

## BOOK NOTES

**PROVIDENCE ISLAND**, by Jacquetta Hawkes.  
*Random House. \$3.50.*

You read the first hundred pages of this cleverly contrived novel with growing excitement. It's the first science fiction written for adults since Ray Bradbury turned into William Saroyan, you are apt to exclaim if someone grumbles that it's time to turn out the lights and go to sleep. What's more, the author, Mrs. J. B. Priestley in private life, is a trained scientist who has found that she likes to write rather than a storyteller who has picked up a smattering of scientific jargon in order to embellish a popular novel. The situation is first-rate: On an impulse to break out of his donnish rut, elderly Professor Pennycuik of Oxford outfits an archaeological expedition to investigate the incredible report that certain Stone Age artifacts typical of the Magdalenians, who drew those lovely pictures on the walls of caves in France, had been found by an American pilot when his plane was forced down in an unexplored island in the South Pacific. Pennycuik and his friends reach their enchanted island and dig up enough Magdalenian artifacts to make them all famous. And then they find something even more astonishing—a colony of living Stone Age people. If someone tells you to turn out the light at this point, go ahead and do it. Despite the inevitable unrepressed sexual customs and a rather clever mind-reading trick they've worked out over the millennia, the artsy-crafty human anachronisms of Providence Island somehow manage to combine the most cloying features of the Noble Savage and the Welfare State. And of course this rather dull anthropological daydream has to end somehow, and so here comes the gum-chewing American pilot again, hell-bent to pulverize the Garden of Eden with a hydrogen bomb. Will our kind-hearted friends from Oxford be able to save the beguiling people of Uskadak from the mass murderers' hideous Coke machine? Read Chapter 11 for the unexciting answer.

**FRANCE: A MODERN HISTORY**, by Albert Guérard. *University of Michigan Press. \$8.75.*

It is difficult to imagine contemporary British politics being influenced by enduring pity for the fate of the Princes in the Tower, or partisan fury over the Wars of the Roses or over Cromwell, but the quarrels the French of our times engage in, with no passions ever spent, are always the projection and continuation of the oldest of their battles. This elephantine memory has given dramatic unity to the endless variety of France's

adventures as the nation progressed, under every known system of good and bad government, down the centuries to the present. It is as if the same company of players were always on stage acting out variations on the theme of the oppressed endlessly challenging the oppressor. The costumes will change, female roles will be given to men: the Queen will no longer have lost her necklace; it will be the ministers of a Third Republic cabinet losing their reputation in the scandal of Panama. Stagehands will change the sets: a stupid King will no longer proceed for illicit pleasures to the Deer Park; a stupid President will let in a furtive mistress through the modest gardens of the Elysée. Vercingetorix, Bayard, Condé, Dumouriez at Valmy, Napoleon in Moscow, Joffre and Foch, all speaking in alexandrines, will create in victory or defeat—it is immaterial which—the military legend. All this, the noisy and dramatic parade of governments, scandals and wars, material achievement and failure, is placed into perspective in Albert Guérard's remarkably balanced and vivid account, made secondary to the achievements of the French people, to the interest that nation has for the world.

**THE TRADITION OF THE NEW**, by Harold Rosenberg. *Horizon Press. \$4.95.*

Though the publisher has done his best to disguise the fact, this is a collection of essays written over the past twenty years. Those who are meeting up with Mr. Rosenberg for the first time will not find him an easy writer to go along with. He needs getting used to; but he is very much worth the effort. His is an acute and original mind, with a passion for the abstract and metaphysical that is united to a radical insight into the political and social context of ideas. All in all, Mr. Rosenberg is the finest type of French intellectual, which may explain why he is not better known in this his own country. He is interested in Marxism, poetry, religion, and politics, and comprehends them all as aspects of one human totality. The first six essays, dealing with "American Painting Today," are a particularly valuable guide to "action painting" or *tachisme* or abstract expressionism or whatever it was that Jackson Pollock was doing. Mr. Rosenberg is the quasi-official philosopher and spokesman for that movement, and he makes considerable sense in explaining why the paintings don't try to.

**THE WATCH THAT ENDS THE NIGHT**, by Hugh MacLennan. *Scribner's. \$3.95.*

This is the story of Catherine Stewart, a "woman well and truly loved," who, because of a congenital heart defect, "must learn to live her own death." It is

also the story of the two men who love her: the one a professional intellectual, dispassionately uninvolved in the fundamental battle for men's souls that characterizes his time; the other a wildly impetuous surgeon, who is swept away from Catherine and from Canada to the Spanish Civil War. Mr. MacLennan, Canada's foremost novelist, has written more than a substantial and mature novel about the loving of life in the midst of death. *The Watch That Ends the Night* is a detailed and analytic reflection of the changing intellectual and political climate of Canada from the twenties through the fifties. Further, there is here an element of the psychological melodrama. It is Graham Greene with the mysticism gone nondenominational. There is sin (in the form of failure of understanding and of nerve) and there is expiation in the form of growing acceptance and courage. And for those who know Montreal, there are magnificent descriptions of the city.

**BELOW THE TIDE**, by Penelope Tremayne. *Houghton Mifflin. \$3.*

Here is an English newspaperwoman's account of the year she spent as a Red Cross field officer in Cyprus. Miss Tremayne describes, in a series of adventures, her attempt to break through the formidable barrier of fear, prejudice, and misunderstanding created by British officialdom and by the Greek and Turkish Cypriots alike. If she almost sounds a little too cute to be true, it should be stated that Miss Tremayne nowhere betrays a sign of the "restless natives" attitude toward the Cypriots that marked some of her countrymen. On the contrary, she manages to maintain her constant sympathy and occasional sternness without ever being patronizing. She arrived in Cyprus with a speaking knowledge of Greek, great curiosity, and a tendency to run toward rather than away from danger. She left believing that the majority of Greek Cypriots while hostile to the British were the gullible, misinformed victims of EOKA propaganda and official stupidity. Although a political settlement has now been reached in Cyprus, Miss Tremayne's insight into the techniques of intimidation and rumor that largely made up the Cyprus war of nerves will continue to be relevant as the three communities get down to the business of living together. Equally interesting is the character of the author herself, who, in the face of awful danger, was more often exasperated than afraid: when a group of villagers hold a council in one's presence on whether or not to push one in one's old Land Rover right over a cliff here and now, well, it really is a bit much.





JUST PUBLISHED

# Boris Pasternak's

*newest book—written after*

*DOCTOR ZHIVAGO*

## I REMEMBER

SKETCH FOR AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

IN THIS, his latest book, Pasternak recalls the incidents and influences that made him the poet and the man he is today. Through what he tells, and what he omits, one comes to understand this symbol of lonely courage who has stepped out of the history of literature into the history of mankind. "The most outspoken and heart-searching document a great poet has ever written."—DAVID MAGARSHACK

*Translated, with a preface and notes, by DAVID MAGARSHACK, and including Pasternak's essay "Translating Shakespeare," in the English version of Manya Harari. Illustrated with photographs and drawings. \$3.75, now at your bookstore.*



PANTHEON

*"One of the great events in man's literary and moral history."*

—Edmund Wilson, THE NEW YORKER

### DOCTOR ZHIVAGO

By BORIS PASTERNAK

\$5.00, now at your bookstore

PANTHEON