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BOOKS

(continued from previous page)

solution in the past, and thereby explains the title. "The long body" is an Eastern philosophical conception of a man's being; he should be judged, not by what he is at any given moment, but by his whole life. Here a youthful escapade leads to several deaths forty years later.

On the other hand, Jean Potts's second story is rather a sad falling off from the sprightly and beautifully titled *Go, Lovely Rose*. Not that *Death of a Stray Cat* is unexciting or badly written, but that plot and characters are relatively dull. The victim is a pathetic trollop with four bedfellows besides a worthless husband, which even in these

days seems slightly excessive. The idea is that some men fall for this type as people do for stray cats. Perhaps so, but I couldn't work up much interest in which of the five killed this stray human.

The disappointment is even deeper with *The Last Enemy*, by Barton Roueche, who did so well in the real life *Annals of Medical Detection*. A professional criminal accidentally kills a domestic servant, whose lover he is, and disappears, feeling he is safe. One naturally expects a chase; but he fades out, and we are treated to a long and boring study of the girl's employer under police suspicion, until the strain produces another tragedy.

In the most enjoyable of this lot, *A Corpse for Charybdis*, the reader voyages

to the Mediterranean and the Adriatic in a Yugoslav cruise-cargo ship. Susan Gilruth collects an assortment of passengers, including a Gorgon of an English school-marm, depicts them with sympathy and wit, and involves them in a disappearance in the Straits of Messina. The descriptions of the Dalmatian coast and the reconstruction of its storied past are uncommonly well done.

"Over the Sea to the Skye" is one of the most romantic phrases, but in Mary Stewart's *Wildfire at Midnight*, the hotel tourists find inherent romance taking a tragic turn. The old pagan gods are invoked to cause more deaths than I can easily stomach, but the mystery is well sustained and the pictures of the island's crags and mists are painted with feeling by one who evidently knows Skye very well.

The determination of an innocent man gaoled for murder to escape and find the murderer, is an excellent theme for a thriller. He has to investigate and hide at the same time. The hero of Victor Canning's *The Hidden Face* also finds that someone is persistently after his blood. All this makes for terrific pace and piled up excitement. The dénouement is so shattering that for me it deflates most of the excitement, but you may think the surprise worth while.

—A.M.

CONFESSIONS OF FAITH

FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT, a Confession of Faith in the form of an anthology, by Victor Gollancz; Victor Gollancz, English price 15/-.

HERE'S richness—even more and even richer than in *A Year of Grace*. As in the earlier book the words in this are others' but the argument they make very much Victor Gollancz's; and it is arranged to be read right through. It's called a "confession of faith," something more positive than the "mood" which *A Year of Grace* claimed to express; but this doesn't mean it is a theology, in any dogmatic sense. If it were it might be thought inadequate in some respects. The faith confessed here is a subjective experience; but one man's subjectivity, deeply felt and honestly expressed, often gives a clearer glimpse of some part of the truth than one man's rational argument; especially when he has some four hundred others to help him.

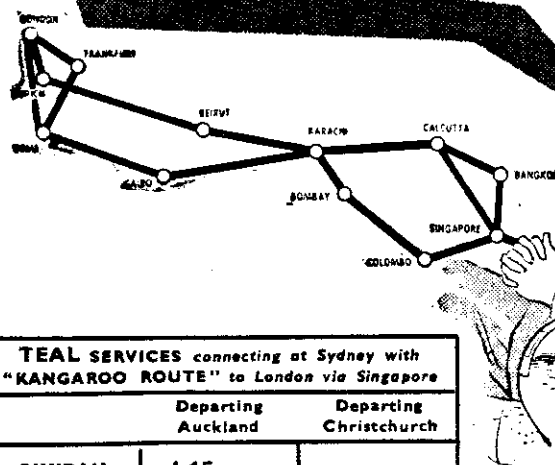
"I have always felt a life and a bliss in everything," Gollancz himself says in a passage quoted from one of his own *Timothy* books. The darkness of the title has its place, but the light is the firm reality, and that here and now. St. Francis and William Penn appear many times in this book, St. Augustine seldom (and those his more comfortable sayings), Calvin not at all. There are Catholics, Protestants, Atheists, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus and Taoists. Blake appears most often: Amiel, Aurobindo, Berdyayev, Coleridge, Plato, Plotinus, Kathleen Raine, Romain Rolland, Bernard Shaw, Tagore, T. S. Eliot, very frequently.

It adds up to a splendidly whole-hearted book, rejecting half-measures and casuistry, refusing to believe we are required to give anything less than total love, total goodness, even if it leads to worldly disaster, as pacifism might. How Gollancz the mystic and Gollancz the crusader hold their peace with Gollancz the successful publisher I don't know, but as he makes some rude remarks himself about this I don't feel called to add to them.

—R.D.McE.

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