

Fiction

Continued from page 16

souls, first, second, and steerage class, for New York. Heavy seas cause the coal-ports to leak and the fire-rooms get awash. The pumps are choked and the pressure drops. It is impossible to keep her fires going. Yet, in spite of her condition, Captain Godde answers the call from a disabled Italian freighter, gets his ship across big waves, and, because of his disabled engine, is unable to right her. Lifeboats spill hundreds of passengers into the sea, the *Canope* capsizes, but Godde is saved along with his second mate, by a sister ship, the *Virginia*. We hear all this in a conversation between the second mate of the *Canope* and the captain of the *Virginia*. Just why a commander permits a second mate to tell the story while the captain is actually on board—in fact, is overhearing much of it—is some-

thing that makes no sense to this reviewer. In fact there are so many technical puzzles in this book that there is no space to enumerate them. These, it is true, may be the result of the translation from the French, a serious hazard which any European novelist must face. Famous writers are lucky in this regard: they get the good ones. Small fry are less fortunate. Their books often come to us "translated" in the sense that Quince uses the word when he describes Bottom—and that is what apparently has happened to Mr. Peisson's novel. —WILLIAM McFEE.

COMING OF AGE IN PARIS: The hero of Peggy Mann's first novel, "*A Room in Paris*" (Doubleday, \$3.95), is a veteran of Normandy, St. Lo, and Bastogne who is financing his art classes on the G.I. Bill. But he is kin to the expatriate of the Twenties, having a beard, a cold room, and a contempt for America. In the Parisian cafes he talks art, soul, freedom, and love,

and then love comes into his life in the form of one Janet Welles, a clean, clear-eyed girl with a job in Washington and with a temporary ECA assignment in France. His feeling for Janet forces hero Stanley to face some realities he does not want to face: his inadequate talent and his retreat into a world where being a failure does not show. Ultimately he shaves off the beard, sheds the pose, and comes back home a better man. As a look at American bohemians in Paris, Miss Mann's story rings true, a fact which is a pretty good accomplishment for a first novel.

—LUCILLE SCHULBERG.

TRIBULATIONS OF A TAR: Anne de Tourville is one of those newcomers to fiction who has won attention and, inevitably, one of the hundred or so literary prizes bestowed every year upon one or another of the French novelists. Her "*Wedding Dance*," a weird tale of Breton folklore, was remarkable for its exotic fantasy and its delicate poetry. "*The Innocent Sailor*" (translated by Mervyn Savill; Farrar, Straus, \$3.50) is less spontaneous and less natural in tone and its strangeness is too contrived. But it has vivid moments of description, of tornadoes and shipwrecks, and it recreates with real power the violent storms rocking a sailor's heart. Hero Yves Gaël is a Breton sailor whose father was lost at sea and who, along with his numerous brothers and sisters, was kept from the sea by his distressed mother until temptation proved too strong. At sea he retains a strange purity of heart amid drunken sailors, preserves his memory of an orphan girl whom he had once helped, and, between voyages, marries a naive, childlike girl, who has previously been engaged to his own brother. But he is unable to stick with her because of his wanderlust. In the end, wearied and aged, he again meets the orphan girl (now a widow), and, his own wife having died of grief, he marries again and reaches a serene old age.

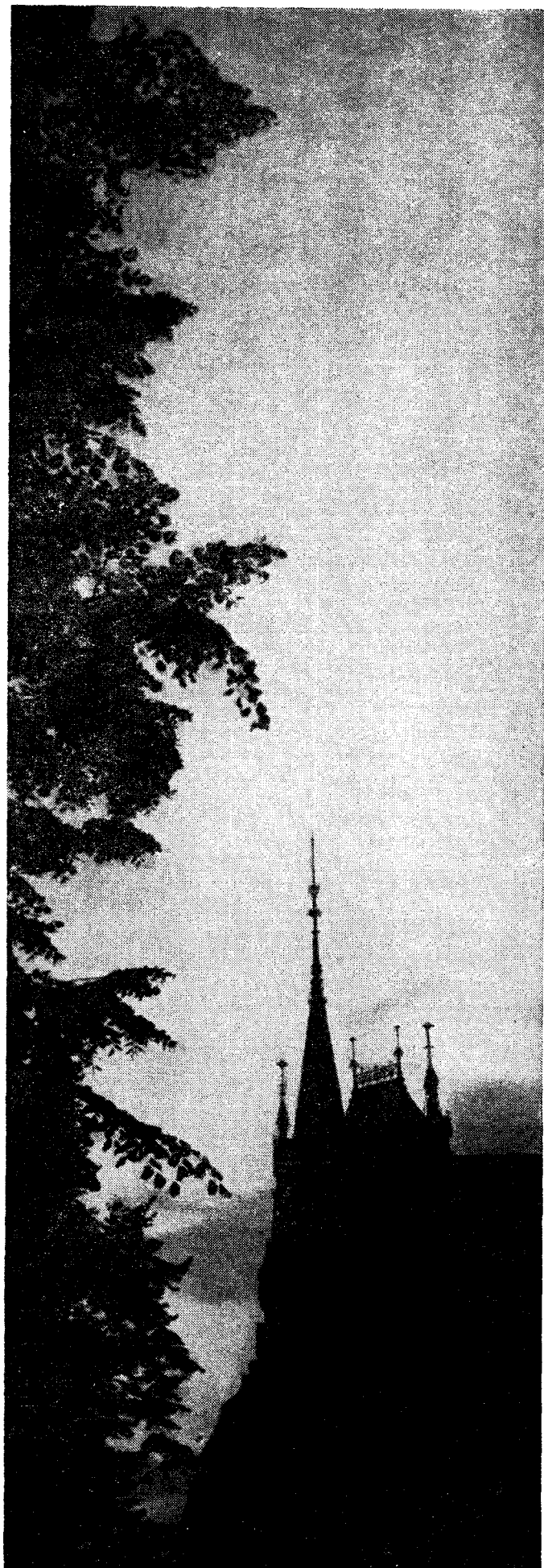
Anne de Tourville is clearly more at home in fairy tales and Celtic witchcraft than in the modern world. Although her new novel takes place in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it is steeped in an atmosphere of poverty and of naivete which is medieval. The women characters, let alone the male ones, have little convincingness: they are all too pale and fairylike and meek—mere pretexts for the sailor's reveries. But young readers thirsty for adventure (and older ones who do not demand logical continuity or psychological depth) will probably be entertained, perhaps even fascinated, by "*The Innocent Sailor*." —HENRI PEYRE.

