

suit himself and the interests of his party. If he wishes, he does not even have to accept responsibility for his actions, but can leave the Director open to attack. . . . The Minister possesses absolute power and it is scant comfort for the listeners to know that we have had "good" Ministers as well as "bad" Ministers, for no doubt their intentions were quite good. . . .

That, if it is accepted as the true condition, is to be deplored. Though a commission could make as much mischief as a politician there is perhaps much to be said for the notion that a commission should exist to protect the service.

Mr. Mackay has, then, laid down ample material for argument about broadcasting control. Perhaps someone will now write a book about programming, which is the substance of broadcasting.

## WHITE MAN'S BURDEN

**TOO LATE THE PHALAROPHE**, by Alan Paton; Jonathan Cape, English price 10/6. **RATOONS**, by Daphne Rooke; Victor Gollancz, English price 12/6.

**PIETER VAN VLAANDEREN** is a man "of great strength and great weakness" who commits the unforgivable sin of his community, where it is an iron law that no white man can touch a black woman. The sad consequences of Pieter's act of miscegenation are depicted in this second novel by the author of *Cry, the Beloved Country*, who builds a pattern of lament about his fine upstanding young South African, a lieutenant of police and a great Rugby player who might one day have been captain of the Springboks if he hadn't succumbed to his desire for a pretty Negro girl. Pieter is trapped not by his own conscience but by an envious subordinate in the police force who observes his crime and pins a note to his door: "I saw you." He is arrested and imprisoned, his wife deserts him, his father dies of grief, and his whole family is ostracised. The story is told mainly by Pieter's Aunt Sophie, in the familiar Old Testament rhythms that distinguished Alan Paton's first book. But the material is thinly stretched out, and the long passages of lament and self-recrimination become tedious.

In *Ratoons* we move across to Natal, with its polo-playing ranchers, the Lamberts, their Zulu servants, and the Indian sugarcane farmer Mr. Bannerjee. The moral problem here involves a British South African girl who has an illegitimate child by a Boer youngster, Chris Van der Westhuizen. There is a good deal of morbid violence in the story, which is set in the time of the First World War. The exuberance of Daphne Rooke's earlier novels, *A Grove of Fever Trees* and *Mittee*, is replaced by a flat disenchantment with life which may well be a true reflection of the contemporary South African scene.

—P.J.W.

## MEN AND BEASTS

**UNDER THE INFLUENCE**, by Geoffrey Kerr; Michael Joseph, English price 10/6; **A KID FOR TWO FARTHING**, by Wolf Mankowitz; Andre Deutsch, English price 7/6; **MAN AND BEAST**, by Phyllis Bottome; Faber and Faber, English price 7/6.

**UNDER THE INFLUENCE** is a high-spirited thriller. The story is carried forward in a series of shrewdly contrived first person narratives describing the central incident. Each person speaking in his own voice reveals not only his character but also his guilt. The mild young bank clerk with the embarrassing gift of reading people's thoughts after he has had a few drinks, and the rest of Mr. Kerr's genial dim types, recall a less boisterous and more subtle Wodehouse.

*A Kid for Two Farthings* is freshly written, impudent and genuinely funny.

N.Z. LISTENER, JANUARY 22, 1954.

FIVE books will be discussed in the session of ZB Book Review to be heard on January 31. They are the following (with the names of reviewers in parentheses): "The Pattern of Communist Revolution," by Hugh Seton-Watson (John Moffett); "The Deaf and Their Problems," by Kenneth W. Hodgson (Dr. H. B. Turbott); "Two Worlds for Memory," by Alfred Noyes (J. C. Reid); "Farthest South," by A. H. Reed, and "Home Territory," by Lawrence Constable (O. N. Gillespie).

Its hero is Joe, aged six, who lives in Fashion Street in the East End of London. Joe buys a unicorn which to other people looks like a small goat. But not to Joe, who knows it can grant the most urgent wishes of the people of Fashion Street. Poverty and the people's attempts to live with it are, through Joe's eyes, silhouetted against the imaginative landscape of childhood. Wolf Mankowitz is completely at home in the East End, and the illustrations by James Boswell give the story another dimension.

Miss Bottome's obvious affection for animals and admiration of their intelligence have produced five brief stories. *Man and Beast* is concerned, variously with mental affinity between individuals and a lion, tiger, horse, dog and prize bull; a romantic conception of the rapprochement that can exist between man and beast. Miss Bottome does not entirely avoid the trap that opens before those who write about animals, and sentiment becomes sentimentality.

—C.

## MAN OF ACTION

**BOLDNESS BE MY FRIEND**, by Richard Pape; Elek, English price 16/-.

**WARRANT OFFICER PAPE'S** adventures are so fantastic and come so thick and fast that one wonders for a time whether they are true or whether he is merely telling a good story. He has been wise to produce documentary proof by including amongst the illustrations photographic copies of official letters and of the citation for his M.M. which confirm his narrative. Navigator of a bomber shot down in Holland, he is helped by the Dutch underground, arrested with false papers and in civilian clothes by the Gestapo, and suspected of being both a British agent and a German traitor. (Pape is also a German name.) In Stalag VIII B, Lamsdorf, he changes identity with a New Zealander, escapes from a German coal mine into Poland, and again falls foul of the Gestapo, this time with Polish name and forged papers. After a second unsuccessful escape from a farm in Czechoslovakia, his real identity is discovered. He later feigns nephritis and is repatriated in September, 1944, exactly three years to the day after he was shot down.

This is not a gentle story nor is it subtly told. Written in a racy style that is easy to read, the book is frank, earthy and often crude, at times deliberately and unnecessarily so. Pape writes callously of killing and of trying to kill, of battering with a poker an innocent Hungarian whose wardrobe he was caught robbing, of trying to strangle an old Dutch woman, of his prowess with the knife. Is he deliberately trying to shock or has he perhaps been hardened by his experiences? He is courageous, fanatical in his determination to escape, ruthless in pursuing that end, resourceful in outwitting his guards and defying the Gestapo; in emergency, a man of action who thinks with his fists and feet and risks the consequences.

—W.A.G.

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