

ness in art and criticism. His new poem "Distance Behind Distance" was published in abridged form in the June issue of *Novyi Mir* (*New World*). The poem was conceived and obviously begun during a mission to the Far East in 1950. Distant railway journeys are invested, both in pre-Revolutionary Russian and in Soviet literature, with a special quality of romance. Torn from their customary life routine, people who only yesterday were strangers quickly become friends and pass the time in conversation characterized by an unusual degree of intimacy and frankness. Tvardovski became acquainted with his traveling companions and found out their professions and what their interests were. In his turn, the poet did not succeed for long in preserving his incognito. Having discovered that a famous writer was riding with them, the other passengers gave him a "going-over." The poet had to answer not only for his own shortcomings but for the sins of contemporary Soviet literature as a whole. The passengers criticized writers for "not reflecting life." Often writers acquaint themselves with contemporary life during so-called "creative missions." The writer visits a construction project, "breathes a little dust," "pokes a stick in the concrete," and goes home to dash off a novel. Everything in the book is seemingly as he saw it, "and yet as a whole it is so inedible that it makes one want to cry aloud."

Listening to this "impartial criticism," Tvardovski is chagrined; at the same time, he admits that this reproof, spiced at times "with a coarse joke," is far more agreeable to him than the "cold fog of lies" with which he is usually regaled by his colleagues. Therefore he acknowledges his own and others' sins. But then he is suddenly interrupted by the voice of a passenger in the upper berth. This passenger is the composite image of an editor, the product of the poet's imagination, and the further conversation between him and the poet is fictitious. Nevertheless, this conversation is very significant. The "editor" admits that he had wanted to enter Tvardovski's discussion with the passengers earlier, but he had found it "entertaining" to observe the poet when he imagined himself free of his editorial tutelage. It was "entertaining" for the editor to watch how the poet suddenly became "incredibly fervent" and "bold." Tvardovski vehemently protests against his editor, but the latter explains in an insinuating voice that he is, after all, a special kind of editor; he is created by the fear of the poet himself. That is why it is so easy for him, as an editor, to correct the poet:

All my work  
You carry out for me.  
.....  
And I am satisfied with you  
And like you very much, believe me.  
I prefer you to all others.  
I cite you as an example: Here is a  
poet  
Whom I simply do not read,  
For I need have no fear.

Tvardovski does not give in—"only when I am weak and dispirited are you able to creep up upon me," "you are not real, but only a bad dream"—and the fictitious conversation ends on a cheerful note:

Meanwhile, the passengers,  
Filling the corridor like a hall,  
Stood and listened excitedly  
To all of this heated discussion. . . .

A great many theatrical people—actors and directors—have also taken part in the discussion of frankness in art during the past year. An example is the article "More Boldness" (*Literaturnaya Gazeta*, August 25, 1953) by the actor Ruben Simonov, which takes up the reasons for the failure of recent stage productions. Among other things, Simonov writes: "When I reflect on why, of late, a chill has often seemed to hang like an invisible curtain between the stage and the audience, I am inclined to blame not only

the playwrights but the actors and directors as well." And he goes on to give a vivid description of a Soviet stage performance: "The theatre fills up, the audience take their seats, programs rustle; then the lights dim and the ensuing quiet is broken by the first lines of the play. And suddenly, sometimes after no more than the first few lines, a whisper runs through the theatre.

"Do not imagine that this is the emotional response which the actors find so desirable and the playwright so flattering. Not at all! It is simply members of the audience in different parts of the theatre guessing simultaneously what is to happen next and hastening to share their guesses. The satisfaction they receive when their surmises start to come true . . . will not afford them esthetic pleasure. It resembles more the pleasure a person experiences in solving an easy crossword puzzle."

