

**Patterns of Doom:** The teen-agers first met in a juvenile court: one, a defiant delinquent disowned by hateful parents; the other, the magistrate's loving daughter. Their circumstances could hardly have been more different, yet there was an affinity between them that lasted through many vicissitudes. In *Kate and Emma* (Coward-McCann, \$4.95), Monica Dickens's novel of London life in the slums and suburbia, each girl speaks in the authentic voice of her respective social class as in the next few years their paths cross and recross. The tale each tells is tragic, although what holds Kate and Emma bound in friendship is their zest for life, sense of fun, and enjoyment of fantasy.

After a short period of happiness in a good foster home Kate marries a moron by whom she is pregnant. Three more babies follow quickly; meanwhile the shiftless husband loses his unskilled job, resorts to petty theft, and goes to jail. Kate seems doomed to repeat the squalid pattern of her own deplorable home, as though poverty were an inheritable, recurrent disease, incurable in spite of all the efforts of the English welfare state to mitigate the severity of its attacks. Poor laughter-loving Kate winds up in a mental home in her mid-twenties, placidly unaware that her children have had to be rescued from her cruelty and neglect.

Emma repeatedly helps in one crisis after another, but her life too is in a tangle. Out of sympathy with her defeatist mother, disillusioned about her adored father, burdened with an arid career in the family business of developing a chain of super super markets, she suffers as a final frustration a desperate passion for a married man with an undivoriceable wife.

Richly detailed, the lives of these two young women are related with exactitude, sympathy, psychological insight, and flashes of humor. The novel is full of convincing character sketches of rich and poor, wise and foolish, stuffily respectable and ineptly criminal—all human and all too human. Yet Monica Dickens, great-granddaughter of the great Charles, is quite pitiless in dooming her two vividly real heroines to misery. The moral inferred from this tale of warm hearts and kind intentions is that you just can't win.

—AILEEN PIPPETT.

**No Stopping the Presses:** What happens to a big metropolitan newspaper when its brilliant young publisher suddenly drops dead? Either the *Mail* in Richard Powell's *Daily and Sunday* (Scribners, \$4.95) will be sold to a successful chain and thus lose its character, or a member of the current management will be elected to take over. The most prestigious vote is held by the

chairman of the board, Paul Wynnefield, an affable man of means who, having had a heart attack, is not pushing himself hard. His inclination is to take the spiritless but financially sound course of selling out. At this stage, readers may begin to wonder whether the calculating corporate bad guys are going to score once again over the idealistic individualists.

If the answer to that question were the only point to the story, this would not be much of a book. But the author, who was a reporter for the Philadelphia *Evening Ledger* for ten years, is more interested in the workings of a newspaper than in high finance, and he wisely avoids a subject already expertly explored by Theodore White in *The View from the Fortieth Floor*. Instead, in a series of vignettes, he examines the lives of various contenders for the job of publisher.

There is the tough, ex-football-playing circulation manager, who trains a juvenile delinquent to sell papers. There is the lonely woman's-page editor, who discovers a lesbian tendency in herself. The advertising manager is a problem drinker. The managing editor writes fantasy news stories to release emotions concealed from the world. The general manager is neurotically jealous of his young wife. The treasurer has a weakness for girls on the staff.

The fiction is salted with newspaper publishing statistics. If you want to know the cost of newsprint, how fast presses run, what department stores pay for lineage, it's all here, presumably to add verisimilitude to a quite believable if not too exciting story. But the journalistic activity of the *Mail*—the fast-breaking stories, the crusades, the actual product—is scarcely mentioned.

In this bit of light entertainment Mr. Powell has (perhaps unintentionally) exposed the contradiction of mass-circulation journalism: editorial content, by its nature highly personal, depends on the successful operation of rather impersonal industrial and commercial de-

partments; the non-editorial side may actually be more important to a paper's survival than the copy. This fact explains for me the lack of punch in *Daily and Sunday*. The city room of the lousiest rag is still ten times more exciting than the board room of the best.

—ROBERT W. MINTON.

**Tea and Sympathy:** Set in New York's West Side, *Catch a Brass Canary*, by Donna Hill (Lippincott, \$3.95), gathers most of its microcosmic population into a run-down branch of the Public Library. Here the librarians drink tea and contemplate their mission, the clerks search for the meaning of love, and the pages discover that petty jealousies are not the answer to anything. Add to this literary cauldron one Rupert, a pathological censor, "a little bit nuts but nice . . ." who mutilates books to save society, and a regenerate young Puerto Rican hoodlum, Miguel Campos, who escapes his delinquency to discover art.

Generally the characters are shallow, the mixture of romance and violence too melodramatic, and the solutions altogether too simple. The novel is overpopulated, overplotted, and the result is another social tract on tolerance. Technically, Miss Hill has chosen an elliptical, fragmentary descriptive style designed to add some life to routine intervals of dialogue. "Crash," she writes of a gang beating. "Sound of breaking glass. More laughter." But this adds nothing to the narrative and only serves to call attention to itself.

