

Nuclear Warfare

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ing gotten the information they needed, they sent them back to their homes to die. It was not until Norman Cousins of the *Saturday Review* organized the journey of the Hiroshima Maidens to America for surgical treatment that anyone seemed really concerned for the victims of the American bomb.

Robert Jungk opens his story with the statement "The persons who appear in this report are real and are referred to by their proper names. None of the people or the events have been invented by the author." His story is one of the great pieces of re-

porting of our time. He has finally brought our consciences and our Hiroshima victims face to face. His story is tender and true. Its implications are tough and terrifying.

Once again, black clouds of radioactive rubble are sweeping across the world on the whirling winds, dropping, slowly dropping their lethal particles upon the cities of men. The radioactive elements go into the food chain, thence into the bones, the thyroids, the gonads of the little ones. Our brave warriors and stumbling statesmen make war upon babies, and wreak their vengeance on the yet unborn. Those who have sown the wind, reap the whirlwind. Who, who will have the courage to call a halt?

out of General Groves, and this and other complications led to decidedly bad feeling on the part of the British, extending all the way to the top. Even Winston S. Churchill protested, as has been noted by him and by Robert E. Sherwood and others.

Clark's book begins in 1938, before Munich, and before Hahn and Strassman and Meitner (and later Szilard and Fermi) were to show that, in Szilard's phrase, "the world was headed for trouble." He tells old and new anecdotes about the attempts to interest governments, and the governments' eventual responses in secrecy and mystery. No one, except perhaps Robert Jungk, has interviewed more of the key men of the atomic age, and no one has asked more questions about their power and their conscience. Recent books have picked up some of the human and political side of this chapter of our century, but Clark is unique in his attention to the scientists' reactions to what government planned to do. For example, Niels Bohr argued with Churchill that the Russians should be informed of the project, because the bomb "will completely change all future conditions of warfare," and "any temporary advantage, however great, may be outweighed by a perpetual menace to human security."

That was before Stimson put much the same case to Truman. Both Bohr and Stimson were misunderstood then, but in this story we can better understand how human history was made—and how it may be brought to an end.

The British Did Their Bit

"The Birth of the Bomb," by Ronald W. Clark (Horizon. 209 pp. \$3.95), reveals how English scientists felt about their crucial work in developing the first atomic weapons. Michael Amrine, who is a Washington, D.C., science reporter, wrote "The Great Decision."

By MICHAEL AMRINE

SIR GEORGE THOMSON said of the research, engineering, and cloak-and-dagger work involved in creating the first atomic bombs, "It is a fascinating and exciting story . . . there has never been one like it and perhaps never will be."

This book is not the whole story; but it is an extraordinary and thorough account of British work on the bomb, and it is needed now to help our understanding of early atomic history. Will the next atomic bomb, like the first ones, be dropped by a single country with little consultation with her allies?

When Harry S. Truman decided to use the A-bombs, he believed (at least at the time) what most Americans have since come to believe, that the atomic bomb project was originally an all-American effort. Yet, as a matter of fact, the British were not only concerned with early research, as anyone familiar with the international nature of science would expect; they also achieved spectacular results in evolving the first major method of separation of uranium 233 from uranium as found in nature. Their work surprised and impressed Harold C. Urey when he visited

England in 1941, and his report was of primary importance in assuring our own leaders that the job could be done.

Urey's report also led to a "partnership" between Britain and the U.S., in which the expectation was that America would undertake production because her centers could be safe from attack, but that British and American scientists would work side by side. As it turned out, the British scientists had great trouble getting information



Personal History

Continued from page 14

Hamilton Johnson, a Cowley Father in Boston whom she had known briefly more than thirty years before in London when she was still an Anglican communicant, initiated the present correspondence. His part, he declared, was merely to "give her a little push back to where she belonged, *inside* the church," while she had done more for him than "any school, college or university." This is the justification for publishing the book and subtitling it on the jacket "The Spiritual Autobiography of a Distinguished Writer."

Written at frequent intervals and at odd moments, these letters provide a kind of diary and are to that extent autobiographical; but they cover only the period 1950-52, and their interest is by no means limited to the spiritual. The tone is never portentous, there is no breast-beating, no abasement, no exultation. In the midst of a crisis of the soul Rose Macaulay remained a lady.

The crisis is almost over when the letters begin. "Surrounded by death," including that of her lover, she finds herself lost in a world that she has made. She has her work, her habits, her friends; but where is the security of her childhood? Faith is the answer; Father Johnson is the channel through which love can again flood her life. She is aging and ill, but she is at home and happy.

