

reading, the author "found" a style that was at once limpid and musical, light and yet realistic. Even since its first edition (in 1477), the poem has enjoyed great popularity, and has been reprinted more than thirty times.

The story of "The Nymph of Fiesole" is quite delicate, and contains dramatic, pathetic, and sensual moments. The protagonists are Affrico, a handsome shepherd, and Mensola, a fifteen-year-old girl (reader of "Lolita," beware!), with whom he is deeply in love. His father, Girafone, tries to dissuade him from his love, but without success.

The plot echoes in several places Ovid's "Metamorphoses" and Dante's "Comedy," the last of which Boccaccio knew well and often quotes verbatim. But the borrowings from the classical authors matter little, since Boccaccio managed to write a tender love story which has freshness and originality, especially in the treatment of Mensola's maternal feelings for Pruneo.

Mr. Donno is to be congratulated for his felicitous translation and for the accurate scholarship of his work. Those wishing to continue the study of the poem will find his preface and commentary quite useful, and the final bibliography indispensable. I must add, finally, that the format of this precious little volume and the exquisite drawings and illustrations of Angela Conner succeed handsomely in enhancing the story.

—SERGIO PACIFICI.

Fiction

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the initiator of the sensational "Accursed Kings" series, written by a team, and directed to the public which likes its "True Stories" presented with an historical flavor.

As unadulterated "commercial literature" this would be acceptable, even welcome sometimes when exciting enough. But there is really no excuse for pretentiousness in an author who is putting together a story false both psychologically and socially, and technically poor as well.

As an added attraction, Maurice Druon has hinted that there are "real" personalities involved hidden under thin disguises. Well and good. But why pretend that this wearisome "saga" has any connection whatsoever with the history of France in the "entre-deux guerres"? Of course, it does concern only the "aristocracy," "political figures," and "big businessmen" in a society as rotten as it is capitalistic and shockingly corrupt. Maurice Druon is no Aragon, and he makes up for it by liberally commentating his own scenarios. "A society can be happy in spite of its internal wounds; disaster follows after. Similarly, a society may appear happy though many of its members are suffering." This is insight with a vengeance.

—GERMAINE BREE.

Criminal Record

A HAMMER IN HIS HAND. By Whit Masterson. Dodd, Mead. \$2.95. Southern California policewoman's violent death (husband is slain with her) sends excellent cops (m. and f.) into action; did Werewolf do all? Put this close to the top of your list.

TIGER ON MY BACK. By the Gordons. Crime Club. \$2.95. Kansas girl, secretary in U.S. Embassy in Paris, takes on CIA assignment that carries her to Monte Carlo and Morocco and into pressing peril. Orthodox dame-in-jam job, with offbeat scenery.

THE BELL ON LONELY. By Margaret Page Hood. Coward-McCann. \$3.50. Isolated Penobscot Bay isle is scene of native son's violent demise; nice Deputy Sheriff Gil Donan quietly investigates. Good baffler, with excellent color, background.

THE CASE OF THE RUNNING MAN. By Christopher Bush. Macmillan. \$2.95. Ludovic Travers, erudite London eye, journeys to Shakespeare country to look over painting collection and to help capable Yard crew catch two-time killer. Usual sound think-piece.

THE TROUBLE AT SAXBY'S. By John Creasey. Harper. \$2.95. New Yard boss makes things tough for Inspector Roger ("Handsome") West, who is forced to play lone and wary wolf to free framed suspect and tag killer. Typical lively job, but cast is phenomenally huge.

WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO BABY JANE? By Henry Farrell. Rinehart. \$2.95. Ancient movie star, crippled, and virtual prisoner of embittered sister in Victorian Hollywood mansion, wonders what will happen next—and it does. Spine-twister.

—SERGEANT CUFF.

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The Secretary
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St. Paul 6, Minnesota

Ideas

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ceptance must be awaited is not a subject on which Mr. Thompson is inclined to speculate. But he leaves no doubt about his position in regard to the current controversy on the subject of foreign and military policy. He hardly seems to agree with President Eisenhower's statement that "our defense is not only strong, it is awesome, and it is respected everywhere." For, according to the author, "the breakdown of American leadership is . . . due to the lag in American military policies . . . No reasonable man of course can believe that the end of the Cold War is in sight . . . nor should anyone think we could negotiate a lasting settlement from our present position of weakness."

Moreover, Mr. Thompson does not share the view that criticism of our present posture is of necessity politically motivated and unpatriotic.

In this crisis it is fitting and proper that private citizens and public officials should take the lead in calling for a rededication of our national strength and treasure to the restoration of American power. This is so because there has been or will shortly occur a radical shift in the military balance of power threatening the West and ourselves with total destruction . . . If these proposals for resolving the national will against an ever more powerful and unscrupulous foe are appallingly grim, the mortal dangers we face are yet more forbidding.

