

books of Korea. But there was something solid and familiar in the valour of the Gloucesters, whose 800 men in April, 1951, held their hilltop positions near the Imjin River on the road to Seoul for three days before being encircled and swamped by thousands of Chinese. For this action the Gloucesters' colonel won the V.C. and their adjutant, the author, the D.S.O.

While the truce negotiators bickered over details for more than two years, the Gloucesters' survivors in their prison camps resisted their captors' constant efforts to corrupt them by political indoctrination, and fought a losing battle to keep alive. Their colonel spent nineteen months in solitary confinement in underground bunkers and bare concrete cells, and dismissed it all on repatriation with the concise comment: "The food was rotten, and I was damned bored!" The adjutant was a more than usually troublesome prisoner: he escaped five times, survived the brutal interrogations and torture in harsh, civilian prisons that followed recapture, made two more attempts that went wrong at the last minute, and was again arrested and interrogated. In this hard school the author learnt to understand the complex Chinese mind and the devious reasoning of Communist politics. His impressions are sharp and he writes well.

—W.A.G.

DIAL 999

SCOTLAND YARD, by Sir Harold Scott, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, 1945-53; Andre Deutsch, English price 16/-.

THE pull of the words Scotland Yard is strengthened here by the authority of the author. When the Home Secretary, Mr. Herbert Morrison, decided in the last year of the war that in the public interest the military tradition in the choice of Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police should be departed from, he picked Sir Harold Scott from Aircraft Production. This book is a record of Sir Harold's term of office, and an account of every department in his command. After the war, the police had to face an increase in crime with a force well below strength. Recruiting was its gravest trouble, and, with so many other openings for young men, it seems to be so still. The man "ounding the beat" remains the foundation of a service that grows ever more complex.

Sir Harold tells us what he did to improve the policeman's lot, and takes us right through the organisation, from petty crime to homicide, from traffic control to finger-prints and the forensic laboratory, from gaming houses to the protection of Marshal Tito. Even the training of police horses and dogs is covered. From the chapter on women police, we learn that these are now completely accepted by the once suspicious men.

Every year the equipment of the police grows more formidable. Today's burglar is liable to be surprised on the job by police who have been called to the scene by an automatic alarm device that rings 999 and announces the address and the burglar's presence. In 1948 an attempt to steal bullion from an airport store was thwarted through "information received," and the whole gang caught, but a few weeks ago another attempt succeeded. In the 1948 case, as in other foillings, policemen acted as decoys, a service which, since there is a risk of savage assault, calls for cold courage. Crime cases of many kinds are cited, including some that have hit the world's headlines.

The principle laid down at the foundation of the modern force that the policeman is the friend, not the enemy,

of the people, is carefully maintained, and dramatic examples are given here of the citizen's co-operation. This is an attractive and encouraging book.

—A.M.

EXOTIC LANDSCAPES

THE BATHS OF ABSALOM, by James Pope-Hennessy; Allan Wingate, English price 15/-.

MARTINIQUE, Trinidad, Dominica, Barbados—these names have for most people old and obscure associations of piracy, slave-trading, wrongs criminally inflicted and criminally avenged. Mr. Pope-Hennessy describes his book as an "extended footnote to the work of that great writer, James Anthony Froude," the author of *English in the West Indies*. He is perhaps too modest. His own sensitive, unprejudiced eye lacks the special focus of the historian and sociologist. But he has obviously an affinity with the squalidly exotic landscapes he has passed through and the deeply passive genius of the transplanted Africans. For the French administration of Martinique, its order and efficiency, he has several good words to say; his view of British administration is less sanguine: "... the ragged clothes spread out to dry by washerwomen on the shores of the Roseau River, which daily and publicly proclaim the inexcusable poverty in which the working people of Dominica are maintained."

The condemnation is sharpened by its sharp concrete reference. Mr. Pope-Hennessy is a tourist, with a difference. His grandfather, as a benevolent Governor of Barbados, abolished flogging in the eighteen-seventies, thus arousing the bitter enmity of the white planters; and he himself in 1938 was private secretary to the Governor of Trinidad and Tobago. Thus he is linked to the West Indies by birth and occupation. But there is a closer spiritual link of attraction and repulsion to the haunted luxuries of these islands, their juxtaposition of death and fertility. He defines this bond in a balanced and lucid prose, which becomes at times prose-poetry: "All down the coast the sand was black and ashly soft unlike the tumbled stone beaches of Dominica... huge nets were stretched along the beach on poles, as though someone were trying to fence in the land or fence out the sea." One would like to see more of the world through the eyes of this author.

—James K. Baxter

POUNDS AND DOLLARS

THE FUTURE OF STERLING, by A. C. L. Day; Oxford University Press, English price 12/-.

IF ever there was a timely book in economics, this is it. Should countries outside the sterling area be permitted without limit to change their British pounds into dollars? The author, who is one of the British experts on the subject, concludes that they should not. His argument is that if the world is to continue to be short of dollars, then there is no point in letting other countries drain away the dollars of the sterling area—that is, a system of convertibility under these circumstances would be impossible. If, on the other hand, it might prove, by some curious chance, that dollars should become plentiful, then "the centre of gravity of the world financial system would move to New York," and the importance of sterling as an international currency would be reduced.

Day argues that Britain's economy will be severely damaged if Britain takes on too large a part of the world's burden of trying to make a workable and unified international monetary system. His

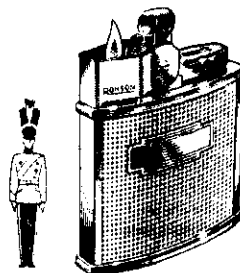
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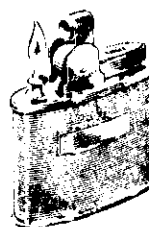
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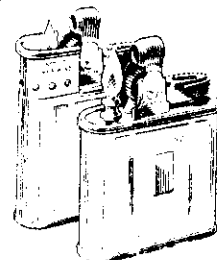
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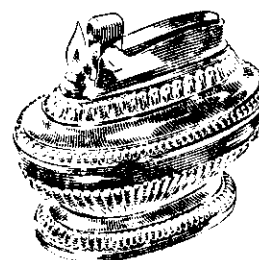
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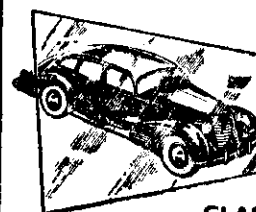
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