

I have seen frequently in 70 years, and how many had vanished before I was born, my confidence is not as strong as it perhaps ought to be.

It may be worth repeating a note on the back of the dust-jacket that "Morus" is the pen-name of Richard Lewinsohn, a Doctor of Medicine and Political Science of the University of Berlin, who is now Head of the Institute of Technical Research at Rio de Janeiro.

WITH CAPTAIN COOK

A VOYAGE AROUND THE WORLD, by Anders Sparrman; Robert Hale, English price 21/-.

CAPTAIN JAMES COOK was our greatest navigator and was, of course, the father of Australia and New Zealand. This reprint of a first-hand account of his second voyage is therefore of interest. It was published in Swedish as a kind of popular account many years after the voyage, but was not rendered into any of the major languages till recently.

The Admiralty failed to secure the services of Sir Joseph Banks as naturalist for the second voyage and the Forsters were a poor second choice; "were pitched upon," Cook says. The Forsters, perhaps conscious of their own deficiencies, prevailed on Cook to allow them to bring the Swede Anders Sparrman at their own expense. Cook seems to have been reluctant to agree. Also he fails to mention Sparrman for almost the whole first year of the voyage, and then only to censure him under the name of Spearman. Cook probably thought him rather a fool, but did not underline it except in case of necessity. For his part Sparrman (like the Forsters in their narration) criticises the captain and the officers and bewails the malevolence of his shipmates. Posterity, however, has preferred the evidence of Captain Cook.

In spite of the fact that Sparrman adds little to the account in Cook's Journal there are here and there details of native customs elsewhere unobtainable, and some of the reports of what the sailors got up to in the islands are in rather more detail than Cook allowed himself.

—F. J. Foot

THE UNLIFTED CURTAIN

SOVIET POLICY IN THE FAR EAST, 1944-1951, by Max Beloff; Oxford University Press, English price 21/-.

A SHORT assessment of this book would be that it gets the reader nowhere. With all the resources of the Chatham House library of press clippings, Mr. Beloff has shown that he can't find enough precise facts about Soviet policy in the Far East to draw any conclusions, and he says as much. In a world where propaganda demands

HISTORY and travel are the main themes for ZB Book Review on June 6, and the list of books for discussion (it may be slightly amended before the broadcast) is as follows: "The Hoover Memoirs," Volume III, by Herbert Hoover (reviewed by Dr. W. B. Sutcliffe); "The Road to Shalimar," by Carverth Wells (Joyce Martin); "The Long Ships," by Franz Bengtsson (Jim Henderson); and "Oxford, the First Hundred Years," by O. A. Gillespie (H. C. D. Somerset).



N.P.S. photo
Joyce Martin

that we be right and they be wrong, we can be thankful that a suspended judgment is prescribed.

The difficulty is that Mr. Beloff doesn't stop at that. Three or four years ago he wrote a paper on the subject, and his friends unfortunately advised him to expand it into a book. Accordingly he puts in his references to newspapers and other secondary sources (some very questionable), weaves a discussion round the events reported, shows by his attitude what he thinks is the case, sometimes makes direct statements which, though untrue, are generally acceptable to an uncritical audience, and then says that what precisely happened "remains obscure."

His discussion on Korea is poor. Mr. Beloff obviously knows little about the United Nations and even less about the documents which show authoritatively the UN background on Korea. One doesn't expect Mr. Beloff to be detached—to have a sense of humour or to be a brilliant political scientist, but he has a reputation for plodding through the detail. In this case, however, he simply hasn't done the work necessary for a serious book. Mr. Beloff is allowed his pot-boiler, but it is a chastening thought that the promoters of the book feel it will boil pots.

—W.B.S.

THE SPICE OF VARIETY

THE BLOSSOMING TREE, by Betty Askwith; Victor Gollancz, English price 10/6. FLAMING JANET, by Pamela Hill; Chatto and Windus, English price 12/6. DEVICES AND DESIRES, by E. Arnot Robertson; Jonathan Cape, English price 10/6. A BED OF ROSES, by William Sansom; the Hogarth Press, English price 12/6.

THE BLOSSOMING TREE, by Betty Askwith, is easily the most readable of these four: and that in spite of a certain luke-warmness, a lack of enthusiasm, which would kill a more pretentious work. It will appeal to all who like a quiet story of the English Upper Classes in the late Edwardian days. The heroine, Catherine Dysart, suffers a brief infatuation for an Irish vet—sustains his loss with stoicism—marries a titled neighbour—and is happy enough in a blue-blooded way until she meets an emigré Frenchman and really falls in love. That is all the story: like a cold evening meal, it has its charms as well as its mild disappointments.

No one could compare Pamela Hill's *Flaming Janet* with a cold meal—rather, it is a hot posset to be swallowed down gratefully on a winter's evening. Janet Kennedy came from the Lowlands of Scotland in the 15th Century to bewitch many men, among them the sensitive and enigmatic James IV of Scotland. Hers is a lusty tale, told here with *bravura* and a fair amount of taste. But it suffers the disability of all except the greatest historical novels: each character seems to have such a conscious eye on posterity, is so determined to be picturesque, that the reader suffers his surfeit of lampreys early. "Oh, for a spot of placid, human, credible dullness!" was the sigh of this reader, when *Flaming Janet* had seared her way through 251 excited pages and come to rest in a glossary.

E. Arnot Robertson's *Devices and Desires* is, on the other hand, so muted as to be equally incredible. A constant nymph, orphaned on the first page, strays thereafter through war-ravaged south-eastern Europe possessed by two urges: to get her band of refugees safely to their havens, and to find matrimonial security for herself. Her adventures,

(continued on next page)

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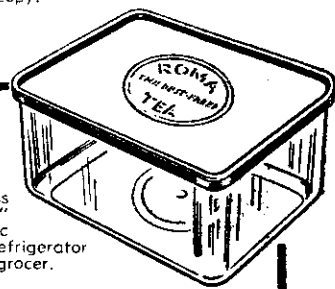


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