

were innocent, but that the percentage runs high is indisputable. Take the case of Robert Johnson in Bluefield, West Virginia. When charged with rape of a white girl he presented an alibi and proved it. The girl who had minutely described the clothing of her assailant naturally did not identify Johnson. Thereupon the police took Johnson and *dressed him up to fit the girl's description*. The girl then identified him and the police permitted the mob first to abuse Johnson and then hang this innocent man.

Today lynching has taken on a new and dangerous phase which Mr. Shay well brings out. It is being used against labor organizers, against men, white and black, whose sole offense is to dare to demand higher wages and that right to collective bargaining which has now been decreed by the Congress. In many Southern States, notably in Florida, and also in California, terrorism and lynching are used to keep pitifully underpaid peons in complete economic servitude and to bar out unions. If this continues long the class struggle will be gravely intensified. The

worst feature of it is that Governors and police officials connive at this lynching policy and cooperate with the mobs, the planters, and other employers. For all of this Mr. Shay gives chapter and verse.

While Mr. Shay calls his book "The First Hundred Years" of Judge Lynch, much longer time than that has elapsed since lynching began. I am especially glad that he has brought out numerous lynching cases prior to 1861, for there is now a determined movement on foot, in connection with the new rewriting of the history of the South and especially of the slavery period and the Civil War, to "forget" these instances.

It is a monstrous misrepresentation of history to declare that this crime was "learned" from the Yankees. Mr. Shay tells only part of the story. His book would have gained weight had he gone into this aspect of the case more thoroughly. As it is he more than proves his point.

*Oswald Garrison Villard, as the grandson of the Liberator, comes by his interest in the Negro naturally.*

## Under the Sun

LOVE AT THE MISSION. By R. Hernekin Baptist. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1938. \$2.50.

Reviewed by STUART CLOETE

STRANGE things still come out of Africa, and strange things come into the thoughts of those who live there—they come from the mountains and the veld and slowly eat their way into the human mind.

All novels dealing with Africa emphasize its tragedy. In them all, intellect is sacrificed to brutality. Matter is greater than mind in Africa and man, lost in these endless *morgen* of Karoo, mountains, bush, and lowveld, struggles vainly against the malignant forces of nature; against droughts, floods, ticks, and white ants, struggles until he gives up or is caught up and destroyed. The books of such novelists as Plomer, Olive Schreiner, Richard Dehan, Pauline Smith, Ethelreda Lewis, and Sarah Gertrude Millin show the impossibility of escape from such an environment and the corruption that ensues from it. The country is so big that there is nowhere to go. The distance between farms is so great that there is no one to talk to. "The Story of an African Farm" is no exaggeration. It is the truth. "The Dope Doctor" is the truth. "God's Stepchildren" is the story of a missionary and his demoralization. These novels will not be surpassed, and it is doubtful if they will be equalled.

Mr. Baptist has written the story of a Mission Station in Bantusiland. It deals with the lives of three girls, the daughters of a widowed missionary. His is an aseptic fatherhood; he neglects his daughters and devotes his life to translating the Bible into Bantusi. The girls, thrown back on their own resources, become introspective, perhaps unduly so, and wayward. The eldest, Hortense, falls victim to the charms of the East African servant of a neighborhood missionary. Another missionary, married to a woman much older than himself, falls in love with Madeleine, one of the younger girls. And the eldest, to save her sister from the clutches of the sinister East African who is also interested in her, encourages this all but adulterous relationship.

I do not think love at a mission is like this, or for that matter, love anywhere. It is not love which is described, it is not a mission (or at least I do not think it is) and it is not Africa. The characters are two-dimensional and move in a world that is utterly un-African, swimming like gold fish through a sexual fluid of the author's own invention. Presumably the strength of the book lies in its reversal of the accepted standards of miscegenation. This reversal would only become credible if it was explained. I am not prepared to state that under no circumstances would a missionary's daughter give herself willingly to a native, but before I can believe it I must have a detailed psychological study of her character. This book is as strong as the man in leopard skins who picks up papier mâché weights.

Stuart Cloete is the author of "The Turning Wheels."

