

his showman's moving life, and suffering agonies at first performances. Mary made a career of her own, with a husband at home after war service, but not at her elbow. She has much to say that is interesting about the technique and persons of broadcasting. Mabel and Wilfred have the tang and exuberance of the north, a flavour of J. B. Priestley. Mary has a West End smoothness, but her sympathies are wide. Both give the reader a warm glow of joy in work and home life.

—A.M.

PINK SUGAR AND BIG BUSINESS

MAMA, I LOVE YOU, by William Saroyan, Faber and Faber, English price 15/-. **THE GREAT WORLD AND TIMOTHY COLT**, by Louis Auchincloss, Victor Gollancz, English price 15/-. **THE ROOM ON THE ROOF**, by Ruskin Bond, Andre Deutsch, English price 10/6. **A TRAIN TO CATCH**, by Anthony Rushworth, Angus and Robertson, English price 16/-. **NO HOME BUT HEAVEN**, by Jon Manchip White, Hodder and Stoughton, English price 15/-.

MOST writers go sour at some time or another. William Saroyan, just to be different, has gone sweet. *Mama, I Love You*, unbelievable successor to *Peace, It's Wonderful*, and *The Daring Young Man*, is all pink sugar and girlish laughter. Briefly, the story is this: Mama Girl and daughter Twink—she may have a real name, but she doesn't tell us—are going to a party in Sunset Boulevard, California. Mama Girl changes her mind, they take a plane to New York and go in a play together. Just like that. And what's more, everyone's so kind to them, producers, old friends, hotel proprietors—even the Press! If ever there was a theme that begged for the astringent Saroyan touch, this is it, but the author himself seems to have been stupefied by this husband-lorn Mama and her dreadful child.

There's the same solidity about Louis Auchincloss's *The Great World and Timothy Colt* as there is in the legal world he writes about, and he has given us a readable study in ethics and human relationships. It's unfortunate, though, that he has been so unimaginative in his theme, the well-worn one of the young man making good who takes a false step and crashes. You can see what's coming from the first page.

The Room on the Roof is the best first novel I've read for a long time, even though, basically, it's nothing more than a slight account of an English boy's life with a Hindu family. I found it remarkable for its lack of European judgment on the absurdities and inconsequentialities of post-partition Indian living. There's a delicacy and a freshness about Ruskin Bond's dealings with adolescent relationships that reminded me very pleasantly of Forrest Reid.

Anthony Rushworth's *A Train to Catch* is another canter on the weary

hobby-horse of post-war rehabilitation. The characters are a trifle vague and undifferentiated—which may or may not be deliberate—and the end, a final kicking over the traces and a high-tailing off to South America, is not altogether a surprise.

No Home But Heaven, a rip-roarer about gypsies, doctors, pretty Sisters, fist fights and sports cars, seems to have been written with one eye on the cinema screen. Jon Manchip White's prose is fast-moving and unfettered. This is entertainment for a rainy evening, but nothing more.

—Peter Cape

ENGLISH PROSE STYLE

THE PATTERN OF ENGLISH, by G. H. Vallins; Andre Deutsch, N.Z. price 15/-.

HOW much formal grammar should be taught in our schools? If Shakespeare wrote "between you and I" and sometimes used a misrelated participle, should the student be penalised for taking similar liberties? What authority, if any, does English usage from time to time acknowledge?

These are familiar questions to English teachers; and most of them will know Mr. Vallins's earlier books. In this latest study he gives us a useful historical outline of the development of the English prose sentence from King Alfred to modern broadcast script. He traces the decay of inflexion, indicates the basic word order that survived it, and illustrates successive attempts to legislate for English practice from Ben Jonson and Dryden, through the 18th century grammarians, to Cobbett and the post-Fowler school. This is a "background" book rather than a manual of instruction; but it includes a chapter of examples of formal analysis, and a brief essay that is a sort of manifesto or order of the day for contemporary grammarians.

Many teachers would like to tighten up on modern informality; not all of them will agree with Mr. Vallins's approach. But he has the great advantage, shared by most writers on this subject since Chambers, of appreciating the basic continuity of our prose style from Old English times. It is clear that all teachers of English should know some Anglo-Saxon: if they do not, the translated examples in this little book will help them. It may be recommended to all advanced students, and to teacher training colleges in particular.

—J.B.

"TURN OR BURN"

NICHOLAS RIDLEY, by Jasper Ridley; Longmans, English price 25/-.

SOME four hundred years ago Hugh Latimer, Nicholas Ridley and Thomas Cranmer chose to die at the stake. An account of the processes leading to that choice is largely a history (continued on next page)



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