

the girl he had seduced.

His meeting with his son turns his mind back to the past. He is able for the first time to view his life as an accomplished fact, as if he was discussing with an old friend the minor victories of his profession and his failure to establish a more enduring reputation than a medal and a citation on the honors list. At the end he enjoyed a minor but resounding triumph when his old and bitter Communist rival in several conferences surrenders himself to Charles rather than to the head of the British Diplomatic Service in order to escape liquidation by his superiors in Moscow. Mr. Hilton provides the necessary happy ending for readers concerned with the future of this clever and somewhat ambiguous man by suggesting that he will marry the woman with whom his son was enamored.

The novel is disciplined and deliberately nostalgic, revealing the pattern of existence for the talented Englishman of good family, repeated time after time until two world wars and a depression smashed it perhaps forever. It is written with subtlety and humor and the good taste that forbids mentioning the cruder aspects of life. "I cannot imagine myself dynamiting trains," Charles said to his old enemy whose early life had been spent in mayhem and murder in Russia. Happiness for Charles was a state of achievement; he could not pursue it or find it in moments of exaltation and ecstasy.

Fiction Notes

MYSTERY EN ROUTE TO BORNEO: Mark Derby's third novel, "*The Big Water*" (Viking Press, \$3), begins quite suddenly—in a Penang hospital where a thoroughly desperate and dying man compels Rosanna Brown, a thoroughly sufficient and beautiful consular assistant, to undertake the delivery of a roll of film about which she knows nothing except that it may mean the history of the world to a Major Lansdowne in Singapore. This, it develops, is indeed a matter of much life and many deaths. Major Lansdowne must be followed upriver to Borneo—by steamer to Kalindang, by native boat to Baragit—in a rapidly growing company. This includes: Ngadan, the Dyak headhunter who is Rosanna's honorary father; Birdie O'Sullivan, Singapore's "sixtyish, exotic firebird"; Jaresh, whose sinister whisper has come from a concentration camp injury; Weinholt Fox, an American reporter risking his wife's worthwhile (Continued on page 37)



NEW EDITIONS

Scholarship in the Ring

THOMAS FULLER's "The Worthies of England" is a title with which to conjure. Ever since Anthony à Wood started stealing from it, for his *Athenae Oxonienses*, it has been a well-worked mine of biographical, historical, topographical, and social information regarding pre-Restoration England. It has, too, been the delight of at least a small company of judicious readers in many generations. But it has also been long out of print; so it is good news, indeed, that John Freeman has prepared an admirable, somewhat abridged edition of Fuller's massive work, with introduction and notes (Macmillan, \$9.50).

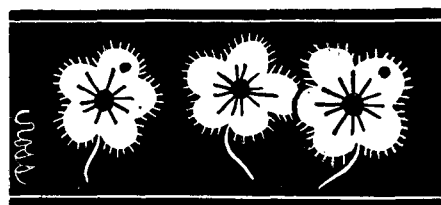
This first English dictionary of national biography—a one-man job that would now call for a regiment of collaborators—will surely never be surpassed in readability. Fuller's language is racy, pithy, vigorous, picturesque. He is a master of brevity—"He lived by the sea, died on it, and was buried in it," he says of Drake. He is a master of balanced phrases—"He left learning where he found ignorance; justice where he found oppression; peace where he found distraction," he writes of King Alfred. He is a master of striking images—"Scotland was his castle, from the top whereof he took the true prospect of our English affairs," he writes of General Monk. He breathes out wit as other men breathe out air, even in the gravest contexts, as when he tells us that Pope Adrian IV was choked to death by "a fly, which in the large territory of St. Peter's patrimony had no place but his throat to get into." He thinks in aphorisms and speaks in maxims—"Malice knoweth no other heaven than to do mischief to others, though thereby no good to itself."—"odds at any time may be bet on the side of treachery against valour." He is a storehouse of miscellaneous facts in which we may learn, among a multitude of other things, that "it was the arm, not of King Henry, but of King Edward the First, which is notoriously known to have been the adoration of a yard"; why it was once usual to refer to a cloak that had been turned as having been "Perned"; just how important the cap-making industry was in Elizabethan England; and the useful rule that "an hog-back and little head is a sign that any fish is in season." In short, the great Tom Fuller is just as delightful today as Lamb and Coleridge found him to be;

and his reputation as a writer of English prose has not yet climbed as high as his true stature.

G. G. Coulton's "Art and the Reformation" (Cambridge, \$10), first published in 1928, is a fascinating work of fighting scholarship, largely devoted to proving that the relationship between medieval religion and architecture was one of parallel development rather than one of cause and effect, and to demonstrating that Montalembert has misled generations of art-historians into believing that the contribution of monastic workman-builders and artists to medieval architecture and its allied arts was far greater than it really was. The late, great medievalist digs deep for his facts and argues fiercely; and, in an appendix, he takes apart Cram's "The Gothic Quest" with all the speed and skill of an expert *maitre d'hotel* carving duck.

