

THE NEW BOOKS

Biography

DO NOT DISTURB. By Frank Case. Illustrated by Soglow. Stokes. 1940. 322 pp., with index. \$3.

Frank Case, proprietor of the Hotel Algonquin, continues in "Do Not Disturb" his merry chat about the celebrated people who frequent his 44th Street branch of the Mermaid Tavern. Although the conversation is not quite so lively, nor the recollections so random as in Mr. Case's earlier book, he has again provided a liberal supply of

anecdotes in which Names are named, and has shown himself better than able to match wits with his customers. A good deal of talk about hotel-keeping is thrown in with the friendly gossip, and frequently these professional comments of Mr. Case's are even more interesting than the stories he has to tell. One section in particular combines the best features of both: a list of replies to a questionnaire on food preferences which Mr. Case sent out to a number of his patrons. Finding out what anyone likes to eat is always, for some reason, fascinating. It is even better to find out what Lillian Gish and Gene Markey and Lewis Gannett and Joan Crawford like to eat. (More people dislike parsnips than anything else.) Occasionally Mr. Case complains of the complexities and difficulties a hotel-keeper has to face, but serious as these are there is no doubt that the host of the Algonquin finds that "the duties are delightful and the privileges great." Certainly his book conveys his pleasure in his lot, and it will therefore please his readers: those he knows, who look to see if they are mentioned and correctly credited; those he doesn't know, who want to share his delighted intimacy with those he knows.

F. S.

Fiction

THE HILL IS MINE. By Maurice Walsh. Stokes. 1940. 355 pp. \$2.50.

Mr. Walsh's tales are best described as swaggering romances, garnished

with deft touches of banter in mellow old literary vein and with sudden swirls of dark passion, also in mellow old literary vein. His characters, once set up, move of their own accord just as though they were alive. They know what to do and what to say, how to toss their shaggy heads, dash through the heather, swear rueful love, and strike hot blows. And if we seem to be saying that they aren't real at all we should add that if you don't mind that you will find them very entertaining. Mr. Walsh is spinning a yarn about a Montana cowboy who comes into possession of a small estate in Scotland. Put horsey Steve Wayne in a heathery glen, add one mercurial Scot named Kenny Alpin, a latter-day Mercutio, and three varied and troubling Scottish beauties, and some old Scottish feuds, and you have the stuff for a bright and flippant adventure. Such is "The Hill Is Mine," latest in a series of romances which have raised Mr. Walsh to eminence in his field.

N. L. R.

SLAVA BOHU. By J. F. C. Wright. Farrar & Rinehart. 1940. 438 pp. \$3.50.

Slava Bohu—which means Praise God—is the phrase of greeting and farewell among the Dukhobors, a religious sect that originated in Caucasia in the seventeenth century. Like the Mennonites in their refusal to recognize civil authority, and like Quakers in their opposition to military service, the Dukhobors naturally were a cause of ceaseless trouble to the Czars. In the Wet Mountains of Southern Russia their tribes flourished for a time despite the weirdness of their ways, but in the nineteenth century, some of

Sylvia Townsend Warner

at her most beguiling best...delighting you with her artistry and giving you furiously to think. Here is a banquet of stories (fables, parables, what you will) to suit the most fastidious of literary epicures, salted, spiced and sauced with irony, satire and ghostly, evanescent wit."—*New York Times*.

"Ideal for those who remember a book by Miss Warner that rocketed over two continents, and still burns brightly: *Lolly Willowes*. There was a delicate witchcraft in it, out of earth and fire; the same sorcery shaped these tales."—*N. Y. Herald Tribune*.

"A complete enchantment. A work of art. A book to make quaking hearts forget the evil moment."—CARL VAN VECHTEN.

Illustrated by Bertram Hartman. The Viking Press. \$2.50

THE CAT'S CRADLE-BOOK



"Cleverly Plotted . . .

realistically treated, generally refreshing," says Jack Ketch in the *Herald Tribune* of

HUSH, GABRIEL!

by Veronica Parker Johns

A Bloodhound Mystery

DUELL, SLOAN AND PEARCE · \$2

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	Crime, Place, and Sleuth	Summing Up	Verdict
TURN OF THE TABLE Jonathan Stagge (Crime Club: \$2.)	Table-tipping soiree in jittery American household ends in mysterious poisoning. Doctor guest lends Insp. Cobb assistance of questionable value.	Evidences of lycanthropy, dark family secrets, an amusing child, and fearsome finish are features of melodramatic and highly-tensioned tale.	Satisfactory
THE GREAT MISTAKE Mary Roberts Rinehart (Farrar & Rinehart: \$2.)	Tragedy hits household of wealthy widow when ex-husband of friend is conked and drowned. Coterie of local cops solve it.	Continuously exciting entertainment, slightly marred by extra length and considerable amount of "had-I-but-knowning."	Well worthwhile
THE WRONG MURDER Craig Rice (Simon & Schuster: \$2.)	Shooting of shabby little man midst Chicago Christmas shoppers speeds Jake Justus and Helene Brand to ecstatic heights of sleuthing.	Prevalence of bibulous humor and rowdy happenings should not obscure good detecting and an excellent worked out plot.	High voltage
LAST TRAIN OUT E. Phillips Oppenheim (Little, Brown: \$2.)	Extraction of art-treasures from eve-of-war Vienna managed with much éclat and some violence by clever and unruffled Englishman.	Build-up handled in very best Oppenheim manner. Climax on cheap side, but by that time reader won't mind-much.	Intriguing

