

tions of a South African. In spite of them, *Along That Coast*—a first novel that, quite remarkably, never reads like one—is worthy of attention. One looks forward to the other books that must surely follow it.

Renegades in Retreat: With six of his novels available in English, Willi Heinrich is one of the most translated of German authors. His success is quite deserved, even though he has never matched the brutal realism of his first book, *Cross of Iron*. His stories of ordinary men fighting a war whose purpose they do not understand are of the kind that appeals to readers who value straightforward prose and depth of experience more than literary experimentation. At his best, Heinrich must be compared to Remarque, with whom he shares a disillusionment about loudly proclaimed patriotic ideals and a compassionate feeling for those squeezed against the wall.

Heinrich's new novel, *The Crumbling Fortress* (Dial, \$5.95), perfectly translated from the German by Michael Glenny, is set in the *Alpes-Maritimes*, near Nice, a ruggedly beautiful landscape that becomes part of the action as deserters from the Russian and German armies, refugees from Nazi Germany, French quislings, and the *Maquis* get into each other's way on the precipices. Every cliff-dweller has his own reasons for hiding out in the mountain fortress, and their life is not made easier by the widening cracks in its brickwork. A slight shift of the rocks, and there's a grave for all in the valley below.

Against this background of imminent danger Heinrich skillfully intertwines the fates of characters whose life histories are those of an entire generation, disenchanted Nazi enthusiasts, a renegade communist, disgusted soldiers. The best portraits are Herr Knopf, the aging Jew from Germany, and his young niece, who learns of love and death at the same time. The wise humanity of her uncle, a victim rather than a doer, does not have its like in any other Heinrich novel. Knopf's inner calm dwarfs the hotspurs around him and provides an excellent foil for the fast-paced developments.

Willi Heinrich is a competent storyteller and knows how to mix the ingredients in just the right proportions. There is no cleverly contrived plot in *The Crumbling Fortress*, but the shooting, the shouting, and the whispered words of love have a cumulative effect, like an echo in the mountains. The suspense carries you from page to page, rather than from the first page to the last, and you will not fall asleep if you read this novel rocking in the hammock, no matter how hot the afternoon.

—JOSEPH P. BAUKE.

Problems of Small Royal Houses:

Joseph Breitbach, a versatile, German-born author living in Paris, has written a number of novels and plays in French and German that have found wide acclaim in Europe. That he is familiar with the most intricate details of industry and business, as well as the problems of small royal houses, is proven by the book with which he makes his curious debut in the United States. Not really a novel, *Report on Bruno*, translated from the German by Michael Bullock (Knopf, \$5.95), imitates non-fiction. Or perhaps it would be more precise to say that it mimics a type of nonfiction that reads more like fiction. In any case, the book is both fascinating and exasperating.

Its basic pattern seems simple enough. Bruno Collignon, grandson of the most influential minister of a small Western European kingdom, lives separated from his communist father and his alcoholic mother. His grandfather, whom he both loves and hates, is supposed to look after him, and Bruno seems to have everything a boy needs—everything but sufficient care and affection. Since Bruno is brilliant, he is introduced, at an age when other boys worry about their stamp collections, to ministers, secret agents, ambassadors. His grandfather shouldn't really be surprised when Bruno, with the help of his father (whom he starts loathing soon after), defects to Soviet Russia and refuses to communicate with anyone, even his former tutor, Stijn Ryssegeert. The first human being to treat Bruno as a person, Ryssegeert made one fatal mistake: he underestimated Bruno's jealousy. At the

end, after we have witnessed Bruno's transformation from de luxe delinquent to communist agitator and journalist-blackmailer, Ryssegeert pays with his life for this error: for, like many slightly paranoid intellectuals, Bruno is continually taking revenge.

There are some hilarious episodes: the Soviet ambassador intent on a boar hunt, making enemies of the "proletarian" helpers; her Royal Excellency, the Dowager Queen Mother, taking a trip to Russia to promote peace; the police activities against the ever-present "lyrical artistes" (frequented, among others, by the young Bruno and the cops themselves the moment they are off duty).

As a portrait of politics in a small monarchy, the book is of interest. As a thriller, it will while away a few hours. I only wish we could feel more sympathy for grandfather, who, as narrator, reports on too many intrigues, involving too many people whom we have hardly met.

