

sea as the monsoons break, and wreak the right and inevitable judgment of God. All this is changed by Marie. Like him, she is an outcast. Lacking a place of her own, she moves in with Len, who accepts her grudgingly and marries her finally out of a sense of obligation. When Marie conceives Len is brought back to reality, first by shock, then more gradually by love. The book ends on this note of affirmation; the monsoons are breaking and the child has been born.

Why is it, then, that the book is so flat? Most probably it is because of the way Len is handled. What is particularly lacking is that love of character which one sees so abundantly in Graham Greene, for example. Len is treated throughout the book like a laboratory animal. His feelings are described, but they are never shared. One even senses an unconscious abhorrence on the part of Miss Godden for the world Len inhabits. There are tell-tale lapses of viewpoint. What it all adds up to is that Miss Godden wants to wring tears from her audience while remaining dry-eyed herself. Unfortunately, a reading of "The City and the Wave" offers substantial proof that it cannot be done.

Fiction Notes

EARLY SIMENON: Georges Simenon, his publishers have been complaining, is "the man without a best seller." Apparently they have now sought to change his luck by calling him "Victor Kosta." Kosta or Simenon, the product has the same unmistakable distinction. "On Land and Sea" (Hanover House, \$3.50) is the title given to this volume, which contains two short novels, the French editions of which evidently date back to 1933 and 1932. Whatever the date of its birth, "On Land and Sea" is entirely undimmed by the onset of time. The flawless quality of these two little gems of suspense is enhanced by the impeccable services of their translators: Geoffrey Sainsbury and Stuart Gilbert.

Of the two tales—called "Danger Ashore" and "Danger at Sea"—the first is perhaps the more exceptional. It spins out an episode in the life of Adil Zeki Bey, a lonely Turkish consul at the Black Sea port of Batum. The time seems to be that of the Twenties, but the web of horror that envelops Adil has a high sense of the immediate present. Simenon suffuses

his story with the squalor of the Russian oil port and the feeling of utter hopelessness that infects its inhabitants. Adil is dogged by the OGPU, ignored by the populace, tripped up by the local bureaucrats. He falls in love, and the outcome of his attachment is the ghastly climax of a sustained wave of tension.

Whereas "Danger Ashore" is preoccupied with the mind of a lonely man, its companion piece embraces a more variegated chunk of character and incident. In an extroverted mood, Simenon tells an intricate tale of murder and mistaken identity aboard a Norwegian freighter. That the action takes a firm clamp on the reader's imagination is in large part due to the novelist's flair for etching character. The passengers and crew of the S.S. *Polarlys* are motley but memorable.

"On Land and Sea" is vintage stuff indeed. Maybe Hanover House (which is really Doubleday) will give Kosta (who is really Simenon) a best seller at last.

—MARTIN LEVIN.

CONTINENTAL DESIGN FOR LIVING: The *ménage à trois* seems fated to be used repeatedly as a symbol of the "complexity" of Europeans as opposed to the cultural innocence of Americans. Perhaps in 1903 the situation had its shock value, but since the immense horrors of the two world wars this classic domestic arrangement no longer seems desperate enough to epitomize the terrible cross-purposes at work in modern society. In Catherine Hutter's latest novel, "The Alien Heart" (Holt, \$3), Robbie, an American boy living on the Riviera with his mother, believes he has found the meaning and essence of Continental living in the glamour and tension of just such a situation. His mother's friend Sophie, an Austrian who has "married beneath her," is living alternately and openly with her socialist husband, Eugene, and with her lover, Victor, an incipient fascist. Robbie's heart is presumably alienated from his more staid homeland because of Sophie's superior fascination. Only when Robbie has seen her, after the war, ravaged by years of refugee living, does he renounce the wickedness of Europe for the elms of Massachusetts. Excellent political conversation does much to reinforce a book whose situation is tenuous and whose characters are only fitfully interesting.

—NICOLAS MONJO.

