

a robot that will make automation as outdated as the steam engine. Walker gradually and plausibly fills the mansion with the most preposterous array of characters since *Grand Hotel*; and, in the tradition of quickie farce, the Scots are quaint, the Americans naïve, the Englishmen suave, and the children precocious and monstrous.

What makes this comedy-mystery-romance-horror story of more than routine interest is the lively, first-person narration that Walker has assigned to his Scots nobleman, Tarquin Ian Auchart Duncatto. Duncatto's sharp eye and ear are quite equal to the novel's outlandish sequence of events. In addition, the author delightfully spoofs that much-parodied secret agent James Bond in the character of one Tiger Clyde: "Through swirls of heady smoke he paced my study, draw after draw of Melachrino, sip after sip of prewar Glinlivet. Ten Egyptians and one bottle gone, Tiger Clyde abruptly sat. He stared at the flames. I could not watch the firelight's play upon the hawklike face. 'You're a solid type,' he growled, 'I'm going to trust you.' Among Clyde-Bond's axioms is 'If you like a chap, never shoot him in the guts; it isn't cricket.'"

In the true spirit of comedy, *Winter of Madness* ends with evil being put down, love triumphing in unexpected places, and tranquility and sanity once again being restored to the Scottish Highlands.

—BURLING LOWREY.

**Corsair in Commerce:** Likely to appear in the parlor game of memorable first lines is that of P. H. Newby's new novel, *The Barbary Light* (Lippincott, \$3.95): "One evening, in bed, she said they had been friendly long enough now to think of getting married. . . ." After such an opening the rest of the novel almost inevitably has to be a disappointment; and it is.

Although the setting—London and environs, with a side trip to Tunis—is for the most part less exotic than that in some of his best-known earlier fiction, the theme is Newby's trademarked one. Again the central figure is impelled (or compelled) to take a journey, which becomes a quest for his true self. Again the journey makes possible the readjustment of the hero to life with himself in his natural habitat.

The journey in *The Barbary Light* is at first an abortive one, which Owen Hanner has never forgotten: when he was twelve he tried to run away on a freighter to the Barbary Coast, but the ship never left Bristol Channel. Now fortyish, Hanner rediscovers his need for self-assertion. This finds its outlet through the acquisition of a mistress and dabbling in embezzlement. Neither

proves satisfying, and one of the more comic scenes displays Hanner's wife, Sybil—who has brought Alex, the mistress, home to live with them—working with Alex on jigsaw puzzles and sharing snacks with her, while mistress wears wife's poppy-flowered nightgowns. Hanner, meanwhile, enjoys the affection of neither.

When even the accumulation of ill-gotten money proves distasteful and troublesome, little but the foundered boyhood voyage is left for Hanner, who in his mild way has been a Barbary pirate (London variety) in love and commerce. Although Hanner has always known it theoretically, it takes further complications to reinforce for him the comforting idea that "being a human being was not such a difficult role to play provided nothing extraordinary was expected."

Comic in a surprisingly quiet way, with Newby's characteristic gifts for evoking the nature of daydreams and for realistic, ironically witty dialogue, *The Barbary Light* is an unpretentious entertainment that also attempts an underlying seriousness. American readers may be puzzled by some of the author's peculiarly English expressions, may need some appreciation for the subtleties of London geography, or may quail at such quaint ideas as that "American ice-cream soda" can be commercially bottled; nevertheless there are rewards for the faithful.

—STANLEY WEINTRAUB.

**Touch Typist with Switchblade:** It often has been claimed that a talented young writer who has produced a successful first novel is apt to encounter serious creative difficulties when it comes to producing a second. In the case of Alfred Grossman, whose first novel, *Acrobat Admits*, received much praise, no such difficulties are discernible.

Though *Many Slippery Errors* (Doubleday, \$4.50) is a disturbing novel, it also is an entertaining one, for Alfred Grossman's rage against all that can be called established in American life is skilfully balanced by tolerance and amiability. His gift for verbal invention and his ability to create incidents that are farcical but devastating were displayed to excellent but erratic advantage in his first novel. In this new book he has taken more care with construction and has gone to the trouble to tell a good story.

