

artfully done, and the photographs have been carefully chosen to project the life of the city and not just its look. So, in large and clear reproductions, "London" shows you the city lamplighters, the pavement artists, the Hyde Park haranguers in sharp focus. When the book reaches a museum it walks inside and reproduces some of the work of the masters, among them Raphael, Michelangelo, Velázquez, Reynolds, Gainsborough, and Watteau. The text by Jacques Boussard is not exceptional for style, but it is, all the same, pleasant, straightforward, and informative.

**ALL THE BEST IN THE MEDITERRANEAN.** By Sydney Clark. Dodd Mead. \$4. The whole Mediterranean from Gibraltar to Israel, which Mr. Clark tries to cover in this, his newest travel book, has proven a large mouthful, unwieldy to chew, difficult to digest. I say this in the light of Mr. Clark's lengthy list of previous books, which have been excellent out-and-out guides. This one proves more of a book for reading than a guide for consulting. Separated from the main body of the text are sketchy words about hotels in the twenty-four lands Clark covered. Separate, too, are words about local food and drink, and also regional shopping. It is a device that will make for plenty of cross reference. Clark is fine on the islands and the lands of North Africa, but he hits an obstacle when he strikes the 800 miles of Italian coastline washed by the Mediterranean, not to mention the large chunk of Southern France. So it happens that Italy gets but six pages, Sicily gets six pages, France and Corsica get eight pages together, but the island of Cyprus gets sixteen. Mr. Clark has other books, and good ones, too, on France (Italy is in preparation), and those who want additional information will have to make an additional purchase. Those who are content to read for background, for pleasure, or to warm over an old memory, however, will do well to start out with "All the Best in the Mediterranean."

—H. S.

#### THE SHERWOOD EDDY AMERICAN SEMINAR

SAILS on the Queen Mary June 25, 1952, returning to New York on August 12. After two weeks in England, meeting a score of British leaders, we fly to Berlin, a hundred miles beyond the Iron Curtain; thence to Yugoslavia, Italy and Geneva, Switzerland, where we study the United Nations and World Council of Churches; then Paris. The cost will approximate \$1,100. Membership will be limited to 50 who constantly speak or write, who will seek to interpret the needs of Europe to America. This is the 22nd year of the Seminar, which is recognized by the political, educational and cultural leaders of Europe who meet with us daily. Application should be sent to Peter Nadsen, Inc., 311 West 23rd St., New York 11, N. Y.

## NEW EDITIONS

WHEN Glenway Westcott—in his introduction to "Short Novels of Colette" (Dial, \$5)—declares flatly that "Colette is the greatest living French fiction-writer," he makes a statement that is more easily phrased than defended. But apart from this possible exaggeration his introduction is very nearly a model of intelligence, sympathy, sensitivity, and biographical discretion (he does not, for example, mention the scandalous incident at the Moulin-Rouge that sent Colette's famous husband, Willy, plunging from his eminence of popularity), and it should provide a pleasant and informative approach to a delightful body of fiction that is still unknown to many readers capable of enjoying it. The present volume contains five short novels first translated, and well translated, for Rinehart, from 1929 to 1935: "Chéri," "The Last of Chéri," "The Other One," "Duo," "The Cat," and "The Indulgent Husband." Here we have Colette at her brilliant best, and also in her merely clever—but how devilishly clever!—vein. Most famous of all these novels, of course, is "Chéri," named after its insufferable yet fascinating hero; but "The Last of Chéri" is a more than worthy sequel, and Colette's genius finds consummate expression in "Duo," an agonizing tale of jealousy, and in "The Cat," another, and strange, variation on the same enduring theme. "The Other One" takes a middle place among her fictions, while "The Indulgent Husband," originally "Claudine en Ménage," with all its gaiety and charm and candor, does most definitely, as the French would say, *frise l'indécence*. But, whatever her degree of decency, Colette is always the perfect mistress of her favorite material; when she writes of the variations of sexual experience—with emotional and psychological concomitants—she makes many of her competitors, especially in English, look like fumbling schoolboys.

Just as Colette's clarity is flawless, so is Mallarmé's obscurity famous—and cherished by his adorers. Charles Mauron, who has written an introduction and commentaries for Mallarmé's "Poems" (New Directions, \$2), says that this obscurity is of two kinds, intentional and unintentional, and he does his ingenious best to dissipate darkness of the second kind. The extent of his success must be measured

by every reader for himself. For my own part, I am often charmed by Mallarmé's verbal music; but I more frequently fail than succeed in the perhaps unfashionable task of trying to make sense of his words. This compact New Directions volume holds sixty-four poems in the original French, with Roger Fry's translations of twenty-nine of them, an "early introduction" to Mallarmé's work by Fry, and M. Mauron's introduction and explanatory notes. Mr. Fry's versions are literal, but he carried no music across the Channel when he made them.