—RICHARD PLANT.

Don Giovanni and Lesbos: Brigid Brophy is a clever young English novelist who evidently has sorceress blood in the family. Reading her two short novels, *The Snow Ball* and *The Finishing Touch* (World, \$4.95), is an experience much like a dream-filled sleep: enchanting, absorbing, sometimes frightening, and faintly bewildering. Awakening, one wonders at the source of the spell, the mystic significance of the symbols. But the magic lingers.

The Snow Ball, longer and by far the most effective of the novels, is set in an eighteenth-century London town house,



where, on New Year's Eve, a masked ball is in progress. Anna, a middle-aged and attractive divorcee, with perfect pitch, has come as Donna Anna from Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni*. At midnight she is kissed by a stranger in the costume of Don Juan; his kiss more than complements his role, and Anna, aroused and frightened, escapes among the dancers.

But *did* Don Giovanni actually seduce Donna Anna? This is the question that preoccupies her for the next hour or two, while the dance progresses and other and younger seductions are in course of accomplishment. The stranger seeks the answer in the library; Anna seeks it from a pompous musicologist. The stranger finds his answer, finds Anna (or she finds him), and the erotic tension grows.

It is a bizarre night, filled with the sounds of Mozart, the pressures of desire, the underlying theme of death and age, youth and cruelty. And in the end it betrays, as life inevitably betrays.

Where *The Snow Ball* seems delicate, curious, and quite wonderful, *The Finishing Touch* seems delicate, curious, and faintly repulsive. The setting is a somewhat nightmarish girls' finishing school on the Riviera; the characters are a group of aristocratic and unpleasant adolescents, their headmistress, and her frog-voiced assistant—the latter two straight from Lesbos. But the Mediterranean atmosphere is pungent, the writing is exquisite, and the headmistress does end up in bed with a man. Miss Brophy always knows how to mix her magic brew, even when it contains a touch of the jeweled toad.

—MARGARET PARTON.

SR's Checklist of the Week's New Books

Crime, Suspense

THE CASE OF THE HEAVENLY TWIN. By Christopher Bush. Macmillan. \$3.95.

THE CORRUPTERS. By Daniel Telfer. Simon & Schuster. \$4.95.

THE SILENCE OF HERONDALE. By Joan Aiken. Doubleday. \$3.50.

THE THICK BLUE SWEATER. By Pete Fry. Roy. \$2.95.

Fiction

THE BLOCK BUSTERS. By Lou Cameron. McKay. \$4.50.

DAUGHTER, OH MY DAUGHTER. By Mildred Mesurac Jeffrey. Lyle Stuart. \$4.95.

THE FRENCH BRIDE. By Evelyn Anthony. Doubleday. \$4.95.

THE GREAT SWEET DAYS OF OLD SHIBUI. By H. D. Miller. Doubleday. \$4.50.

THE VIRGIN MARKET. By C. Y. Lee. Doubleday. \$4.50.

WHEN THE BOUGH BREAKS. By Richard Kluger. Doubleday. \$4.95.

History

A HISTORY OF VENEZUELA. By Guillermo Moron. Roy. \$5.95.

THE TRANSFER OF THE SUDETEN GERMANS: A Study of Czech-German Relations, 1933-1962. New York Univ. Press. \$6.50.

THE WAR DISPATCHES OF STEPHEN CRANE. Edited by R. W. Stallman and E. R. Hagemann. New York Univ. Press. \$7.50.

Miscellany

FEDERAL AID TO PRIVATE SCHOOLS. By Leo R. Ward, C.S.C. Newman, \$3.95.

HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY DEPARTMENT OF PRINTING AND GRAPHIC ARTS CATALOGUE OF BOOKS AND MANUSCRIPTS.

Part I: French 16th Century Books. Compiled by Ruth Mortimer. Harvard-Belknap. \$50 set.

LETTERS FROM THE PEACE CORPS. Edited by Iris Luce. Luce. \$3.95.

MAN'S QUEST FOR POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE: The Study and Teaching of Politics in Ancient Times. By William Anderson. Minnesota Univ. Press. \$8.

SQUARE-RIGGER DAYS. By Warren Armstrong. John Day. \$4.50.

THIRTY-EIGHT WITNESSES. By A. M. Rosenthal. McGraw-Hill. \$2.95.

