

collection of essays by well-known authorities surveying the bases and main problems of American foreign relations.

—WILLIAM L. LANGER

Mysteries

Out of the current crop of mysteries, these six stand out:

Trent Intervenes, by E. C. Bentley (Knopf, \$2). All lovers of literary crime may be grateful for the fact that when that splendid novel, *Trent's Last Case*, appeared, Mr. Bentley didn't say *positively*. Here in *Trent Intervenes*, Mr. Bentley has done something valuable for detective fiction. He has been at once episodic and exciting, at once casual and satisfying. Suavity and melodrama, leisureliness and suspense, go hand in hand. The twelve stories are far above the ruck, with never so much as a veiled insult to the reader's intelligence.

Murder Will Speak, by J. J. Connington (Little, Brown, \$2). An epidemic of poison-pen letters leads to the murder which Sir Clinton Driffeld is called upon to solve in this excellent example of English detective fiction. Both glandular disturbances and radio are mixed up in it, and it's rather unsavory at times; but the way the letter writer is exposed, and the method by which the culprit is at last identified, make first-class reading for those who enjoy a good puzzle intricately worked out.

The Crooked Hinge, by John Dickson Carr (Harper, \$2). This is undoubtedly Mr. Carr's best book and, indeed, shares laurels with the best detective stories of the past year. Dr. Fell, Chestertonian detective of other Carr stories, corners the murderer.

Death Sends a Cable, by Margaret Taylor Yates (Macmillan, \$2). Most books about the FBI special agent have accentuated the bloodier aspects of his profession. But here he comes into his own, in a well-devised and brightly written story of strange deaths at Guantánomo Bay. Agent Bill Duncan is helped no end by Mrs. Hugh McLean—the nurse "Davvie" of Mrs. Yates' earlier stories—and the international gang is, for once outside of Oppenheim, composed of credible people.

Three Bright Pebbles, by Leslie Ford (Farrar & Rinehart, \$2). An arrow extinguishes the life of Rick Winthrop on one of those Maryland estates that are filled with lovely ladies—all with slim, lithe bodies—and handsome men. A number of impeccably groomed and an-cstored folks come under suspicion, but grave Dr. Birdsong and his dog finally make it too hot for the murderer. Well worked out and remarkably pleasant

reading—but lacking both in the chill of earlier Ford Stories and a detective as interesting as John Primrose.

Challenge to the Reader, by Ellery Queen (Stokes, \$2.50). A comprehensive and good anthology of 25 detective stories ranging from Conan Doyle to Dashiell Hammett—chosen with care and an alert understanding of mystery material. In fact, it's so good an anthology that I could easily dispense with the dubious "game" idea of having the protagonists bear substituted names to test the reader's wit. But once you have made your own index and pasted it in on the flyleaf, you will possess a satisfying and up-to-date collection—interspersed with several unfamiliar yet authentic inclusions.

—S. S. VAN DINE

Art

After two decades of debasing confusion in art, during which the evils of presumptuous mediocrity were foisted on a bewildered public, we have had, of late, a marked return to more estimable standards of endeavor. This salutary tendency on the part of artists and writers alike is characterized by its repudiation of "pure form" and "esthetic impeccability" as practiced by the various modernist sects, and by its insistence on the fact that the artist is part and parcel of his period and his environment. This return to first principles is beautifully illustrated in the current crop of art publications by two books of conspicuous merit—*Goya*, by Charles Poore (Scribners, \$3.50), and *Toulouse-Lautrec*, by Gerstle Mack (Knopf, \$5).

Both books are biographical rather

than critical, and both are examples of sound scholarship, painstaking accuracy in historical matters, and an intelligent conception of the purpose and meaning of art. Of the two, the *Goya* is decidedly superior in its reconstruction of the background and in its convincing presentation of a great personality. Mr. Poore writes with exceptional energy, always vividly and often with brilliance. At times, in his determination to uncover the real Goya behind the incredible libertine of romantic legend, he interrupts his narrative with skeptical discussions which, though damaging to the old familiar escapades, do not remove the possibility of such adventures. But he has created a living figure in a living environment, and his book, in this particular, is not likely to be superseded for a long time. Mr. Mack, for all his diligence and his knowledge of the French Bohemia of Toulouse-Lautrec, is not so successful as a biographer. His difficult subject, a physical deformity and a dipsomaniac, but a great artist unmistakably, almost defies belief and remains a shadowy little monster in a world of depravity and sensual excesses.

Last, there is *Sky Hooks* (Lippincott, \$3.50), the autobiography of John Kane, an immigrant day laborer who painted naïve pictures of unquestionable originality. Kane's story, dictated in his last years to Marie McSwigan and recorded by her with all the elements of discretion and good sense, is the extraordinarily moving confession of a "modern primitive" whose pictures, after his death, won the suffrage of the intellectuals.

—THOMAS CRAVEN

One Last Wilderness

(continued from page 51)

"I could have a gun and shoot bears," the General said.

