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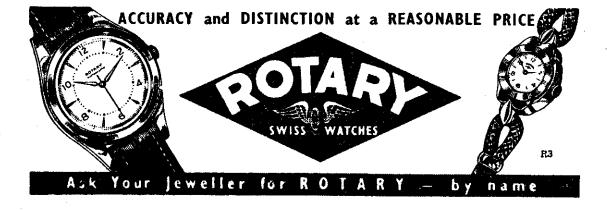
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### BOOKS

(continued from previous page)

There is no tendency to dwell upon the affairs of a glamorous aristocracy; all classes receive due measure of attention. With her ponderously artificial style Dorothy Marshall does not make things easy for the reader, but for those who prefer instruction to entertainment she has produced an admirably balanced account of an entire society.

-R. M. Burdon

#### FAR AWAY OR LONG AGO

JUSTINE, by Lawrence Durrell; Faber and Faber, English price 15 - THE RED MARTEN, by Peter Nisser; Michael Joseph, English price 15 - AND WALK IN LOVE, by Henrietta Buckmaster; Victor Gollancz, English price 16 - THE FLAME OF HERCULES, by Richard Llewellyn; Michael Joseph, English price 12 6.

ALEXANDRIA is the scene of Justine, and perhaps Lawrence Durrell's most signal achievement is to recreate the full atmosphere of that city, poised uneasily between East and West. "Capodistria has the purely involuntary knack of turning everything into a woman: under his eyes chairs become painfully conscious of their bare legs." Modern Alexandria, too, has the knack of turning everything into love, in its various versions and inversions, and Alexandrians exhibit—indeed flaunt—a "terrifying honesty and world-weariness." But do not be too terrified in advance to read this percipient, disturbing, brilliant novel whose grace, wit and unuttered assumptions are more French than English.

Sweden in the early 18th century is the scene of Peter Nisser's translated novel about a rising peasant family whose manners are of Homeric directness and simplicity. It provides a glimpse of a world very strange to us in a memorable and enthralling narrative.

The sub-title of Henrietta Buckmaster's book, "A Novel on the Life of Saint Paul," explains its scope. I have a strong prejudice against this type of book, because it is usually such a paltry travesty of the literary power of King James's Bible, and because, apparently, piety is supposed to offset this inferiority. This novel recreates the historical context of early Christianity with some success. Indeed, it is good of its type. But it was a mistake to treat the whole of Paul's life instead of a manageable portion.

An escaped Gaulish slave adrift in Herculaneum before and during the eruption of Vesuvius has lurid adventures, in Richard Llewellyn's novel, which quickly debauch the attention of the most tolerant reader. Here is an excellent scenario for one of those stripcartoon serials.

— David Hall

#### **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

VALLEYS OF SPRINGS, by Dorothea Eastwood; Alan Wingate, English price 18/-. The author is a botanistartist who turns her holiday excursions into ciary-form reminiscences of an intimate and family kind, her husband and son being the main characters. The setting is the valley of the Usk. Illustrated by the author.

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