However, if her performance is not all that it might be, the author's intention is worth a comment. She is aware of the chaos of circumstance and abhors the casuistry of discrimination. So her treatise is worthy if her treatment is lacking. Beyond this, it is only fair to express confidence that Miss Hill will likely improve; her brass canary is a far cry from Yeats's golden bird, but her novel does point up that capability for sympathy without which no writer can succeed.


—WILLIAM C. HAMLIN.

# Patrick Dennis

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## She Wore a Crown and a Widow's Cap

***Queen Victoria: Born to Succeed***, by Elizabeth Longford (Harper & Row, 635 pp. \$8.50), based on hitherto unavailable sources, permits "a leisurely stare behind the scenes" at the woman whose name has become the synonym for an era. Roger Fulford is author of a biography of the Prince Consort as well as of Victoria and her uncles.

By ROGER FULFORD

**I**F QUEEN VICTORIA had never lived Victorian England would certainly have had to invent something like her. She seemed to symbolize not so much the majesty of the monarchy as the divine mission of her people. At the end of her reign a small boy who had heard his elders discussing the ruler asked them, "Does Queen Victoria belong to this world?" For to her people she did indeed appear to be poised between heaven and earth, and when those well-filled churches prayed that their Queen "might evermore have affiance in Thee," such a petition sounded natural and seemly. Was there not understanding between the Lord of the Heavens



**Disraeli adds the Imperial Crown of India to the Queen's portrait. From a lampoon inspired by her assumption of the title "Empress of India."**

and the Lady of the Highlands? By her outward behavior Queen Victoria crowned the deep religious awe of the nineteenth-century English people.

Or so they thought. For the fascination of this fine biography is that it reveals what the Queen was, rather than what people thought she was. The Countess of Longford, who has been allowed by the present Queen to examine Victoria's private correspondence, gives us not so much a peep as a long, leisurely stare behind the scenes. We learn, for example, that the Queen was afflicted by what she called "flashes of doubtfulness" about religion, and once asked a future Archbishop of Canterbury whether such things ever came over him. Yet whatever her private feelings may have been, she saw, with that penetrating singleness of mind which was one of her salient characteristics, that religion and the throne were inextricably bound together; and she once wrote, "Disbelief in God leads to lack of reverence for those in authority, including parents."

One of the many interesting questions considered by this book is whether the Queen damaged or strengthened herself by withdrawing into seclusion after the Prince Consort died in 1861. Half her life lay ahead; she was still comparatively young, and a friend who saw her was struck by the desolate look on the youthful face in its widow's cap. But in Windsor Castle the dead lived on; every evening for forty years the Prince's clothes were set out and a can of hot water and a clean towel put ready for him. For the Queen, and every English widow in easy circumstances, there was a sacred ritual of widowhood, of which weeds and expression of face were an essential part; to think of remarrying was a blasphemy. (Lady Longford effectively disposes of the silly gossip that the Queen secretly married her Highland attendant, John Brown, a tale that makes an excellent Victorian novelette but not history.) The widowhood and seclusion of the Queen did unquestionably touch some chord in the heart of Victorian England. As Lady Longford shrewdly points out, the marriage bed looms large in the thoughts of us in the 1960s, but our great-grandparents in the 1860s were absorbed by a different bed—that of death. Queen Victoria did not of course create the English widow, but as the “Widow of Windsor” she gave the species immortality. Although the up-

per and official classes objected to the sparkle of the crown being hidden in the widow's veil, the withdrawal made the woman more mysterious and added to the monarchical pull.

One other point that this book brings out clearly is the natural authority of the Queen's personality, her shyness notwithstanding. Certainly Victoria's diffidence was not a hereditary characteristic; her mother was voluble, and her father, the Duke of Kent, was the least inhibited of men. (He was the first member of George III's family to visit America after Independence, and made himself extremely popular in Boston.) Victoria had the advantage of a voice "remarkable for its extreme clarity and precision." It is likely that, except when she had to keep her somewhat turbulent children in order, she never raised her voice in her life. Effortless speech of that kind is one of the handmaids of dignity.

We can estimate how formidable the Queen really was from what Lady Longford tells about her relations with Gladstone. He rather amusingly compared them to those between a mule and its rider: the latter is aware of the faithfulness of the brute, but cannot work up the slightest degree of feeling for it. The great statesman minded this acutely, and at the end of his life sought occasions to be noticed by the Queen and even dreamed frequently that he had been asked to breakfast alone with her.

Lord Tennyson, in his ode on the Duke of Wellington, describes him as "rich in saving common sense." Lady Longford evidently feels that the key to an understanding of the Queen's great-



—From the book.

**John Brown tends the Queen's sprained thumb in a cartoon from "John Brown's Legs, or Leaves from a Journal in the Lowlands," a parody published in New York.**