

The New Books

Fiction

TUTT FOR TUTT. By Arthur Train. Scribners. 1934. \$2.

To those who have enjoyed the Tutt books as they should be enjoyed—and this is what has happened, surely, to practically all who have read them—it is sufficient to say that in this new collection of stories Ephraim Tutt remains Ephraim Tutt and Arthur Train remains Arthur Train. To define Ephraim Tutt for those who have not yet made his acquaintance is a less simple task; it is quite inadequate to say that he is a compound of simplicity and guile, of tenderness and force, of the backwoods primitive and the cultured gentleman, etc. The truth is that he is a genuine creation, a human being whom Mr. Train has given to us as a friend and companion, and whose little peculiarities are as endearing as are his cardinal traits. In point of sheer ingenuity he does not rank with Sherlock Holmes, but he is a far more complete human being; and while the adventures of the shrewd, resourceful, romantic old New York lawyer do not grip the mind so intensely as those of the uncannily logical London detective, they are both more amusing and more touching. In these days, when grim problems claim almost a monopoly of our attention, stories that not only delight the mind but move us to laughter and tears are something for which we may be truly thankful.

F. F.

THE RECKONING. By Leane Zugsmith. Smith & Hass. 1934. \$2.50.

Leane Zugsmith is primarily a portrayer of character. She has the photographic eye for the details of gesture and idiom and she has the selective sense that tells her just which ones should be recorded and which ignored to create the whole person for the reader. The awkward angle at which a woman sets down her feet gives as much of her past and her future as a paragraph might. A cat "unslotting" its eyes in a kitchen warms the whole scene to intimacy. Arthur Turk clinging desperately, through great emotional stress, to the elegant nominative, "No hard feelings between you and I," exposes himself as well as his vernacular.

Characters abound in the present novel. Whether they are to play principal roles in the reckoning of New York's social system or are to appear only momentarily in a coached part before the jury, they are complete in their short-sighted self-seeking, their futile idealism, or their unthinking blundering ahead. In importance Oliver Pace should probably come first. A fairly young, unsuccessful lawyer in the beginning, with his driving interest in justice and his unresolved bondage to his dominating mother, he decides against his

nature to strive, by whatever means he can put his mind and hands to, for power. After his greatest effort in the struggle he finds himself out-tricked and power as elusive as justice. Or perhaps Castie Petrella, who lied himself into Welfare Island rather than admit to his meager fifteen years of age, should come first as the ball that started the whole thing rolling.

The story itself is, of course, an indictment of the legal and social systems where Casties are first made and then condemned for existing, but Miss Zugsmith's ability at story telling (her novels are full of complete and perfectly finished short stories, as in this instance, the parting of Mr. Turk and Maude) lifts her work safely clear of any didacticism.

G. G.

ABOUT LEVY. By Arthur Calder-Marshall. Scribners. 1934. \$2.

A man on trial for murder brings an impact of vicarious drama to the lives of all who have known him, and the drama is none the less real even to those whose acquaintance with him was casual. An excellent idea for a novel, and Mr. Calder-Marshall has done it justice. He has an unusual versatility in his ability to project various characters—Levy's two inamoratae, one real and passionate, the other cold and artificial; the middle-aged priest who had been his tutor; the loafer in the pub, discussing the case over a pint of bitters; Levy's sister, secure and secluded, avoiding contact with him. The author presents them all quickly, surely, and with conviction. He handles equally well the dramatic narrative and the stream of consciousness, alternating them to suit his needs, always with his eye on the multifarious interplay of the events and characters. About Levy, who never appears directly, we finally know everything that can be said by the objective method—a method, incidentally, which gives the novel a superficial resemblance to the by-products of "Grand Hotel." It's much better than that.

