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## Edges of the World

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provided work for scholars who are better able to carry on their research into the early history of man within walking distance of the world's great libraries.

The scholars, however, will not have as much fun as did these intrepid Frenchmen and their fascinating native helpers. As they tell of it, it seems to have been fun, though almost always fun with overtones and undertones of heartbreaking agony and tantalizing discomfort. Their trip would certainly qualify as one of the worst journeys in the world, yet the reader will find it hard to overcome a mounting wish that he, too, had taken it. This must indicate something of the character and personality of Carl, Petit, Bourdelon, and Guérard. With men of their calibre to do the searching, nothing which has left any trace on earth can long remain a secret. I have only two complaints about their book: one, that there is not even a sketch map accompanying it; and the other, that the translation from the French is extremely stiff, unidiomatic, and occasionally undiscerning.

## Notes

**TRAVEL APPETIZER:** Jerome Weidman's "Traveler's Cheque" (Doubleday, \$4.50) is something of a what-is-it—part-anthology, part travelogue; in fact, a sort of *pasticcio*, which may or may not be your favorite flavor. It contains nineteen articles that originally appeared in *Holiday* magazine and which have the editor introducing and commenting upon excerpts from some notable travel and adventure stories by some notable authors. Weidman has ranged far and on the whole chosen wisely. Represented are such works as "Brazilian Adventure," "Land Below the Wind," "Good Night, Sweet Prince," "The Conquest of Peru," letters by Henry Adams and Columbus, and the Gospel according to St. Luke; and such writers as Maugham, Dickens, Richard Henry Dana, James Ramsey Ullman, Sir Richard Burton, Alexander Woolcott, William Makepeace Thackeray, and Jerome Weidman.

There is not much quarreling with a lineup like this, but there may be with the manner of presentation. Mr. Weidman is all over the place with personal anecdotes and asides, often as not entertaining in themselves, but leaving little room for the all too brief excerpts from his selected authors. In



—From "Mountains in the Desert."

A Taureg—"one of the worst journeys."

all fairness, however, it should be noted that his intention was merely in each case to whet the reader's appetite for the whole book. If you are willing to go along with this idea, Mr. Weidman makes lively company.

—J. M. FLAGLER.

**THIRTY JAPS AND A GIRL:** Even at best, writings in the Japanese idiom have always been difficult for Western readers, and the hastily-translated work of a Japanese amateur is more than mortal American should normally be asked to bear. Since the book in question, however, is the American edition of the unusual Japanese best seller "Anatahan" (Hermitage House, \$3.50), by Michiro Maruyama, interested parties may wish to brave the printed version rather than content themselves with Josef von Sternberg's movie adaptation, which has been making the rounds in this country. For all its raggedness, the book does contain a fuller and somewhat earthier account of events and the story itself is indeed a sort of classic curiosity in the annals of shipwreck literature.

Anatahan is a rugged tropical island in the Marianas where a band of twenty to thirty castaway Japanese soldiers and sailors held out for seven years, five of them after the surrender of their homeland in World War II. Their social order is put to a severe strain by primitive living conditions, personal animosities, and, most of all, the presence on the island of a lone woman. Young and relatively attractive, Keiko becomes known as "The Queen Bee," not without reason, and she is strictly poison. Her five semi-official mates (the author hints at some unofficial drones, too) die on Anatahan, some under suspicious circumstances, and she herself becomes as tough, naked, and bibulous as the men, but then even a Wellesley girl might have been hard put to retain decorum under similar circumstances.

—J. M. F.

with the late Joseph Greene. The writers' conference, it appears, is here to stay; some of our most distinguished writers participate in these affairs and similar anthologies could be put together from the works of authors 'connected with' most of them. The editor's commentaries, however, are characterized by the florid tone of the second-rate press release. Such statements as "you will write a better . . . [novel] for having heard a poet analyze a poem [at a writers' conference]" or "Bread Loaf . . . is a Shangri-la of a place" tend to make me just a little ill.

## Notes

**DIPLOMATS AT PLAY:** When Georges de Sarre, fledgling French diplomat, reports to his new post in Athens the use of the European bombshell is already burning, for it is 1937. But the preening characters in Roger Peyrefitte's "**Diplomatic Diversions**" (Vanguard Press, \$3) use its ominous heat only to toast the marshmallows of their own self-interest. The absurd, inter-embassy rivalries; the major calamities resulting from minor breaches of protocol; the psychosexual perversity aroused by the antique decadence of the Attic clime (to one extreme of which our hero succumbs with his chief's nubile daughter, and to the other—nearly—with blond, platonic Rudolf)—all these make for amusing, piquant reading. At the end (which might occur at any point, so little does the book depend on narrative progression), Georges's embassy, anticipating the imminent Great War, indulges in a pitched battle of its own, as a result of which Georges, indifferent to his paltry fate, is recalled to Paris.

Though British reviewers have compared "**Diplomatic Diversions**" to novels of their own Evelyn Waugh and Christopher Isherwood, it seldom achieves either Waugh's roaring satiric humor or Isherwood's sensitive, regretful irony. In alternating between approximations to both these disparate qualities, the book is marred by a definite unevenness of tone. But M. Peyrefitte is French, and falls heir to a portion of that temperament which, adulterated by Anatole France, finds its most illustrious exemplar in Voltaire. Those who enjoy the wit and pitiless sanity of "**Candide**" will discover fitful adumbrations of it here, and may find in their satiric souls the kindness to excuse this author's lapses when they consider that he writes,

# This Picture is as DANGEROUS as it is PITIFUL!

The ominous significance of this picture is that it threatens to take from us all that we hold most dear—life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Not only in South Korea, where this picture was taken, but in India and other *democratic* countries, millions awoke this morning hungry. They will be hungry all day and will go to bed hungry. To bed?—Millions of them after working all day will sleep in the streets at night. They have no home. They can't even afford a few feet of space in some vermin infected shack without sanitary arrangements of any kind.

The road to communism is paved with hunger, ignorance and lack of hope. Half of the school age children living in the world today do not attend school. If they did, they would be too hungry to study. What does a man, woman or child, without a roof over their heads, with no personal belongings whatever, save the rags wrapped around them, tormented with the inescapable lice, always hungry and above all facing only hopeless tomorrows—what do such have to lose if they listen to communist propaganda? Their resentment may any day ignite the spark that will explode the hydrogen bomb.



The misery of human beings is the most powerful weapon in the hands of the communists. It just can't go on. The world can't exist half stuffed and half starved. The rumble that is growing in intensity around the world is not the rumble in overfed stomachs. It is the fearsome and dangerous rumble in the empty stomachs of the world.

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