She writes to him about anything that comes into her head: about writing (a book on ruins); about reading (on this they exchange advice); about their family connections (they turn out to be fourth cousins, which makes it eas-

ier to send love and use first names); about her friends (E. M. Forster at Abinger distributing flowers on tombstones in accordance with merit; Graham Greene, "not a priest there. Have they dropped him?" for surely his characters are "low types," hardly candidates for canonization; Vita Sackville-West, the original of "Orlando," did he know?, who is "v. beautiful and nice"); about hearing Mass and taking the Sacrament, and about swimming every possible day in the Serpentine. She plays with ideas about time and history (if the monasteries had not been despoiled by Henry VIII, if it were not for the "repugnant Puritans," if she had lived in the days of religious persecution). She is interested in liturgy and prefers the Latin versions of familiar prayers. Roman Catholics annoy her because they are certain they have the whole truth and so are, to her mind, less open to the continuing guidance of the Holy Spirit. But, oddly enough, Miss Macaulay does not relate this dislike to the segregation of herself and her sisters as Protestants in an Italian convent school.

Nor does she see herself in the inexplicable mermaid heroine of "And No Man's Wit," though perhaps she will later understand she was then attempting to justify her attitude to illicit love, so plainly shown, once one has the key, as impossible to justify morally, in her last novel, "The Towers of Trebizond."

This mixture of wit and chitchat, insight and blindness, is entrancing, but is it spiritual? Another volume is promised, containing the letters of the next six years up to her death in 1958. They were less frequent, perhaps more secular, perhaps more profound. It is impossible to guess, impossible not to wonder.

The News from Bonn

By Harold Witt

SOMEONE plunked a minor tune by Beethoven on an old piano, strumming decaying keys—and the felts fit like stars in the sky's plan, the wobbly wires throbbed as if they were strung tight on an eminent frame by Steinway or Baldwin.

It was only a casual picking out of the piece, far from the links that flash at thundering wrists, and fashion's audience coughing in its plush. Critics would laugh, the noted experts twitch to hear an amateur banging away at greatness.

And there would be something, as usual, critics missed: clear as clumsiness, from their point of view, a small boy stumbling in a giant's shoe, but to an inner ear, which is the only one, music beyond deafness, the news from Bonn.

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Fiction

Continued from page 16

of the famous warrior-lover. When Amyot jumps ship near Castle Dor, he meets a girl with the Arthurian-romance name of Linnet, who is of course married to an aging man called Mark. The three of them carry the story to its inevitably fatal conclusion.

Miss du Maurier works this out neatly enough, in the spirit of Quiller-Couch's earlier passages. The style has a slightly antiquated ring that goes with the Victorian setting as well as with the potions, threatening giants, and other properties of the medieval legends, and the book's variations on a theme pick up some attractive notes of local color. However, unlike some novels taken from myths, this one doesn't serve to illuminate differences between older and newer ways of life—as, for example, James Joyce's "Ulysses" does when, among other accomplishments, it shows how the grand age of the Homeric hero has become debased to that of the shabby little man of the modern city.

"Castle Dor" does, however, include some interesting scholarly discussions by several of its older characters, who provide a kind of chorus that adds resonance to the legendary background. But this novel is not serious literature; its central story never becomes anything more than a readable melodrama.

—HARRY T. MOORE.

A FOXY ELIZA DOOLITTLE: After forty years David Garnett's Silvia turns back wonderfully into Vercors's "Sylva" (Putnam, \$4); and the reverse process, though without the novelty, still exercises much of the fascination remembered in the English novelist's "Lady Into Fox."

With England the land of the hunt, the French author must set his scene there, too. His heroine comes in with the hounds right at her heels, as Garnett's went out with the dogs catching up with her brutally. In each you find a Nanny and a doubting parson; and for Garnett's husband named Richard Tebrick, there is Vercors's Albert Richwick.

At dusk one day Richwick hears a pack of hounds come baying right up to the hedge around his manor, where inexplicably their barks change to whines, and they abandon the chase. Then Richwick sees a creature clawing its way through the briars onto his grounds. He throws himself on it, subdues it, and discovers he has caught himself a young woman, scratched, muddled in her flight for life, but beautiful, and nude.

With a variety of motives, he manages to carry her in secret to his room, where he undertakes to tame and civilize her. She eats a chicken whole, relishing in particular the crunch of the bones; she can jump to the top of the dresser and practically climb bare walls; instead of listening at doors, she sniffs; she fights off baths; and for a long while she fights off Richwick till she finally learns, at first with innocence, to cuddle in his arms.

The many resemblances to the Garnett, which include even the last line, the very last word, do not prevent this from being Vercors's own story. The one, published in 1922, had its own unique English fancifulness; this, translated by Rita Barisse, is purely French in its clarity, precision, and explicitness and in the suggestion that most of us even now, men as well as women, occasionally feel like jumping on dressers, climbing walls, and sniffing at doors. It is a delightful love story, too, with the man fashioning the woman after his own heart; Sylva after all is just Shaw's Eliza Doolittle—scratching, clawing, and biting a little more.

—W. G. ROGERS.



SO EXCELLENT A KING: Of the making of historical novels there is no end, and of the making of good ones there is hardly a beginning. There are perhaps excellent reasons for the rarity of good historical fiction, for it is almost beyond the power of men to bring the

FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT NO. 970

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 970 will be found in the next issue.

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BHCAZMAX MA HLG FPD-
DTAMHO.

G. S. LPSC.

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 969

Most people enjoy the inferiority of their best friends.

—CHESTERFIELD.