

cial system of a community, probably identifiable as Jonesville, but with particular interest in the impact of social classes on adolescents. This entails study not only of the youth of the town, but of the social, cultural, and financial standing of the citizens and of the school system, the material plant, and the educational program.

Most of the volume is devoted to the study of the several classes or qualities of students, these classes being divided according to position of the family in the social structure. The local high school furnishes the testing ground. While these social distinctions are noted and used as causes, emphasis is on the results of these differences on the youth, whether in study, play, or prohibited activities. There is little doubt that there are classes among the youth of Elmtown or any other town, and that the influence of family position or other

advantage is usually reflected in the adolescents.

Hollingshead can do no more than catalog the "crimes" without outlining cures, but he makes a detailed and somewhat comprehensive listing of young people's faults, to show that the lower classes of junior citizens are frequently the greatest offenders. Part of his book is a Kinsey report on these young people, but none of it is new discovery. The author recognizes that there is a non-legal class system, and that many of our regulations are compromises based on that unacknowledged but actual system, and that the more successful—the highly placed social group—controls our culture. There is still no universal panacea offered for those of less ability or less aggressiveness. The truth of the matter is that "the fault is not in our stars, but in ourselves, that we are underlings."

BRIEFER COMMENT

FICTION

The Borgia era in Italy, with its poisons and murders, is the theme of *The Borgia Testament*, by Nigel Balchin (Houghton, Mifflin, \$3.00). Cesare Borgia tells his own story in twentieth century language. It is the period of papal intrigue, Italian against Italian, and the Borgias against each other and everyone else. Of course his own brutality and viciousness are only lightly touched, and often excused.

The Egyptian by Mika Waltari (Putnam, \$3.75), is a gripping novel of the days of the Pharaohs, with the atmosphere of the priests and their temples, chariot warfare, and customs of the times. Love, hate, and all the other emotions are displayed and used by the author with a deft hand. In some spots it is slightly ghastly, but probably authentically Egyptian. The novel is translated from the Finnish by Naomi Walford.

Marguerite Steen relates more of the history of the Flood family—800 pages more—in *Twilight on the Floods* (Doubleday, \$3.95). It is particularly Johnny Flood's tale, following in his great grandfather's trail on the Gold Coast. It is a tremendous story, exciting and absorbing, except when the au-

thor goes into minute details of character or situation. I'd like it even better if the occasional French quotations were deleted.

Upton Sinclair's Lanny Budd stories end with *O Shepherd Speak!* (Viking, \$3.50), or at least so he promises. In this volume the hero of ten volumes of world history between 1914 and 1946 has to expand a fortune in the interest of world peace. Plenty of the war in Europe still fills the pages, and even the virtues and personalities of prominent figures, including the Trumans, come in for their share of praise. If Sinclair can take a dig at the critics, he relishes it. Of Miss Truman he can't forego this: "... (she) was making a career for herself as a concert singer, giving pleasure to the public if not to sophisticated critics." There is an index to the entire series, and Sinclair's compliments to the critics who have failed to approve of Lanny's long life. The style of writing is as stilted as ever.

A tale of Death Valley in 1850, and the trials of a group of California-bound pioneers lost in it, *Hickory Shirt* by George Palmer Putnam (Duell, Sloan & Pearce, \$2.75), is a western saga of adventure, with Mexicans, Indians and, of course, romance. Shooting and scalping make it sound bloodthirsty, but

it is a good clean story, and in fact somewhat refreshing.

A psychological novel, highly improbable but serving a purpose, *The River Line* by Charles Morgan (Macmillan, \$2.75), is about the planned reunion of an American, an Englishman, and his French wife. The plot centers on the story of the underground in France during the war, with a tragedy in it for all three, its effects on them, and man's general incredulity that things that happen to others can also happen to him. The book was serialized as *Edge of Happiness*.

Fraternity Village, by Ben Ames Williams (Houghton, Mifflin, \$3.00), is a collection of short stories all placed in that Maine village. These previously appeared in magazine form, picturing the inhabitants in sketches and tales, all with the inviting atmosphere of the back country and its customs.

A story of Jewish family life, *A Little Sleep, A Little Slumber* by Norman Katkov (Doubleday, \$2.75), makes its appeal by pulling on the old heart strings. It is the story of a dying immigrant, his loving family, and the recollections of yesterday. A lot of it is good everyday street life, dramatized, but real. Some of the street language, realistic but filthy, might have been edited advantageously.

A family's internal differences, spoiled and self-willed children against their self-made father, makes *Let Love Come Last*, by Taylor Caldwell (Scribner's, \$3.00), a study of character. It is an exposition of the advantage of being ruthless in business, with the moral of ruining the lives of one's own children.

MISCELLANEOUS

A friendly tour through the three countries, *The Bolivar Countries, Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela*, by William Russell (Coward, McCann, \$4.00), is the latest in the *Invitation to Travel Series*. The history of each place visited is given in brief, and the customs, some modern, some quaint, are given added interest by anecdote and recollection of amusing moments.

American Wild Flowers, by Harold N. Moldenke (D. Van Nostrand, \$6.95), is a guide to the wild flora of the United States, with numerous illustrations, many in their

natural colors, and a lengthy index. Native habitat, botanical and common names, and detailed descriptions give ample information about the many plants. Despite all this, it still isn't easy to identify a variety that you pick in the woods. One has to know something of botany to find his way around, but it is an excellent and useful volume, particularly in its arrangement. The author is curator of the New York Botanical Gardens.

The development of our transport air force during the war is related in *The Eagle in the Egg*, by Oliver La Farge (Houghton, Mifflin, \$3.50). The author, a lieutenant colonel and historical officer in the air force, describes the growth of our carrying airways from a small beginning, with details of the problems and their solution, whether in Europe or in the Far East. It makes an appraisal and record of our air transportation effectiveness in a simple, effective manner.

The Palestine Year Book and Israeli Annual, Vol. IV, edited by Sophie A. Udin (Zionist Organization of America, \$3.75), is devoted chiefly to the affairs, laws, and problems of the new state, with articles on culture and economics. A portion gives the history of the Zionist movement; there is also tabulation of statistics and historical facts.

Why and how authors write is the unifying topic of articles now in book form as *Writing for Love or Money*, edited by Norman Cousins (Longmans, Green, \$3.50). Previously published in the *Saturday Review of Literature*, these chapters by well known writers try to give the authors' views on the public's ideas and demand for fiction, essays, and biography. At the same time they tell something of the authors themselves and their urge to explain themselves, or portray a person, or tell a story.

Based on his personal observations first reported in newspaper and magazine, *Behind the Curtain*, by John Gunther (Harper, \$3.00), is his revelation of conditions in Europe, from Italy to Russia. Descriptive of people and places, of farms, politics, and ways of living, Gunther's first-hand report on the satellite countries of the Russian dictator gives an intelligent picture of Europe today. There are also chapters on Germany, France, Italy, and England.