

Fiction

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way is found murdered the jury reports an indefinite verdict.

War brings a dim-out to Britain, and the Contessa home from Sicily. Her return harries the household and further undermines the stability of her son. Fearing for her family, Mary Grace seeks an escape from the thin, cruel old woman and her destruction. But the only escape is to uncover the Contessa's past violence in the tranquil town of Prothero.

What makes this tale more than a murder mystery is Mr. Swinnerton's absorbing interest in his characters and his revelations of their motives and relationships. The story sags when it is given over, a chapter at a time, to the Grace children, but it regains tension and intensity as quickly as the focus fastens upon the principals in this uneasy household.

—WALTER HAVIGHURST.

FORGOTTEN WAR: The hero of Eugene Brown's *"The Locust Fire"* (Doubleday, \$3.25) is George Lewis, a washed-out pilot flying as radio-operator in the Air Transport Command's DC-3's in China, that forgotten theatre of World War II. While highly publicized air battles were taking place over Europe and the South Pacific, an isolated and undernourished war in the sky was being fought over some of the wildest terrain in the world, from Hankow as far west as Myitkyina in Burma, and Siam as far south as the China Sea. The problems of the Air Force and of ATC in the CBI were probably unique. Enemy fighters were never as populous as they were in

Europe, and nothing like the blankets of flack that covered Berlin were ever thrown up over Chinese cities. But there were formidable obstacles: the highest mountains in the world, the cruelest weather, the most unreliable maps, and almost completely unpredictable radio communications. All of these combined to make "China time" an aeronautical nightmare.

As the book opens George Lewis has put in all but a few hours' time to complete his tour of duty. Unexpectedly and brutally, the number of hours for a tour is increased to 750. This shoddy trick of fate and the embittering medical experience (the legacy of a stateside amour) which had prevented him from becoming a pilot threaten to destroy his integrity and his sanity. It is only after the war has technically ended that he is able, again almost fortuitously, to regain some sense of honor through an act of heroism dictated, as usual, by fear.

The tedium, the vague, gnawing fear of interminable hours in the dangerous air, the suspicion of, and resentment toward, the Kuomintang (shared by most American troops in China) are all very accurately recounted by Mr. Brown. Some of the descriptive passages—the almost legendary evacuation of Liuchow, for example—are as fine as any writing to come out of World War II. But the total effect is curiously anecdotal and flat. The failure of the book lies in the author's inability to link the symbol of George Lewis and his fatigued resentment with some sort of genuinely exonerating action.

China during World War II and directly thereafter was an enormously complex and tragic arena in which the forces of at least four disparate nations were in contention. It should receive much more careful study and sympathetic treatment than *"The Locust Fire"* provides.

—DANIEL B. DODSON.

MAYHEM IN MAJORCA: There is plenty of action in Victor Canning's new novel *"The Manasco Road"* (Sloane, \$3.50). Nick Thorne, an Englishman brought up in Majorca and operating as a small-time importer, contractor, and trader, finds himself committed by his partner to an impossible business deal at the same time that he discovers that his wife has been unfaithful to him. Thorne transfers his rage at his wife's action to the task of beating the unscrupulous Majorcan who is trying to keep him from unloading the salvage cargo that is the heart of the business deal. Fist fights, small-boat piracy, and politely threatening interviews with his enemy are the result of Thorne's determination to release his anger against anyone

but his wife. There is rather too much strong silent nobleness between these two as they work their way toward an adult reconciliation, but the action itself is crisp and vivid, and so is the picture of Majorca.

—THOMAS E. COONEY.

DULY NOTED: *"Six People and Love,"* by Stella Zilliacus (John Day, \$3.50), is an international tour, obviously semi-autobiographical, on which the discovery is made that lovers cannot always conquer national parochialism. Despite the pessimistic tone, the author adroitly exploits a rich vein of human interest.

"Three Faces of Love," by Faith Baldwin (Rinehart, \$3.50), tells of a maundering ten-year marriage in which the principals find unsuspected spiritual strength with which to face a crisis brought on by the stork. Miss Baldwin's sixty-sixth book proves she is still the undisputed queen of mass-produced sentimentality and stylistic slickery.

