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ond to lose. I took a deep breath and closed my eyes and thought desperately of Lucy.

When I opened them again I was back in my living room at home with Lucy and, of all people, Mr. Noyse. They were sitting together on the sofa and seemed very surprised to see me. I noted a bottle of Scotch on the cocktail table and two half-empty glasses.

"Johnnie!" Lucy almost screamed. "I thought you were on the night train!"

"I missed it," I said sheepishly. "I'm sorry, Mr. Noyse. I'll catch the first one in the morning."

But Mr. Noyse seemed disposed to let this pass.

"It's quite all right, Flashback," he said hastily. "Don't give it a thought." He glanced at his watch. "Dear me, it's getting late. As a matter of fact,

don't bother about that morning train. I think I'll run up to Pryde myself. No sense your taking a nasty trip like that in the middle of winter."

When he had gone I told Lucy gravely how honored she should be that the boss himself had called. It meant, of course, that I was being considered for partnership. Those things always had their significance.

"Oh, darling," she exclaimed a bit wildly, "I hope you're right!"

"Of course, I'm right."

"I'm glad you didn't go to Pryde," she continued after what seemed a rather reflective pause. "And I'm glad you don't have to go in the morning. Darling, tell me you won't leave me again for Pryde. Ever?"

"I'm through with Pryde," I said as I took her in my arms. And this time I knew I meant it.

The Criminal Record

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Title and Author	Crime, Place, and Sleuth	Summing Up	Verdict
THE CASE OF THE THREE LOST LETTERS <i>Christopher Bush</i> (Macmillan: \$2.75)	Aging English businessman fears for life; Pvt. Op. Ludovic Travers takes over sitting assignment in vain.	Population large; much commuting involved, but nobody misses a meal in this well-paced job.	Amiably complex.
THE COUNTRY-HOUSE BURGLAR <i>Michael Gilbert</i> (Harper: \$2.75)	British suburban colony jarred by corpse-producing explosion, echo of 1920 blast; cops and amateurs pool findings.	Setting and personnel admirable; tension holds nicely; skilful, taut handling all the way.	His usual bang-up job.
MURDER COMES TO EDEN <i>Leslie Ford</i> (Scribner: \$2.75)	Ancient killing haunts Maryland countryside as road-builders and real-estate move in.	Kiddies, dogs, insects increase complications; characters too numerous and fitted to formula.	Severely involved.
THE PAINFUL PREDICAMENT OF SHERLOCK HOLMES <i>William Gillette</i> (Ben Abramson, Chicago: \$3.50)	Vincent Starrett intro. gives history of this "tenth of an act" curtain-raiser, now first printed.	Author-playwright who created part utters no word in this enjoyable fantasy, produced London, 1905.	Compulsory for BSIs.
THE DARK PLACE <i>Mildred Davis</i> (S&S: \$2.75)	Female screwball lams, unsettling eastern US community as parents fret over kiddies.	Confused state of patient is transferred to reader; authorities strangely complacent.	Moody, murky, misty.
SHOOT A SITTING DUCK <i>David Alexander</i> (Random: \$2.75)	Bart Hardin of Broadway fronts for exacting boss when painter dies and lady vanishes.	Pace grows fast as wad of dough is stashed in little theatre; Lt. Romano usual good cop.	His best yet.
GENTLY DOES IT <i>Alan Hunter</i> (Rinehart: \$2.75)	Yardman Gently, on vacation, takes usual busman's holiday when timber tycoon goes boom.	Football game exciting, and so is CID vs. local cops tilt; climax deliberately foreshadowed.	Detection all the way.
THE GREER CASE <i>David W. Peck</i> (S&S: \$3.75)	NY jurist narrates true court drama concerning recent will fight with Mass. angles.	Fascinating yarn, skilfully set forth, with technical aspects made clear.	Top drawer.
NEVER PLEAD GUILTY <i>John Wesley Noble and Bernard Averbuch</i> (Farrar, Straus: \$3.50)	Life history of Jake Ehrlich, SF trial lawyer, with numerous case histories involving name clients.	Nice studies of courtroom technique make this a worthy addition to fact-crime shelf.	Sound entertainment.

—SERGEANT CUFF.

Fiction

Continued from page 17

the late 1930s, it revolves around sixteen-year-old Joe Burns and his drunkard father. The condition of their life together is one of conflict, neither of them able to understand what motivates the other to be what he is, and both pretending not to care. Finally the struggle is ended by death, and Joe, able now to comprehend some of the broken ties that bound him and his "old man" together, can begin to get free of them as he never could before.

Honesty of feeling and knowledge of one's subject are not enough to make a novelist of the first rank, but they help a lot, and Mr. Erno, though his first book is far from faultless, seems to have them. Sometimes they augur a steady artistic development which is worth keeping track of, and we can hope that such is the case here.

—JEROME STONE.

VALIANT MAID: To plot a clean story line through the politico-military mess churned up by the Wars of the Roses is no easy job, but Barbara Jefferis somehow manages to do it in "Beloved Lady" (Sloane, \$3.95). It is only occasionally that the romance of Margery Paston gets lost in the showers of Lancastrian arrows and the tangled switches of Yorkist allegiance. A lesser heroine than Margery would have been permanently lost in the clutter. Whether they wore the white rose or the red, well-born girls of that pragmatic era were married off as instruments of family advantage. Fourteen-year-old Margery loved Richard, who had neither wealth nor power, and, come death itself, would marry no other.

Though Richard was her father's bailiff, indispensable to landed gentry on the make, the Pastons scorned him as a son-in-law. Margery nursed her family through the epidemic and stood by them loyally in the confused civil strife, but she rejected the suitors they chose for her. Neither her mother's brutal beatings nor semi-starvation in an unspeakable hell-hole broke her purpose or her spirit. When it came to defense of the last estate left her beleaguered family Margery was beside Richard on the parapet swinging a right stout axe. Old Sir John had been mistaken in degree but not in kind when he called her Joan of Arc.

—ANN F. WOLFE.

REDEEMER OF ROME'S NAME: Stern Tacitus, lamenting the decay of the old Roman spirit, would have given a respectful "Ave!" to Ralph Graves's

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