

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Bangling Jingles

SIR: I was so interested in your editorial "Bangling the Language," July 10, that I was moved to attempt an arrangement. I spent two or three hours in an air-conditioned bar. Here-with the sorry result of my efforts:

MISFARE OF A GAINLY THING

The jug-bitten taverner, lanken and
sloomy
Totlers and keeks through his hostel
roomy
He slomps his samely brew to felth
And gowls at the lack of clientele,
Berates himself for a jabbernowle,
A spuddling dumble, a bangling mole,
Reaved by slocksters, bereft of patrons,
Sans nappy fry or fluttersome matrons.
He kens the need to thrump and prog
His lobby, and resorts to grog,
He slomps his samely brew to felth
The smithers of his wartime wealth.

RICHARD A. PURSER.

Washington, D. C.

SIR: You have probably received many responses to your good piece, "Bangling the Language." You have probably also received numerous examples, better than the one below, of readers' efforts to plant the words in their vocabularies by incorporating them in verse.

FLINDERS WHILE STROMING

Forswat and forswunk at the end of
the day,
I tolter off on my homeward way.
Feeling as sloomy as any one can,
I gowl at the smatters afflicting man.
I thrump the passersby in the street,
And they thrump me, and step on my
feet.

The scroils and the bummels are constantly
keeking,
The jug-bitten dumbles pass by reek-
ing.

One man is lanken, the next is a chuff;
A few girls are gainly, but not enough.
Each spuddler I meet is more of a
mome,
And I feel like a sumph by the time I
reach home.

At any rate, I intend to try to do
my bit to use some of these words,
and get them back into our active
vocabulary.

RACHEL BARD.

New York, N. Y.

Paradox

SIR: Query re your note on Graham
Greene [SRL July 10]: How can one
simultaneously be "misanthropic, pro-
foundly Christian, disdainful of the
common man. . . .?"

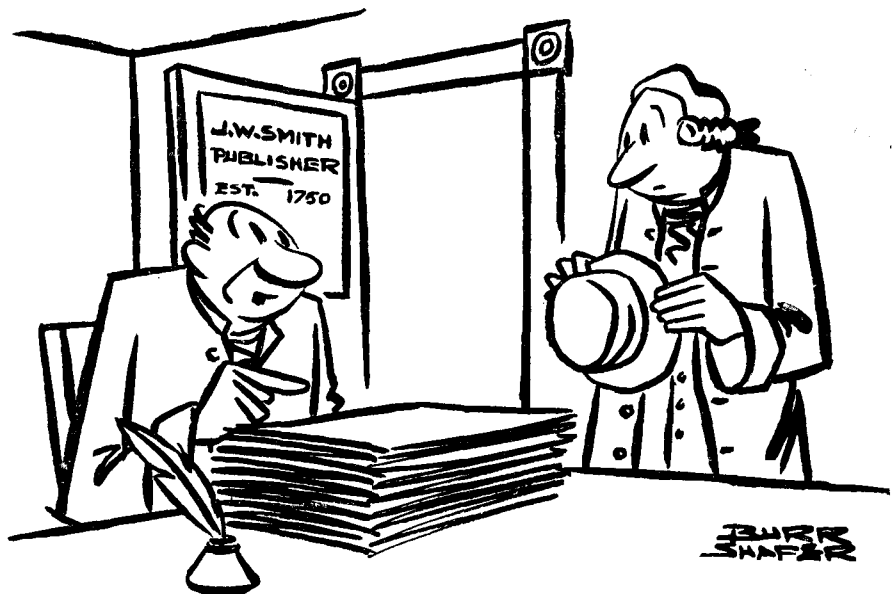
MILDRED B. MUNDAY.

Lynchburg, Va.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *We don't know.
That's the talk going around.*

Fast Plea

SIR: I think your readers need to
be told editorially that Howard Fast
is under sentence to three months in
jail—and why. The considerable like-
lihood is that he will go to prison in
October.



THROUGH HISTORY WITH J. WESLEY SMITH

"You tell Adam Smith that I might accept this manuscript
if he would put in a few amusing anecdotes here and there."

