

hood restrictions, sees the murder as a daring defiance of convention, and is inspired into an abortive duplication of the assault upon his landlady's daughter.

Thus, the murder enters into the life of everyone in the book, and each enters into the murder. Horrified, yet titillated, they devour the tabloid accounts of the crime, each sharing the blood lust, each partaking of the sin.

Charles Jackson's newest novel is craftsmanlike, tough, exciting. It represents a considerable growth in the author's interests, and in his talent. From the intense, detailed exploration of the single disturbed personality, he has directed his attention toward a much larger canvas, a canvas crowded

with a whole string of fascinating characters, a canvas upon which the forces of the social milieu are brought into focus. This book is more diffuse than either "Lost Weekend" or "Fall of Valor." It does not mount relentlessly to the almost unbearable climaxes which were so effectively stated in those works. I do not think it will make the sensation they did.

But I found it tremendously absorbing — and disturbing. For "The Outer Edges" is not only a searching glimpse into the maelstrom of human personality, it is also an indictment of the mental health of a civilization which does not seem too utterly repelled by the imminent opportunity of destroying itself.

Symbolic Ship of Outcasts

THE SHIP AND THE FLAME. By Jerre Mangione. New York: A. A. Wyn. 1948. 311 pp. \$3.

Reviewed by EDMUND FULLER

THE S. S. *Setubal*, under Portuguese flag, is en route from Lisbon to Vera Cruz with five hundred refugees from various countries of Europe. A few of the passengers, known anti-Fascists, are wanted by the Nazis. The spreading rumors that the Captain is an enemy agent and that their Mexican visas will prove fraudulent are a life-and-death matter for many. Return to a European port may mean concentration camps or worse.

Josef Renner is an eminent politico-satirical novelist—"the Gadfly of Austria." His old friend, Stiano Argento, a Sicilian professor of Italian history, is also anti-Fascist, but more recently awakened to political action. With Renner is his current mistress, Tereza Lenska. With Argento are his daughter and his devoutly Catholic wife, Margarita, who as her more rationally religious husband feels, belongs to "the legion of men and women who can apply the principles of Christianity to individuals, but not to society as a whole."

At Vera Cruz begins the cynical tragedy of refusal. Visas repudiated, the whole human cargo is faced with shipment not back to Lisbon but to Casablanca where the Nazi power will envelop them. Only the providential effects of a storm bring them to an American port and to at least a temporary respite.

In the desperate struggle of these people to find haven on American soil Mr. Mangione examines an aspect of the terrible fear hamstringing a great nation; the same fear that has risen

to near panic proportions in some quarters since we have acquired the invincible weapon. Immigration authorities dread the possibility of admitting dangerous radicals, barring from their only sanctuary, as Argento bitterly reflects, "men who had opposed the enemy single-handed long before others had recognized its true character." Such a one is Peter Sadona, sent back to certain death, who says quietly to the Sicilian: "I do not seem to fit anywhere in this modern world except in a concentration camp. There, I find that I am among people who understand me and I understand them. . . . But these other people — most of them are strangers who do not know what they want or where they are going."

As he watches the blind, animal optimism of some of his fellow passengers, as he sees the indifference



"Jerry Mangione examines an aspect of the terrible fear hamstringing a great nation."

of some of them to anything but their own survival, Argento concludes, "The world is probably in its present mess because there are too many of us who are addicted to the drug of hope." A partial diagnosis at best.

An allusion suggests that Mr. Mangione has based his story partly on the widely publicized case of the *St. Louis*, whose passengers never found haven. Similar material was the subject of this season's experimental play "The Skipper Next to God." Indeed, this ship of outcasts makes an apt symbol for much of the present condition of man.

On the whole Mr. Mangione has used his materials well and honestly. A bit too much time is devoted to the somewhat messy relationship between young Paul Kalinka and the highly susceptible Simone Brasson. Still, the author has fashioned a number of absorbing characters and a human drama generally well integrated with the drama of ideas upon which I have dwelt. The dialogue is incisive and penetrating. It is a good work.

Queer Corner of Life

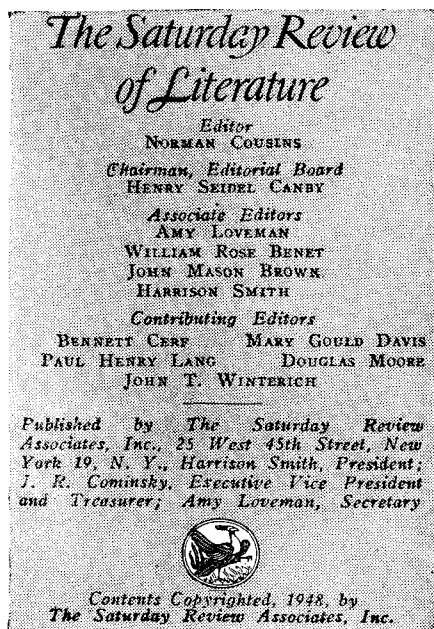
THE FOOLISH GENTLEWOMAN. By Margery Sharp. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1948. 330 pp. \$3.

Reviewed by DOROTHY CANFIELD

WHETHER we are aware of it or not, we look, in every self-respecting work of fiction, for a "bulletin from the front," the front being human life. Other things being equal, the more truthful such a report on reality, the more valuable. But other things are never equal. And to make one's little narrative honestly a part of truth is a big undertaking, rather beyond the ability of many authors. Yet I maintain that the first thing to say about a novel is whether the writer has been able to do just this.