"Someday," Felix said, a little wearily, "somebody'll beat you two tough guys to death with a sock full-a soft mush. Go on to sleep."

"Huh!" the General said. The whispering began again.

Finally Fletcher rose. "I guess I'll turn in. I've got to pack tomorrow."

"Comin' back next year?"

"Maybe. There's still a little work I could pretend I was doing."

"You'll prob'ly have to stay at Reichert's," Felix said. "Better bring along a

soup and fish and a lot-a boiled shirts."

"I know one thing I'm going to do. I'm going to stop at the division office and see if anything can make them change their minds."

"You'll find the whole office with little buttons in their button holes, sayin' 'I am Reichert's little man.'"

Felix seemed so unnaturally troubled, so lacking in his usual boisterousness, that Fletcher was glad to get away. He went through the chilly dark to his tent, wondering if the dairyman was going to keep on in his mood of cynical defeatism. He hoped not, and he thought

not, because he could think of Felix only in terms of wilderness toughness. When he went down it ought to be with his teeth in somebody's throat. And before he went to sleep he remembered the fierce, alert eyes of the boys over the rim of their blanket, and was reassured. There was no danger of lack of spine in that family.

IX

It was afternoon before Fletcher finished striking his tent, packing his boxes, and loading the car. Felix had been around the house most of the day, puttering and thinking. When Fletcher came over after stowing away the last bundle, Felix led him off up into the draw.

"Well, I made up my mind," he said. "I'm gonna put in a stable."

"Good. As I thought it over again last night I hoped you'd see it that way."

"I'm gonna put up another corral right up here," said Felix. "And this winter I'm gonna catch me some wild horses down in the Parker Range. Henry can use the cows."

For a moment he stood looking at the ground, thinking. "And I'm gonna put up a couple of cabins. I c'n get one up before snow flies, and the other'n before the season opens next spring."

"You don't look very happy about it," Fletcher said. "Need any money?"

"No, I c'n swing her. But I don't like it. It don't bother Reichert none to spoil a whole mountain, but it bothers me. Only thing good about it is it's better'n lettin' him run me off."

"Well, good luck," said Fletcher. "I'll stay to supper, if I may. Then I'll pull down to Richland and leave in the morning from there. Anything I can do for you in town?"

"Naw. I'm takin' some more cows down tomorrow or next day. But you c'n come back here next year, anyway."

"I will," Fletcher said. "I want to."

For most of the morning, after the chores were done, Wild Bill and Custer had been off together in the woods. They appeared briefly for lunch, carried in a few armfuls of stovewood, and vanished again. Now they came down through the draw under the thin gold of the aspen, saw their father and Fletcher standing in the clearing, and with something sly and cunning in their faces and movements, shied off into the timber again.

"What's the matter with them two?" Felix asked, looking after them.

"They look as if they had daggers under their cloaks," Fletcher said.

"I'll have to watch them little

suckers." Felix grinned. "When they look like that they got some devilment in their heads."

At supper the two were still conspiratorial, saying little and sneaking knowing glances at one another. Before the others were through, Wild Bill jerked his head at Custer and the two slipped away from the table.

"Hey, where you goin'?" Felix said.

"Oh, just outside," said Wild Bill.

Five minutes later the others found them sitting disconsolately on the step. General Custer was looking up at the dark massed clouds that obscured the west. "Hell, it looks like it's gonna rain," he said.

His father cocked a weatherwise eye skyward. "Oh, not for a while. It'll take that four five hours to come to a head."

The boys perceptibly brightened. "Think so?" Wild Bill said hopefully.

"Lemme tell you something," said Felix. "In this country, in the fall, she never rains in a hurry. She builds up slow and she lasts a long time. Spring rain, now, that comes on 'fore you can reach for your slicker."

"Well, that's all right then."

"All right for what?"

"Oh, nothin'."

"Maybe I'd better get on my way," Fletcher said. "I'd like to get down that dugway before it breaks."

"You got plenty-a time," Felix said. "Sit around awhile."

They sat quietly talking for more than an hour, while the darkness from sky and land drew slowly together, until the mountain was a dense shadow above them. Only over the lake, like a pale pearly scarf, the light lay still. At last Fletcher rose to go. It was not till then that they noticed that the boys were gone.

"Now where could they be?" Felix asked suspiciously. "They had something on their minds all day."

"Last I saw them they were going down the corral," Ruby said.

"Damn it to hell," Felix said. "I bet I know. I bet they're plannin' to bust into Reichert's. I yanked the General out-a that candy case a dozen times. That's where they are. They think they'll make a cleanin' and get even with Reichert for me at the same time."

"They wouldn't steal," Fletcher said in disbelief.

"The hell they wouldn't steal. They'd steal from him, anyway. I bet you a dollar the mare's gone out-a that corral."

The three of them walked down across the oozy spring until the corral bars loomed up in the opaque near-dark. The sorrel mare was gone.



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