

should think—reads beautifully in English:

Is it not he who still of the living stays  
Most blissful? O, but all the more  
deeply fate  
Who equalizes all things also  
Tears the inflammable heart of the  
mighty.

Prokosch, indeed, observes religiously the metres and expressions chosen by Hölderlin. And yet he is sometimes at his best where he ventures to deviate somewhat from the original, as he does, for instance, most successfully in the famous opening lines of "Patmos": "Near, near and—Difficult to grasp is the Almighty," for the German: "*Nah ist—Und schwer zu fassen der Gott.*" The repetition of "Near"—missing in the original—is well in keeping with the sacerdotal tenor of the work and undoubtedly apt to increase its effectiveness. "Yet where the danger lies," continues the rhapsody, "Likewise lies the salvation."

Beautiful words, these—earnest, heartening words. What profound and highly welcome comfort in these splendid songs and fantasies! Are they untimely, out of place, under the circumstances? But they are timeless: their validity transcends all limits of time and space. They are encouraging, for all their tragic and nostalgic undertones; for they confirm and exalt the divine flame inherent in all human drama. Hyperion's Song is as essentially true today, in an Army camp in Missouri, as it was, 150 years ago, in the Neckar valley, or 2,000 years before, in Athens—the place and epoch for which Hölderlin was homesick, incurably, during his whole miserable, wonderful life.

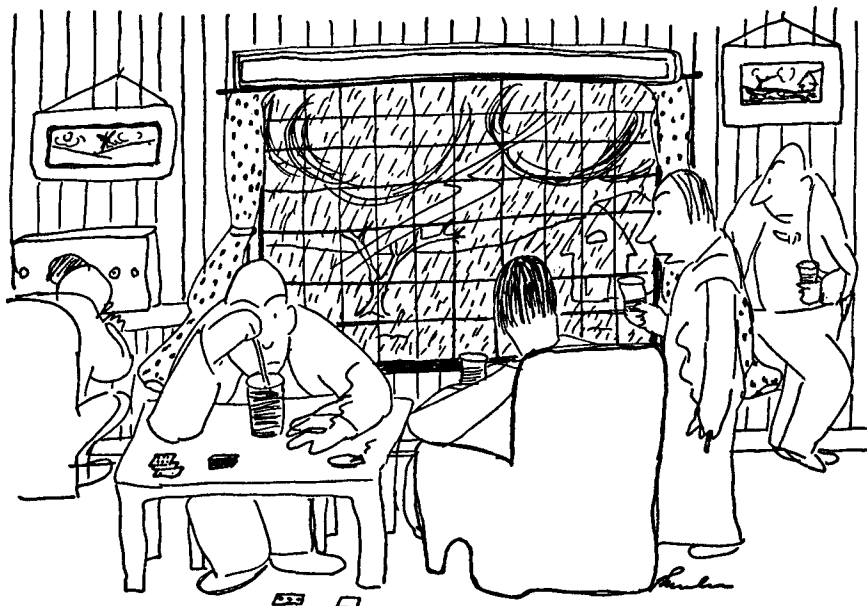
Sings Hyperion-Hölderlin—and I am moved, struck, comforted by his anguish and wisdom:

Yet we are destined  
Never to come to rest;  
They falter, they fall,  
These suffering mortals,  
In blindness from  
One hour to the next  
Like water hurled from  
Cliff upon cliff  
Down the whole year long into  
The Unfathomed.

This is the truth: I know it. More essentially, more truly true it is than the tiresome vicissitudes and petty struggles of our daily life—in these barracks or outside. With infinite boredom, endless agonies we atone for our mistakes, our cowardice, our lack of imagination. All these necessary sufferings and efforts—so grimly, inescapably real now—will fade away, become chimerical. "Yet all that endures," says Hölderlin, "is given to us by the poets."

Klaus Mann is now serving overseas with the United States Army as a Staff Sergeant in the Signal Corps.

## Thurber's Lowdown on Life



—From the book.

"This is like that awful afternoon we telephoned Mencken."

**MEN, WOMEN AND DOGS.** A Book of Drawings. By James Thurber. With a Preface by Dorothy Parker. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1943. \$3.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

THE above title to my review does not indicate an *exposé* of Mr. Luce's excellent illustrated magazine, even though, according to a woman friend of mine, *Life* is frequently overweighted with "cheese-cake and corpses." Mr. Thurber has another, and withal, truer view of life. And you tell me what it is?

Only a genius could have drawn the picture of the perturbed gentleman at a party assailed by one of Mr. Thurber's absolutely straight-haired females with the frightening words, "I'm offering you sanctuary, Dr. Mason." I fear to become as fulsome as the ordinarily—or lately—subacid (I've always wanted to know what "subacid" means!) Dorothy Parker, whom a Thurber book reduces to what my parents used to call "a perfect mush of concession." And me too. And it's New Year, isn't it?

Only a genius could—I said that. Apply it to 90 per cent of the pictures in this collection and you'll be right. A good way is to close your eyes, turn the pages, and point. That will be Bangkok, the capital of Siam, or, as it is now called, with a wicked leer, Thailand.

This review, I see, is rapidly deteriorating! But Mr. Thurber never deteriorates. Anyone encountering difficulties in his lovemaking can profit

by "The Masculine Approach." It is a complete compendium. Much has been said of Mr. Thurber's dogs; but, so far, comparatively little has been said about the animal on page thirty-two—my guess is a hippopotamus—who is privy to the disappearance of a Dr. Millmoss. Also, a psychoanalyst could work out something interesting about the recurrence of *doctors* in the works of Mr. Thurber. But then, can't analysts do *anything*!

