

Youth In the Toils

By

LEONARD V. HARRISON

and

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THE BOOK FORUM



LLOYD'S: THE GENTLEMEN AT THE COFFEE HOUSE — Ralph Straus (Carrick & Evans, \$3.75).

DEFEOE — James Sutherland (Lippincott, \$3.50).

MAN AGAINST HIMSELF — Karl A. Menninger (Harcourt, Brace, \$3.75).

HIS EXCELLENCY GEORGE CLINTON — E. Wilder Spaulding (Macmillan, \$3.50).

WESTWARD, HIGH, LOW, AND DRY — Dorothy Childs Hogner (Dutton, \$3.75).

COMING SIR — Dave Marlowe (Lippincott, \$2.50).

IF the purely narrative side to Miriam Beard's *History of the Business Man* took your fancy, follow it up with *Lloyd's: The Gentlemen at the Coffee House*, a history of one particular business, by Ralph Straus. Romantic and colorful rather than analytic, full of crotchets and anecdotes, the book gives a genial biography of insurance in England. Lloyd's, as everybody should know, is the biggest insurance institution on earth; it will underwrite almost anything from anchors to ankles, from war risks to horse races. It was Lloyd's that invented the briefest of all superlatives, the term *A-1*. To Lloyd's goes the credit for introducing the lifeboat, for developing lighthouses round the world. Into its rather pompous London headquarters pours a staggering collection of up-to-the-minute information on shipping and commerce: agents posted along the trade lanes of the seven seas keep the main office wise to weather, politics, and the movements of every vessel sufficiently seaworthy to stay afloat. In Lloyd's is reflected the structure and activity of the whole British Empire.

This vast institution began 250 years ago with informal gatherings of landlubbers who made their living from the sea. Every day, marine insurance brokers would meet at the coffee house of the enterprising Mr. Lloyd, where they sipped the novel Turkish drink, waited for customers, and exchanged the gossip of the trade. How their casual association grew into a kind of gigantic, orderly holding company, how the news sheet that the good Mr. Lloyd posted on his wall expanded into a daily paper printed now by Lloyd's own press is a fascinating story. Mr. Straus tells it with gusto, yet with a certain deference necessary in the first popular writer ever to have an official passport to the organization's archives.

AMONG the merchants who frequented Lloyd's in the late sixteen hundreds was an adventurous, improvident Jack-of-all trades, a Mr. Foe by name. Everything he touched turned to gold, then dust. As wine merchant, hosier, tobaccoist, brick manufacturer, he failed with spectacular regularity. He disliked the trappings of aristocracy but was snobbish enough to decorate his name with a French prefix. Daniel Defoe he became, yet the change brought him no luck. Contentious by nature, he did his stint in the pillory for writing what he thought about the official church. As a religious dissenter he was at odds with the king, yet he managed to find time to serve as a royal spy. He was, in short, the perfect whetstone for any biographer's wits and for the already keen mind of James Sutherland particularly.

Had the contrary old rebel died at the age of 58, Mr. Sutherland's *Defoe* would be only the history of a prodigious pamphleteer. But in 1718 Defoe turned novelist. As a climax to perversity he gave up the highbrow art of political writing and published the granddaddy of pulp-magazine fiction: *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York, Mariner*. In the next ten years, *Moll Flanders*, *Colonel Jack*, and a spate of other stories delighted the public and outraged the critics. Trenchantly but humanely, Mr. Sutherland delineates this extraordinary character. *Defoe* is a corking piece of work — and impresses this reviewer as being the best biography so far this year.

NOT since the turbulent and introspective early seventeenth century has there been so much writing on the subject of battle, murder, and sudden death as in our postwar times. Novelists and poets, whether of the delicate or the violent school, reflect our preoccupation with the destructive and self-destructive forces of the human make-up. And, unconsciously perhaps, the bootstrap boys — the makers of friends and the dwellers alone — whistle desperately in the dark because of this same power of devastation. If you shudder at the one and wince at the other, read *Man Against Himself*, by Karl A. Menninger, which probes into this "sickness that affects the whole world." The book will leave you with a jubilant conviction of reason beyond chaos and a sort of crusading determination to make your cousins and your children and your aunts share its wisdom.

in fiction



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The Book Forum

Starting with Freud's theory that the death instinct in all of us parallels the instinct of self-preservation, Dr. Menninger proceeds through a lucid development of ways for harmonizing the two. What makes you devil your husband or suspect your wife; why do some people whoop it up for war and others pray for peace; why do we overdrink, why indeed do we get a stomach-ache?—these are questions the Doctor meets every day in his clinic. He believes the reason hides inside a larger question—why do we all want to commit suicide, whether slowly or with a bang?

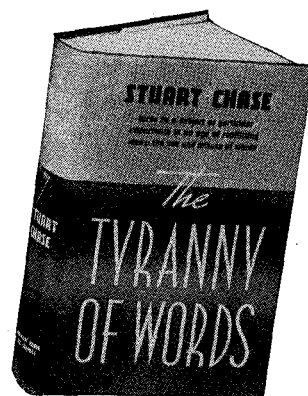
Whatever you may think of psychoanalysis, the stories and argument of this book will shoot a beam into the black corners of your own unexplored or unhappy experience. With grave and passionate concern for a society in which more hospital beds are occupied by the mentally ill than by those suffering from any other disease, Dr. Menninger pleads that a cure can start only from understanding. Though he looks toward a time when sanity will be as much a public concern as sanitation, he plans no Utopia with every congressman a Freudian scholar. *Man Against Himself* is rather timed and geared to the individual, and it should set a good many wheels to turning in the right direction.

THE only remaining figure in American history on whom a biographer seemed never to have drawn a bead has now been squarely picked off by E. Wilder Spaulding. In *His Excellency George Clinton, Critic of the Constitution*, he tells the story of one of the incorrigible democrats who carried through the American Revolution and whose attachment to egalitarian ideals was enduring enough to bring him into conflict with the aristocrats like Hamilton and the Federalists. While these gentlemen were seeking and winning a strong central government admirably fitted to serve their own ends, Clinton, with Jefferson and others of the radical group, valiantly—if not brilliantly—resisted.

Wit was not Clinton's first-line defense. But strong he was and a competent administrator. He did for New York State what Sam Adams did for Massachusetts in preparing and organizing the Revolution and, as Governor of the State during the War, he established himself permanently as one of America's real heroes. So great was his local power that he held that office seven times. But when he finally rose to the vice presidency, the subtleties of Washington politics and the approach of senility cheated him of his dearest ambition. For George Clinton wanted to be president.

The background of this man, but for whom England might have kept the

in non-fiction



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by Katherine Mayo GENERAL WASHINGTON'S DILEMMA

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