holier-than-thou attitude. Here a sensitive and appreciative Englishman has taken the four Chatsworth hunting tapestries, as well as some others, and has saturated his eye, mind, and soul in their artificial world. The result is some pages in which formal figures are endowed with a





“Joe!”

“Oh, Ethel, please let me finish this chapter!”

IT HAPPENS almost every evening. No matter where we are going he will stand or sit with one shoe in his hand, his necktie half tied — or untied — and devour those last few words. . . . But I can't blame him. A movie or a waiting host — even the departure of a train — seem unimportant when one is swallowed up in the action of a story or the startling revelations of a vivid biography.

“What *are* you doing?” I'll call if he is out of sight when he should be dressing.

“Umph,” is usually the first answer.

“Joe. You're *reading*.”

He gives that accusation twice as much consideration: “Um — humph.”

“Put up your book; we're *late*!”

Then: “Just let me finish this chapter.”

But our alibi for tardiness at parties is always sufficient excuse. “The Guild book just came and Joe had to *start* it. I was lucky to get him out of the house at all.”

Joe's side of the situation is almost as dark. “Oh,” he says,

“blames *me* for being late. I was doing the reading. Well, this time, maybe. But how about *They Stood to Folly*? And *Queen Elizabeth*? Every time I tuned in on the fights at the Garden she would say, ‘Joe, please shut off that radio.’ Oh, I'm not the only Guild fan in our house. We looked for *Magic Island* three days last spring — and finally found it under the cook's pillow.”

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