**T**HE crisis gripping the contemporary Soviet theatre can be overcome only by bold directors and bold actors. "It goes without saying," Simonov adds, "that this boldness of the director and actors for which we have all been pining can emerge only out of vivid, bold plays." The author does not, of course, go on to say why  
(Continued on page 31)



## Your Literary I. Q.

Conducted by John T. Winterich

### MORE TOUSLED TITLES

Fannie Gross of Asheville, North Carolina, offers twenty anagrammed titles under each of which collections of short stories and sketches by one writer have been published, along with their disarranged authors. Allowing five points for each title and author you can disentangle, a score of sixty is par, seventy is neat, and eighty or better more or less superb. Answers on page 31.

- |                                        |                     |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. "Brat Uses a Snub Hint"             | Lester L. Drunbars  |
| 2. "As Man Risks a Greeting"           | Pandurah Redemui    |
| 3. "Fadgy Fahns"                       | Homer Thisle Croypr |
| 4. "A. V. Racna"                       | Holjawg Shontry     |
| 5. "Houb Swore in G.I."                | Hownd Drose Eroans  |
| 6. "Murtin of Hileol"                  | R. H. Noye          |
| 7. "After Many Bells Came Morgon Hour" | Chapele Scotenk     |
| 8. "Toes Cleave Things"                | Sadie Kinnes        |
| 9. "Je Suis T. T. Rosso"               | Prungir Lakiddy     |
| 10. "Tune Gem Hutch Foot"              | Lichon Lojer        |
| 11. "Grim Men Do Honor Taft"           | Molto Shafew        |
| 12. "Caputal Refreshes Us"             | Rhoda Trepokyr      |
| 13. "Sir Sorel Told"                   | Zanee Chaborold     |
| 14. "Hurray! Castle Tree"              | Skelorc Shajanc     |
| 15. "Glib Ten from Hale Fate"          | Thomas M. Ragemuse  |
| 16. "Marne Coed"                       | Conogo Canac Bivici |
| 17. "Veteran W. I. Leigh"              | Learlenc Klidews    |
| 18. "Hethier Tenets"                   | Lewalin Klafumir    |
| 19. "Heed Yon Cheep Tea"               | Hantral Helgorm     |
| 20. "Rubid Lens"                       | Maco J. Sejey       |

## A Deadly Dead Englishman

*"The Man Who Never Was," by Ewen Montagu (J. B. Lippincott. 160 pp. \$2.75), offers an account of World War II's most carefully planned spy strategy, which was executed with intelligence and imagination by the British Military Intelligence Department. Kurt Singer, our reviewer, is the author of twenty books on espionage throughout the world.*

By Kurt Singer

**T**O CONFUSE, to mystify, to misinform, and to fool an enemy have always been main objectives in the stratagem of global espionage. Here, in one of the greatest spy stories of the last war, is the recipe the British Intelligence served up to outwit the Axis partners:

Take an anonymous corpse, give it the identity of a supposed major of the Royal British Marines bearing spurious top secret messages in code, cast the body from a submarine into the rough sea so it will float to the Spanish shore and be picked up. The Spaniards will sell the false messages to German agents. Eventually this planted information reaches the German High Command and leads to the changing of its entire Mediterranean defense plan.

Ewen Montagu was the father of this idea which Hollywood probably would have rejected as much too fantastic for a picture. He has told the story in a fascinating book, *"The Man Who Never Was."* My only wonder is why we in the United States had to wait almost eleven years to get an account of Operation Mincemeat. (Some account of it was given in several volumes published over the past few years in England and Germany.)

It was during 1943 when Winston Churchill, fearing heavy losses might result from an invasion of Sicily, said: "Anybody but a damn fool would know it is Sicily we will strike next." It is here where Operation Mincemeat begins. The Allies had to think up a scheme to keep losses down, to fool the enemy through commando raids and guerrilla actions, in the hope they would think we would strike elsewhere than Sicily.