the Dukhobor leaders were arrested, and eventually shipped off to Siberia. As loyal members continued to refuse to consent to military service of any sort, life under the Czars became increasingly difficult, and eventually the sect migrated in great numbers to Western Canada where some 17,000 of them now live amidst poverty and ignorance. In some of their leaders they had remarkable good fortune. Peter Verigin, a strong, intelligent, devout leader, the most noteworthy of them, is the central character in Mr. Wright's story.

J. F. C. Wright, a Canadian newspaper man, spent several years in Saskatchewan and British Columbia studying these unique people. He has reconstructed the story of their struggles from the time of the early days in Russia to the present. He has written a historical novel, but he has allowed facts and dates to burden his tale to such an extent that the work lacks the sweep and suspense that should distinguish a novel. With few sources in writing, the author was forced to depend heavily upon folklore. He has told his story of the Dukhobors with great care and with sympathy. Otherwise the reader might have less interest in their fate than even these misled people deserve.

C. K.

THEY DON'T DANCE MUCH. By James Ross. Houghton Mifflin. 1940. 296 pp. \$2.50.

Anyone who likes his murders and assaults ghastly and his immoralities frequent and vigorous can't do better for his money than this enchanting idyll of a Carolina roadhouse and cabin camp. While the book is seldom as explicit as some of Mr. Faulkner's more celebrated passages, it is sufficiently descriptive for the average stomach; lovers of bourbon whiskey are warned against passages dealing with the disposal of the top-billing corpse; the matter of the corpse's production roughly follows Shakespeare and the royal princes in the Tower. It is strong enough for us.

The book is not a mere chamber of horrors and ribaldries, however. The grim success story of the roadhouse proprietor creates, if not any factitious sympathy, at least considerable and consistent suspense about the resolution of the man's career. The final episode of his brutal progress "from the bottom over everyone on top," as he puts it, is brought about by the mean counter-plotting of his confederate in murder, who is strong only in his desire for his share of the profits of the crime and his indignation when they are withheld.

There are a good many loose ends in the book, but they are amusing loose ends.

In spite of these irrelevant tags of detail the book has drive and power and an artistic and truly haunting aura of savagery and some horror.

P. S.

Author! Author!

HERMANN RAUSCHNING has completed, frequently working in bomb and air-raid shelters in London, the manuscript of a new book which is a continuation of his "The Revolution of Nihilism." The manuscript has arrived by Clipper from London and will be rushed to press as soon as the English translation is completed. The book deals with recent events and is written in simpler language than the first work. . . . The life of William Allen White will be the subject of a movie produced by M.G.M.

★ ★

Kenneth Roberts ("Northwest Passage," "Oliver Wiswell") has developed a sudden and pretty thorough interest in tropical fish. Last weekend he acquired an 18-gallon tank, a heater, lighting apparatus, and other paraphernalia. And, of course, a couple of dozen tropical fish. Unfortunately six of them proceeded to die and the author had to devise an implement, made of an old fishing pole and a pin, to get them out, since, contrary to custom, the fish sank to the bottom of the tank. Mr. Roberts has added fifty acres to his place in Kennebunkport, Maine, and is clearing it. He takes time off from agonizing over the tropical fish to chop down trees by the dozen. . . . Katherine Anne Porter ("Flowering Judas") is in New York. Her ardent fans will be delighted that she is now doing the final revisions on the first full-length novel she has completed. It will appear in the spring. Miss Porter will be on the "Invitation to Learning" broadcast during the first week in December—she will discuss "Moll Flanders."

★ ★

Philip Atlee, whose novel, "The Inheritors," is laid in Fort Worth, Texas, has been getting letters from irate

Texans, some warning him to stay in New York, others daring him to come back to Fort Worth. Mr. Atlee is working on a new novel and hasn't decided which offer he'll take up. . . . Christina Stead drew a portrait of her husband, William Blake ("The World Is Mine," "The Painter and the Lady") in one of the characters of her last novel, "House of All Nations;" it's rumored that she has put herself into her new book, "The Man Who Loved Children." . . . Ellen Glasgow has been in New York to deliver the manuscript of her first new novel in five years. It has no title as yet, but it's a contemporary story laid in Virginia.

★ ★

Richard Johns, short-story writer and one-time editor of *Pagany*, one of the most famous of the "Little magazines" of the Thirties, has two books dedicated to him this season, William Carlos Williams's novel, "In the Money," and a mystery story, "Hush, Gabriel," by his wife, Veronica Parker Johns. . . . Margery Sharp ("The Stone of Chastity") is doing First Aid in England and keeping up her writing in Crooklets, Bude, Cornwall. Her war work has developed an odd twist: she gives a great deal of blood for transfusions, because "my blood is the most useful sort of all—transfuses into any other kind." **EUGENE ARMFIELD.**

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