



—From "All Men Have Loved Thee."

## Profit and the Debacle

**"Cry Out of the Depths,"** by **Georges Duhamel** (Little, Brown, 213 pp. \$3.50), records the moral disintegration of an opportunist during the German Occupation of France.

By Ann F. Wolfe

IN AUGUST 1945 a member of the reviewer's family entered Nazi-occupied Paris with the Allied armies of liberation. Among the first Parisians he spoke with was Georges Duhamel, who, like all his fellow citizens, was overjoyed to emerge from the long isolation of the blackout. Judging from his new novel, "Cry Out of the Depths," Mr. Duhamel must have kept an eye on the insidious mechanics of the Occupation. He seems, in particular, to have missed none of the collaborationist tricks by which the success of the Occupation was insured.

In Felix, ambitious manager of a Paris pharmaceutical concern, Mr. Duhamel has bodied forth the most contemptible aspects of collaboration. It would have been bad enough if the renegade Frenchman had served the Germans in order to save his own skin. But Felix exploited his country's defeat as a shortcut to power. Under cover of altruism he took greedy advantage of the wartime misfortunes of his firm's partners and of the tragedy in the life of his only child. An arch-opportunist, he made a science of his strategy for aggrandizement.

To switch to the production of medicaments for the Wehrmacht cost Felix no pangs of conscience. Instead of a conscience he had a built-in design for success that included suppression of emotion, denial of love and friendship, and the unvarying ap-

pearance of rectitude. The design, to be sure, was slightly flawed by his love for his daughter Monica. Yet, to further his selfish ends, he kept Monica from marrying the young man of her choice and after the youth died in an enemy prison prevented her from entering a convent. He forced the bereaved girl to lend him her dowry in order that he might buy Winterberg's third of the firm's shares. Though the hypocrite pretended otherwise, Felix well knew that Winterberg, broken victim of Nazi anti-Semitism, would never be in a position to buy the stock back. Later, through murderous casuistry, Felix was to acquire his brother's third of the shares. By that time, thanks to a master stroke of opportunism, the great industrialist had won acclaim as a Resistance hero.

IT PUTS a strain on the novelist's art—and the reader's credulity—to reconcile the evil Felix with the De Profundis of the title. The structure of the novel may possibly be at fault. Felix tells his own story, committing important passages to brief entries in a notebook. The essence of his conversion, if that is what it was, is too spiritual a matter for a businessman's log.

The trouble is that, in this masterpiece of greed for power, Mr. Duhamel has succeeded all too well with his ironic Frankenstein. He has seemingly carried the man's iniquity past the point of no return. Yet Felix suddenly takes refuge in the psalmist's prayer, begging forgiveness of all whom he has injured. With his daughter's forgiveness, it is true, grace may have had its inexplicable way with him. He makes amends of a sort, but repentance appears to have passed him by. Could that, after all, be the price he pays?

## Liszt Was Last

**"The Last Love of Camille,"** by **Frances Winwar** (Harper, 272 pp. \$3), is a fictional re-creation of the romance of the fashionable Parisian courtesan Alphonsine Plessis and the composer Franz von Liszt.

By Harrison Smith

TO PRODUCE in this first decade of the atomic age a contemporary novel of deathless love and passion would be a thankless task. Romance in the grand manner, since it requires the gaudy trappings and the amorous yearnings of lovers for the unattainable which gave color to life a century ago, is as dead, outside of the covers of a book, as Byron or Dumas. That still vital department of fiction has been taken over by romantic biographers and the writers of historical romance.

Frances Winwar is one of the few who have been able to capture inviolate the spirit of an age in which love was an inspiration and not a series of vulgar consummations. For her admirable series of literary biographies she has chosen George Sand, Joan of Arc, and English nineteenth-century poets who were not alien to the grand passion. In her Napoleonic novel, "The Eagle and the Rock," she accomplished the remarkable feat of making Josephine a comprehensible and sympathetic character and Napoleon an honest and ardent lover as well as a conqueror.

Her new novel, "The Last Love of Camille," is in one sense the most daring of all her works, for it is the story of the woman known as Margaret Gautier, "La Dame aux Camélias," of young Alexander Dumas' immortal romance, and the heroine of Verdi's opera "La Traviata." Marguerite is the quintessence of all of the heroines of fiction whose heart was pure gold, and who died of consumption, aggravated by an illness unknown to modern science, unrequited love. In fact, her name was neither Camille nor Gautier. She was born Alphonsine Plessis in the Paris slums and her childhood was sordid. Her last lover was Franz von Liszt, the most popular composer and pianist of his time, the *beau idéal* of all that was romantic, exquisite, and passionate in the males of his day. "There were," writes Miss Winwar in her epilogue, "three components of this human triangle: the love of a man for a woman for art's sake; the love of a woman for the man who has awakened her to spiritual as well as sensual

exaltation, the dedicated love of a youth for love's sake only."

