

viewer is for the adoption of a fifth freedom: freedom from pain. Mr. Harrison recognized his symptoms because he had previously done research on coronary thrombosis for a death scene in one of his novels. The reviewer had an unfailing intuition that he was critically smitten when he was staggering for help to the occupant of the neighboring apartment, although he had no previous warning and no knowledge of the disease. Is there after all biologic validity to the folklore that animals experience a premonition of death?

Then there come the standard six weeks of lying flat on one's back on a hospital bed during which period the coronary artery has to mend its blowout and the patient's will to live and vitality have to throw roots once more. No facetiousness is intended by the eager admission of both the author and the reviewer that they developed a deep respect and affection for the respective nurses who attended them, for the manner of their ministrations were crucial to recovery.

It is the post-hospital period of rehabilitation which, however, is the most critical. Within a few months a lifetime has to be telescoped and redirected, for a way of life has to be worked out which would permit the cardiac individual to live a useful and nearly normal life. In all of this the guidance of the doctor appears to be decisive. The reviewer can well understand the author's bitterness towards the cynical, sadistic violators of the Hippocratic oath he came in contact with and his appreciation of the understanding, sympathetic doctors. It is difficult to think of another illness in which the psychosomatic approach should prove more fruitful. Post-coronary neurosis, making for unnecessary invalidism, has to be dissipated. Occupational, temperamental, and family readjust-

ment may be indicated. The counsel of moderation, like all generalizations, is easily declared and most difficult of observance because of differences in individual manifestations, though a coronary is ample demonstration of how alike we are in our fundamental humanity. Labor disputes, by common consent, would not be considered feasts of brotherly love, and the reviewer would hardly be considered by those who know him as impassive, yet he has been able to engage in labor arbitration without an awareness of appreciable strain.

Despite the title the author does not intend to convey the idea that it is any great fun to be subject to the call to walk the last mile any minute of one's life, even though that call

may be postponed to the end of what is referred to as a normal span of life. But as in Agamemnon: "Who but a god goes woundless all the way?"

I beg the author's forgiveness for "talking about my operation" to some extent. It has been the reviewer's intent to add one more voice in underscoring the message of the author that a coronary does not spell the end for those who survive and to induce the doctor, the nurse, and the layman, cardiac or not, to read the book.

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## On the Greenland Patrol

RED FLANNELS AND GREEN ICE.  
By Arthur Pocock. New York: Random House. 272 pp. \$2.75.

By FLETCHER PRATT

MR. POCOCK joined the Coast Guard, made a lieutenancy after a course at the New London Academy, and was assigned to duty on a small ship of the Greenland patrol, which he calls *Laurel* (why do they have to disguise the name?). Her trip was to three various bases in Greenland, one in northern Labrador, and assorted airfields and weather stations on Baffin Island. It took four months. The mission was to leave supplies and personnel and to bring back exhausted items in both categories. Mr. Pocock was seasick during most of the voyaging; he met a good many Eskimos in a social way and people whom military orders took to the Arctic in a business way; he saw lots of ice, some strange country, and some striking examples of both efficiency and inefficiency.

Everything about the trip amused him; he here writes about the experience with immense good humor. It is only a slight drawback that the publishers have confounded good humor with humor and presented the book as a side-splitter in the line of S. J. Perelman's trip around the world. The reader who expects anything of that kind will probably suffer a severe shock and recover very slowly. To be sure, there are excellent anecdotes (which will doubtless be lifted by the publisher for presentation in his column), and an active and witty turn of phrase, as though the man were walking with steel springs in his shoes. But the book is about as far from the forced grin of the pro-

fessional humorist as a good dinner-table conversation is from a Broadway production.

In fact, "Red Flannels and Green Ice" is exactly a good dinner-table conversation by a keen-eyed observer who has a natural affinity for the wacky streak in everyone. He includes such specimens as Sarah, the Red Cross girl "of the squirrel teeth and concave mammae," who allotted an hour and a half to each date and sent the lucky man on his way by asking his last name so she could introduce him to the cut-in; and Captain Henley, who thought it was fun to go on a four-month dogsled trip alone; and DeBose, the steward, who described the Jello as having a red flavor. A well-informed book, an amiable book that is a pure delight in a troubled world, where so few can be so sane, so urbane, and so pleasant. I read it twice and shall probably do so again.

### LITERARY I. Q. ANSWERS

1. "Little pitchers have big ears." "Richard III." 2. "Every dog has his day." "Richard III." 3. "Hard as steel." "Two Gentlemen of Verona." 4. "Neither rhyme nor reason." "Comedy of Errors." 5. "Give the devil his due." "1 Henry IV." 6. "To throe cold water." "Merry Wives of Windsor." 7. "Dead as a door nail." "Henry VI." 8. "Goes against the stomach." "As You Like It." 9. "The worm turns." "Henry VI." 10. "Birds of a feather." "Henry VI." 11. "Blinking idiot." "Merchant of Venice." 12. "To break the ice." "Taming of the Shrew." 13. "To be in a pickle." "The Tempest." 14. "Harp on the old string." "Richard III." 15. "Not slept a wink." "Cymbeline." 16. "Eaten out of house and home." "2 Henry IV." 17. "Mouth waters." "Pericles." 18. "To the manner born." "Hamlet." 19. "Past praying for." "1 Henry IV." 20. "Laugh one's self to death." "The Tempest."



