

## Men Against the Sea

THE HORNET'S LONGBOAT. By William Roos. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1940. 240 pp. \$2.50.

Reviewed by LAWRENCE OLSON

THIS book is another well-written chapter in the story of men against the sea. Though in many ways inevitably similar to the Nordhoff-Hall *Bounty* narrative, this account of incredible suffering and endurance should stand in its own right as a worthy addition to the literature of the sailing ship era. Mr. Roos's story is less varied than the *Bounty's*, his characters less apt to fire the imagination than are Fletcher Christian or Captain Bligh, but his obviously faithful presentation of a true narrative of elemental struggle and triumph over hardship has its own positive value for the reader.

The *Hornet*, carrying a cargo of kerosene and candles from New York for San Francisco, caught fire in the Pacific off the coast of South America, and the crew, with two Boston divinity student passengers, was forced to take to the boats. Mr. Roos's method in telling of the investigation of the cause of the fire is definitely reminiscent of Joseph Conrad's old preoccupation with the moral implications of perverse action. Whether or not the fire was started intentionally we never learn entirely, but as a result thirty-one men are set adrift in three small boats, stocked with provisions for a mere few days. The rest of the book follows their horrible journey of four thousand miles about the Pacific, out of the doldrums and into the squalls, their search for islands whose very existence was "doubtful" on the maps, with the provisions running out and the men wasting away or going mad in the by-now familiar shipwreck fashion.

Of the fifteen men in the Captain's longboat, which alone reaches safety, only half a dozen are characterized in any detail; of these, perhaps four emerge as tangible personalities. The figure of Captain Mitchell alone is maintained with consistent reality, for through the eyes of his responsibility the story of his men is told. He is quite different from Captain Bligh, for the driving urge for revenge is not in his heart. But in the end his charge is fulfilled, and the men in the longboat are finally brought through to safety.

The author's comprehensive knowledge of seamanship and his constant enthusiasm for the story he has to tell make "The *Hornet's* Longboat" highly entertaining reading. Here the romantic attraction of any sea yarn is reinforced by a written account kept in diaries of the Captain and some of the men who endured the voyage, and the resulting combination of fact and traditional romance has been put down clearly and with a proper sense of the story's intrinsic ability to entertain.

"I like humor with my horror, and this is about the smoothest mixture I have seen in recent years."

—Phil Stong.

## THE Survivor

By  
DENNIS PARRY

"I want life. Any brand will do."

The words stirred Olive uncomfortably. They were not what Uncle James should have been saying, there on his deathbed. She wished that she understood why the hated old man had been kind to her when he had made life a burden and torment for Aunt Eva and Uncle Roger. As a doctor, Uncle James had fought death on a thousand fronts, in a hundred countries. Now, old and tired, he was dying. What Olive, and all the family should have realized was that Dr. James Marshall was not the man to let himself die, no matter what happened . . .

Imagine *The Turn of the Screw* written with a sense of humor and you come close to what THE SURVIVOR is—a brilliantly successful novel in one of the most difficult of all fields of writing. It is the first literary discovery of 1941. \$2.50, at all bookstores.

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# THE GORY GAZETTE

being a small but terrifying news release published monthly in this space by The Dagger-Thru-The-Heart-Department of SIMON AND SCHUSTER 1230 Sixth Avenue, N.Y.C.

The Gory Gazette has just had its Annual Year-End Director's Meeting. This involved sending down for a carton of cigarettes, getting together in one office, and brooding.

But not darkly. The Pointers-With-Pride heavily outnumbered the Viewers-With-Alarm. 1940 saw the start of our plan to publish an Inner Sanctum Mystery each month—saw the birth of the Gory Gazette and the wide-eyed zombie (see below and around) that is our trademark.

And going backwards through 1940 (it was at this point that one sub-director said that's all we'd done all year anyway) we saluted *The Inner Sanctum Mysteries* which have been picked by assorted experts on Best-of-the-Year lists throughout the country: *The Bride Wore Black*, by Cornell Woolrich, *The Wrong Number*, by Craig Rice, *Sing a Song of Homicide*, by James R. Langham, *The Goose is Cooked*, by Emmett Hogarth, *The Case of the Baker Street Irregulars*, by Anthony Boucher.

Mention of ANTHONY BOUCHER jolted the meeting out of its nostalgic mood. Because ANTHONY BOUCHER's new book, *The Case of the Solid Key*, (price \$2.00) is *The Inner Sanctum Mystery* for January—and it rings the bell by starting the New Year off with a bong.

The Director in Charge of Humor, a sombre fellow, sighed: "No chance, I suppose, that BOUCHER has managed another sardonic rib as hilarious as *The Baker Street Irregulars*?" We assured him that BOUCHER had. This time the unhappy victim is Hollywood. To say nothing of the corpse in the locked room. And, incidentally, ANTHONY BOUCHER has found a new way to get his murderer in and out of it.

