

BOOKS

(continued from previous page)

calmness and preoccupation with long-term and unfashionable values is a refreshment.

—F. L. W. Wood

HOMICIDE SQUAD

THE STRONG BOX. by Howard Swiggett; Hodder and Stoughton, English price 13/6. **THE SLEEPING PARTNER.** by Winston Graham; Hodder and Stoughton, English price 12/6. **SHE DIED WITHOUT LIGHT,** by Nieves Mathews; Hodder and Stoughton, English price 11/6. **STRANGER IN THE DARK,** by Helen Nielsen; Victor Gollancz, English price 11/6. **CRIME OUT OF MIND,** by Delano Ames; Hodder and Stoughton, English price 10/6. **THE TOFF IN NEW YORK,** by John Creasey; Hodder and Stoughton, English price 9/6. **APPLEBY TALKS AGAIN,** Eighteen Stories, by Michael Innes; Victor Gollancz, English price 10/6. **THE**

MYSTERY OF THE SLEEPING CAR EXPRESS, and Other Stories, by Freeman Wills Crofts; Hodder and Stoughton, English price 11/6.

HOWARD SWIGGETT'S *The Strong Box* is so much a thriller with a difference that it might escape classification. The middle-aged head of an American mission, rich, cultivated, and much loved, dies in London, and the smoke of mystery immediately rises from his private papers. For his reputation's sake (a hint of scandal would be jam to the witch-hunters in America) a younger man next in succession resolves to explore and bury the mystery, knowing that in so acting he himself may crash. This he does with the help of two women who were close to the dead man. As one reviewer says, there is not a gun or a chase in it; the

well-maintained tension is one of wits, emotions, and conflicting loyalties. This is a well-written political and social novel, ranging between London, America, Sweden and Paris, of exceptional power and interest.

The corpse in *The Sleeping Partner*, by Winston Graham, does not arrive till half way, and the husband's hunt for his wife's murderer is less interesting than the play of characters. The best of these in a tale above the average is a scientist dying of a disease contracted in research. A philosophical humanist, he shows courage and understanding when he finds that his wife and the husband are in love, and helps to solve the crime.

With verve, pace and sparkle, Nieves Mathews (daughter of Salvador de Madariaga, historian and one-time

Spanish Minister) presents an original version of the ruthless-household-tyrant theme. At a Swiss pension an English doctor is astonished to find that the assorted guests put up with scandalous inefficiency. Bit by bit he discovers that the proprietress has a hold over everyone, and he himself is drawn into the blackmailer's toils. She repels attack and taunts them openly and triumphantly, but in the end they escape, by what means I don't propose to say. It is an exciting and fantastic tale.

I doubt if Helen Nielsen is quite so good in *Stranger in the Dark*, where an innocent young American meets skulduggery in Copenhagen, as she is on her own American sidewalks, but Denmark's capital may be new to you as a setting, as it is to me. In *Crime Out of Mind*, Delano Ames takes Dagobert and Jane to the Austrian Tyrol, where murder goes back to a Nazi prison camp. Not one of the best about this likeable pair. The physical peak in John Creasey's *The Toff in New York* comes when the English sleuth grapples with a gangster on a parapet at the top of a hundred-storey building. It isn't "The Toff" who falls the thousand feet.

The volumes of short stories by two leading practitioners make agreeable dipping in bed. Some of the adventures of Michael Innes's Appleby are only four or five pages long. He is suave and erudite; Freeman Wills Crofts the policeman on the beat. There are two Crofts curiosities for collectors: his first story, and one commissioned to describe a "perfect" murder. A real-life ex-C.I.D. man shot the construction full of holes, and his marksmanship is reproduced here, an instructive exposition of police methods.

—A.M.

LAND AND PEOPLE

EARLY NEW ZEALAND FAMILIES, Second Series, by Douglas Cresswell; Whitcombe and Tombs, 18/6.

THIS volume contains the second series of Mr. Cresswell's newspaper articles. Nearly all the families belong to the land, and much land still belongs to most of them. A notable exception is the Dobson family—father and son—who were engineers, and concerning whom Mr. Cresswell doubts "whether any family has served the province of Canterbury better." Fitzherbert of the Hutt is more famed in the political field, but also acquired land. Ngata of Ruatoria is in yet another category. These family tales are told in the style suited to the original form of publication; nevertheless, where the character has not already engaged the attention of a serious historian, the story is a starting point for further study.

—L.J.W.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

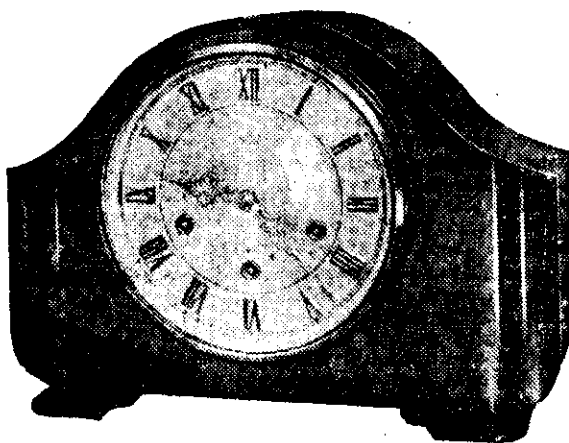
A DICTIONARY OF MODERN PAINTING, edited by Carlton Lake and Robert Maillard; Methuen and Co., English price 30/-. A translation of a French work in which the aim is to introduce notable painters from the Impressionists to the outbreak of the Second World War. Each of the 250 entries is a small essay, and most of the illustrations—hundreds of them—are in colour. This is an excellent production.

PLAN YOUR AFFAIRS AND REDUCE YOUR TAXES

By Ralph Hipkins and E. L. Mulcock. The book you can't afford not to buy. From booksellers, or send 10/- note (money-back guarantee), Ralph Hipkins Ltd. Publishers, P.O. Box 423, Auckland.

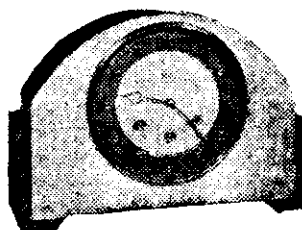
For anniversaries, birthdays, weddings . . .
give them the

*Time of their
Lives —*
A SMITHS CLOCK



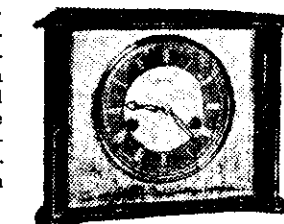
For the family, the newly-weds, the old folk, or the bride-to-be, there's no finer gift. Smith's Clocks are famous the world over for lifetime accuracy and reliability . . . the distinguished gift at all times — particularly at the present time.

ACOUSTIC CHIME MOVEMENT and **FLOATING BALANCE** are two **NEW** features by **SMITH'S**, the world's leading clock makers.



ST. CATHERINE

Mantel Clock with 8-day ACOUSTIC Westminster - Whittington Chime Movement, and designed in bird's eye maple and walnut finish case, with embossed gilt figures on brown zone.



TOSCA

8-day FLOATING BALANCE hour and half-hour striking Mantel Clock in walnut sycamore-finish case, with white Roman numerals on brown zone.

AVAILABLE FROM ALL SMITH'S STOCKISTS EVERYWHERE

Sole New Zealand Agents:

HANNAFORD AND BURTON LTD., P. O. BOX 5177, AUCKLAND.