**Ideas and Studies.** A year ago Thomas Merton was known chiefly in poetic circles, as the author of three volumes of highly promising verse. Then last winter came "The Seven Storey Mountain," his moving account of the experiences that led him to become a Trappist monk—and his name was on the lips of every book-reading American. His second prose work, "The Waters of Siloe," reviewed below, is a luminously told history of the eight centuries of the Trappists. . . . During the past decade, sociologists, and physicians have concluded that alcoholism is more a medical than a moral problem. In "Drinking's Not the Problem" (see page 21) Charles Clapp, Jr., writes illuminatingly if not definitely of this new approach to an old problem. . . . Charles R. Knight has added to our misconceptions about "Prehistoric Man" in a new book by that name, which M. F. Ashley Montagu reviews on page 21.

## Odyssey of an Ascetical Ideal

THE WATERS OF SILOE. By Thomas Merton. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 377 pp. \$3.50.

By ANN F. WOLFE

IN DANTE'S "Paradiso" it is Bernard of Clairvaux who is deemed worthy to serve as guide to the throne of God. Bernard was the mystic under whose direction the twelfth-century Cistercians—Trappists, to give them their later and more popular name—lived the contemplative, monastic life in its purest and highest form. In the golden age of the Cistercians "the monk was a man who labored because he was poor and was poor because he loved God, and who lived apart from the world to praise God and to contemplate Him and to taste the inexpressible joys of His love in silence and peace."

It was among the Trappist contemplatives of Kentucky, some eight centuries later, that twenty-six-year-old Thomas Merton found the waters of peace, "the waters of Siloe, that flow in silence." How he found them he has revealed in the confession called, with Dantesque symbolism, "The Seven Storey Mountain." Now in a companion volume the atomic-age Augustine draws a remarkable picture of life in a Trappist monastery, explains the spirit and purpose of the contemplative way, and traces the growth of the Cistercian Order down the years and over the world. In "The Waters of Siloe," therefore, he gives us a unique insight into the most spiritual form of Christian living and a distinguished contribution to the history of ascetical thought.

Just as "The Seven Storey Mountain" is the odyssey of a soul, "The Waters of Siloe" is, in a sense, the odyssey of an ascetical ideal. The



—From the book.

Trappist monk working in the garden—"the contemplative way."

Cistercian Order, founded late in the eleventh century, looked back explicitly to Benedict, who centered the monastic vocation about a simple and practical mysticism of grace. The rhythm of a monk's life "was attuned to the waxing and waning seasons. It followed the sun's course along the ecliptic . . . the monk grew and became strong in spirit and found his way, without realizing it, into the pure atmosphere of sanctity." In investing Benedictine simplicity with their own distinctive spirituality, the Cistercians looked upon new horizons in the interior life.

With time the ascetical ideal was beclouded and all but lost. Monks became worldly and petty. The contemplative purpose was diverted to

alien activities such as teaching and missionary work. Political persecutions broke up the monasteries and scattered the monks into hiding or exile. In the wars that rent Europe the monks took up arms; many died in the service of their country. In World War II there were Cistercians in the underground resistance forces and in Nazi concentration camps. They were the victims of Communist terrorism in Spain and in China. It is a miracle that the ideal survived the harrowing journey through the weaknesses and stupidity of human nature and the blood baths of world history.

Some of the most fascinating passages in the book deal with the men, saintly and less saintly, brilliant and dun-colored, who molded the Cistercian spirit and sustained it. One of the most extraordinary of these was the dramatic De Rancé who, at twelve, was abbot of three abbeys, prior of three priories, and canon of Notre Dame. This seventeenth-century nobleman despised monks, yet as head of La Trappe he revived the essential asceticism that had gradually been lost to monastic life. Dramatic in reverse is the story of Father Joseph Cassant, who died in 1903. A lowly and prosaic French peasant he lacked strength of body and quickness of mind, but he lived a life of true mystical sanctity.

The first American Trappist was a Texas cowboy who, though a tempestuous and independent youth, had been conditioned, through his lonely rides over the range, to solitude. In

## Autumn Mass-Meetings

By Harold Zlotnick

THE restless crowds of leaves  
Decry the status quo  
Of climate temperate  
Whose seasons come and go

And meet at swollen curbs  
In threadbare, tattered brown  
To shout for solar change  
At corners of the town,

Wanting the world to pool  
More evenly the wealth  
Of sun and warmer air  
And evergreen of health

With communal regard  
For every growing plant,  
A green security  
Which frost should not supplant.

But quadripartite rule  
Of growth and of decay  
Calls out militia winds  
To drive the throngs away.