

tion than the one the author admires: strict military coercion? As practised by Frederick the Great, Mr. Hauser points out that it was "the only alternative to [German] bestiality." If it is not the only way now, the other alternative is the patient building up of a democratic order; and the United Nations must be prepared to police Germany for a hundred years if necessary to ensure that something more than a political façade for absolutism, like the Weimar Republic, is created. We should reward Germany for every measure of responsible self-government she achieves, and penalize her for every attempt to revive absolutism.

Not the least significant part of Mr. Hauser's book are his side-trips into autobiography. He grew up in the period before the First World War, when German youth learned to despise its historic culture and to go in for a pre-Spenglerian nihilism, based on a love for technics for its own sake, and a desire for unlimited power. There were still many counter-currents in that pre-1914 Germany, as I know from the accounts of many German friends; but the new note of "salvation through nihilism" had already been struck. In Mr. Hauser's own experience as a young soldier, one of the Berlin army that brutally attacked and killed Rosa Luxembourgh, he vividly presents the special combination of fear, sadism, and lust that form the core of the Nazi mentality: when combined with the more traditional German elements of isolationism, economic autarchy, anti-semitism, and military regimentation it formed the explosive mixture that brought on the present catastrophe. By his reflections on his own life, Mr. Hauser helps us to understand the scale and the speed of Germany's internal disintegration; at the same time, he calls our attention to elements in every other country that tend to bring out the same responses and to bring on the same results.

At almost every point, Mr. Hauser's ideal Germany is the opposite of what America, ideally, stands for. But this does not make his criticisms of the United States any less penetrating: from the standpoint of our own self-education they are almost as useful as his exposures of Germany. His attacks on America are sometimes ignorant and usually one-sided; in his criticism of American industrial methods he follows the familiar Siegfried line; but what he says, for example, of the demoralizing picture of American life that Hollywood presents to the world is notoriously true. Salutory, likewise, are the following words: "The protestations of patriotic ardor on the part of the radio and the cinema notwithstanding, these huge mob-cuddling in-

stitutions did their level best to keep from the people any true realization of the war."

Even more impressive is the contrast Mr. Hauser draws between America and Europe, as between Brueghel's prints of the Fat Table and the Lean Table: that contrast which our abrupt and brutal cutting off of Lend-Lease supplies for food to our Allies only accentuated. Our greedy return to a high diet, at a moment when the rest of the world is suffering from malnutrition, often outright starvation, may in fact undo many of the real gains we have made toward international coöperation. This isolationism of the belly shows that America has yet to understand the meaning of human brotherhood. On that point, an avowed enemy like Mr. Hauser can afford to be more candid than our friends.

The virtue of this book, however, is that it says openly and brazenly what so many other equally unrepentant and unregenerate Germans are saying

circumspectly and deviously. These are not the ravings of a dyed-in-the-wool Nazi on the lunatic fringe, nor are they the generous hopes of a much smaller "angelic fringe" on the other side: the opinions voiced by Mr. Hauser are probably close to the present beliefs of the majority of the countrymen he now seeks to rejoin. Though the publishers called upon an authority on Germany to counterbalance some of Mr. Hauser's wilder misstatements, his lies, his inner contradictions, and his deliberate perversions of history deserve a far more exhaustive analysis. If such a running commentary were made, I can imagine no more useful text to place in the hands of our troops of occupation, from the commanding generals and administrators down. They will need some back talk of their own when the German starts to talk back. I fear that our schools of military government have not always equipped them with live ammunition or tracer bullets.

## Your Literary I. Q.

By Howard Collins

SPECIAL THIS WEEK! GILBERT & SULLIVAN

Gilbert & Sullivan fans should have little trouble in identifying the characters in this week's quiz from their brief self-descriptions quoted below. Allowing 3 points for each character you can name and 2 more for the work in which he appears, a score of 60 is par, 70 is very good, 80 or better is excellent. Answers on page 34.

1. I am never known to quail at the fury of a gale, and I'm never never sick at sea.

2. I'm very good at integral and differential calculus; I know the scientific names of beings animalculous.

3. I have a left shoulder-blade that is a miracle of loveliness. People come miles to see it. My right elbow has a fascination few can resist.

4. I'm not so old, and not so plain, and I'm quite prepared to marry again.

5. When I was a lad I served a term as office boy to an attorney's firm.

6. Though counting in the usual way, years twenty-one I've been alive, yet, reckoning by my natal day, I am a little boy of five!

7. A wandering minstrel I—a thing of shreds and patches.

8. On Tuesday I made a false income-tax return. On Wednesday I forged a will. On Thursday I shot a fox. On Friday I forged a cheque.

9. All thieves who could my fees afford relied on my orations, and many a burglar I've restored to his friends and his relations.

10. A many years ago, when I was young and charming, as some of you may know, I practised baby-farming.

11. A nurserymaid is not afraid of what you people *call* work, so I made up my mind to go as a kind of piratical maid-of-all-work.

12. I can trace my ancestry back to a protoplasmal primordial atomic globule. Consequently, my family pride is something inconceivable. I can't help it, I was born sneering.

13. In enterprise of martial kind, when there was any fighting, he led his regiment from behind—he found it less exciting.

14. Am I alone and unobserved? I am! Then let me own I'm an aesthetic sham! This air severe is but a mere veneer!

15. I've an irritating chuckle, I've a celebrated sneer, I've an entertaining snigger, I've a fascinating leer.

16. Sometimes I sit and wonder, in my artless Japanese way, why it is that I am so much more attractive than anybody else in the whole world.

17. Oh, I am a cook and a captain bold, and the mate of the *Nancy* brig, and a bo'sun tight, and a midshipmite, and the crew of the captain's gig.