FATEFUL VOYAGE: The *Katy Dee*, in Gordon Webber's "The Far Shore" (Little, Brown, \$3.50), is an ancient freighter berthed at a rotted pier in Liverpool in 1944. She has been brought from her placid runs in Gulf waters to take part in the forthcom-

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ing invasion of Europe. Her destination is unknown—call it the Far Shore. So is her fate, though there are some sticky rumors that the ten wire baskets spot-welded in the holds are eventually to contain enough amatol to blow the *Katy Dee* to an even Farther Shore.

When time and doubts about their future hang over the heads of the men of the *Katy Dee*'s two crews—merchant and Navy—they alternate between nostalgia and jitter. (An exception is the middling mad old messman Fraker, who is happy enough taking care of his pet chickens and listening to the beautiful voices of imaginary creatures he calls Loves.)

The jitteriness often expends itself in brawls, on ship and on shore. The nostalgia is almost always for a pastoral past. Life on a farm may not be the captain's paradise (he's a tough veteran of the old Norwegian square-rigger days who talks like Anna Christie's father), but it's the bosun's, mate's, second mate's, and third engineer's.

All men are lonely, says Mr. Webber, and he writes of men whose loneliness is made even

more acute by war and the sea, and who find, some of them, sometimes, that loneliness shared is loneliness no longer, but love. In atmosphere and action "The Far Shore" is more convincing than it is in characterization and dialogue. Mr. Webber, who took part in the invasion and lived for several days in a scuttled freighter off Omaha Beach, undoubtedly knows men like Lamb and Lombardo and Rachun and Morgan and Jarvis and Ball, but there are many other writers who have known men like them, too, and have written of them with more drama and depth (as Monsarrat has written of their English equivalents).

—MAURICE DOLBIER.

CON-MEN AND SUCH: Kenneth Fearing has served up clever assortments of chills and churls in several previous books but trips over his own machinery in his new one, "The Generous Heart" (Harcourt, Brace, \$3). Meant to be sinister, it is only flashily dull. Its gears grind; its wheels dizzy rather than baffle; its wiring sputters rather than shocks.

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THE CAROLINE AFFAIR <i>C. H. Gibbs-Smith</i> (Viking: \$2.75)	Resistance alumna (British) takes psychiatric treatment; doctor learns much.	Literate and exciting tour includes London, Paris, Venice.	Large plus mark
A POCKET FULL OF RYE <i>Agatha Christie</i> (Dodd, Mead: \$2.75)	London tycoon poisoned; two more go; Insp. Neele and Miss Marple get nosy.	Author's 59th finds the old sleight-of-hand still operating.	Smooth as mellow port
A SHILLING FOR CANDLES <i>Josephine Tey</i> (Macmillan: \$2.50)	British movie gal slain; Insp. Grant finds payoff in barber-shop.	First published, 1936, in London, yarn here makes US bow.	Nice bric-a-brac
THE VICTIM WAS IMPORTANT <i>Joe Raxter</i> (Scribner: \$2.50)	SF lady psychiatrist knocked off; Pvt. Eye Johnny Powers is called in.	Roster of suspects not wholly plausible; pace not too speedy.	Average
TEN PERFECT CRIMES <i>Hank Sterling</i> (Stravon: \$2)	Ten US fact cases (Rothstein, Black Dahlia, Crater, Elwell, Brink, et al.), all unsolved.	Excellent selection, but treatment is hasty, superficial.	Sketchy
WAIT LONG, WAIT STILL <i>Maud M. Thomas</i> (Arcadia: \$2.50)	West Coast marine museum locale of dire doings that dither visiting co-eds.	Not too well organized, but has nice tone, tempo, cops.	Plus mark
SHE WOKE TO DARKNESS <i>Brett Halliday</i> (Torquill: \$2.50)	Michael Shayne flies to NY to get his Watson out of murder jam.	Author's 25th brings in fellow-MWA members; story within story.	Novelty number
I WAS A HOUSE DETECTIVE <i>Dev Collins with Stewart Sterling</i> (Dutton: \$3)	Retired hotel dick (now called security officer) tells all, almost.	Inside view does not boost reader's faith in human nature.	Honest, informing job

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