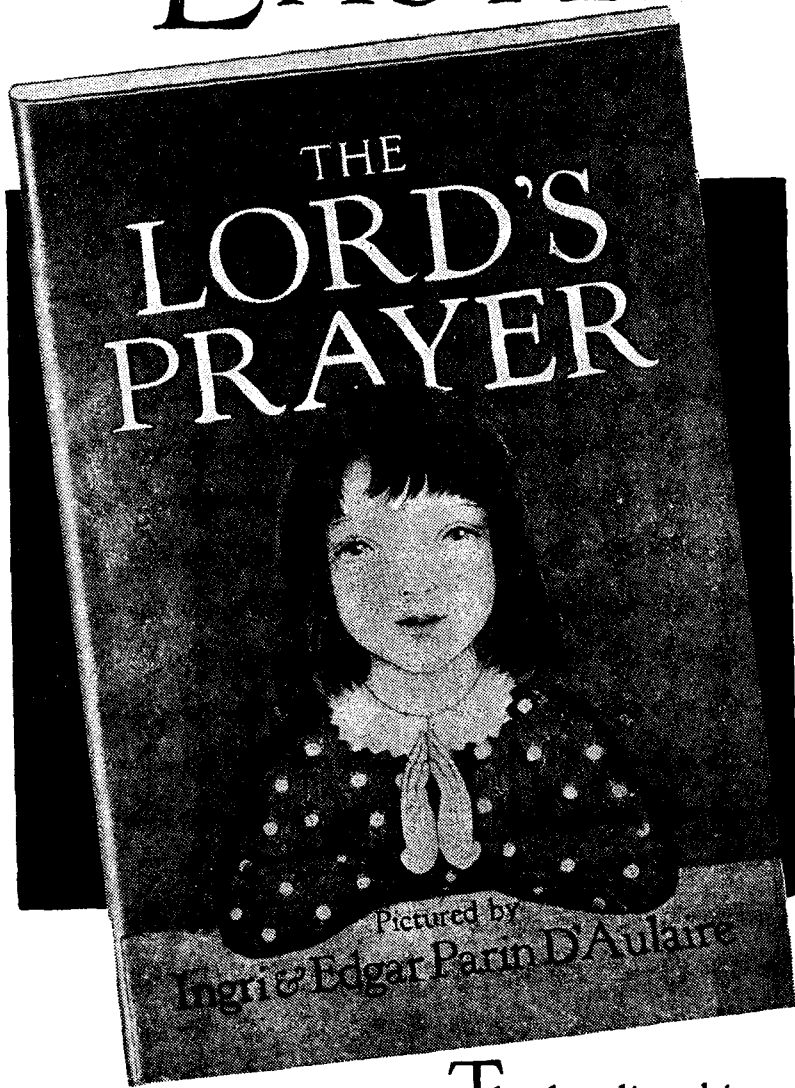
G. S.

THE LADIES. By Stanley Hopkins. Harpers. 1934. \$2.

To say that "The Ladies" is an unusually fine first novel seems almost to mingle some patronage with the praise it amply earns. Perhaps it would be better to say simply that it is a fine novel; but it is nevertheless true that its best qualities, its self-control in attack, and its wealth of character, are precisely those that are most notable in a first book, where a single actor and a single point of view too often suffice. "The Ladies" is a story of the dry-rotten life in a backwater town in the deep

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Title and Author	Crime, Place, Sleuth	Summing Up	Verdict
THE NINE TAILORS Dorothy L. Sayers (Harcourt, Brace: \$2)	Gravediggers at East Anglia funeral turn up unknown corpse. Lord Peter Wimsey does his most brilliant work.	Fascinating accounts of bell-ringing, excellent characterization and local color, make this much more than a good mystery.	AAAAA
LONDON CALLING Val Gielgud & Holt Marvell (Crime Club: \$2.)	Murder in multiple-studioed Broadcasting House, London, taxes brains of sleuthing reader and Scotland Yard Inspector Spears.	Novel setting, complex of motives, several suspects, and ingenious alibi make tight-knit, steady-paced yarn.	Topping
THE CASE OF THE FIFTH KEY Gregory Dean (Covici-Friede: \$2.)	From scratches and broken button, swivel chair detector Ben Simon reconstructs narcotic dealer's murder in Manhattan's East Forties.	Author Dean has developed new pattern; interest holds through Simon's second case, despite multiplicity of speaking parts.	85%
THE GHOST HUNTERS Ralph Aiken (McBride: \$2.)	Wealthy playboy buys Connecticut farm, hopes for ghosts, encounters bootleggers, pretty girl, and incidental murder.	Much youthful whoopee, spiritualistic nonsense, state police, and Wodehouse butler help to confuse issue.	Muddled
THE LESSER ANTILLES CASE Rufus King (Crime Club: \$2)	Murder strikes in lifeboat holding ten survivors from wrecked millionaire's yacht; Lt. Valcour, famed sleuth, goes cruising in Caribbean.	Slight strain on reader's credulity fails to mar deftly managed yarn of killing afloat and ashore. Author should look up meaning of "eclectic."	Engaging

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