

friends, Keally and the Fitzgeralds. The three remaining portraits are more interesting by being amusing or affecting or both: Henrietta, the younger Duchess of Marlborough, who was Congreve's devoted friend and lover; their daughter, who became the Duchess of Leeds; and a friend of the family, the madly eccentric Dr. Messenger Monsey.

Much of it new, Professor Lynch handles her material with skill and tact, picking her way warily through the tangled scandal of eighteenth-century life, letters, and amours. If her gallery does not add much to our direct knowledge of Congreve, it at least establishes what we can know; and it adds, in the essays on the daughter and on the doctor, a pair of first-rate portraits. —ROBERT HALSBAND.

CLASSICAL DEBTS: As a classical scholar, J.A.K. Thomson examines the classical elements and allusions of Shakespeare, "gentle, never school'd, and yet learned." In the course of his study, "Shakespeare and the Classics" (Macmillan, \$4), Mr. Thomson considers the standards of Elizabethan England's classical scholarship, the attitude of Shakespeare's contemporaries toward his learning, the pitfalls of evaluating Shakespeare's indebtedness to classical originals, his treatment of classical myths, his debt to Plutarch, and understanding of Greek tragedy.

Mr. Thomson confirms the standard scholarly consensus on Shakespeare's learning but his fresh treatment of an old theme has its rewards. —S. M.

PUNY PUNNING: A good printing job has been wasted on a worthless little book by Robert Manson Myers. "From Beowulf to Virginia Woolf" (Bobbs-Merrill, \$2)—which is an old joke in academic courses—pretends to be a parody of surveys of English literary history. Certainly those textbooks are worthy of parody—in fact, some of them seem to be; but the kind of heavy-handed treatment given them here is unbelievably obvious and boring. Practically all the "humor" lies in puns and malapropisms. Classroom boners are funny only because they are an occasional, mad relief from the flatness of the surrounding factual plane. But here they are strung out as broad and coarse as possible. A sample, about Shakespeare: "As a child he wrote 'Love's Labour's Lust,' to be followed shortly by 'As You Lack It' (a high comedy), 'The Merchant of Venus' (a low comedy) and 'Anatomy and Coleoptera' (a comedy of errors)." Parody can be a great pleasure, as we can see in the pages of Beerbohm, Leacock, Benchley, Donald Ogden Stewart. But, as this little attempt proves, there is a vast difference between a cleverly placed tickle in the ribs and the crude poke. —R. H.

FICTION

(Continued from page 17)

a woman whose flight from reality has left her empty and doomed to frustration.

Miss Caspary has handled her material solidly and with sensitivity. She doesn't add much new to her theme but what she has to say she says well and persuasively. Occasionally, in her role as narrator, she explains too explicitly a point that has already been made dramatically; but generally she is content to let the facts in her well constructed story make the point for her. It is to be hoped she will continue to apply her high skill.

—EDWARD J. FITZGERALD.

LONELY LADIES: If you're a woman, about forty, and divorced you're likely to have a hell of a life whether you're beautiful, talented, witty or wise. Especially at six o'clock when, home from work or a concert, you wait for the telephone to bring that evening date. That's what Eleanor Lothrop has to say in "Sing For Your Supper" (Rinehart; \$3) That, in fact, with minor variations, is about all she has to say. The variations consist of rounding out her story of unhappy Jane Dunn, divorced from Rodney, with glimpses into the lives of Judy who is divorced and having an affair with a married man, and of April who is having an affair with a man who is not married but likes lots of affairs. Mrs. Lothrop's round-up of this sorry situation is pleasantly competent, seriously intentioned, eminently readable.

—E. J. F.

THE MEANING OF THE MASS: In the prologue to his first novel, "Six O'Clock Mass" (Farrar, Straus, and Young, \$2.75). Monsignor Maurice S. Sheehy asks the aid of St. Jude in making him into a novelist and in bringing the message of the Mass to people. I'm afraid it can't be said that the first part of the wish has been granted. "Six O'Clock Mass" is far from a successful novel. To get that part of it out of the way: Monsignor Sheehy takes nine characters, sketches in some of their past lives, and tells of their reactions to the offering of the Mass. None of them is very believable as a character and each of them is so patently put through his paces for purposes of setting forth Monsignor Sheehy's message that the novelistic devices become annoying rather than helpful. For the rest: Monsignor Sheehy has given an eloquent exposition of the meaning that the Mass has to a devout Roman Catholic.

—E. J. F.

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GOLDSMITH

(Continued from page 12)

take refuge in silence. He would speak on subjects [of] which he had not thought, and of which he was ignorant; he was impatient of being overlooked; he wished to be the principal figure in every group. Goldsmith having adopted this mode of conduct forgot that he must with the advantages accept of all the disadvantages that belonged to it. But he envied Johnson. It may easily be conceived what absurdity of conduct he must fall into in whom this restless desire predominates.

No man's company was ever more greedily sought after, for in his company the ignorant and illiterate were not only easy and free from any mortifying restraint, but even their vanity was gratified to find so admirable a writer so much upon a level, or inferior to themselves, in the arts of conversation. The ingenious and the learned, who wished to display their knowledge, were sure to find an opportunity of gratifying their desire by the triumph of refuting his paradoxes. And it must be acknowledged that he often fought like a tiger, and like the tiger he fought when turned on his back. He risked every opinion which that moment came into his head.

He was impatient when praises were bestowed on any person, however remote these might be from interfering with his own department. It was enough for him if they filled the mouths of men, to oppose their pretensions.

With this fighting, absurdity, and ridiculous kind of envy, he made always a sort of bustle, and wherever he was there was no yawning. The conversation never stagnated or languished. The same company [that], the moment he had turned his back, were in open cry on his absurdity and folly, were still desirous of meeting him again the next day.

He considered him as a friend indeed who would ask him to tell a story or sing a song, either of which requests he was always very ready to comply with, and very often without being asked, and without any preparation, to the great amazement of the company. His favorite songs were "Johnny Armstrong," "Barbara Allen," and "Death and the Lady." In singing the last he endeavored to humor the dialogue by looking very fierce and speaking in a very rough voice for Death, which he suddenly changed when he came to the lady's part, putting on what he fancied to be a lady-like sweetness of

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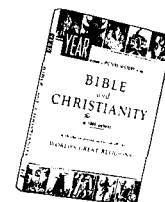
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