

Unlike Other Tales

FANCIES AND GOODNIGHTS. By John Collier. New York: Doubleday & Co. 364 pp. \$4.

By BASIL DAVENPORT

IF you have read any of John Collier's stories, then all I need to do is tell you that this contains fifty of them—the entire contents (one story excepted) of his out-of-print and eagerly sought-after collections, "Presenting Moonshine" and "The Touch of Nutmeg"; and in addition there are among the fifty (like the seventeen of Priam's fifty sons who were sons of Hecuba) seventeen stories never before published in book form. But if you haven't read any of John Collier, then the reviewer, after asking where in the world you have been living, finds himself in a difficulty. For these are, in the sage phrase of the jacket, "tales unlike other tales." And though they are so much akin that, reading any one of them in *The New Yorker* (if it appeared there), one could spot it as a Collier story long before turning over to the signature, it is hard to say what that quality is. It cannot be the eerie, although jinns, fiends, conversational gorillas, and Beelzebub himself figure prominently in many of the stories (and the eeriest of all, perhaps, is about the people who live all night in the big department stores). Some of the best of them, tales of murder revealed by an accident that was in the nature of things, or murders in the future, pointed out equally by the inexorable logic of the nature of things, have nothing haunted about them. It is not quite the macabre, though Mr. Collier can certainly get more fun than any living man out of a scene where a helpless young man is disemboweled before his own eyes (it is funny, and I told you John Collier was a hard man to convey); for there is nothing maca-

LITERARY I.Q. ANSWERS

1. Seeger, in "Two Bottles of Relish," by Lord Dunsany. 2. Fifth Earl of Gonister, in "After Many a Summer Dies the Swan," by Aldous Huxley. 3. Gargantua, in "Gargantua and Pantagruel," by François Rabelais. 4. Beatrice, in "Rappaccini's Daughter," by Nathaniel Hawthorne. 5. Captain in "The Yarn of the Nancy Bell," by W. S. Gilbert. 6. Tamora, in "Titus Andronicus," by William Shakespeare. 7. Injun Joe, in "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer," by Mark Twain. 8. Persephone, in Greek mythology. 9. Renfield, in "Dracula," by Bram Stoker. 10. Sea-serpent, in "The Circus of Dr. Lao," by Charles G. Finney.



—Sol Libsohn.

Benjamin Appel—"good documentary."

bre in the straightforward spiritual brutality of the murder in "Wet Saturday."

The quality is to be found, perhaps, in Mr. Collier's elegant and somehow eighteenth-century view of man. Man, he perceives,

Like an angry ape,
Plays such fantastic tricks before
high heaven
As make the angels weep,

and therefore it is quite natural that he should attract the attention of apes that can write books, of fiends like heavyweight wrestlers, and of fiends like macaronis, who tempt him for amusement. Man in Mr. Collier's world is quite capable of tempting himself, and there is good sport in seeing for what small things he will do it. Clara Middleton's father in "The Egoist" would have been incapable of selling her simply to a rich man; when he tried the wine Sir Willoughby kept in his cellars—! In the same way the father in "Cancel All I Said" would never sell his daughter to Hollywood simply for a fortune; but when he remembers the yellow waistcoat he once saw on Lord Lonsdale—! Only, when the angry ape makes the angels weep, Mr. Collier, with greater detachment than young Mr. Disraeli, is on the side neither of the apes nor the weeping angels; he is sitting in a sidebox, observing how really diverting are the fantastic tricks.

Once or twice tenderness nearly or quite breaks in, and most vividly in the most unrealistic stories. There is a really idyllic feeling about the love of the night-watchman and the youngest of the people who haunt the dark department stores. But in general Mr. Collier remains the master of an irony so perfectly balanced that his horror is hardly ever quite free of humor, nor his humor of horror.

Guerrilla Warfare

FORTRESS IN THE RICE. By Benjamin Appel. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co. 425 pp. \$3.50.

By ROBERT LOWRY

WHEN Paul V. McNutt went to the Philippines as U. S. High Commissioner in 1945 he took along as his special assistant a lean, keen-eyed proletarian novelist to write the history of the mission. Benjamin Appel had never before set foot outside the United States, but in such novels as "The Dark Stain," "The Power House," and "Brain Guy" he had shown a ready sympathy for the poor and downtrodden wherever he found them. He found them by the thousands in the Philippines, burning with anger at their country's black-market ("buy-and-sell") rich, its turncoat, pocket-lining politicians, and its land-hoarding *hacenderos*. Dipping into the diary in which he jotted down daily notes on his jeep trips into the Huk-held rice country north of Manila, where he talked to Hukbalahap leaders, and his conversations with high Philippine and American brass at Manila headquarters, Appel began to conceive a work of non-fiction that would explain to Americans back home the plight of the Philippine masses and the reason for their revolutionary ferment. But when he sat down to write his book Appel, "having been mainly a novelist," found himself writing a novel instead.