The facts behind his case are simple
and clear:

Fast is a member of the executive
board of the Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee
Committee (JAFRC). For ten years
this committee has been administer-
ing relief to the Republican refugees
from Franco Spain who are in France
and Mexico. It has supplied them with
hospital beds, physicians, bandages,
clothes, medicines. This is Fast's first
crime, his most obnoxious crime.

The charitable work of the JAFRC
has been executed abroad by the Uni-
tarian Service Committee and the
Quakers. The records of the JAFRC
have been regularly inspected and ap-
proved by the U.S. Government agency
that licenses the work of such relief
organizations. This is Fast's second
crime.

At this point it becomes necessary
for your readers to know that the
House Committee on Un-American Ac-
tivities some time ago declared that
opposition to the Franco Government
was un-American and subversive. And
that this committee then demanded
by subpoena the books and records of
the Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee
Committee.

Howard Fast, as one of a board of
honorable American men and women,
refused to hand over to this commit-
tee the names of thousands of other
Americans who had contributed money
to their medical aid fund. They did
so in order to protect their donors
from investigation, persecution, public
calumny, and job blacklisting.

As anti-Fascists, the members of the
JAFRC also refused to hand over to
the declared friends of Franco the
names of Spaniards in French camps
who had received their aid, lest the
names be transmitted through the
Thomas Committee to the Spanish
Embassy and the families of these
men then be reached by Franco's exe-
cutioners.

For these crimes, Fast and the other

members of the board of the Joint
Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee were
declared in contempt of Congress,
tried in court, and convicted by a jury
largely composed of Government em-
ployees. Now, their appeals denied,
they are to go to prison. A final peti-
tion for judicial review has been
granted them for the fall.

I think you need to urge your read-
ers to reflect upon another fact. Fast,
more than any other novelist in Amer-
ican literature, has tried book by
book to sing a hymn of American
democracy. Whether or not he has
been successful can be left to the
judgment of the reader. But certainly
he has tried. And now, while he awaits
execution of sentence, some fifteen
men and women who spoke treason
during the war over the Italian, Jap-
anese, and German radios, are walk-
ing the streets at liberty. They have
not been investigated by the Un-Amer-
ican Activities Committee or charged
with any crimes by the Department
of Justice, not even contempt of Con-
gress.

I believe further that you need to
call upon your readers to honor How-
ard Fast for his alleged crimes.

I believe you need also to call upon
the leading literary men and women
in America, calling upon them pub-
licly by name—Sinclair Lewis, Ernest
Hemingway, Pearl Buck, John Dos
Passos, John Steinbeck, Louis Brom-
field, Robert Sherwood, Carl Van
Doren, Bernard De Voto, John Mar-
quand, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Eu-
gene O'Neill—and many others I will
not set down here. I think you must
ask them to interrupt their work and
their lives in order to speak out on
this issue, to agitate and split the sky
with their indignation. And I believe
deeply that you must insist that if
they remain silent then they will be
abdicating their moral responsibility.

ALBERT MALTZ.

Los Angeles, Calif.

AUGUST 14, 1948

23

PERSONAL HISTORY
(Continued from page 21)

jealousies, his poetic exaltation of the family and the land and his self-reproach at his "bourgeois happiness" are a reflection of his inner struggle between realism and God. The first fifteen years of his marriage brought him fame and money and thirteen children; but it also brought him the realization that the family must be the victim of the changing times. Russia seethed with many social crises, and the seething in Tolstoy's heart is evident even in the blithe, wistful, bubbly pages of little Tanya's diary. She tells us of the delight with which they listened to Leo nervously reading aloud the first sections of "War and Peace." She does not tell us of the sense of guilt which tintured those pages, and which hovered over the household.

Some of the Answers

ON BEING AN AUTHOR. By Vera Brittain. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1948. 218 pp. \$3.50.

Reviewed by HERSCHEL BRICKELL

ANY honest book by a successful writer should inevitably be of some help to those who are determined to learn to put words on paper so chosen and arranged as to arouse the interest of other members of the human race, and Miss Brittain's, as might be expected, is an honest book. Hers is a sound intelligence and a sensitive spirit, and the solid accomplishment of her two best books, the autobiographical "Testament of Youth" and the biographical "Testament of Friendship," lend authority to what she has to say on an inexhaustible subject.