THE UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION: Coordinator of the International Mails. By George A. Coddington, Jr. New York Univ. Press. \$6.50.

Music

A JAZZ LEXICON. Edited by Robert Gold. Knopf. \$5.95.

NOTES OF A PIANIST. By Louis Moreau Gottschalk. Knopf. \$6.95.

Personal History

BADEN-POWELL. By William Hillcourt. Putnam. \$7.95.

FRANK MERRIWELL'S "FATHER": An Autobiography by Gilbert Patten. Edited by Harriet Hinsdale. Oklahoma Univ. Press. \$5.95.

THE MISSION. By Martin Caidin and Edward Hymoff. Lippincott. \$4.50.

THE ROYAL GEORGE: The Life of H.R.H. Prince George, Duke of Cambridge, 1819-1904. By Giles St. Aubyn. Knopf. \$6.95.

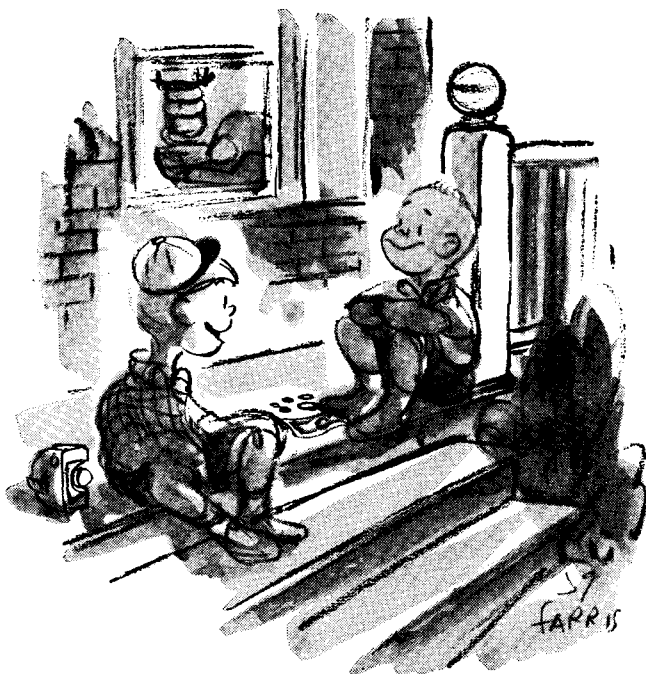
VERDICT ON SCHWEITZER. By Gerald McKnight. John Day. \$4.95.

Religion

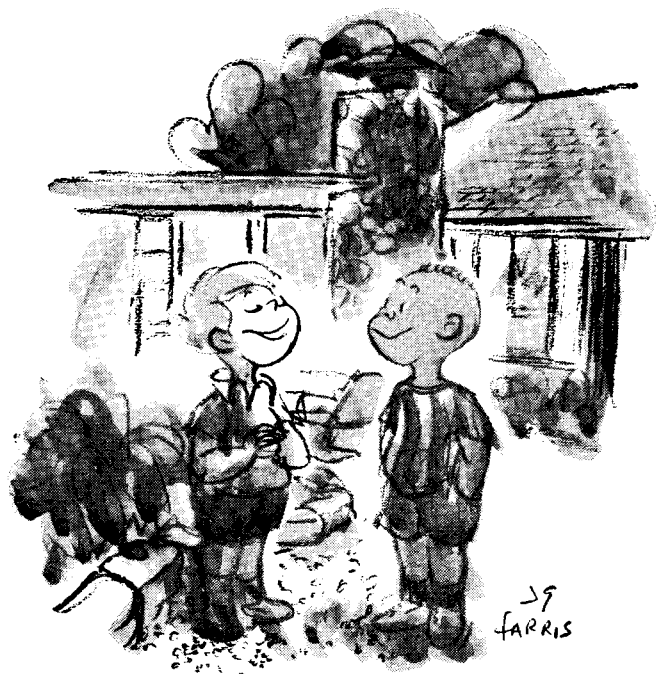
UNDERSTANDING ISLAM. By Frithjof Schuon. Roy. \$5.95.

—Compiled by RUTH BROWN.

Pals



"We've got \$1.67—let's make a modest-budget picture."



"I'm in love with my teaching-machine."