## The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	Crime, Place, Sleuth	Summing Up	Verdict
THE BEAST MUST DIE Nicholas Blake (C. Day Lewis) (Harpers: \$2.)	Crime novelist Felix Lane plots murder as revenge on hit-&-run driver, but it takes Nigel Strangeways to discover who really killed Gloucestershire road-hog.	Extremely ingenious plotting, with Felix Lane's diary leading reader by the nose, provides double surprise in excellent, super-literate baffler.	Don't miss it
MIDNIGHT SAILING Lawrence G. Blockman (Harcourt, Brace: \$2.)	Triple killing on trans-Pacific Jap steamer solved by newshawk ostensibly on trail of elusive heiress for big story.	Brisk action, lively dialog, fiery climax, and neat sleuthing by chap who for newspaperman . . . ain't such a bad detective."	Class A
MR. ZERO Patricia Wentworth (Lippincott: \$2.)	English peer and butler slain by relentless blackmailer. Algy Somers—himself suspect—sees light in nick of time.	Very well bred and somewhat oversentimentalized—but killer is well concealed and final scene has its points.	Entertaining
THE CUT DIRECT Alice Tilton (Norton: \$2.)	Carving knife eliminates man and woman. Leonidas Witherall, who looks like Shakespeare, apprehends assassin.	Knockabout comedy and galaxy of slightly addled characters minimize mystery. Murder, after all, is a serious matter.	Boisterous
MURDER IN SWITZERLAND Edmund Snell (Hillman-Curl: \$2.)	Deadly "Spider," who kills inventor of artificial fog, unmasked by Janyon, frolicsome English lad turned secret agent.	Somewhat routine yarn of continental intrigue with villainy afoot in every chapter, sinister characters pussyfooting around, etc.	Time-passer
CLOUDS OF WITNESS AND THE DOCUMENTS IN THE CASE Dorothy L. Sayers (Harcourt, Brace: \$2.)	(a)—Duke of Denver saved from gallows by slick work of brother Peter (Wimsey); (b) Science foils perpetrator of "perfect" crime.	Both with and without Wimsey these early Sayers stories show author at mystifying best—though second is on esoteric side.	Worth re-reading
THIS MAN IS DANGEROUS Peter Cheyney (Coward-McCann: \$2.)	Kidnaper-killer Siegalla on the loose in England quenched after much mauling by Lemmy Caution, lad with lurid lingo.	Torrents of tough guy talk (slightly synthetic) may bog down some readers—but it's real Camembert for guys what crave action.	Caution!

# The New Books

## Biography

**FRANK MILLER OF MISSION INN.** By Zona Gale. Appleton-Century. 1938. \$2.

The Mission Inn, at Riverside, California, is a hostelry which might have come straight out of the pages of Myron Weagle's notebooks. But the central character of Mr. Lewis's "Work of Art" never approached, even on paper, the amazing synthesis of hotel, community center, tourist Mecca, museum, art colony, and church which Frank Miller achieved in an otherwise unremarkable California citrus town. The Inn has to be seen to be believed, with its Cloister Music Room, its collections of famous bells and of crosses, its Court of the Orient, and the astonishing St. Francis atrio and chapel. Its more or less successfully California-Spanish blocks and wings are everywhere adorned, inside and out, with a prodigal confusion of pictures, statuary, tapestries, and historical objects.

The man who created this enterprise was typical of many of the ideas and enthusiasms which have made Southern California the sort of place it is. Besides bringing his Inn to a shrewd success, Frank Miller worked through most of a long life for the cause of world peace. He organized the first Easter dawn services on Mt. Rubidoux. In a dozen ways he left his mark upon his community. Here was a rare opportunity for a biography which might underline the relation between a man's life and the place where he lived it. Miss Gale has not taken it; her short, over-accented book is hardly more than an unanalytic citation of a remarkable life. It is likely to please Frank Miller's family and friends, but it represents, for the general reader, a lost opportunity. More's the pity.

W. S.

## Fiction

**CHARACTERS IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE.** By Romilly Cavan. Macmillan. 1938. \$2.50.

This novel has the rather irritating charm of some young thing who is just a little too much made up. Now affected, now unselfconscious, its alterations are rather hard on one's nerves. It begins with the meeting, on a rustic September morning, of a boy called Mark Tristram Brown and an elderly gentleman named Abdy Sumsion. Mark is a greengrocer's son, educated "above his station" as he puts it, and ambitious to write a play. Abdy Sumsion (his name alone is a dead give-away) is an old offender. He has appeared in English fiction often enough already—sometimes he is a tramp, sometimes an artist, sometimes an itinerant preacher, and always unsparing in his philosophy. In this reincarnation, he is a scholar with a taste for alcohol, and the idea is that we, the readers, should like him very much.