The Director in Charge of Keeping Both Feet on the Ground added his two cents. "All very well," he said intelligently, "but what kind of a mystery is it? Will it keep me guessing?" At which point we took advantage of a good thing and bet him ten to one that *The Case of the Solid Key* would triple bluff the pants off him.

Then we looked around for the Director in Charge of Directors. That shrewd fellow was back in his own office, behind his own locked door, busily reading—which is what you should be doing this minute—

THE CASE OF THE SOLID KEY



## THE NEW BOOKS

### Fiction

**THE ROAD RETURNS.** By Paul Corey. Bobbs-Merrill. 1940. 457 pp. \$2.50.

Mr. Corey confines himself to a background of a few square miles of farms and a small county seat in Iowa, but the picture he draws in this novel is America, as Hardy's Wessex was England. In "Three Square Miles" he told the story of the Mantz family and their neighbors from 1910 to 1916. "The Road Returns" continues this family and community narrative through 1923, but is nevertheless an independent novel, understandable and enjoyable by itself. The real protagonist of the book is the widow Mantz, courageous and self-sacrificing, but not at all the *mère noble* of romance; for she is sometimes rude and irritable and she stupidly interferes in the lives of her children. But her failings help make her credible, and she retains the respect of family, neighbors, and readers.

Older readers who remember vivid-

ly the convulsive war years and the even more feverish post-war period of relaxed moral codes, fantastic prices, and near-economic collapse (last dress rehearsal for 1929) will recognize the authenticity of detail and background. The Liberty Loans, the senseless persecution of farmers of German descent, echoes of the incredible war in the rural community, the blatant patrioteers, the deadly influenza epidemic, the boom, the beginning of the gadget craze, the depression, the painful readjustment, the faint promise of "Coolidge Prosperity"—the seven-year period is expertly recaptured. The first suggestion of a farmers' alliance—and strikes, the mechanization of the farm, the disturbing and unhealthy shift of population to towns—these revolutionary changes are all presented in terms of human values, but with complete objectivity.

"The Road Returns" is not brilliantly written, but Corey's quiet style, homely and vernacular, is just right for his *comédie rurale*.

R. A. C.

## The Criminal Record

### The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	Crime, Place, and Sleuth	Summing Up	Verdict
<b>MAIGRET TO THE RESCUE</b> <i>Georges Simenon</i> (Harcourt, Brace: \$2.)	With frontier town and Paris as backgrounds Maigret solves three murders, two current, t'other a-many-years-ago.	Psychology to fore in initial offering, which is in <i>crime passionnel</i> dept.; concluding story presents super-fine detecting and inspired writing.	For connoisseurs
<b>MURDER OUT OF TURN</b> <i>Frances and Richard Lockridge</i> (Stokes: \$2.)	Knifing and criminal incineration finish two N. Y. summer cottagers. Mr. and Mrs. North help guest-sleuth Weigand nail desperate killer.	Detective steals story from Norths who nevertheless inject much humor into sparkling and capably constructed yarn with mile-a-minute finish.	Class A
<b>THE CASE OF THE HAUNTED BRIDES</b> <i>William DuBois</i> (Little, Brown: \$2.)	Bridegroom fatally fogged during burst of Wagner on Conn. lawn. Tabloid reporter pinch-hitting for best man does clever detecting.	Twenty Year Plan of patient killer ruined by newshawk meanie after three, possibly four, maybe six, slayings. Too bad.	Too bad
<b>THREE THIRDS OF A GHOST</b> <i>Timothy Fuller</i> (Atlantic-Little Brown: \$2.)	Lecturing author shot at literary soiree. Boston police capt. also demolished. Unethical efforts of Jupiter Jones prove highly effective.	Fictional appearance of thinly-veiled New England lit'ry lights add special tang to capably constructed if not highly original opus.	Satisfactory
<b>THE TALKING CLOCK</b> <i>Frank Gruber</i> (Farrar & Rinehart: \$2.)	Itinerant book-peddlers escape murder charge by solving mystery of voluble time-piece and clearing up two widely separated slayings.	Amusing and picaresque pair of chronically busted amateur sleuths talk reader into high spirits in yarn which is not flawless technically.	Good fun
<b>THE EVIL MEN DO</b> <i>Cortland Fitzsimmons</i> (Stokes: \$2.)	79 year old grand-aunt with record as shrewd sleuth saves niece from 'orrible fate and solves several Cal. killings.	Indomitable Mrs. Thomas runs both police and malefactors ragged in peppery tale of Hollywood evildoers and their manifold wickedness.	Fast and frenzied