

the gamut through Alcohol (a rather dull little article; there is much more to be said), Betwottled (a wonderful word for "bewildered"), Cocky (he doesn't know enough about Australia and New Zealand to do this one justice), Daddocky (full marks here), Glout (a beauty!), Peripilocution ("Talking through one's hat"), and that magnificent specimen of gobbledygook, Post-Mortemization (what the coroner does). It is a haphazard collection, but none the worse for that. How many of us have come across a new word in the dictionary only because it was at the top or the bottom of the page or one up or one down from the word we were really looking for? Word-hunting is a good game and the trophies are at least as impressive as stuffed fish or mounted elephant's tusks. You can do it at home, too, which is an advantage if the weather is too poor for peripatetic entomologizing.

—I.A.G.

CLIMAX AND ANTI-CLIMAX

THE DEVIL THAT FAILED, by Maurice Samuel; Victor Gollancz, English price 12/6. **THIRD PARTY RISK**, by Nicolas Bentley; Michael Joseph, English price 10/6. **A KNIFE FOR THE JUGGLER**, by Manning Coles; Hodder and Stoughton, English price 10/6. **CHRISTMAS AT CANDLESHEOE**, by Michael Innes; Victor Gollancz, English price 10/6. **THE BARON IN FRANCE**, by Anthony Morton; Hodder and Stoughton, English price 7/3.

EASILY first in this list, and of high rank in any company, is Maurice Samuel's story of a happily circumstanced American who wakes up in a mysterious sanatorium to find himself a physical giant, as if from *Gulliver's Travels*, in relation to his human and inanimate surroundings. Kept a close prisoner, allowed no contact with the outside world, and treated in all respects as a giant patient by doctor and nurses, he suffers agonies of mind in submitting to the regime, and trying to solve the mystery of his metamorphosis. Scientific imagination and detection are mingled with great skill. The patient has to do the detection single-handed, and his struggles and ultimate success will keep the reader in a state of taut suspense. A most ingenious idea, very well worked out.

I have met many an innocent character in thrillers and "detectives" who behaved most foolishly in holding back information from the police, but I doubt if among them there was such an ass as the hero of Nicolas Bentley's *Third Party Risk*. By not going to the police when he found the corpse, he involved himself in a horrid chain of dangerous sleuthing. It is certainly an exciting story, laid in England and France, but the revelation of what all the plotting and killing has been about is an anticlimax so disturbing as to shake the

PROFESSOR J. C. GARRETT (below) will review "Personal Remarks," by L. A. G. Strong, in ZB Book Review on March 7.

The other books to be reviewed in the same session are: "Madame Colette," by Margaret Crosland (John Reece Cole); "Boswell on the Grand Tour," edited by F. A. Pottle (R. M. Burdon); and "Llewelyn Powys," by Malcolm Elwin, and "Black Laughter," by Llewelyn Powys (Anton Vogt). The chairman will be Professor L. G. Pocock, of Christchurch.



whole edifice of the book. The plot does not do justice to Nicolas Bentley's talents.

I might say the same of *A Knife for the Juggler*, the 16th adventure of the secret service agent Tommy Hambleton. Manning Coles, I feel, is rather tired. I cannot swallow the idea of an elaborate organisation to kidnap Communists, but there is the usual rush of adventure, and Tommy's assistants, Campbell and Foragn, are always worth meeting.

To adapt an American crack, the latest story by that accomplished artist in intellectual sleuthing, Michael Innes, *Christmas at Candleshoe*, suffers from fallen archness. The tale is laid in two neighbouring English country homes, one a show place whose noble owner is glad of the half-crowns, and the other a decaying relic inhabited by two eccentrics who live in the past attended by a troop of impossible children, ready to repel strangers with arrows. Into this madhouse are projected an American student and his mother. The crime consists of the faking and theft of two Old Masters. The oddest things happen, but the trouble is they are oddly dull. Michael Innes has pulled out every stop in the organ of his exceptional erudition, and at the same time has been determined to make every line bright. The effect is rather suffocating.

The ignorance of critics! Anthony Morton has written 29 books about "The Baron," and they have been translated into several languages and broadcast; yet I never heard of either until I handled the latest, *The Baron in France*. This Raffles-Robin Hood turned art dealer, with detection as a side-line, has the conventional dash, charm, courage and resource, and his rescue of a friend condemned to death for murder is fast and varied. I should place him a little higher than that other new acquaintance "The Toff," but that may be because he has a beautiful wife. I am getting rather tired of bachelor detectives.

—A.M.

GOOD FIRST NOVEL

THE SECOND HAPPIEST DAY, by John Phillips; Michael Joseph, English price 12/6.

THIS first novel is a long panning shot of American upper and middle class youth. It follows the lives of its principal characters through an expensive public school to Harvard and war service and back to New York. The conventions of the new aristocracy of wealth, the codes and rituals of its youth are highlighted with wit and irony.

The writing is fresh, sensitive and remarkably visual. It evokes the familiar legends of American magazine advertisements: the smiling girls grouped about the latest car from the assembly lines at General Motors, the confident male in a Brooks Brothers' shirt, or the healthy tanned face that goes with a cashmere sweater and tennis racket.

Inevitably the publisher compares the author with Scott Fitzgerald. But although Mr. Phillips has, seemingly, in his first attempt mastered the novelist's trade, he lacks the depth of feeling and the tragic sense of Scott Fitzgerald.

—J.R.C.

SLEIGH AND CANOE

THE WIND AND THE CARIBOU, by Erik Munsterhjelm; Allen and Unwin, English price 12/6.

MOST of us like books about other countries. This one describes long journeys by sleigh and canoe through the

(continued on next page)



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