



Fiction of the Week

Listed below are new works of fiction which we do not have room to review in this issue. We hope to review many of them in coming issues.

CAST THE FIRST STONE. By Chester Himes. New York: Coward-McCann. \$3.75. The coming-of-age of nineteen-year-old Jim Monroe serving a twenty-year sentence for robbery.

CONFESSORS OF THE NAME. By Gladys Schmitt. New York: Dial Press. \$3.95. A picture of Rome in the year 250 A.D., "a time of troubles" likened by the historian Toynbee to our own.

DEBUT. By Livingston Biddle, Jr. New York: Julian Messner. \$3.75. What happened when a Philadelphia debutante became a Red Cross nurse in Italy in World War II.

THE DESCENT. By Fritz Peters. New York: Farrar, Straus & Young. \$3.50. A highway catastrophe in New Mexico and its effects on a variety of people.

GIGI; CHANCE AQUAINTANCE; JULIE DE CARNEILHAN. By Colette. New York: Farrar, Straus & Young. \$3.50. Three short novels by the popular French author retranslated and presented in a single volume.

THE GOLDEN THREAD. By Louis de Wohl. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co. \$3. A novel based on the life of St. Ignatius Loyola.

THE HARD WAY. By Robert V. Williams. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. \$3. The story of a tough guy who learns the hard way that blackmarket deals and doublecrosses lead only to prison and other troubles.

HOUSE OF EARTH. By Dorothy Clarke Wilson. Philadelphia: Westminster Press. \$3.50. A novel of India on the eve of its independence.

A LITTLE BOY IN THE HOUSE AND OTHER STORIES. By Maza de la Roche. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. \$3. Ten short stories, set in England and Canada, by the author of the "Jalna" novels.

THE MOUNTAIN AND THE VALLEY. By Ernest Buckler. New York: Henry Holt & Co. \$3.50. The fortunes of a farming family in a remote area of Nova Scotia.

THE NAKED STREETS. By Vasco Pratolini. New York: A. A. Wyn. \$3. Poverty and its effect on adolescents in present-day Florence pictured by the author of "A Tale of Poor Lovers."

NATURAL CHILD. By Calder Willingham. New York: Dial Press. \$3.50. Humor, depravity, and wackiness as practised by denizens of a New York rooming house.

THE RIVER GARDEN OF PURE REPOSE. By Grace Boynton. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co. \$3.50. An account of the inspiration wrought on the lives of many people by Jane Breasted, a Quaker missionary in China.

A SHOWER OF SUMMER DAYS. By May Sarton. New York: Rinehart & Co. \$2.75. A house in Ireland of great tradition and its present tenants.

TRIAL BY DARKNESS. By Charles Gorman. New York: Dial Press. \$3.50. Avery Hollister revolts against his nine-generation Connecticut heritage.

THE WAYWARD ONES. By Sara Harris. New York: Crown Publishers. \$3. Sixteen-year-old Bessie Reeves and her experiences at the Hamilton Training School for Delinquent Girls.

those subsidiary characters. I liked particularly an eccentric astrologer, although he was inclined to go on at somewhat too great length about his craft.
—E. J. F.

FOR THE YOUNG OF ALL AGES: There are many writers today who can tell a warm, simple story in which people are basically good and in which virtue is rewarded. Bettina Ehrlich has the happy faculty of being naturally and spontaneously at home with uncomplicated, wholesome sentiment and with simple people. The poor people she writes about in "A Horse for the Island" (Harper, \$2.75) are good without being plaster saints. The lives they lead are, by and large, uneventful but not dull. Even the open moralizing, which occasionally appears in these pages without any disguise, is light-handed and light-hearted.

Miss Ehrlich's book is the story of a little island off the Adriatic coast in Italy and of a hard-working family, mother, father, and two little boys, and of how they brought a horse, Cavallo, to the island to help them with the farming. The island was very little and most older people, as well as all the boys and girls, had never seen a horse. Well, they finally saw one and loved him and played with him. Children who read "A Horse for the Island" will have a great experience.

—SERGE HUGHES.

DREAMS COME TRUE: There is an old-fashioned substantiality about the writing and much of the construction in Guthrie Wilson's second novel, "Julien Ware" (Putnam, \$3.50), that is deeply satisfying. His first book was a war novel of remarkable vividness. This second ends in the war but is primarily concerned with the meticulous examination of the life, motives, and dreams of a man growing up in New Zealand in the decades before the war.

Julien Ware began life as the son of a poor rabbit in the New Zealand wasteland. Early in his life the two dominant facets of his character were set: a deep distrust and hatred of women, arising from the hostility his mother bore him, and a consuming ambition. He would gain wealth, power, reclaim and enrich the land his father had labored on, and he would—out of the same ambition—marry the aristocratic daughter of the land's present owner. It is Mr. Guthrie's story that he accomplished all these ends, and it is a convincing story. Carefully building with infinite detail the author has shown us not only the steps along the way to Julien's success, but also—and more importantly—the cost in the gradual warping and distortion of his character. It is an

impressively developed story, rich with psychological understanding though free of jargon, peopled with believable characters, and carried forward by the kind of strong dramatic conflict that used to be more prevalent in novels.

At the end the author's hand falters and the fault here is a serious one. Julien goes off to World War II after the breakup of his marriage and returns for a furlough with indications of a changed character. When again he goes back to war he is killed and the book is ended. The fault is twofold: the earlier establishment of his warped character had been so convincingly achieved that we cannot believe in the swift, off-stage change that is suggested. In addition, his death at this precise moment serves no purpose thematically and appears a mere contrivance to bring the book to a close. These are serious but not disastrous failings by a novelist who has twice now indicated potentialities of considerable stature.