This is not a general, tainted with parochialism, sounding a note of warning. Nor is it a Presidential aspirant seeking dramatic headlines. It is a political scientist appraising as objectively as he may available information.

And he looks upon the danger of which he is acutely aware as furnishing a "matchless opportunity to which another American President may respond. Leadership that draws its strength from the fires of moral and intellectual courage can rally men to do their utmost in education, science, and diplomacy." It is in this somber setting that Mr. Thompson ends on a hopeful note.

TWO-FISTED LIBERTY: Anyone familiar with H. A. Hayek's "Road to Serfdom" of over a decade ago will find again in his monumental new work, "**The Constitution of Liberty**" (University of Chicago Press, \$7.50) its basic premise that liberty must resist all forms of coercion if we are to keep open the road to continuing growth. And of all forms of coercion "unlimited government" is the most dangerous.

If that seems a reasonable proposition, it appears at once quite unrea-

sonable in the light of Professor Hayek's list of the enemies of liberty: mainly socialism, social planning, administrative government, the welfare state, differential taxation, trade union monopolies, and world government.

Since these appear to be the irreversible tendencies of society in general, one wonders why Professor Hayek persists in a futile and doctrinaire dissent. The answer is that he is a determined and convinced crusader trying to influence public opinion by "indicating desirable directions of development." But however desirable in principle, their application offends the realities. I do not minimize Professor Hayek's wide-ranging scholarship; he writes as economist, political scientist, sociologist, and moralist. He is no conservative; he devotes a chapter to explaining why he is not; even the conservatives, he says, are dominated by statism. He is rather a libertarian, indeed almost a philosophical anarchist, dedicated to freedom without state coercion.

While I share his view of liberty as the essential force for growth, I part company with his rejection of the state as an instrument incapable of reconciling liberty with social needs and claims. We are not, I suggest, on the way to being all incorporated into huge, impersonal machines where the individual no longer functions. Yet that is the professor's thesis and fear.

I would not dismiss so courageous and provocative a study as merely Utopian. It has the high value of reminding us of some basic principles; and it posts a warning on the road of change which many others have pointed out in the dangers of big government, big corporations, big unions.

A curious theme marks Professor Hayek's treatment of equality before the law, kin to Anatole France's satiric reference to the law's ban, for rich and poor alike, on sleeping under bridges. He would not use law to correct inequalities; the rich and poor would pay exactly the same per cent of their incomes as taxes (though with other inescapable differentials). Nor would the state correct inequalities beyond a bare minimum of well-being.

A fair picture of the author's thought may be gained from this single sentence in his treatment of social security. He writes: "Though we may have speeded up a little the conquest of want, disease, ignorance, and squalor, we may in the future do worse when the chief dangers will come from inflation, paralyzing taxation, coercive labor unions, an ever-increasing dominance of government in education, and a social service bureaucracy with far-reaching arbitrary powers."

—ROGER N. BALDWIN.

Russian Writing

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psychosis, etc.—that American literature is entirely a literature of pathology and murder?

However, let us return to Soviet literature. It is a well-known fact that the Stalin personality cult, which we so emphatically condemn, has left its negative trace on a number of Soviet books. Yet our opponents abroad want to convince ignorant readers that our literature ignores the shortcomings disclosed at the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party. And in such cases, when such books do appear, they maintain that these books are ostracized in the USSR. And by the way of illustration they mention such different books as Dudintsev's "Not By Bread Alone" and Pasternak's "Doctor Zhivago."

There would be no need for me to dispel this untruth if the American reader were able to read our books. But under existing circumstances I shall have to disprove this claim.

Just imagine that this were the period of formation of the United States of America. The foremost people of your country are determined to fight to the death against British rule, to establish an independent American state. Tens of thousands of Americans have sacrificed their lives in this fight for a just cause. There are dead and wounded in many families. Those who live are proud that their cause has been successful. They know that their comrades did not give their lives in vain.

AND suddenly a book appears—let us call it "Doctor Smith"—in which the author claims that the dead died and the living struggled in vain, that the pre-Revolutionary (in this case British) culture had been vilified by the American Revolution, that the intelligentsia had become extinct, had perished because of the birth of the United States. What would your attitude be toward such a book? When we indignantly rejected "Doctor Zhivago" we were not only thinking of our fathers who had given their lives to make the Revolution of 1917 possible. We also had in mind the recent war in which we fought for our way of life. We had in mind the tremendous sacrifices which the American people never dreamed of, although they also did their share in fighting Hitlerism.

We felt that this book spat on the graves of our fathers and brothers. This was not criticism, however strong, of shortcomings. The author proclaimed with Olympian detachment and epical placidity that all had been in vain: they should have gone on living as