

the richest man on earth; and Caesar himself, with his popular appeal and commanding intelligence. There were also Cicero and the arch conspirator, Catiline; Antony and Octavian, Caesar's grandnephew who, as Augustus, became Rome's first emperor.

With a poet's skill and style—and, most fortunately, with the caution of a sound historian—Warner pictures for us the emergence of Caesar into the sea of warring factions. Proscriptions were often the order of the day, so that mere physical survival could never be taken for granted. And how was a man such as Caesar—well born, to be sure, but bankrupt—to make his way against entrenched wealth and privilege; how was he to win the city mob from its skilful leaders? Inevitably, perhaps, he began life as an unscrupulous politician, but he was to die a great statesman, a military genius, conqueror of Gaul and master of the Mediterranean world.

Eschewing all sensationalism, Warner carries us quietly from page to page in a kind of white heat, as one crisis passes into another. The task of the day, he makes Caesar say, was to combine "liberty with authority, revolution with continuity, discipline with initiative."

It was indeed a formidable problem. Mommsen once observed that "there was in the world as Caesar found it much of the noble heritage of past centuries and an infinite abundance of pomp and glory, but little spirit, still less taste, and least of all true delight in life." What Caesar might have accomplished we shall never know, but certainly his assassination filled the hearts of many men with gloom. As one of his friends remarked, "If Caesar, with all his genius, could not find a way out, who will now?"

Warner stops his narrative short, on the eve of Caesar's departure for Gaul and the greatest achievements of his life. Let us hope, however, that he will not rest on his laurels. Meanwhile there is John Buchan's tiny, but topnotch, biography of two decades ago to round out the story.

LITERARY I.Q. ANSWERS

1. "Alice Adams" (Booth Tarkington). 2. Mrs. Battle, in "Mrs. Battle's Opinions on Whist" (Charles Lamb). 3. John Oakhurst, in "The Outcasts of Poker Flat" (Bret Harte). 4. Le Vicomte de Florac, in "The New-comers" (Thackeray). 5. The Nightmare Life-in-Death, in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (Coleridge). 6. "Journals" (Emerson, under January 16, 1843). 7. "Daniel Deronda" (George Eliot—the gambling lady is Gwendolen Harleth). 8. None.

Anguish of Life

"Exile and the Kingdom," by Albert Camus, translated by Justin O'Brien (Knopf. 213 pp. \$3.50), consists of six stylistically different stories whose theme is separation. Philip Thody, whose "Albert Camus: A Study of His Work" was recently published, reports on this latest book by the Nobel Prizewinner for us. Mr. Thody teaches at Queen's University of Belfast.

By Philip Thody

M. CAMUS's first three novels, "The Outsider," "The Plague," and "The Fall," closely resembled one another in their preoccupation with moral and philosophical problems—the world's absurdity, the nature of evil, and the obsession with guilt. This new collection of short stories differs from them in not being primarily related to metaphysical questions. These questions are still there, but yield first place to the study of personal relationships and individual problems. To judge by the latest work by the Nobel Prizewinner, French literature is moving away from its recent obsession with politics and philosophy.

The theme of exile and separation—which recurs in all Camus's work—is here made for the first time into the central subject of a whole book. All the characters in the stories share this feeling: the mad priest who turns traitor to his faith in "The Renegade," the schoolmaster in "The Quest," the painter Jonas in the snob-ridden world of Paris art, the worker Yvars in Algeria, and the engineer D'Arrast in Brazil. In this respect each person—except the priest—seems a version of Camus's own character. In no other book except "The Outsider" does the autobiographical aspect of his writing show up so strongly.

The book consists of six stories, each of which is written in a different style. The first, "The Adulterous Woman," is descriptive and poetic, openly emotional and concerned with a purely personal problem. It is set in Camus's native Algeria, and is the first—and so far the only—one of his stories to have a woman as its central character. Janine, the wife of a small French draper, is accompanying her husband on a trip to sell cloth to the Arabs. She is conscious throughout the journey of the lost vigor of her youth and of approaching middle age. This is her exile, and she feels strongly the contrast between her heaviness

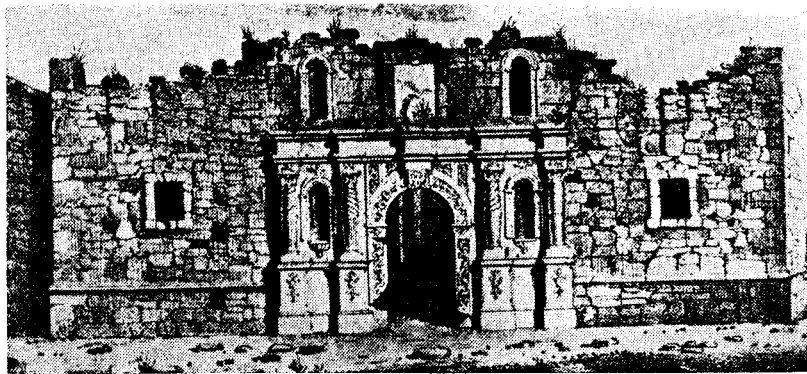
and the natural grace of the Berber tribesmen, those "poverty-stricken but free lords of a strange kingdom." When she and her husband stop for the night, she steals out of the hotel bedroom and goes up onto the parapet surrounding the town. Her "adultery" is consummated in a feeling of mystic union with the earth and sky, in which, "breathing deeply, she forgot the cold, the dead weight of others, the craziness or stuffiness of life, the long anguish of living and dying."