It is pleasant to record that, after this inauspicious beginning, the novel improves considerably. It introduces Mark to the Verity family, while Abdy Sum-

sion assumes the comparatively tolerable role of a one-man chorus, and intermittent at that. The Veritys are quite amoral and quite attractive and more than a little over-written; they are also likable. Mark makes friends with them, quarrels with them, and disappears from their life for several years, during which he writes a successful play.

Then he meets Abdy Sumsion in a London pub, and that sage leads him once more to the Veritys. Mrs. Verity is a little faded, but the two girls have grown up; and you are very soon apprised of the fact that Mark is destined to marry Moira. He does so; and the rest of the novel is concerned with the question—Can Mark, who is beginning to lose his grip on the theater, make a go of it with Moira, who is on her way to becoming a successful dress designer? The movies have run this particular problem almost to death, but, with the help of some neat characterizations, Miss Cavan manages to keep it on its feet. She even contrives to keep it running, for at the end of the book we still don't quite know what is going to become of Mark and Moira. This is one of those take-it-or-leave-it novels; but those who take it will get some pleasure along the way.

G. D.

**FRUIT IN SEASON.** By Anthony Thorne. Random House. 1938. \$2.50.

The minor English novel is usually a piece of smooth writing about nothing in particular; "Fruit in Season," without ever getting out of its class, is a superior specimen on both counts. Anthony Thorne writes with felicity and economy not only about landscape and old houses, but about people, and his book has more body than most summer imports from England. Four children and their governess come for the summer to the country house they love, and have hardly renewed their acquaintance with the trees and gardens before the sudden death of their dipsomaniac mother sends them away. Years later the eldest daughter spends her savings to reopen the house for a fortnight's holiday for the four, with an accompanying wife and husband. Two of three kinds of tragedy strike them, yet they are left with a sense of solidarity amid diversity not too often seen in the families one actually knows. Very pleasant reading.

E. D.

**SMOULDERING FIRE.** By D. E. Stevenson. Farrar & Rinehart. 1938. \$2.

The touch of lemon which has hitherto given character to Miss Stevenson's excellent prune soufflés has been forgotten in this latest confection of hers, the romance of an impoverished Scottish chieftain. Scarcely a page of "Smouldering Fire" shows signs of having been written by the deft and entertaining author of "Miss Buncle's Book": it is Florence Barclay at her least realistic, but without her authority.

How The MacAslan found his dream princess again, years after his first

glimpse of her; how she had suffered with the rake to whom she had been married and from whom she was now in the process of getting a divorce; how appearances were against her and MacAslan that stormy night when they were wrecked on a lonely island; what use the villain threatened to make of these appearances; and how MacAslan's faithful follower saved his chief—all this any schoolgirl could tell you. Moreover, any schoolgirl could tell it to you rather better than Miss Stevenson, to whose nature melodrama is so obviously alien. The reader accustomed to her humor and intelligence and skill keeps expecting her to observe the absurdity of her characters and situations and exchange an occasional wink with him; but he ends the story puzzled by Miss Stevenson's failure to do justice to her own sense of humor.

It is hard to believe that she is unconscious of the unreality of her principal characters, especially since she has juxtaposed to them Mrs. Hetherington Smith, who is one of the pleasantest and solidest and warmest creatures in English fiction since Mr. Polly's fat woman at the Inn. She sits there in Ardfalloch, and her shoes and her corset hurt her, and she wishes she were back in the old days in the Edgware Road, where things seemed more real. So does the reader.

K. S.

**WOMAN ABOUT TOWN.** By Allis McKay. Macmillan. 1938. \$2.50.

Here is rather an ambitious novel about working women inside and outside the office which, somehow, ends in being nothing more than second-rate summer reading.

Leila Gerston, who is the best fashion-copy writer in Chicago, besides being young and pretty and not quite divorced, has the bad luck to fall in love with one of the men in her office. The story of their affair finally ends when, after getting her divorce, Leila lets the man go because she knows that he doesn't really want to marry her. The advertising background

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