Her small book, called "On Becoming a Writer in England," is made considerably more useful here by the editing of Dr. George Savage of the English Department of the University of Washington, who has given it the necessary American touches, and who introduces it in terms that seem somewhat extravagant in the light of its actual accomplishment. His stress is on Miss Brittain's frankness, which is not really so surprising as to cause excitement; many good writers have been frank about their careers, as why should they not be?

This is not really a "manual for writers," as its blurb asserts, since it is a very personal book, which gives it its value. The author does not pre-

tend to know all the answers, or even very many of them, outside the fields she herself has cultivated: journalism, the novel, and the personal narrative. The truth is that no one person can cover all the branches of writing, even cursorily, unless he be either a hack without a conscience or a racketeer.

Speaking for herself, Miss Brittain confesses that she could not have been anything else except a writer. She declares that no matter how difficult it is to learn to write, as difficult for most people as to learn to play the piano or to paint well, the writer has the advantage of being able to rid himself of his sufferings by writing about his troubles, besides, if he is fortunate, winning fame and fortune.

As for how much can be taught about writing, she gives the only de-

cent answer there is: people with talent may be helped to learn to write, people without talent cannot. Her recipe for handling the awful task of disposing of unsolicited manuscripts, which haunts us all in this business, is to tell the truth, a drastic prescription, but the only serviceable one.

Dr. Savage adds a good deal of information about American prizes, fellowships, and other aids to writers, but neither his bibliography nor Miss Brittain's is selective or annotated, and therefore both are far less useful than they might have been. Bookshops are piled high with books on writing, most of them worthless, or worse, and a service might have been rendered by saying so, and listing the few good ones, with a line or so of description.

The Criminal Record
The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	Crime, Place, and Sleuth	Summing Up	Verdict
THIS INWARD HORROR J. Russell Warren (Dutton: \$2.75)	Nice young English architect wakes up, injured, in ditch and finds, soon enough, that he's in somebody else's body. Ructions follow.	Murder, robbery, English underworld life, and misplaced soul's efforts to make itself known portrayed in absorbing detail, if not convincingly.	Read-able fantasy
SAVE A ROPE H. C. Bailey (Crime Club: \$2.)	Discovery of female bones (minus skull) near English tarn interests many people, including Dr. Reggie Fortune, who enlightens local cop.	Don't mind plethora of idle chatter—it all ties in. Mr. Fortune is himself throughout, and tale has plenty of high spots.	High class Bailey
SHADOW OF FU MANCHU Sax Rohmer (Crime Club: \$2.)	Fu Manchu, masquerading in N. Y. as psychiatrist, crosses swords again with Nayland Smith of Scotland Yard in sequence of startling situations.	Best line in book, for Fu devotees, is, "He has slipped through our fingers." Others may take oriental deviltries in stride.	Mixture as before
THE CASE OF THE VAGABOND VIRGIN Erle Stanley Gardner (Morrow: \$2.50)	Troubles of irascible executive with beautiful blonde "vagrant" progress through blackmail to murder and some stylish sleuthing.	Slight let-down at finish compensated by extra-speedy action, sinuous plotting, and dope on racket which male motorists may ponder.	Standard brand
UNEASY STREET Wade Miller (Farrar, Straus: \$2.50)	Blunt Calif. shamus Max Thursday walks smack into client's murder—and others, before secret of antique music box is revealed.	Forthright, streamlined detecting; incessant action from start to end; neat puzzle, and much lively wit-matching by Thursday and girl.	Brisk and rugged
THE LONG ESCAPE David Dodge (Random House: \$2.50)	Private investigator Colbee traces long missing Pasadenan from Mexico City to Chile, energetically dodging death en route.	Plenty of punch and color—latter due to gal called Idaho—frequent fisticuffs and fire-fights and logical, although anticlimactic, finish.	Better grade
THE LINKS IN THE CHAIN John Rhode (Dodd, Mead: \$2.50)	Perplexing English crime-carnival, featuring safe-lifting, drug-stealing, and murder, stopped by Supt. Wag-horn with assist from Dr. Priestley.	Usual careful plotting, plodding but interesting detective work, variety of honestly portrayed characters, and helpful hints from Dr. P.	Satisfactorily solid