"Nightmare and Dawn," by Mark Aldanov (translated by Joel Carmichael; Duell, Sloan & Pearce, \$4.50) is a novel of intrigue about an adventurer so allergic to principles that he is in the pay of both American and Russian intelligence.

He tires of his complex trade and so may readers who have come to expect more than routine melodrama from the author of such a fine book as *"The Fifth Seal."*

"Night of the Flood," by George Woodman (Dutton, \$3.50), tells what happens when the rains came: to Louise, the forlorn artist, who finds a lover in her rescuer and to Stella, the spendthrift, who relishes all the excitement as a relief from her dull-witted husband. Mr. Woodman's pace is suspenseful, his people flesh-and-blood, his narrative frame compact.

"A Long Day in a Short Life," by Albert Maltz (International Publishers, \$3.75), details the mental and environmental anguish suffered by a group of prison inmates with assorted records.

Some of the episodes are undoubtedly autobiographical, since Maltz served time as one of the "Hollywood Ten." There is sting and sharpness in his writing and characterizations, but the book's one-sided indictment of American democracy is so bitter that it must be counted as little more than propaganda. —S. P. MANSTEN.

LITERARY I.Q. ANSWERS

1. William Faulkner, II Samuel (xviii, 33; xix, 4). 2. Adria Langley, Proverbs (xxvi, 13). 3. Robert Penn Warren, Job (xxx, 29). 4. John Steinbeck, Genesis (iv, 16). 5. Philip Wylie, Matthew (iii, 7 and elsewhere). 6. Elizabeth Madox Roberts, Genesis (viii, 7). 7. Paul Green, Luke (xvi, 22). 8. Caroline Miller, II Samuel (xii, 3) or Isaiah (lx, 11). 9. Grace L. H. Lutz, Romans (viii, 37). 10. Vincent Sheean, Matthew (x, 34). 11. Waldo Frank, Matthew (xxv, 6). 12. Edith Wharton, Genesis (iii, 3). 13. Henry James, Ecclesiastes (xii, 6). 14. Marc Connelly (after Roark Bradford), Psalms (xxiii, 2). 15. Lillian Hellman, Song of Solomon (ii, 15). 16. Sidney Howard, Ecclesiastes (xii, 6). 17. Ernest Hemingway, Ecclesiastes (i, 5). 18. Thornton Wilder, I Corinthians (xv, 52). 19. John Van Druten, Song of Solomon (ii, 12). 20. Irwin Shaw, Psalms (xxxiv, 10, and elsewhere).

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World War II

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modesty, salting it with much valuable psychological lore. —T. E. C.

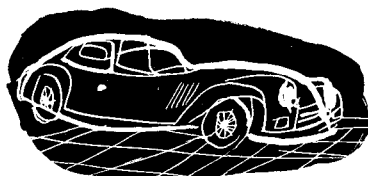
"I Remember Flores," by Tasuku Sato and Mark Tannien (Farrar, Straus & Cudahy, \$3), is a collaboration by a captain in the Japanese Navy and a Maryknoll priest.

Captain Sato was assigned as commander of the formerly Dutch island of Flores in the East Indies, where there was a strong Catholic community. Sato studied this strange religion because he needed, in his capacity as military governor, to know what he was dealing with.

With Father Tannien's aid he tells how the faith of his "subjects" gradually took hold of him and how he joined the Church. —T. E. C.

"The Ship With Two Captains," by Terrence Robertson (Dutton, \$3.95), is the story of the British submarine *Seraph*, which was commissioned as a U. S. Navy ship and given an American captain and flag so as not to offend the pride of General Henri Giraud, who refused to have anything to do with the British but wished to be transported from Vichy France to North Africa.

In lively and humorous fashion Mr. Robertson tells how the *Seraph* accomplished its mission under two captains and two flags and later participated in other exploits, including the landing of General Mark Clark



and some aides to prepare for the Allied invasion of North Africa.

—T. E. C.

