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FROM JEWELLERS EVERYWHERE

BOOKS

(continued from previous page)

be Leap Year. Women indeed can do all that men can do and bear children too.

The book is highly "scientific" and full of informative tidbits that are of unfailing interest to a layman—or ought I to say laywoman? As a man I hide my head from the Langstaff brickbats (all distressingly well-aimed) and can come up only with the feeble riposte, "Ya! Envy of the male!" It is a disappointment to me personally that the learned author is preoccupied with sex as mechanism and sex as grievance, and does not examine sex as comedy—which provides the overwhelming proportion of novels with their *raison d'être*. The age-old problem of why John loves Myrtle and sees nothing in Marian, who loves him, while Myrtle loves Edgar, who flings himself at the feet of Barbara, who loves only Ernest—and so on, ad infinitum. And yet, in spite of all this (and of Josephine Langstaff) happy marriages do occasionally occur.

—David Hall

EXCITEMENT SHELF

THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY, by Helen McCloy; Victor Gollancz, English price 9 6. *BROUGHT TO LIGHT*, by E. R. Punshon; Victor Gollancz, English price 10 6. *BEWARE OF THE DOG*, by John Varnam; Hodder and Stoughton, English price 10 6. *THE MAN FROM THE TURKISH SLAVE*, by Victor Canning; Hodder and Stoughton, English price 10 6. *LIVE AND LET DIE*, by Ian Fleming; Jonathan Cape, English price 10 6.

HELEN MCCLOY'S first two books led us to expect much. For two reasons there will be some disappointment with the third, *The One That Got Away*, a tale of a visit by a young American intelligence officer to the deep, Scottish Highlands. There is too much psychiatric talk, and the explanation of the tense mystery is quite incredible. On the other hand, the writing is the best Miss McCloy has done. In the move from the sophisticated city life of America to the lonely history-haunted glens and moors of Scotland, her style has gained in strength and beauty. Her evocation of scene stirs mind and heart, and most of her characters, from peer to peasant, are impressive.

In a fit of remorse, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, painter and poet, buried the manuscript of his poems in his wife's coffin, but some years later recovered them for publication. Does a fictional grave in a remote country churchyard in England hold a similar treasure; and, if so, should it be opened? These questions spin the plot of *Brought to Life*, another appearance for Scotland Yard's Bobby Owen. Two murder mysteries have to be solved, an unusual by-product of poetry. This is E. R. Punshon at about his best.

The murdered man in *Beware of the Dog*—a particularly nasty piece of moral corruption—has as many visitors in the fatal past-midnight hour as a business executive. I find this, and the dénouement involving one of the pleasantest characters, hard to swallow, but John Varnam's is a lively, well-written story above the average. And, as a dog-lover, I must not forget the retriever.

To be thrown overboard in the wide Atlantic at the beginning of a story cannot be fatal to its hero. This one, who was serving in the ship to uncover a smuggling gang, reaches a Brazilian island which proves to be a link in the chain, and finds life on land equally hazardous, with romance, however, for

compensation. I would rank *The Man from the Turkish Slave* rather below others of Victor Canning's I have read, but the picture of simple life in this remote spot, ruled by an agreeable Brazilian eccentric from Oxford and the Sorbonne, is well done.

West Indian buried treasure gives the impulse to *Live and Let Die*: English secret service agent plus F.B.I. pitted against a monstrous Negro Napoleon of crime in Harlem; stupid recklessness of Englishman; beautiful victim for him to love; killings, and sadism which culminates in towing live victims through shark and barracuda infested waters; and for background, bestialities of Voodoo worship. Exciting, yes, but—"Is your journey necessary?" Ian Fleming writes too well to spend himself on such stuff.

—A.M.

THE PLUTOCRATS

THE AGE OF THE MOGULS, by Stewart H. Holbrook; Victor Gollancz, English price 16 6.

THE story of America's multi-millionaires is not altogether edifying. The golden age for making vast fortunes lasted, roughly speaking, from the end of the Civil War until 1877, by which time the enormities perpetrated by the fortune hunters had caused certain restrictions to be placed on their activities. Since then the restrictions have gradually been made more severe until "under present day rules, almost every man in this book would face a good hundred years in prison."

While exploiting a virgin continent, and enjoying opportunity for enrichment without parallel in the world's history, they swindled both the general public and each other with complete disregard for ethical principles. Surprisingly enough, one or two of them earned widespread popularity as public benefactors and several made lavish gifts to charity. These, however, were exceptional, at least among the earlier "Moguls." Daniel Drew, for instance, was a psalm-singing drunkard who was not interested in railways as a transportation system, but merely as "property to be manipulated for his own profit." Jay Gould tried to corrupt President Grant through the medium of his brother-in-law so that he might more easily corner the American gold market. In more modern times W. R. Hearst, whose newspapers made a studied "appeal to the fundamental emotions of sex, love, hate and gain, laced with carefully-regulated doses of pity running with tears," was not above faking news whenever it suited him to do so.

In a final chapter Mr. Holbrook describes the lavish vulgarity with which the plutocrats spent their money. No luxury was beyond their reach, but is it not morally instructive to learn that in spite of colossal sums spent on specialists, J. P. Morgan never succeeded in discovering one among them who could cure, or even reduce, the fiery redness of his nose?

—R. M. Burdon

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CARAVAN to XANADU, by Edison Marshall; Shakespeare Head Press, Australian price 15/6. A story of Marco Polo, written with gusto.

A MATTER OF MINUTES, by Patrick Howarth; Allan Wingate, N.Z. price 8/6. A cautionary tale of the welfare state, told in a series of minutes, memoranda, official letters, and so on. Straight narrative would have been better.

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