—MARTIN RICE.

MRS. TIM RIDES AGAIN: That lady of equable humor, pleasant habits, leisurely charm, and sound common sense, Mrs. Tim, is back in circulation, not to mention the circulating libraries. In "Mrs. Tim Flies Home" (Rinehart, \$3) D. E. Stevenson transports her gentle heroine by plane from Kenya to the North Country of England, plonks her down in the village of Old Quinings, establishes her in a charming house called—naturally—The Small House, and then sets the usual village goings-on going on about her. In her usual placid way Mrs. Tim straightens everything out before the tale is told. The boy with the over-possessive mother is freed from her clutches and handed over to the lovely daughter of the squire. The groundwork is laid for romance between Mrs. Tim's daughter and the best friend of Mrs. Tim's son (a further development of this can presumably be looked for); Anne Carlyle's legacy is restored to her; and Mrs. Tim herself weathers some malicious gossip. By some magic D. E. Stevenson is able to make these mild tempests in tea-pots into readable prose. By even greater magic she keeps her heroine from appearing either a fool or an offensive busy-body.

—E. J. F.

MUGGY ALLEGORY: Egypt and Northern Africa have provided the setting for a considerable part of postwar avant-garde literature. "The Lazy Ones" by Albert Cossery (New Directions, \$2.75) is the latest addition to this muggy lot. Again we have the miasmic atmosphere, the intimations of meanings never quite revealed, heavy latherings of perverse sexuality, and a brooding sense of doom. Mr. Cossery's

offering is, the publishers tell us, comic. The "comedy" concerns a family dedicated to sleep, who live in a house in the suburbs of an Egyptian city, and whose struggle is to keep the world of wake men away from their sleep world. Much of the fun and games centers around Papa Hafez's hernia which, as you can imagine, is funny as all get-out. The rest of the novel deals with the efforts of Serag to escape from the house of sleep into

the world. He does and falls asleep. I nearly joined him. —E. J. F.

AMERICANS IN ROME: A city is a group of friends, a few places we like to see, and people going somewhere or pausing to look or to talk. If the city is beautiful, the friends are very good ones, the places very interesting, and the people going or resting are likeable and cordial. Rome for John H. Secondari is a very beautiful city. His

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	Crime, Place, and Sleuth	Summing Up	Verdict
INTO THIN AIR <i>Jack Iams</i> (Morrow: \$2.50)	Voice of America commentator vanishes; news ed follows gal-cluttered NY trail around; FBI in at payoff.	Lively and literate job, with real characters, heady pace, breezy writing.	Good
KISS ME, DEADLY <i>Mickey Spillane</i> (Dutton: \$2.50)	Mike Hammer, hell on wheels or off, slugs it out with N.Y. dope ring; dames fail to impede mission.	Old formula still operating; this one just as wild as predecessors.	Shake well before using
THE FACE IN THE SHADOWS <i>Peter Orday</i> (A. A. Wyn: \$2.75)	Newsman ticketed as Commie trails Red agent over half U.S., Canada, to prove hero is good security-risk.	Soft in spots, but has moments of tension as trail takes in Wisconsin, Chicago, Montreal, etc.	Middling
DRUMBEAT FOR A DIRGE <i>Brandon Bird</i> (Dodd Mead: \$2.50)	N.Y. dance band (also plays Penn., W.Va.) develops sour notes, corpses; Hampton Hume, understudy, aids cops.	Technical setting authentic; characters nicely drawn; told with liveliness and humor.	Good
A CASE FOR MR. CROOK <i>Anthony Gilbert</i> (Random: \$2.50)	British nurse, not young, involves self in intricate crime jam; Arthur Crook, lone operative, goes to work.	Plot ingenious without being tricky; personnel three-dimensional; treatment sound.	Good
THE CASE OF THE VELVET CLAWS <i>Erle Stanley Gardner</i> (Morrow: \$2.50)	First offering in Collectors' Edition of E.S.G. is yarn that introduced Perry Mason to universe in 1933.	Della Street also makes bow here; now she is secretary to the millions.	For auld lang syne
NICE PEOPLE POISON <i>Mary Hastings Bradley</i> (Longmans: \$2.50)	Midwest bride, scenting death, alters will; lawyer tries hand at sleuthing.	Nice job, but lacks sharpness and clear focusing of previous effort.	Medium
GHOSTS WITH A PURPOSE <i>Elliott O'Donnell</i> (Roy: \$3.)	Fifty-odd "true" cases of spirits (many U.S.) who had missions to accomplish; many involve crimes.	Author, noted spook fan diligent in quest of variety. Treatment uninspired, telegraphic.	Unusual posy
FLIGHT INTO PERIL <i>Douglas Rutherford</i> (Dodd, Mead: \$2.50)	Youth bodyguards British tycoon on trip to Trieste; handsome sec'y (f) goes along for ride.	Pace brisk in spots, but crises adhere to conventional spythriller pattern.	Medium
A SHROUD FOR MR. BUNDY <i>James M. Fox</i> (Little Brown: \$2.75)	John and Suzy Marshall, L.A. private-eye team, take on case of man who collapses on their front lawn.	Swell start, but plot rides off in all directions before hitting lively climax.	Has its moments
VALSE MACABRE <i>Kathleen Moore Knight</i> (Crime Club: \$2.50)	Korean vet returns to New England to find wife ticketed suicide; Elisha Macomber says 'taint so.	Three die before dénouement; show folk produce several oddities among characters.	Standard

—SERGEANT CUFF.

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