Since he writes in the first person, the plot is dominated by the personality of the narrator, Charles Kraft, a demographer in the United Nations Secretariat, who can't believe, though obviously he should, that he has it made. Oppressed by boredom, bureaucracy, his own rebellious nature, and an inse-

cure but insistent wife, he launches his protest against all these things when he begins to pursue an attractive young typist in his office who, he has discovered, carries a switchblade. The pursuit leads him to the headquarters of a juvenile gang in Brooklyn, which has as its mentor an aged wanderer with but one hope left in life, which is to blow up a power plant on the East River. The complications that ensue are, though immediately comical, tragic by implication. Charles learns in the end that those who would rebel come off as badly, if not worse, than those who would conform. The conclusion that the reader must draw is that in our society rebellion, though admirable in the attempt, is inevitably futile, and the only possible anarchy that can be achieved is that of the senses.

Fortunately, Alfred Grossman manages to give his characters a conviction that is upheld throughout his story, and the narrative itself never loses its interest and plausibility despite a few lapses into overextended and somewhat inflated monologues. Grossman demonstrates in this novel that he is bringing his unusual gifts under excellent control and that he can be expected to become a sound novelist as well as a brilliant writer.

—VICTOR CHAPIN.

**Tar in the Bayous:** The publisher states that *Love You Good, See You Later* (Scribners, \$3.95), by Eugene Walter, is a satirical novel. Whether it is or is not—and frankly I think that the South that has been presented by most of the so-called Southern writers is so bizarre as to be its own satire—is of little importance to your enjoyment of their romp through the bayous.

Briefly, Mr. Walter is telling the story of a sailor's visit with the Bergerons, a passionate and wacky clan of redheads. The young and hotblooded grandmother, Amelie, had once picked up the sailor during Mardi Gras in New Orleans, and now she has summoned him from across the world to come and be her last adventure and possibly her granddaughter's first.

While this setup could make for heavy sexual going in other hands, with Mr. Walter in charge it is a light, delightful spree with people who qualify as eccentrics only because they have the guts to live their lives their way and at full tilt. The combination of the lush bayou setting and the lusty crew, including a couple of spirit voices and a conjure man, that Mr. Walter has turned loose in it, brings to mind *A Midsummer Night's Dream* performed with a "you-all" accent. *Love You Good, See You Later* is a soufflé of a book—light and high, warm and rich and, most of all, satisfying.

—HASKEL FRANKEL.

# A World That Won't Stand Still

***Living in a World Revolution: My Encounters with History*, by Hans Kohn (Trident. 185 pp. \$3.95), a volume in the Credo Series, asserts that the essence of the social experience is comprised of diversity, pluralism, mutual respect, compromises, and continual change. Carroll Quigley is professor of history at Georgetown University and author of "The Evolution of Civilization."**

By CARROLL QUIGLEY

WHEN Socrates asked the aged Cephalus what old age has to relate of life to the coming generation, he did not get a very fruitful answer. He should have asked Hans Kohn. For Professor Kohn has much of value to report. It is doubtful if any lifetime in human history has covered a more eventful period than Professor Kohn's allotted three-score-and-ten, which began in 1891. And few men living in those years have been more aware of what was going on than the author of this little book. More—the author is that rare thing, a true cosmopolitan, as much at home, apparently, during his year in Irkutsk, Siberia, in 1919 as during his fifteen months in Paris, four years in London, six in Jerusalem, or fifteen in Northampton, Massachusetts. His youth in Prague was spent under that diverse and anachronistic political structure, the Hapsburg monarchy, which was destroyed in 1918, but which now, with the turning of the tide of Europe's political development, has many lessons for the future of an integrated Europe.