"Holocaust at Sea," by Fritz-Otto Busch (Rinehart, \$3.50), grippingly narrates some of the examples of daring against great odds shown by the German surface navy during World War II. Among these is the *Scharnhorst's* dash from Brest to Wilhelmshaven through the English Channel, where every bit of air and sea power the British could muster was levelled against her. There are also stories of some of the *Scharnhorst's* raids against allied shipping, including the sinking of the British carrier *Glorious*. —T. E. C.

"Guerilla Surgeon," by Lindsay Rogers, M. D. (Doubleday, \$3.95), is the personal account of a New Zealand surgeon's experiences with Marshall Tito's Yugoslav guerillas. His job was establishing and operating secret hospitals in the forests and training Partisan doctors and nurses. His book was written without records in the space of two weeks immediately after he left Yugoslavia in 1945; his impressions are fragmentary and related only in that they came within the ken of one man, but they bear the mark of truth which is art.

—GORDON HARRISON.

Verse

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I must admit to a prejudice which may affect my judgment unduly. Since 1946 I have tended to find almost all contemporary verse unreadable: overly intellectual, remote from life and common emotional preoccupations, either tiresomely involved in such intricate self-analysis as to require scholarly exegesis, or conversely (as in Viereck's case) so preoccupied with recapturing self-consciously a classic lyricism and simplicity as to be full of bookish conceits and artful whimsy. The question whether vital poetry can be written, as most practising poets are attempting to write it today, next door to the classroom, has yet to be faced. The examples of Shapiro, Auden—and Viereck—are not reassuring.

Viereck hasn't (and never has had) the temperament or the ear for spontaneous lyricism in the vein of Herrick, Blake, Shelley, Cummings, or Thomas. Even in the tenderest passages his flights can be positively elephantine, and his metaphors—"The perfect breasts of untouched infinite farness"—vaguely abstract. In my opinion, he is ill-advised to try this sort of thing. What he can do supremely and uniquely well is the symbolic monologue on a social-political theme like "Kilroy Was Here" or, in the present instance the dialogue between Goethe and Hart Crane in the poem entitled "Decorum and Terror":

Johann, your ego never shared
or co-starred;
Your secret fear of failing makes
you boast hard.
Your classicism? What a corny
postcard,
An alp all scenic'd up and bella-
vista'd.

Don't try to act as earthy as a
coastguard;
You're not exactly hearty and
two-fisted.
Americana lures you, Hart—
resist it.
There's nothing wrong with being
tender-wristed;
Your gift is more Athenian than
Doric;
Your best songs are not ruggedly
folkloric
Nor grossly and gregariously
choric
But subtly—this I honor—esoteric

In this kind of poem, all Viereck's real gifts for satire, wit, rhyme, memorable phrase, and unorthodox critical analysis come into play.



Pick of the Paperbacks



BARCHESTER TOWERS. By Anthony Trollope. Penguin. 85¢. This second novel in the Barchester series, published just a century ago, recounts the trials of Mrs. Proudie as she puffs her way through the intrigues of church politics in a Victorian cathedral city.

THE MIRACLE OF LANGUAGE. By Charlton Laird. Premier. 50¢ The family tree of verbal communication traced from Old Arabic to pidgin English.

TWO NOVELS OF MEXICO. By Mariano Azuela. Translated by Lesley Byrd Simpson. University of California Press. \$1.25. The Mexican Revolution, recorded in two vignettes "The Flies" and "The Bosses," by a shrewd, jocular, and always realistic Mexican novelist who served in Villa's army.

SESSHU. By Tanio Nakamura. English text by Elise Grilli. Tuttle. \$1.25. A lovely little book, handsomely illustrated with the simple and serene paintings of the fifteenth-century Zen Buddhist monk who is often called Japan's greatest painter.

THE LAST DAYS OF SOCRATES. By Plato. Translated by Hugh Tredennick. Penguin. 65¢. Plato's account of the trial, condemnation, death, and most of all the wisdom, of Socrates.

CRUCIBLES: THE STORY OF CHEMISTRY. By Bernard Jaffe. Premier. 35¢. The history of chemistry is related in terms of fifteen men and one woman, from fifteenth-century Trevisan to twentieth-century Oppenheimer, who contributed to its progress.