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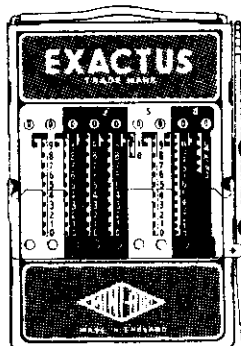
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BOOKS

(continued from previous page)

the skill with which the community involved is depicted. I finished *Which Doctor* befogged by the hunting for the criminal, but grateful for the introduction to life in a hospital for children in the Midlands. Edward Candy, who I conclude is either a doctor or a research worker in that field, has exceptional insight and wit, and his gallery of doctors might well make a theme for a B.M.A. evening. A diversity of characters mingle and clash, and dangers threatening institutional medicine are alarmingly indicated. The masterpiece is the professor head of the establishment, an appallingly dry narrow type, in whom the natural process of desiccation has been hastened by specialisation.

I did not particularly care who murdered the rather likeable English business tycoon in Marjorie Bremner's *Murder Most Familiar*, but I did enjoy the delineation of the dominated family circle, with its variety of character and politics. That Marjorie Bremner is an American graduate who has studied and worked in London may account for the freshness of her approach to these family jars and the British political set-up. She has a good eye for character and writes sensitively.

Silence After Dinner strengthens my feeling that Clifford Witting is not fulfilling the promise of his first books. The basic idea, of an Englishman in present-day China obtaining freedom at the price of desertion of his friends and murder, is original, but the working out of the story in England is fantastic in action, out of tune in character-drawing, and uninterestingly conventional in style.

The descent is steeper in one of the two American stories, *So Young to Die*, by Gregory Tree, who made a splash with *The Case Against Myself* and *A Shroud for Grandmama*. A schoolboy and a schoolgirl have an affair; there is argument about pregnancy; she tries to seduce a young doctor; and she is murdered. I doubt if I have ever read a duller tale of duller folk. *The Passionate Victims*, by Lange Lewis, a story of Los Angeles, in which another teenager is killed, is similarly uninviting. However, a woman detective gives a dash of colour to it, and a professor investigator who talks refreshingly and wittily about psychology, in which he has left the Freudian track, does most to pull the thing out of the doldrums.

—A.M.

THE DOG'S WORLD

THREE'S COMPANY, by Hans Bentz, translated by Marjorie Deans; Victor Gollancz, English price 12/6.

A DOG AT ALL THINGS, an Anthology, by Agnes Lauchlan; Jonathan Cape, English price 10/6.

THIS is a book by a sentimental German about three dogs—a spaniel, a wire-haired terrier, and a mongrel—and the household that belonged to them. According to Brian Vesey-Fitzgerald's introduction, the book tells a great deal about "the animals themselves, their senses, their thoughts, their desires, the world (the dog world) they live in." That may be so; anyway, the book is the sort that will be appreciated by people who carry pet dogs in their arms or cars (and, in London, let them befool the pavement), and who talk to them and of them, as Mr. Bentz does, as if they were their children.

Miss Lauchlan's collection, industriously gathered from sources ancient and modern, from Homer to O. Henry,

will be a precious bedside book for the dog-lover. The title is a quotation from Shakespeare.

—L.J.W.

HEART OF LONDON

LONDON GENERAL, by Frederick Willis; Phoenix House, through A. H. and A. W. Reed, English price 18/-. .

THESE Edwardian reminiscences of a Cockney hatter strike me as a rather better than what went before—101 Jubilee Road and *Peace and Dripping Toast*—which is saying a good deal. The book shows the same astonishing eye for the varied aspects of life which Mr. Willis's avid mind and warm heart explored; the same Dickensian flavour of London; the same love of packed humanity, including the little side-street pub, where you got "intelligent conversation, honest laughter and good fellowship," and no one tried to organise anything. Here, however, the canvas is wider and the painting more mature. One meets a greater variety of people, from peers to barmaids.

Like the other volumes, this book is social history and can be especially recommended to those who love London. This London was receiving the first instalments of the Welfare State, which were to make the spectre of old age less grim and lessen the ever-present fear that fierce competition might at any moment drop you in the gutter with nothing to break the fall. Yet it was an age of confidence and irrepressible good humour, of cheerfulness and charity. One reason why Frederick Willis is worth reading is that he shows how easy it is to get enjoyment out of what lies to hand. He knows a great deal about life, but retains the heart of a child.

—M.

NUREMBERG TRIAL

THE SWORD IN THE SCALES, by Hans Fritzsche; Allan Wingate, English price 15/-. .

HANS FRITZSCHE died shortly before publication of this book. He was the third man in Goebbels's propaganda team, and it so happened that it fell to him as the Senior Nazi official to surrender Berlin to the Russians. He was produced by them to be tried at Nuremberg and was there acquitted. He may therefore be accounted fortunate in having to stand his trial, for most prisoners taken by the Russians have not since emerged. This is an account of the Nuremberg Trial through the eyes of an interested participant. The point that the conqueror is not the most impartial judge of the conquered is well taken. But after all, Herr Fritzsche himself was acquitted. It is interesting and readable.

—F. J. Foot

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ELIZABETH CROWNED QUEEN, Odhams Press, through Whitcombe and Tombs, N.Z. price 15/9. A pictorial record of the Coronation.

PERSONAL LIBRARY, by Lionel McColvin; Phoenix House, through A. H. and A. W. Reed, N.Z. price 12/-. The Chief Librarian of the Westminster Public Libraries gives lists of what he believes to be the best books in their different fields, and adds some valuable advice to private collectors.

THE SIKHS, Khushwant Singh; Allen and Unwin, English price 16/-. A full history of the Sikhs, beginning with the founding of their religious movement in the 15th Century, and ending with a prediction that by the end of the present century "Sikh religion will have become a branch of Hinduism and the Sikhs a part of the Hindu social system."

N.Z. LISTENER, APRIL 15, 1954.