Not many men are better qualified than Professor Kohn to teach those lessons. In his twenties, during World War I, he was a soldier of the Central Powers; he was a prisoner of war in Russia during the five crucial years 1915-1920, and he was a student and journalist over much of Europe and the Near East until he came to America in 1933. Today, after twenty-seven years of teaching at Smith College and the City College of New York, he is recognized as the historical profession's outstanding authority on nationalism and one of its most facile and prolific writers.

From Professor Kohn's experiences, related by a learned and thoughtful

mind, a number of interesting conclusions emerge. One is that the experience of nationalism in much of Europe was very brief. In the 1890s Prague was still largely untouched by it, and today in Prague it has again become a secondary concern, while in the twenty years 1918-1938 it was the chief motivation of political action in all of Bohemia. Today Americans still insist on a fully integrated, largely conformist, nationalist society; hence it is something of a shock to us to read of the cultural and intellectual vitality that Prague, with its segregated linguistic groups, had in the 1890s. The Czechs, Germans, Jews, and others had separate theaters, literatures, and, to some extent, separate education, but they lived with a minimum of personal friction and found acquaintance with each other's cultures, especially music and literature, mutually enriching. Surely this is a model for the po-

litical and cultural future of Western Europe's Economic Community.

Almost equally striking is the intellectual and cultural fervor of young Hans and his friends. In an unaffluent society, where drudgery was endemic and automation undreamed of, they had the time and energy to sample all kinds of diverse experiences and to build the best aspects of these, by discussion and testing, into their own outlooks and values. How colorless in comparison is our contemporary students' "search for identity" in materialism and sensuality.

Professor Kohn's conclusions are not those of our recent past, but are those of an older convention, closer to our traditional Western culture. He sees diversity, pluralism, mutual respect, compromise, and continual change as the fundamental facts of human or social experience, and sees the slogans of the recent past, such as "One World, or None!," or the emphasis on conformity, integration, togetherness, and belonging, as misleading, even dangerous. In view of the rich experience of his own life and the longer-range view of his historical knowledge, his conclusions make sense—in terms of what is possible or desirable and in terms of the older traditions of our own Western culture.

## Tight Little Island of Our Times

***The Age of Triumph and Frustration: Modern Dialogues*, by Charles Yost (Speller. 242 pp. \$4.95), voices the critical issues of our day as they might be probed by eleven contrasting, intelligent people. Malcolm Moos is professor of political science at Johns Hopkins University and visiting professor of public law and government at Columbia University.**

By MALCOLM MOOS

WHEN Brancusi was introduced to an acquaintance of an old friend, the noted sculptor asked what he was. "A writer," was the reply. "I've never cared much for the medium," said Brancusi. "You can't see it from every side." In the long struggle to deal with the collision of ideas many writers must have pondered the wisdom behind this remark. One of the oldest and perhaps one of the best literary forms for coping with ideas has been the philosophical dialogue—not a popular form, to be sure, but one having the distinct advantage of permitting the writer to put several conflicting viewpoints into orbit,

and then, by means of discussion, stimulating the reader to form his own judgments. In this fashion it is not just the bold brush strokes that illuminate and define the clash of opinion, but the subtle nuances—the half-tones that shade the final measure of analysis as an argument squeezes into the tight places.

Working on a broad canvas, Charles Yost does just this in *The Age of Triumph and Frustration*. At a time when the world quivers under the threat of the bomb, it is both a topical and pithy commentary on the elements of discord and change on this sorely troubled planet. In a remarkable tour de force, Mr. Yost has achieved almost the impossible: a book that could alternatively provide intellectual nutrition for a year's graduate seminar or, read in one sitting, a thought-provoking, thoroughly rewarding evening's entertainment.

For this discourse on the critical issues of the age the author has grouped his materials into ten informal dialogues—among them, "Democracy and Dictatorship," "The Modern Temper," "Individuality, Fanaticism, and Faith," "Modern Art and Literature," "War," and "The Confines of Utopia."

For his cast Mr. Yost has gathered