18. When I sally forth to seek my prey, I help myself in a royal way: I sink a few more ships, it's true, than a well-bred monarch ought to do.

19. I've planned a little burglary and forged a little cheque, and slain a little baby for the coral on its neck.

20. My object all sublime I shall achieve in time—to let the punishment fit the crime—the punishment fit the crime.

# High Adventure in Interdependence

*THE WHITE TOWER.* By James Ramsey Ullman. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co. 1945. 479 pp. \$3.

Reviewed by BEN RAY REDMAN

THERE have been many plays and novels in which the interest has centered in the development and revelation of the several characters of a group submitted to a common trial. The dramatic events employed by the author may be those of fire or flood or famine, of war in all its varieties, of plague or earthquake, or of merely an overnight auto-bus breakdown; but, whatever the events, the pattern is recognizable and familiar. We are introduced to a group of strangers, we accept them at first for what they seem to be, and then gradually, as the pressure of shared circumstances bears down upon them, each shows himself for what he really is. There are even certain standard variations, of which the most hackneyed is that in which the last become first and the mighty are cast down. It is this basic pattern that we find in "The White Tower," but Mr. Ullman has used it as freshly as if it had never been used before, and has avoided hackneyed variations along with easy ironies and stock surprises. He has also imbued his tale with remarkable vitality, while being served in its telling by a rich fund of special knowledge.

When Martin Ordway, lost above Europe, parachuted into the night from his flak-wrecked American bomber, he came to earth in the Swiss valley of Kandermatt; and it was as though he had plunged through time as well as space. For here was the valley he had visited and loved a dozen years before, here was the *Gasthof* where he had stayed, and Andreas his old guide, and Nicholas Radcliffe his old friend, and Carla who had been as a sister to him when she was fifteen. Here, too, "a cold, radiant white shape unmoving and immutable in the sky," towering above Kandermatt, was the mass and challenge of the White Tower. It seemed a miracle to Martin that he should find himself where he was, and one must admit that it was an extraordinary stroke of fate; but, as Mr. Ullman manages matters, it is not a stroke that strains the reader's powers of belief. Later, indeed, the author does strain those powers, but again, such is his persuasiveness, he succeeds in getting us to suspend our doubts. Or, perhaps, a reviewer should speak only for himself in this instance.

No one had ever climbed the White Tower from the Kandermatt side. For more than a hundred years men had been trying, and many had died try-

ing; for twenty years past every guide but Andreas Benner had shunned this mountain on which Andreas's own father had perished. But now, with the arrival of Martin to spur the others into action, there were six persons in Kandermatt determined to accomplish the impossible. Martin was determined to climb the White Tower, in satisfaction of an old desire, before he slipped out of Switzerland, back to the wars, via the underground-aerial route. Carla was determined to climb where he climbed, for the sister-brother relationship was far behind them. Andreas was determined to climb where his father had failed. Radcliffe, the lonely English geologist who had been on Everest with Mallory, was determined to climb to a victory that would wash out the memory of past defeats. Paul Delambre, wealthy dilettante, frustrated writer and lover, the hollow man, the stuffed man, was determined to climb as an escape from the mirror and horror of self, as an escape into reality. And Siegfried Hein, ardent Nazi and Wehrmacht officer, a truly great Alpinist who had been studying White Tower and planning his campaign against it for years, was determined to climb for the glory of the Third Reich and the Fuehrer.

We are asked to believe that determination was translated into action, that a cautious guide like Andreas and an expert mountaineer like Hein were willing to team themselves with "a middle-aged geologist, a girl and a half-shot bomber pilot," plus a brandy-drinking idler, in an assault upon a peak that had defeated the skill and calculation of a century; and we are asked to believe, further, that members of this semi-amateur team could come closer to success than had any of their predecessors. If the reader's belief fails, then, of course, the novel will fail for him. But if not, if doubts are suspended, then the reward is the enjoyment of a story that tightens its hold upon the interest with every turn of the page.

The narrative strategy is straightforward and free from tricks, with the greater part of the writing devoted to the physical actions and incidents of the ascent and descent of the White Tower; and, because Mr. Ullman writes of mountaineering as informally and as intelligently as Hemingway writes of bull-fighting, the reader is made to identify himself with every step, hold, hesitation, and slip of the several climbers. This is no tale for hypso-phobes: they will find themselves holding on to their chairs.

But the prime purpose of the climbing, so brilliantly described, is to re-



James Ramsey Ullman "has avoided easy ironies and stock surprises."

veal the climbers, and here there is rather more of promise than fulfillment. Martin, for all his bitter philosophizing about life in the large and war in particular, stays in the memory as merely an attractive young man whose part could be easily cast in Hollywood. And Carla remains the kind of desirable, unselfish heroine who makes one think again of Hemingway. Andreas is all honest, sturdy peasant and a yard wide, while Radcliffe is shadowy. Delambre is perhaps the most successfully realized of the lot. ("If climbing was putting one foot before the other, one hand above the other, he could climb. If writing was setting down one word after another, he could write. If fighting was striking one blow after another, he could fight, and if loving was embracing the body of one woman after another, he could love. And yet he was neither mountaineer, author, soldier, lover. He had never climbed to the summit of any great peak. He had never written a book, defeated an enemy, found or engendered happiness in any woman. Always between desire and fulfillment there was the shadow. Always between the image and the substance there was the stillness and emptiness of the mirror, the gray mist rising out of the depths of the mirror, deeper and more terrible than emptiness.") And the character of Siegfried Hein is accounted for, with objective understanding, in some of the best pages of the book.

If promises are partly unredeemed, it is probably because the promises are far from small. And if Mr. Ullman falls short of the summit, even as Martin Ordway, he still climbs impressively. There is in "The White Tower" much thoughtful writing to match the skill-