THE novel begins when Liszt comes to Paris after one of his triumphant tours abroad. He had been showered with flowers and scented notes from feminine admirers, a young man somewhat wearied of his role as the inspired and amorous musician who had six pianos on the platform, lest in his more passionate moments he should break the strings of five of them. Alphonsine had in a few years become the most celebrated courtesan of that city of elegance and debauchery. Her face was as pure as an angel's, her body as fair as that in a Renaissance painting. Her lovers were the most envied men of Paris; her exquisite boudoir contained a fabulous hoard of jewels and priceless objects of art. A titled youth was half mad for love of this angelic prostitute.

It was destined that she should meet Liszt and fall head over heels in love with him when marriage with a young count would have solved her problems, including her slight but irritating cough. Finally, perhaps as a

last effort to save her life, the courtesan ran off to London to marry the lover she had abandoned and whom she thought she might save from madness. The next day she deserted him, returning to London and to Liszt. She had gained a title and a coat of arms for her silver; but soon Liszt was away again, and her sickness increased. On his last visit to her boudoir he saw an angelic woman dying on the exquisite couch he had bought for her.

In the course of this astounding and fateful romance a few doubts may creep into the bemused reader's mind. Is it conceivable that, even in voluptuous Paris a century ago, Alphonsine Plessis, after so many lovers, could have died of love for a man whom she could never, in any real sense, possess, a man who gave everything he had to his art, his audiences, and his fame? And Franz von Liszt, too, seems the archetype of the man destined always to run away from love. Was he as great a composer and man as Miss Winwar believes, or was he half artist and half actor and mountebank?

## Riddles of Royalty

*"Temptation for a King," by John H. Secondari (J. B. Lippincott. 279 pp. \$3.50), is literary proof that summer is on its way—a light, agreeable story about a king in exile and the motley crew that makes up his court.*

By Al Hine

IT IS 178 years since our Founding Fathers cut loose from the British Crown, 162 years since the formation of the French First Republic, thirty-seven years since the Russian upheaval. Two world wars helped finish off scattered monarchies not toppled directly by revolution. And yet in this year of dubious grace 1954 royalty seems still to be awesome and exciting.

It's an ancient spell and one that has always fascinated the romantic novelist. John H. Secondari works over the subject lightly and divertingly, hardly more than scratching the top soil, yet managing to keep the reader's interest, in his second novel, "Temptation for a King."

Julian IV, ex-king of a nameless nation, is living in comfortable exile in Sorrento with a handful of loyal nobles and old retainers. Julian has a ne'er-do-well, Farouklike brother, Prince Philip, and a seemingly nymphomaniac sister, Princess Irene, who drain both his spiritual and financial resources. Suddenly, due to a political crisis in the homeland, he has a chance to regain his throne. This would be a world-shaking event, so an American radio network correspondent shows up at Julian's retreat displaying all the mannerisms of a movie reporter, good-guy division. (There is a rival Yank newsmen who appears briefly in order to display the mannerisms of a movie reporter, bad-guy division.) There is also a beautiful American girl who is sort of a reporter, too.

The flaws in "Temptation for a King" are traceable not so much to the familiarity of its characters as to its overall lack of depth. The decision with which Julian is faced fails to have any real meaning since the reader gets no idea of what political crisis lies behind the movement for his recall. Just one of those crises, that's all. And the international importance, the news value of the decision are sloughed off the same way. You are told several times that it is very important, but you never actually learn why. This absence of background extends even to the minor characters—

(Continued on page 34)

## Your Literary I. Q.



Conducted by John T. Winterich

THE ANIMALS ONE BY ONE



Ned Beatty Bartlow of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, submits twenty book titles containing the names of various living creatures, including even man. Alongside these she has jumbled the names of twenty authors, and she asks you to assign the proper titles to the proper authors. If you get fifteen correct answers, you are out of the doghouse (just); if sixteen, you are entitled to wear a yellow ribbon; if seventeen or better, you rate admission to "Whose Zoo?" Answers on page 29.

- |   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| 1. The Brave Bulls                                  | ( ) G. B. Stern              |
| 2. Lady Into Fox                                    | ( ) Mary Jane Ward           |
| 3. Elephant and Castle                              | ( ) Mark Twain               |
| 4. The Deer on the Stairs                           | ( ) Ouida                    |
| 5. The Buck in the Snow                             | ( ) Jack London              |
| 6. Moon Calf  | ( ) David Garnett            |
| 7. The Ugly Dachshund                               | ( ) Floyd Dell               |
| 8. The Sea Wolf                                     | ( ) Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings |
| 9. The Cat and the King                             | ( ) John Masefield           |
| 10. The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County | ( ) R. C. Hutchinson         |
| 11. Three Blind Mice                                | ( ) John Steinbeck           |
| 12. The Hound of Heaven                             | ( ) Diana Forbes Robertson   |
| 13. Reynard the Fox                                 | ( ) Tom Lea                  |
| 14. The Snake Pit                                   | ( ) Percy Wyndham Lewis      |
| 15. The Yearling                                    | ( ) Ernest Seton Thompson    |
| 16. A Dog of Flanders                               | ( ) L. F. Cooper             |
| 17. Monarch, the Big Bear                           | ( ) Christina Stead          |
| 18. Of Mice and Men                                 | ( ) Agatha Christie          |
| 19. The People with the Dogs                        | ( ) Edna St. Vincent Millay  |
| 20. Apes of God                                     | ( ) Francis Thompson         |