

for its completion. Or, to put it another way, that an office staff can be increased five-fold and the work load will automatically adjust itself to fit the situation. This is not at all clear as I state it, nor is it clear as the Professor states it, but at least the Professor makes it immensely stimulating.

He deals at length with the science of the committee meeting. One of his essays is a demonstration of the fact that the achievements of a meeting, any meeting, do not depend on wisdom or the lack of it, but wholly on the seating plan.

One of the most enlightening papers in the book is the one titled "High Finance, or the Point of Vanishing Interest," which begins: "People who understand high finance are of two kinds: those who have vast fortunes of their own and those who have nothing at all." This essay is a sort of British "Treasurer's Report" and in its way is as funny as Mr. Benchley's.

There is a chapter dealing with offices and plants and structures, containing a most astonishing theory; another considers the cocktail party as an instrument for judging a person's worth (without regard to his drinking habits); there are some interesting asides on the art of tax evasion, and there is a concluding chapter on retirement that would be depressing if it were not so funny.

It is my guess that Professor Parkinson's book is going to have a large circulation in the United States. The suggestion has been made that it should be of major interest to the Organization Man. The appeal goes beyond that—executives of every stripe will find it enlivening, and I think that those who man the lowlier desks will get certain satisfactions out of it. As for myself, a free-lance loafer, I suspect that we have a small classic on our hands.

DAY OF THE VIGILANTE: Twenty-one years ago Stanton A. Coblentz published a popular history of vigilante days in San Francisco that was notable for its vivid prose and its recapture of the human qualities underlying violent events. Now a new generation of readers is offered a revised edition of the book. "**Villains and Vigilantes**" (Thomas Yoseloff, \$5) tells the story of the two vigilante committees that the businessmen of San Francisco organized, first in 1851 and again in 1856, to suppress crime and political corruption in their city during the turbulent gold rush era. The author concludes that local conditions justified their arbitrary decrees of hanging and banishment, but that in the long run they may have set a bad precedent for less worthy vigilance committees. —HAL BRIDGES.

SHADY BUSINESS

The Bold Pretender

"The Tichborne Impostor," by **Geddes MacGregor** (Lippincott. 288 pp. \$3.95) and **"The Tichborne Claimant,"** by **Douglas Woodruff** (Farrar, Straus & Cudahy. 479 pp. \$4.75) tell the story of Arthur Orton, who achieved great celebrity in Victorian England claiming to be the heir to a great fortune.

By Allen Churchill

IN THE year 1854, a young man named Roger Charles Tichborne, heir to an English baronetcy and estates, stepped aboard the sailing ship *Bella*, in Rio de Janeiro. The *Bella* was shortly wrecked off the coast, and no survivors were ever reported.

But in the best tradition of Victorian mothers, Lady Tichborne refused to believe her son dead. She kept a lamp burning in the window of Tichborne Hall, and investigated his death so diligently that in time her search became well known. Twelve years later an improbable figure rose from the Australian bush to make claim to being Roger Tichborne. He was Arthur Orton, forever after known as "The Claimant," and

from 1867 to 1874 one of the most famous men in England.

In time, the Tichborne Case became the longest and possibly the most expensive known to the English law courts. Now after years of neglect (though one of Josephine Tey's fine mysteries was loosely based on it), two books on The Claimant and his self-imposed tribulations have simultaneously appeared. The reader can pay his money and make a definite choice, for in "The Tichborne Impostor" Geddes MacGregor proceeds under the certainty that The Claimant was a downright impostor and a mighty poor one at that. Douglas Woodruff, in "The Tichborne Claimant," takes a more measured, or British, point of view. From his book, the reader must make up his own mind after an impartial presentation of fact and background.

Anyone who reads both books is likely to agree with Mr. MacGregor, while enjoying Mr. Woodruff more. The Claimant was unpleasant physically, a mammoth of fat who drank two gallons of whiskey a week and with difficulty held himself to twenty cigars a day. One of the claims he made publicly to strengthen his case was that (as Roger Tichborne) he had seduced his young sweetheart before leaving for South America. His letters were crude and illiterate, as was his speech. Yet Lady Tichborne was immediately won to him, believing that her handsome, educated son had been grossly coarsened by contact with barbaric Australians. Proceeding slowly, with an animal shrewdness that is felt in both books, The Claimant won people to his side. In 1874 he was sent to prison, but even as he went the poor were sending him pennies to pay for his defense.

