

can be brought to bear on human beings and just how far those stresses can be endured; and he has the supreme gift of creating characters vividly, roundly, earthily, solidly alive. He knows the stage, and at his best can greatly reward actors and producers. He shows the profoundest sympathy with the lost and defeated, and he sometimes wrings a boozy poetry from the tough, weather-beaten, bruised creatures who people his plays. His pretensions are sometimes rocketing, and his experimenting clumsy and grotesque, but no one can say that he ever limited the size of his stage. For all his faults, he had scale and size and the dimensions of greatness, for which in an age of little men, we can only be grateful.

SOLDIER IN INDIA

BUGLES AND A TIGER, by John Masters; Michael Joseph, English price 16/-.

THE tendency to regard the Indian Army as something rather funny, deriving its origin perhaps from the choleric eccentricities of retired Anglo-Indian colonels, was at its height in the early nineteen-thirties, when soldiers were regarded by a people bent on renouncing war as parasites on the community. Since those days adversity has brought about a change of opinion, and with Britain's retreat from imperialism, the Indian Army that Colonel Masters knew has passed away. The possibility that it was not quite such a comic affair as was sometimes supposed will no doubt occur to the reader of this very interesting book.

Bugles and a Tiger is a narrative of events that would not be readily intelligible without some description of the background of an Indian Army officer's life. We should be at a loss without some knowledge of the economy of a Gurkha regiment, of how the North-West Frontier Province was administered, or of how cadets live and work at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst. All these gaps in our understanding are filled in by Colonel Masters, whose prose, even in its sternest passages, is enlivened by a fund of anecdote that never fails, whether he writes of frontier campaigns, tiger hunts, manoeuvres, or orgies that might have shocked a Regency rake. His many adventures are sometimes thrilling, sometimes comic, and occasionally contain an element of both. (Here surely is subject matter for future novels after the style of *Bhowani Junction*.) But the recurring theme of this memoir is a tribute of admiration to "the stubborn and indomitable peasants of Nepal," whom Masters commanded. Of the many stories of their courage, humour, and devotion there is only space here to include one.

In 1940, a Gurkha regiment, was called upon for one hundred volunteers to train as parachutists. It was explained to the men that the jumps would be made at first from the height of a mere thousand feet, but only seventy volunteers were forthcoming. Deeply disappointed, the British officers explained once again that parachutes hardly ever failed to open, and described the various devices for ensuring that they did so. Suddenly the face of the Gurkhas' spokesman cleared, "and, speaking for all, he said, 'Oh, we jump with these parachutes, do we? That's different.'"

—R. M. Burdon

A WHIRLWIND VOICE

THE HUMAN AGE, by Wyndham Lewis; Methuen, English price 30/-.

MANY years ago (or it seems many years) I was lent a copy of *The Apes of God*, by John Moffett, then

Literary Editor of the *Otago Daily Times*. The book fascinated, horrified and bewildered me. It seemed to be written about an order of beings who could not, or at least should not, exist. The same blend of fascination and horror overcame me as I burrowed through the pages of *The Human Age*; for there is only one Wyndham Lewis. But today the bewilderment is less—for I know that such beings do exist. Wyndham Lewis presents us with our unregenerate, shuffling, gabbling, horrifying selves. He does not add that love can and will, with a dexterous conflagration, consume these effigies and remake them; but he does make it abundantly clear that such a happening would only be plain, pure miracle. Love, of course, is outside his province. He is a satirist, a writer with direct moral intention, wielding Rabelais' bludgeon, though without the tolerance shown by that great Catholic humanist toward the poor, forked, mandrake flesh.

The Human Age consists of a trilogy—*The Childermass*, *Monstre Gai* and *Malign Fiesta*—of which only the last two books are contained in the present volume. I have never read *The Childermass*, but it is my intention to buy, borrow or steal it when it is "in due course published in the same format." The plot of Books Two and Three, however, presented no difficulty on this account. James Pullman, a writer, and Satterthwaite, the boy who had been his fag at school, have passed over to the Other Side. There they find conditions similar to those on earth. There are political factions and hierarchies in Hell. The Devil cannot bear the sins of the flesh or the company of women. Pullman is drawn into infernal politics... It is impossible, by description or quotation, to convey the terrible, hallucinating force of Wyndham Lewis's satire. But if you read it, you will tremble and rejoice at this whirlwind in our midst.

—James K. Baxter

WRAITHS AND STRAYS

THE LONG BODY, by Helen McCloy; Victor Gollancz, English price 10/6. *DEATH OF A STRAY CAT*, by Jean Potts; Victor Gollancz, English price 10/6. *THE LAST ENEMY*, by Barton Roueche; Victor Gollancz, English price 12/6. *A CORPSE FOR CHARYBDIS*, by Susan Gilruth; Hodder and Stoughton, English price 10/6. *WILDFIRE AT MIDNIGHT*, by Mary Stewart; Hodder and Stoughton, English price 10/6. *THE HIDDEN FACE*, by Victor Canning; Hodder and Stoughton, English price 10/6.

IN her fifth book, *The Long Body*, Helen McCloy has done it again. It is not so long, involved or original as *Thro' a Glass Darkly*, but it has the same psychic mystery and tension, the same prickly effect at midnight, and is admirably written. A woman hates another woman with good reason, murders her mentally, and comes out of a sleep-walk to find her killed just as planned, and by someone who seems to have known of the intention. The psychiatrist Basil Willing finds the

(continued on next page)

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