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fact and Fiction

Title and Author	Crime, Place, and Sleuth	Summing Up	Verdict
THE TRAGEDY AT ROAD-HILL HOUSE <i>Yseult Bridges</i> (Rinehart: \$3.50)	Full-length treatment of famous Constance Kent case (England, 1860); logical new solution offered.	Did 16-year-old miss cut 4-year-old step-brother's throat; Inspector Whicher said yes.	Devotees will eat it up.
DANGERLINE <i>T. Morris Longstreth</i> (Macmillan: \$2.75)	Penn. farm youth on Berlin visit finds pal in Reds' hands; beards bears in den.	Adult, fast-moving yarn will also appeal to alert teen-agers.	Lively and intelligent.
BURNT OFFERING <i>Richard and Frances Lockridge</i> (Lippincott: \$2.50)	Capt. Heimrich, NY state police, attends town-meeting, fire; crisp corpse raises doubts.	Setting, characters sound: action smooth, with loud payoff.	In the groove.
A KIND OF MISFORTUNE <i>Richard Parker</i> (Scribner: \$2.75)	Delayed-fuse murder (p. 134) dithers whimsical population of English village.	Entertainment content high, but profusion of characters is mild nuisance.	Plus mark.
THE SILVER COBWEB <i>Ben Benson</i> (Mill-Morrow: \$2.75)	Ralph Lindsey, nice Mass. state trooper, nabs killer in Chap. I; plenty action left.	Usual air of competence, authenticity; could do without love angle.	Superior.
FALSE COLORS <i>Richard Powell</i> (S&S: \$2.50)	Phila. art dealer's nose for phony pix brings smell of trouble, killings.	Customary urbanity and zip in this highly pigmented number.	Jolly and jaunty.
DEATH IN LILAC TIME <i>Frances Crane</i> (Random: \$2.75)	Gadding Abbots (Pat, Jean) pause in Kentucky long enough to solve murders.	Highway cops do heavy work; first-to-third person shift unhappy.	So-so.
NO THOROUGHFARE <i>Denise Egerton</i> (Coward-McCann: \$3)	Cornish village scene of look-alike substitution to lay family ghost.	Hero's blindness a factor; eavesdropping abounds.	Too much luggage.
THE BEST OF THE PIPS <i>Various authors</i> (Baker St. Irregs., RFD 1, Morristown, N.J.: \$3.50)	Papers (and poems even) glossing text of Sherlock Holmes's feats. 15 contributions strong.	Noble addition to growing literature of studies of the master.	Tops for specialists.

—SERGEANT CUFF.



—Summer's Night in Oslo.

EUROPE '55

A PORTFOLIO FOR PASSENGERS

EDITED BY HORACE SUTTON

If things stay tranquil with Mao and The Market by mid-July there won't be anybody left on this side of the Atlantic to feed the cat.

For all the emigrants bound for the far side we've prepared a fifteen-page portfolio of fact and folderol. Turning the page you will find short takes by Inez Robb, whose daily column for United Features Syndicate appears in 108 papers; by Dennis McEvoy, former executive of *Reader's Digest* International Editions; by Helen MacInnes, author of the Swiss-set mystery "Pray for a Brave Heart"; by British comedienne Hermione Gingold; by Mogens Lind, who is feature editor of *Berlingske Tidende*, Copenhagen's largest; by William Harlan Hale, historian and former press attaché of our Embassy in Vienna; and by John Steinbeck and Jerome Weidman. I'm sure you know them.

We've also collected some postcards from famous people long since deceased, and there is added intelligence on what to do until the *médecin* comes, and what you can expect to find in a cupboard on a Wagon-Lit.

Venice anyone?

