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BOOKS

(continued from previous page)

Lenin and the Bolsheviks and blurring other individuals and groups. Professor Treadgold must be congratulated for allowing this distortion to influence merely the title, and not the text, of his valuable study of the emerging political parties of Russia in the years 1898-1906.

Valuable—to whom? To the student of Russian history, certainly; but the work deserves, I think, a wider public. Professor Treadgold's achievement is to have identified himself in turn with the main party leaders—Chernov, Lenin, Martov, Miliukov—seeing through their eyes the rapidly changing course of events, interpreting those events in terms of their particular ideologies, and devising from those interpretations tactics appropriate to the present and to the anticipated future. The general historian and the political scientist will find here valuable material on the relation of ideology to political practice. The sociologist may treat the work as a case study in the unintended consequences of social action. And the general reader who is willing first to acquire some background knowledge of the period (for the book demands this) will find himself in a different and fascinating world, in which parties are run by intellectuals and policies derived from sociological analyses.

In his conclusion, Professor Treadgold tries to explain why the revolution of 1905 failed. The opposition groups were too rationalistic, insufficiently empirical; they did not grasp what the peasant masses really wanted; and the Centre mistakenly sought a Popular Front with the Leninist Left. These inferences are debatable; but it is not the least of his merits that the author provides sufficient material to enable one to debate his conclusions. —R.H.B.

THREE KINDS OF FICTION

THE STORY-TELLER, by Gil Buhet; *OCCASION OF GLORY*, by Arthur Calder-Marshall; *AUTUMN TERM*, by Joan Whitty: all published by Jonathan Cape at 13/6 English price.

THE publishers are as consistent in quality as in price, but the three authors quite remarkable in their differences. *The Story-Teller* is French, slick, sophisticated; *Occasion for Glory*, set in Mexico, passionate and arresting; *Autumn Term* mellowly English.

The Story-Teller begins powerfully, with a mysterious manuscript, by a mysterious woman, sent to a corrupt agency in Lyons, at the end of World War II. Her style is modelled on Gide; but the "I" person, the manager of the agency, can't keep it up, or sustain the atmosphere of the "book-within-the-book." He is, perhaps, too clever. The emotional somersaults necessary to produce a good detective novel ruin the novel as such; and by the time the mystery is solved it has evaporated. Yet there remains the certainty that Gil Buhet can do better; and that the first half of this book, published as an unfinished manuscript by an anonymous author, would set literary tongues wagging. Here there is fine, peculiarly French sophistication, allied to flawless characterisation. . . But, no, the rest won't do. The end undoes the beginning.

Occasion of Glory is better sustained; and if there is a flaw here it is of a different kind, to be subjectively determined. An allegory on the Crucifixion, it has as its hero a patriot loving his land. Against a mock-pageant of Easter he moves to certain death, with the inevitability of classic tragedy. But he is

also in love: with a woman as highly idealised as himself, in a union reminiscent of (but more powerful than) Kipling's "The Brushwood Boy." Here, perhaps, credulity is strained too far; but this is a matter for subjective judgment. It is fashionable to minimise romantic love; to denigrate the senses; and to dismiss ecstasy as adolescent. It is perhaps only because I do not share these notions that I still admire Hemingway's early novels; and, for much the same reasons, I consider *Occasion of Glory* better even than *Fiesta*.

Autumn Term, by way of contrast, is written in a minor key. The elderly widow of the owner of a preparatory school tries to break her contract with it; but she cannot escape the entanglements that come from responsibility, especially towards a young delinquent who suffers from the change in management. She does not want to "interfere," but she does; and it is clear that she will never break away to easy retirement. Joan Whitty is gentle, urbane, mature, kindly but unsentimental; and she has a wealth of sound, but untext-bookish knowledge of small boys at boarding school. Hearts break so easily away from home. Read this book before you send your youngster off.

—Anton Vogt

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

BYRON IN ITALY, by Peter Quennell; Penguin Books, New Zealand price 3/3. A companion volume to *Byron: The Years of Fame* (also in Penguins), this is an important study of Byron in exile and of the Romantic movement and its influence.

GULLIVER'S TRAVELS, by Jonathan Cape, Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, English price 12/6. A new edition for children, based on the definitive Nonesuch text of 1934, and superbly produced.

THE SINGING FOREST, by H. Mortimer Batten; William Blackwood and Sons, English price 12/6. The life of a Highland red deer, told attractively by a naturalist who can write for adults and children.

BERNARD SPILSBURY, by Douglas G. Browne and E. V. Tullett; Penguin Books, N.Z. price 4/6. A new edition of a full-length biography of the pathologist who has been described as the first of the medical detectives.

RUSSIAN FRENZY, by W. E. R. Piddington; Elek Books, N.Z. price 16/-. The dramatic and revealing story of an Englishman who for four years was a prisoner in Soviet Russia.

Parking Metres

WINTER HANDICAP, SCRATCHINGS

WHEN we two parted
Last year in the spring,
I felt just as free
As a bird on the wing.
I said to myself
"You can do as you please,"
And spent the whole summer
In comfort and ease.

But autumn or winter
I can't be sure which,
Brings on a return
Of that once-a-year itch.
The skin of my back
Is my heel of Achilles—
My dear winter woollies,
You give me the willies.

—R.G.P.