Most of Camus's readers will probably agree that "Exile and the Kingdom" is not one of his major works. It is, however, none the less interesting and readable. M. Camus cannot write badly, and he is well served by his translator. His incursion into satire in "The Artist at Work" is most successful, while the stream-of-consciousness technique which he uses in "The Renegade" is well suited to the subject matter of the story. The delirium of the mutilated missionary waiting to kill his successor, the intolerance and stupidity of his twisted mind, are admirably rendered by the confusion of his language and the intermingling of places and events.

BY CONTRAST, the simplicity of narration of "The Guest," the only one of the stories with a political flavor, reminds us that M. Camus has not lost the power for deliberate underwriting which was so effective in "The Plague." "The Guest" tells how a French schoolteacher, isolated in a small village in the Algerian mountains, reluctantly accepts custody of an Arab who has killed a relative with a pruning hook. He shares his meal with the Arab, takes off his bonds, and in the morning leads him to a place from where he can go either towards the town and the prison, or towards the plateau where the nomads will shelter him. The Arab, who had tried in vain to persuade Daru to join the terrorists, walks toward the town. On returning to his school, Daru finds on the blackboard the words: "You handed over our brother. You will pay for this." The whole tragedy of men of good will in Algeria is contained in these eighteen pages. M. Camus can still deal with the issues of our time, even though he now approaches them in a more indirect and personal way.



HISTORY

—From the book, *Elicson Photography*.

Exterior of Alamo Chapel in 1846.

An American Epic

"Thirteen Days to Glory," by Lon Tinkle (McGraw-Hill, 255 pp. \$3.95), is the story of the siege of the Alamo. Reviewer H. B. Parkes is the author of *"History of Mexico."*

By H. B. Parkes

IN A less sophisticated era the siege of the Alamo would have become a theme for heroic poetry. This story of how a small group of adventurers, disobeying orders to retreat, insisted on holding their ground against an enemy army, how all of them were eventually slaughtered but not before they had killed immensely larger numbers of their opponents, and how their deaths were afterwards avenged by their compatriots has the flavor of primeval saga. Both in the nature of the action and in the behavior of the leading personalities it recalls the battle fought by Charlemagne's rear guard in the pass of Roncesvaux, as described in the "Chanson de Roland." The bloody outcome resembles also the last stand of the Burgundians against the Huns in the finale of the "Nibelungenlied." The whole early history of Texas, as of some other sections of the American frontier, has, in fact, the qualities of the epic ages. Chaotic social conditions, highly individualistic characters, emphasis on the values of physical courage, generosity, and personal loyalty, conflict with alien enemies: such are the factors that gave rise to the Homeric poems.

Frontier conditions did not endure long enough to produce the appropriate literary expressions, and instead of heroic poetry we have prose history. Yet when the history is well written, with an appreciation of its

intrinsically dramatic aspects, it is extraordinary how much of the epic flavor it can convey. Mr. Tinkle is scrupulous about his facts, and appears to have done a thorough job of research. Only in one instance, as he explains, has he gone beyond documentary evidence in describing the actions of his characters. His book is a careful, detailed record of the siege, along with flashbacks describing the earlier lives of the leading personalities. Yet simply by describing what was said and done he has produced a narrative with the qualities of a good work of fiction. The story of the Alamo has been often told, but never so movingly as in this book.

William Barret Travis is the central figure of Mr. Tinkle's story. This young Alabama lawyer, reserved, sensitive, and dominated by an exaggerated sense of personal honor, had apparently killed a man for insulting his wife before coming to Texas. His claim to be the commander of the beleaguered garrison was at first challenged by Jim Bowie, an adventurer of a very different type who had been a slave-trader and an ambitious land-speculator and was famous throughout the Southwest for his prowess in knife fights. But Bowie

was seriously injured early in the siege by a rolling cannon, after which he forgot his quarrel with Travis and loyally supported his leadership.

A third Homeric character who died in the Alamo was Davy Crockett, ex-Congressman from Tennessee, whose exploits as a frontier hunter were already mythical. During the siege he apparently lived up to his reputation both as a marksman and as a humorist. Nor does the story lack the element of betrayal that is an integral part of most epic legends. The men in the Alamo expected help from Colonel Fannin, in command of Texan troops at Goliad a hundred miles to the Southeast; but although Fannin received a series of messengers from Travis, he refused to move. These and other men are clearly characterized by Mr. Tinkle.

He is less successful with the Mexicans, and Santa Anna remains a monster who never becomes understandably human. But this extraordinary figure has been an enigma to all his biographers. Mr. Tinkle, however, emphasizes the fact that this was not a war of races. A number of Mexicans, refusing to accept the destruction of their country's liberties, fought with the Texans, and some of them died in the Alamo.

THE WAYS WEST: That improved transportation facilities were essential to the winning of the American West is well known. Not so well known is the part played by the Army Engineer Department in providing these facilities. Forest G. Hill in *"Roads, Rails, & Waterways: The Army Engineers and Early Transportation"* (University of Oklahoma Press, \$4) points out that West Point was until 1824 the only school of engineering in the United States, and that it remained the nation's leading technical school until the Civil War. Since most engineers were in the Army, civil as well as military construction in this period needed Army technological aid. In the 1820s Army engineers began working on civil projects, and soon under the internal improvements programs of the national government this

In Memory of an Overambitious Poem

By Richard Moore

THAT great, meaningless poem! It races
Still through my empty spaces,
A darkened star, ill starred:
It drew down into itself so hard
It disturbed all motion and all rest
Even to vastest distance—
But in the process it compressed
Itself out of existence.