In Mr. Woodruff's book we find the reason for this. Under Queen Victoria, the aristocracy and middle class attained an unbelievable smugness and superiority. Thus the poorer folk were glad to see one of their own—Arthur Orton was born on Wapping High Street, London—making fools of the upper classes.

But even with such wide public support. The Claimant's boorishness was so insufferable that he could not get away with it. He was finally sentenced to fourteen years in prison, and served ten. He lived on as a bartender and drifter, and when he



Arthur Orton—"a mammoth of fat."



Roger Tichborne, the vanished heir.

died crowds flocked to the undertaking parlor to view his body. They especially relished the gold plaque which brazenly stated "Roger Charles Doughty Tichborne."

Mr. MacGregor's book is one to read and enjoy, Mr. Woodruff's one to cause thought and perhaps wonder. Pay your money, take your choice.

COUNTERFEITERS: Murray Teigh Bloom became interested in counterfeiters in 1952. In Mexico, doing a story on Trotsky's murderer, he fell in with a criminologist who made the detection of counterfeiters a fascinating hobby. Mr. Bloom, a successful magazine writer, became similarly infected, with the result that he has now written "Money of Their Own" (Scribners, \$4.50).

According to Mr. Bloom, the Golden Age of Counterfeiting in this country came between 1836 and 1896. Prince of our counterfeiters during this gaudy era was William Brockway, who took some periphery courses at New Haven and thus qualifies as a Yale man. Brockway plates were so good that even Government sleuths thought he stole them from the U.S. Mint. In nine other chapters Mr. Bloom ranges the United States and Europe culminating—chronologically, at least—with the grand Nazi plan for counterfeiting Bank of England notes. (John Steinbeck and others suggested a similar plan for this country, as Mr. Bloom adds.) The author's research is impressive, but his writing shows signs of haste and is not always arranged for the strongest dramatic effect. However, the book is full of fascinating information. —A. C.

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fact and Fiction

Title and Author	Crime, Place, and Sleuth	Summing Up	Verdict
POOR HARRIET <i>Elizabeth Fenwick</i> (Harper: \$2.95)	Conn. housewife, spend-thrift type, found dead in car; trail takes in Manhattan; female screwball dominates.	Handling deft, delicate; end not unguessable; village folk neatly drawn; fires burn brightly; pace smooth.	Nice going.
THE MARY ROBERTS RINEHART CRIME BOOK (Rinehart: \$3.95)	505-page omnibus includes "The Door" (1930), "The Confession" (1922), "The Red Lamp" (1925).	Pleasant foreword explains author's penchant for mysteries; two yarns based on actual cases.	Safe and sure.
THE MAN WITH THE CANE <i>Jean Potts</i> (Scribner: \$2.75)	Divorced Greenwich Villagers in middle as corpse disfigures church steps; cops question survivors.	Six-year-old lassie prominent; yarn alternately discloses, conceals; pace variable.	Medium.
DEATH OF AN AMBASSADOR <i>Manning Coles</i> (Crime Club: \$2.95)	Latin-American envoy shot in London; Tommy Hambleton of Foreign Office scours Paris with Sûreté help.	Break-up of gang involves numerous hair-breadth escapes; sugar cubes juggled; dog howls for dead.	Gay and gory as ever.
THE CARTARET HOTEL MYSTERY <i>James Corbett</i> (Roy: \$2.75)	Pipe-smoking Insp. Page takes over as manager of swank London caravanserai bites rug.	Aged curmudgeon also present; locked-room variant; repetitive and diffuse; odd characters abound.	Incredible.
DEATH FOR SALE <i>Henry Kane</i> (Dell: 25¢)	Promiscuous NY blonde done in; Capt. Kilgallen of cops (who drinks and smokes on duty) takes over.	Characters molded to fit switcheroo formula; tycoon on spot.	Thin.
GIDEON'S NIGHT <i>J. J. Marric</i> (Harper: \$2.95)	Dusk-to-dawn recital of Yard ace's tussle with wide variety of crime (kidnaping to gang war).	Interplay of character and action well managed and sustained; family concerns abound (cops are people). —SERGEANT CUFF.	Sound performance, as always.

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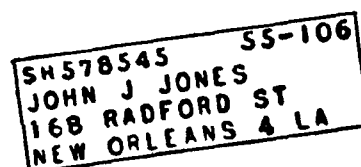
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