

BOOKS

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can say, "To whatever evil, we will oppose only good." His book is a spiritual document of unusual value.

—P.J.W.

OVERFLOWING VIOLENCE

DEAD MEN FALLING, by Desmond Cory; Frederick Muller, English price 9/6. **THE LONG LOUD SILENCE**, by Wilson Tucker; Bodley Head, English price 8/6. **THIS WAY FOR A SHROUD**, by James Hadley Chase; Robert Hale, English price 10/6.

THERE is more violence in these three books than in any I have ever bracketed. In Desmond Cory's last thriller I did not like the ethics of his British secret service agent in holding back knowledge of a Nazi treasure. In *Dead Men Falling*, Johnny Fedora, tracking down this treasure for himself, is led through a maze of mystery and killing to a cache in the Austrian Alps, where the chase ends in hair-raising mountain climbing. An exciting tale, but too steely for my liking.

In imaginative force and literary quality, *The Long Loud Silence* is far the best of the three. After a drunken sleep, an American soldier finds himself on the eastern side of the Mississippi, separated from his unit, and in a world mortally struck by bombing with explosives and pestilence. The whole eastern half of the United States is sealed off from the rest of the nation, and anyone attempting to pass the barrier is shot. With all corporate life destroyed, the

stricken half reverts to the law of the jungle. When, through guile and killing, this man succeeds in crossing to the other side, he discovers, that though immune himself, he is a carrier of pestilence, and has to return. The story of his adventures and the collapse of a civilised society into a condition more primitive than that of cave-men, is powerfully told; but the abandonment of one half of the Union by the other is quite incredible.

In *This Way for a Shroud*, there is no war catastrophe to excuse the hideous evil. I am again sickened by James Hadley Chase's killings, and in the ending there is a new kind of shock. The nausea begins in the first chapter with six murders and the horrible mutilation of one of the victims—the opening of a war between authority and a gangster who, with California assigned him as territory, murders for safety with as little compunction as a man killing a rabbit. Regarding himself as safe through the removal of essential witnesses, this head gangster gives a jaunty interview to the press and appears in television, only to be killed by a superior gangster, who takes over the business, including the dead man's wife. What may be the effect of this mixture of murder and lust on foreigners as a picture of life in America?

—A.M.

IRISH GIFT

THE STORIES OF FRANK O'CONNOR; Hamish Hamilton, English price 12/6.

THIS volume, which includes material never previously published, is a selection from an immense number of Mr.

O'Connor's stories. But it is a little difficult to agree with the author's reasons for excluding stories from an early collection entitled *Guests of the Nation*: the title-story, a tale of the Irish rebellion during World War I, appears to be one of the finest stories written in English this century, and nothing like such a claim could be made for the greater part of the material included in the present volume. That is not however to deny the lively and entertaining quality of almost any story written by Mr. O'Connor. In this collection he rarely goes beyond the city of Cork and its county for his raw material, and is rarely if ever lacking in the racy fluency which one expects from Irish writers. Perhaps this Irish gift is not an unmixed blessing, since there are times when one feels that language is being whipped to a froth of very little substance. Nevertheless, one can, and I think should, be grateful to Mr. O'Connor for a number of stories that are remarkable for their insight and humanity. And incidentally, besides pleasing the New Zealand reader the book should encourage the New Zealand writer: the author confidently handles a variety of provincial material, which only an unobservant or insensitive New Zealander would consider remote and unfamiliar.

—F.S.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THE latest issue in the New Oxford University Press illustrated Dickens series is *Little Dorrit*, with introduction

by Lionel Trilling; English price 12/6. The plates, as in other volumes, have been remade from the Phiz originals and the drawings are restored for present-day readers who had hitherto known the famous illustrations only as reproductions from well-worn blocks.

HAZELWOOD, by Norah Burke; Hodder and Stoughton; English price 10/6. Another story of a stately home of England, modern version, with the Duke washing up in the butler's pantry, the Duchess in the kitchen, and the family touched in the end with a sunset glory.

IT'S TOO CAN PROSPER, by Graham Hutton; Allen and Unwin, English price 12/-. A survey of current problems, leading to the argument that "nations live as they deserve," and explaining how economic crises can be overcome if British people set their minds to the task.

THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT, photographed by Hans Wild, with an introduction by James Pope-Hennessy; B. T. Batsford Ltd., English price 16/-. At a time when photographic studies are very numerous, this stands out as a beautifully-produced book. The letterpress is fully equal to the interest and dignity of the subject.

THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS, by Tom Driberg; Phoenix House, through A. H. and A. W. Reed, N.Z. price 15/-. The personal diary of a backbencher with a flair for the more controversial side of English politics.

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