Oddly, "Fortress in the Rice" is not a story of the postwar Philippines that Appel knew, but a story of the Philippines at war. And it is more successful as an expression of his original non-fiction intentions than it is as a novel.

Hero Dave MacVey is a stock young, wide-eyed man-of-good-will who voyages to Manila in 1941 to take a job in a bank and abruptly finds himself a prisoner of a war he hadn't bargained for. Commissioned a lieutenant with the USAFFE, the American-led guerrillas who carried on in the back-country during the Japanese occupation, Dave hurdles an obstacle course of his own Western prejudices on his raids with the Huks (who were not Red-led at the time, Mr. Appel explains in a faintly apologetic postscript to his novel, but included "not only Communists but Socialists, Nationalistas, and non-politicals") and emerges at war's end, wounded but alive, with a profound sympathy for the hard-pressed revolutionaries he got to know and a profound distaste

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Personal History. *With the death of Harold W. Ross, founder and editor of The New Yorker, American journalism and literature lost one of its rarest talents. SRL's feelings about Mr. Ross will be found on the editorial page of this issue. Shortly before his passing Dale Kramer, a free-lance writer, published a volume recounting the history and legend of "Ross and The New Yorker." George Y. Wells examines the book and its subject on page 18. Another legendary American who revolutionized American business and to an astonishing extent American society is the topic of "We Never Called Him Henry," reviewed immediately below. Its author, Harry Bennett, was Ford's right-hand man for three decades and himself became nearly as much of a legend as his boss. . . . Erskine Caldwell, whose novels have reached one of the largest audiences of modern times, thanks to the paper-backed reprint editions, tells of his years as a writer in "Call It Experience" (page 19).*

Thirty Years with a Tycoon

WE NEVER CALLED HIM HENRY.
By Harry Bennett as told to Paul Marcus. New York: Gold Medal Books. 180 pp. 25c.

By W. C. RICHARDS

A DETROIT editor in need some years back of a picture of Harry Herbert Bennett and not finding one suitable ordered his photographers to get him at once.

"We'll wake up some morning," he said, "to find this fellow murdered or president of the Ford Motor Company."

Head of Mr. Ford's plant police, his closest confidant for no inconsiderable time, and a man untroubled by gnawing dreams over whether Mr. Ford's wants were good or bad in the commonly accepted sense, Mr. Bennett did become a director of the company briefly. He was not killed because shots fired at him missed, and other persons who would have liked to rough him up thought best not to try.

In "We Never Called Him Henry" he tells the story of his thirty years as jack-of-all-trades and says to his critics: "It has been made to appear that Mr. Ford was a simple man misled by my bad advice. No simple man could have achieved what he did. I stayed as long as I did because I always did what he wanted."

To those who have called Bennett "gangster" and "thug" and "pro-Nazi" and "anti-Semite" he answers "lies." This rebuttal offered, he recites his ca-

reer as Ford's ears and eyes from their first meeting in 1916 when Sailor Bennett was fresh off the U.S.S. Nashville, until the senior Ford's final breakdown.

Ford, he says, made gifts and withdrew them later if the recipients displeased him, tried to reunite families whether they wanted reunion or not, and would repaint or redecorate a favorite's house or even build him a new one, but it had to be done according to Ford's preferences. In critical situations his attitude was, "Let's you and him have a fight, Harry." He would not stand derision, figured he was getting divine guidance, hated anyone who criticized the car, had a morbid

interest in crime and criminals, and always figured behind any man's downfall was a woman. He insisted he was not a capitalist, decided a person could live as long as he wished on cracked wheat, was anti-Catholic as well as anti-Jewish, thought unions were Jewish plots to ruin him but assured Thomas Edison he had no racial bias, really, but "the rotten newspapers make me look that way."

He suspected the DuPonts, reporters, and accountants, was anti-English (Bennett thinks it was because Winston Churchill poked fun at Ford's theory that most English problems could be solved if farming was intensified so the English could produce their own produce) and pro-German because Germans were clean, thrifty, hard working, and technologically advanced. He convinced himself that reports of Nazi brutality were propaganda and that Hitler would drop anchor as soon as he got the Polish corridor. "Well, by God, we're through with him," Ford is quoted as saying when Hitler's expansion continued. "He's power-drunk like the rest."

The book is an unusual coin to drop in the farebox for the ride Mr. Bennett had on Mr. Ford's shoulders. But the reader's puzzle when he puts it down is how the Tin Lizzie came to be amid such reputed maneuverings, biases, deviousness, cops and robbers, and feuds. Along the line there was the grand vision and brilliant inventiveness and expert calling of shots in addition to the muscling, the animosities, and the hocus-pocus. If there hadn't been, Lizzie never would have queened it as long as she did.



—Acme.

Henry Ford, Harry Ferguson, and Ford-Ferguson tractor model "the grand vision."

W. C. Richards, a Detroit newspaperman, is the author of "The Last Billionaire," an informal biography of Henry Ford.