FROM Knopf come new editions of three valuable histories—Sir Bernard Pares's "A History of Russia" (\$7.50); Abram Leon Sachar's "A History of the Jews" (\$5); and "A History of the South" (\$7.50), by Francis Butler Simkins. Sir Bernard's fine history is the work of a man who spent his life perfecting his knowledge of all things Russian; who believed that the Western world's ignorance of Russia is even more dangerous than the designs of Communistic imperialism. This new edition contains a remarkably attractive introduction by the author's son. Dr. Sachar's highly esteemed book, which may be read as much for pleasure as for information, has been revised to bring Israel's story down to the present year; and it could hardly be improved, except by a good map of Palestine and a few approximate dates in the early part of the narrative. Professor Simkins writes of the South with profound knowledge, of the Negro with understanding and tenderness, and of the Northern Radicals and Black Reconstruction with a dispassion that is almost incredible.

—BEN RAY REDMAN.



The Saturday Review



Editor, NORMAN COUSINS

Chairman, Editorial Board, HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

Chairman, Board of Directors, E. DEGOLYER

Associate Editors, AMY LOVEMAN, HARRISON SMITH, IRVING KOLODIN

Assistant Editor, ELOISE PERRY HAZARD

Feature Editor, ROLAND GELATT

Book Review Editor, RAYMOND WALTERS, JR.

Contributing Editors, JOHN MASON BROWN, BENNETT CERF, MARY GOULD DAVIS,
JAMES THRALL SOBY, HORACE SUTTON, JOHN T. WINTERICH

Publisher, J. R. COMINSKY

Associate Publisher, W. D. PATTERSON

Contents Copyrighted, 1953, by The Saturday Review Associates, Inc.

A Moment in Time

IN THEIR absorption and involvement with the present and the year after tomorrow Americans are in danger of losing their sense of perspective, as if they were a species of men born for the crises of the moment and advancing toward some undiscoverable, brief, and dark future. It is reflected in the articles in our popular magazines where we are given the latest news the airplane can bring of what is going on in Kenya, Indo-China, or East Berlin, in the world medley provided by weekly journals of opinion, and in countless books which always seem to be so authoritative that we forget that the writer held completely divergent theories ten years ago. With the exception of the fiction writers who are busily building space ships and creating the new kind of American male whose internal organs will have the elasticity to man them, the future appears to be limited to the remainder of this particular decade of the twentieth century. We are told that by the year 1960 Russia will be able to destroy us with the H-bomb and poison us with bacteria. After that the deluge!

We are forgetting the continuity of American history that has brought us where we are, toward what may be the relentless and steadily increasing force that we must now shape and build if the world of men is to be saved from destruction. It will be impossible to do so if we attempt to live on the brittle edge of a moment in time.

This attitude toward time is responsible to a great extent for the inadequacy of the authors of our creative contemporary literature with its neu-

rotic and bloodless characters who have no consciousness of the richness and the meaning of life, who have forgotten the very names and the careers of their ancestors, and who only know that their fathers and mothers spoiled them or drove them to the verge of homosexuality or insanity. These novelists and playwrights are not true realists; they are perverted romantics or uninspired photographers of the unhappy lives they choose to portray. They lack the exaltation of mood that alone can bring forth an enduring piece of literature, though they reflect the temper of the times in which only the present can exist. In an essay of Donald Adams there is a quotation from a letter of Sean O'Faolain that is worth repeating: "One wishes that literature could learn again from Greek tragedy that exaltation of mood in which the merely familiar drops away completely and the characters achieve a certain timelessness that, like a piece of headless sculpture or formal pious picture, holds one as a symbol of the devout . . . All art is constantly striving backward out of the tangle of its own sophistication to a dignity that depends largely on the oneness of man."

American literature was born in that exaltation, and it once possessed a sense of the unity of man and the conflict of good and evil in which evil need not always triumph. It was not borrowed from Europe. It came out of our own soil and from the men and women whose immediate ancestors had come to this country for all of the reasons for which our millions of immigrants crossed the oceans, in spite of D. H. Lawrence's dictum that the

spiritual home of Americans was and still is Europe. They wished to be men without a master, whether of church or state, factory or farm. They had a passion for freedom and for the hard life they would lead. That passion—and the spiritual conflicts it produced—still exists and is still worth writing about. You will find it in Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Scarlet Letter," which D. H. Lawrence in his "Studies of Classical American Literature" calls a sort of parable, an earthly story with a hellish meaning. You will find it in Dana's "Two Years Before the Mast," in Melville's "Omoo" and "Typee," and especially in "Moby Dick," one of the strangest and most wonderful books in the world. To quote Lawrence again, "It is an epic of the sea which no man has equaled, a book of esoteric symbolism of profound significance, and of considerable tiresomeness." You will find it in Walt Whitman and Emerson and Thoreau and in many an earlier writer.

It is time that we should discover again why we are here, what kind of men and women were our ancestors, and what faith they had in their own futures and in the destiny of the United States. They looked ahead with confidence into future generations of their descendants. We must do the same, and rid ourselves both of our "tangle of sophistication" and our fears. For those of us who since they left college may not have opened the American books of a past century it would be an excellent and encouraging exercise to read them again and then read D. H. Lawrence's "Studies in Classic American Literature," published thirty years ago, for he feared, hated, and loved this country, and his critical essays reflect the arguments that have continued for and against our survival since the days of the Revolution.

—H. S.

Standing Under Stars

By Carleton Drewry

COME out, and stand, and mark
Night's whole light-spangled
wheel.

Alone, from out earth's dark
Look, let your eyes reveal

The void, the vast distress
That is yourself. This small
Glance from your littleness
Is everything, is all.

Stay on awhile, and watch
With more than eyes, with mind:
The striking of one match
Will make the sky go blind.