Both Churchill and Eisenhower conferred on this matter and as a re-

sult Ewen Montagu, a British Naval Intelligence officer, came up with the idea of how to confuse Hitler and Mussolini successfully. "Why Sicily? There were other possible points of invasion. What about Sardinia, Corsica, Crete, Yugoslavia, Greece, Northern France, Southern France?"

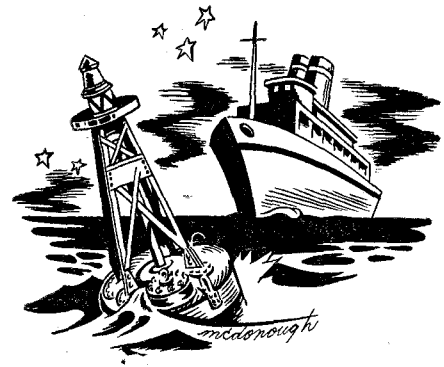
Ewen Montagu received *plain pouvoir*. He and a colleague, who must not be identified even now, conceived the daring idea of taking a body and disguising it as a staff officer. He was to carry high level papers which would show clearly that Churchill and Eisenhower had decided, at the last minute, to bypass Sicily and invade somewhere on the Mediterranean.

Montagu needed medical advice first. What kind of body would he have to use to pass enemy inspection and autopsy? He was told to use a pneumonia case with water in the lungs. Then he learned how the body could be preserved on dry ice in a specially built tank put aboard a submarine.

The book gives a detailed account of the whole plan, starting from the visit in the London morgue where the body was picked. "He does not have to look like an officer—only like a staff officer."

Even today only a few people know the real name of this corpse who became "Major William Martin" and was dropped from H. M. submarine *Seraph* near the Spanish town of Huelva. In Huelva the British M.I. 5 knew the Germans had a most active secret service center. Mr. Montagu was on board the *Seraph* when the dead man was thrown overboard. The *Seraph*, by the way, was the same ship that had rescued General Giraud and brought General Mark Clark secretly to North Africa for pre-invasion reconnaissance.

**T**HE documents put into the pockets of the dead man included letters written by General Alexander and a letter personally written by Lord Louis Mountbatten addressed to General Dwight D. Eisenhower. All the documents planted on the dead courier indicated that the Allies would bypass Sicily, take Sardinia first and then Corsica, thus opening the whole coast of Italy and Southern France to attack. The document gave false dates,



false strategy to lead Hitler to defend every part of the Mediterranean except the landing beaches of Sicily picked by the Allies.

Major Bill Martin, the man who never was, did a most convincing job. The papers on him were in code, but as the Allies had used a broken code the enemy agents easily decoded the messages. When Hitler personally asked for evidence that this dead courier was real, and not a plant, the German agent had plenty of it to produce for him.

They knew that Major Martin carried thirty-one different small items on him; he was dressed like a courier; he looked like one. He must have been on a ship torpedoed off North Africa. The autopsy, too, was in his favor. He also had snapshots of his fiancée, Pam, and love letters from her. He had an unpaid bill for the engagement ring in his pocket and a letter from his father. Lloyds Bank had written him about an overdraft of £79. He had Navy identification papers, a St. Christopher medal, and the Silver Cross. That this man was what he seemed to be was the decision of the Nazi Secret Service.

Hitler and Mussolini were convinced by the evidence. It was a great catch that proved the information from Turkey given by the agent Danielle (of "Five Fingers" and Operation Cicero fame) must be false. Even Admiral Doenitz was convinced by the planted evidence. As a result, the High Command moved troops from Sicily to Sardinia and Corsica and Southern France. When the Allies finally landed in Sicily their losses were far less than originally anticipated.

This is a moving and true spy story told by a writer with touches of the Eric Ambler skill. It is, perhaps, the best book of its kind to come out of the war. It is also wonderfully refreshing to read of real professional spy masters and spy catchers because they act so totally different from the self-styled brand and the amateur investigators we have met so often in fiction during the past years.