In the case of Margery Sharp's odd and delightful new novel, the answer is yes, she has. She shows us a queer corner of British life in our times with a queer collection of very British people, such as we Americans decidedly do not see around us. But we don't need to be acquainted with them to be sure they exist. You really can tell, you know, about the presence or absence of reality in a story as accurately and without any special gift for analysis, as you know from the sound, when somebody sets a dish down on the table, whether the dish is cracked or not. Margery Sharp's latest dish is of a shape unfamiliar to us. But we know there is no crack in it, the moment she sets

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The SRL Anisfield-Wolf Awards

ONCE again the editors take pleasure in announcing the selection of two books for the Anisfield-Wolf Awards, given each year by SRL to the best works on race relations published during the preceding year. The books chosen for 1947 are:

- "The Indians of the Americas" by John Collier (Norton)
- "The Other Room" by Worth Tuttle Hedden (Crown)

Mr. Collier and Mrs. Hedden will each receive prizes of \$1,000. As in the past, selections were made by a committee consisting of Henry Seidel Canby, chairman of the editorial board of the SRL, Henry P. Fairchild of New York University, and Ralph Linton of Yale University.

John Collier's "The Indians of the Americas" is the fruit of twenty-five years of work in behalf of the American Indian. Mr. Collier was executive secretary of the American Indian Defense Association from 1923 to 1933, and for the next dozen years served as United States Commissioner of Indian Affairs. At present he is president of the Institute of Ethnic Affairs in Washington. Besides his prize-winning book, he is the author of six volumes of verse.

In making the award to "The Indians of the Americas," the committee pointed out that it is "the first modern book to link together accounts of all the Indians from primitive Apaches to the extraordinary civilization of the Incas in Peru. It is not only an ethnological and cultural study, but a history of the dreadful series of injustices perpetrated by the whites against

the Indians, and by no means ended today. It is a book which will inform, arouse the conscience, and stimulate the well-earned pride of the Indian people.

"In addition to the indispensable requisite of being an excellent book, well written and appealing, Mr. Collier's book has the especial merit, from the point of view of the Anisfield-Wolf Awards, of dealing with a minority which has received relatively little attention, and which needs consideration most seriously. Against a background of an historical review of the contacts between white intruders and the natives of the American continents, the author tells the story of the dealings of the United States Government with its Indian wards, and discusses sympathetically the contemporary problems of adjustment and the struggle for justice. As United States Commissioner of Indian Affairs Mr. Collier inaugurated a policy which, while regarded as controversial in some of its details by other specialists, was unquestionably humanitarian in its recognition of the Indians as human beings with cultures of their own, in which are to be found many admirable features. The reader of this book will discern many justifications for this policy."

Worth Tuttle Hedden's "The Other Room" is a first novel. In writing it, Mrs. Hedden drew upon her Southern heritage and experiences. Born in Raleigh, N. C., the daughter of a minister of the Southern Methodist Episcopal Church, she is an alumna of Trinity College, Duke University. After service with the American Red Cross, Mrs. Hedden taught at Straight College (which has since been absorbed by Dillard University), a Negro institution at New Orleans. She now lives with her husband and three children in Norwalk, Conn.

In her novel [the Anisfield-Wolf Awards Committee comments] Mrs. Hedden has made use of a novel situation to project a revealing picture of Negro-white relations in the Deep South. Nina Latham,

daughter of one of the first families of Virginia, eager to escape from the stultifying atmosphere of her house, accepts a position which an agency secures for her to teach in a college in New Orleans. It is only after she has arrived there to begin her work that she discovers that it is a Negro college. At first her training and background are in horrified revolt against the situation. Only her pride and her sense of duty prevent her from fleeing for home. She does not dare to tell her family of her humiliation and her letters home are painful compositions in pure fiction.

Gradually, however, she comes to regard her students as individuals rather than occupants of that "other room" into which no Southern lady should set foot. She becomes interested in helping them with their problems, the ever-present problems of youth to which is added the extra burden of discrimination. She finds deep satisfaction in fostering the talents of the occasional gifted student. For her colleague, Professor Warwick, a true scholar and a gentleman who could pass for white in the North but not in New Orleans, she has an admiration which develops into a deep but tragic love, for they both know that there is no future for them in our society.

Through the story of one Southern girl coping with an unusual problem, Mrs. Hedden has thrown into high relief many of the difficulties of young people, both black and white, below the Mason-Dixon line.

"'The Other Room' will probably offend a great many people," Sara Henderson Hay wrote in reviewing it for SRL. "That they can be offended by the truth is to their discredit, not to that of Mrs. Hedden's honest and courageous book."

The Anisfield-Wolf Awards were established a dozen years ago by Edith Anisfield Wolf and her late husband, Eugene E. Wolf. They provide \$1,000 for each of the two books adjudged to be the best in the field of race relations, either in creative literature or in the social sciences. To be considered for the award for 1948, three copies of a book in published form should be sent to Professor Henry P. Fairchild, New York University, Washington Square, New York 3, N. Y.

Arrival of War Bride, Pier 97, Hudson River

By Howard Griffin

EACH taxi is a poem in her honor,
tied-up and neat, elegant as a bird;
the cheap store windows gleam like malachite
and through the causeway night falls with its glitter.

The fabled towers greet her and she tries
to cheer her prince recovered in this port,
clasps her child tighter, climbs the army van
and on the black street turns her golden eyes.