ALSO from New Directions come "Selected Writings of Paul Eluard" (\$3.50), Muriel Rukeyser's "Selected Poems" (\$1.50), and William Carlos Williams's "Paterson" (\$1.50). Eluard's singing, almost always crystalline poems and poetic prose have been skilfully translated, facing the original French, by Lloyd Alexander and have been enthusiastically introduced by Aragon, Louis Parrot, and Claude Roy. Miss Rukeyser's several modes may be studied in this one small volume; her star shines brightest when she subjects her deepest feelings to her strictest artistic discipline. There is poetry in Dr. Williams's long, controversial "Paterson," but it is adulterated by much alien matter and is jostled by a good deal of writing that is merely tricky.

I wish I had space in which to do justice to the excellence and beauties of "A Treasury of French Poetry," selected and translated by Alan Conder (Harper, \$4), for it is the finest collection of its kind that I have seen. Here are translations of 351 poems, beginning with a ballade by Charles d'Orleans (1391-1465) and ending with six poems by Jules Supervielle (b. 1884). In almost every instance it is an unmixed pleasure to match Mr. Conder's version against its original, and in almost every instance Mr. Conder's version is an admirable and enjoyable English poem in its own right. Such a combination of quality and quantity, in this particular field of literature, is very nearly miraculous.

It is a joy to come on a new rendition of an immortal classic that is as fresh and readable as Edgar Daplyn's translation of the "Imitation of Christ" (Sheed & Ward, \$2).

—BEN RAY REDMAN.

## FICTION

(Continued from page 12)

becomes a collector of whatever experiences the city of "Cyropolis" has to offer. He smokes hashish, visits cabarets, succumbs to a traveling nymphomaniac, drinks arak, befriends an aging European degenerate, and tries in general to burn with a hard, gem-like flame. In spite of his sneers at the values of suburbia the dissipations which Master Stirling samples in the mysterious East have about as much exoticism as those which may be found in East Orange.

Along with some kissing and much telling Mr. Stewart's hero cultivates a preference for Eastern primitivism as opposed to the commercialized decadence of Western culture. Unfortunately, his reflections on this theme never rise above the banal. He confuses his orientalism with admiration for a young Oriental and utters platitudinous observations on life and art that read like a paraphrase of Oscar Wilde's "Intentions." Mr. Stewart ultimately fills his protagonist full of native fire-water and sends him off gunning for his occidental friend, who is contemplating polluting the primitive landscape with a resort hotel. In so doing, the author finally implements the strong urge to self-destruction Stirling has displayed throughout the book, an impulse which one cannot regard seriously because of the callowness which motivates it.

—MARTIN LEVIN.

**THE BEETLE LEG.** By John Hawkes. *New Directions*. \$2.50. The *avant garde* has now taken over the Western story and, I'm afraid, it will never be quite the same again. It is somewhat difficult to say precisely what Mr. Hawkes's novel is about, but in general what he seems to be hitting for is a sort of myth (in the James Joyce sense) which incorporates all the standard paraphernalia of the Western story and invests it with legendary meaning. Unfortunately, before you've gone very far through the bad lands of Mr. Hawkes's turgid prose, you're likely to lose not only your way but also your interest. The very definite promise which appeared in Mr. Hawkes's first novel, "The Cannibal," is still to be redeemed.

**COME FILL THE CUP.** By Harlan Ware. *Random House*. \$3. In part this tale is the one about the hard-hitting city editor who, practically single-handed, rids Chicago of crime and political corruption. They've been doing that to Chicago ever since the



—George Hurrell.

Harlan Ware—"practised hand."

days of "The Front Page," and in essentially the same way. Much two-fisted stuff, plenty of hard-boiled talk, and the machine-guns rattling the windows. The author's new—or at least added—twist is considerable well-handled material on the care and feeding of drunks, or how alcoholics are made and can be unmade. This adds lots of body to a routine but well-told tale, although—the blurb writer to the contrary—it hasn't quite the quality of "The Lost Weekend."

The reader should perhaps be warned that he may have seen this in its previous incarnation as a motion picture with James Cagney. Thanks to Mr. Ware's practised hand it reads considerably better than would most novel versions of such productions.

**HIMALAYAN ASSIGNMENT.** By F. Van Wyck Mason. *Doubleday*. \$3. Those of you who have been worrying about a Red invasion of India from Tibet can rest a little easier. Colonel Hugh North is on the scene and has the situation in hand. A pretty ticklish situation it is, too, what with Russian agents in various disguises, Chinese agents, spies and counterspies, and betraying natives all trying to make the forbidden valley of Jonkhar into a highway for a Red march into India. The complications get a little thick at times, and sometimes it's hard, even with a scorecard, to tell which side the players are on. But Colonel North straightens everything out finally, with the aid—as usual—of a few smitten women of incredible beauty and complaisant ways. Watch that seductive siren, Atossa Matala, with the silver-blond hair. She'll fool you more than once before it's all over. Shangri-La was never like this.

—EDWARD J. FITZGERALD.

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