I can draw a little; I can draw as little as Mr. Thurber; but he can put a few hesitating lines on paper and give you people and animals with expressions over which you ponder for hours and from which you build in your mind whole Ibsen dramas and devastating novels. How he *always* gets exactly the *right* and convulsing expression upon their faces is his own unmilitary secret.

All intelligent people are now Thurber collectors. So, of course, you are. So why am I prattling on in this idiotic fashion? The question is rhetorical. The book costs three bucks. It's worth three thousand!

Judge Wm. Travers Jerome was a good campaigner. Some of his stories became famous, in particular one to the effect that, during the investigation of the purchase of what appeared to be an inordinate weight of sponges for a public dep't, the inspector under fire plaintively inquired: "Hell! Do you think I weigh 'em *dry*?"—From "Yankee Lawyer, the Autobiography of Ephraim Tutt."

# The Battle for Africa

Two Reviews by Frederick Gruin

*ONE CONTINENT REDEEMED.* By Guy Ramsey. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1943. 280 pp. \$2.50.

GUY RAMSEY, of Harvard, Oxford, and the *London News Chronicle*, has written a vivid, sparkling book on French North Africa during the crucial early months of Allied occupation. He was the first British correspondent to send back an eyewitness account of the historic landings between Casablanca and Algiers. Subsequently his interview with General Henri Giraud was quoted by President Franklin Roosevelt at a White House press conference and by Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden in Parliament. The details of these solid journalistic coups are contained in "One Continent Redeemed." But there is much else besides, for the author combines shrewd war and political reporting with a rich, three months' personal history.

Mr. Ramsey is informative, garrulous, sophisticated, enthusiastic, realistic, poetic. Before the reader puts down this book he learns, among weightier things, that the author is moon-faced, acutely sensitive to gutter and garlic smells, married to a composer of sonnets. Mr. Ramsey came ashore with the Americans, near Oran, journeyed to Algiers and the Aletti bar, went on to live with the R.A.F. in Tunisia. He likes to talk newspaper shop, often to a boring extent. He has a fine sense of detail, a flair for anecdote, a feeling for drama and personality. His command of French and his "passion for France" help him to a rare understanding of the French mind. He can be superior and acidulous, in the snobbiest British tradition; but usually he winds up with a temperate, balanced judgment.

The style of Mr. Ramsey's writing is distinguished. It is as remote from journalese as the average North African Arab is from soap and water. Here is a description of the invasion of the French shore on that November night a year ago:

Silently, on muffled ropes, the boats went down, touching the still water with never a splash, only a faint kiss, like the stroke of the flat of a sword. Then, softly purring, their screws churned the water into a luminous silver-green, like the radiance of a glowworm seen through spray; and, almost at midnight precisely, they sped shoreward, leaving a gradually fading silver-green trail like the luminous slime of an electric snail. Then silence . . . becoming

more and more profound as the purr of the engines receded.

On the controversial issue of Allied political policy in French Africa, Mr. Ramsey does not take a violent stand. He has a warm sympathy for the Gaullist resistance movement. He does not like Vichyites, but he understands what is so difficult for Anglo-Saxons to understand—that among legalistic-minded Frenchmen there can be nicely shaded degrees of adherence to Vichyism. For form, perception, and nuance of meaning, Mr. Ramsey's interviews with the "late, unlamented" Admiral François Darlan and with "tall, arrow-straight" General Giraud are masterly. But he does not accept the view of apologists for Anglo-American policy that expediency was the one and only possible course in French Africa.

That view seems to be beside the point for Mr. Ramsey. More significant is this:

Africa was, in fact, a Great Rehearsal . . . the mirror of all future [Allied] conquests. In France, or Poland, or Norway, or Czechoslovakia, or Yugoslavia, or Greece, or the East Indies, the same pattern will, of necessity, be repeated: the Darlans and Quislings, the "progressive" Girauds and implacable De Gaulles, the need to use any instrument that fits our hands; the difficulties of language, of drained and decimated supplies, of improvised, sparsely guarded communications . . . will be seen, and felt, over and over again. He is rash who prophesies in this war; but I am convinced there is another element in the pattern which will be repeated too: the sudden, staggering, German crack.

*DESERT CONQUEST.* By Russell Hill. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1943. 339 pp., with maps and appendices. \$3.

GENERAL BERNARD MONTGOMERY'S indefatigable, indomitable Eighth Army has advanced some 2,300 miles within the past year. Across western Egypt, Cyrenaica, Tripolitania, Tunisia, the Mediterranean narrows, Sicily, the Messina Strait, southern Italy—a brilliant, unparalleled military march that one likes to think will go on until Monty and his men roll down Berlin's Unter den Linden. The *New York Herald Tribune's* youthful, able Russell Hill went along with the Eighth, sharing heat and chill, thirst and dust, on its spectacular 1600-mile push from Alamein to Tunis. In "Desert Conquest" he gives a solid, straightforward report on that campaign.

Mr. Hill has a facility for weaving together skirmish and grand strategy. In describing the everyday routine of the soldier, the isolated, often confused fragments of battle, he never loses sight of the overall picture. He begins his story in May, 1942. It is a "rapidly cooling late afternoon" in an Eighth Army dugout in the flinty Libyan wasteland. Marshal Erwin Rommel is about to attack the British line strung from Gazala on the Mediterranean to Bir Hacheim forty miles inland. In bitter time the German offensive came, and it did not stop until it had swept up Tobruk's 30,000-man garrison, ground across the western desert



Lieut. Gen. Mark Clark, commanding the American 5th Army, pays his respects to some of the local dignitaries during the North African campaign.