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BRATHWAITE

A NEW
NOVEL

PUBLISHED
BY CAXTON



Fear in the Night

... tautly written, interesting, gripping and convincing with a true claim to be called a pulse-quickenner.

... didn't put it down again until I'd read every word.

—Gordon Parry in Bookshop

BOOKS

(continued from page 12)

demons; but I like him none the less for it. One cannot summarise the workings of genius, but one can read and read again.

—James K. Baxter

STRAIGHT AND CROOKED

SHADOW OF GUILT, by Patrick Quentin; Victor Gollancz, English price 12/6. **DETOUR THROUGH DEVON**, by Guy Endore; Victor Gollancz, English price 12/6. **A LITTLE SIN**, by William M. Hardy; Hamish Hamilton, English price 12/6. **SWING AWAY, CLIMBER**, by Glyn Carr; Geoffrey Bles, English price 12/6.

ALL "detectives" and thrillers are complicated, but there are degrees of complication. The reader may find himself halted, perhaps with irritation, by flashbacks or psychological dissertations. *Shadow of Guilt*, by the trustworthy Patrick Quentin, illustrates well the type of story that moves rapidly from crisis to crisis and bristles with surprises, yet never impedes the reader's progress. It is a walk and not an obstacle race. An American business man, married to a wealthy woman who tries to manage everything in sight at home and abroad, falls in love with his (apparently) more homely secretary. A young art protégée of his wife's, who turns out to be a professional black-mailer, is murdered, and suspicion falls on a string of characters. The action is swift and exciting, the writing crystal clear, and the dénouement shattering in its surprise. One believes it all might have happened in a credible society. This is a really good story of its kind.

By contrast, Guy Endore's *Detour Through Devon* is like a tangled rope. It is one of the maddest thrillers I have read, but original in concept and treatment. An American truck driver stops by night for a break in a town, and the hitch-hiking hobo with him is staggered to find that this town is Devon, Indiana, where he was brought up in an orphanage, rose to be a professor of philology, was acquitted on a murder charge, and walked out on his wife to become a wanderer. As he walks about the town he tells his story. The ruling passion of his life from childhood has been the study of words, words of every kind and in many languages, their meaning, origin and association. In his loneliness he savours words as some men savour poetry, or drink or tobacco. As he says, he would think of them in a ditch. For example, "blimp," "bloomers" and "balcony." Why, he asks, do almost all words beginning with "wr" involve some kind of twisting: "wriggle," "wrestle," "writhe," "wrench," "wreath" and so on. This is instructive and fascinating, and often amusing, but at times somewhat hampering. It is as if a thriller were annotated by our old friend Professor Arnold Wall. The last words of the book are "to mate is more than to meet, and to love is more than live," so you may guess what he found. This is the only thriller I have read that could be a text-book in a university library.

A Little Sin, by William M. Hardy, takes us back to the more conventional type. This well-written story is based on university life in an American town with a flavour of politics. A married professor, well aware that it is an indiscretion, accepts an invitation from an attractive student-assistant to go bathing with her alone. He finds her murdered at the lakeside house, and thinks he catches a glimpse of the murderer. The wise course would be to go to the police with the whole story, but he lies and lies and lies, and naturally

gets himself more and more entangled, for clues pointing to him abound. He is convicted of murder but at the very last minute is saved from the "chair" by a series of thrilling developments.

Swing Away Climber, is the second of Glyn Carr's mountaineering mysteries to be noticed here. *The Ice-Axe Murders* was about a party in the Alps. *Swing Away, Climber*, tells us of rock-climbing in the Snowdon region. A most loathsome young pervert, expelled from the party in the hut, is found hanging by a climber's rope against a rock wall. Everybody hopes it is suicide, as is at first believed, but truth and justice must be served. It is an agonising process by which Sir Abercrombie Lewker, the author's Shakespearian actor plus detective, does, this, partly through his knowledge of climbing craft. There is a lot of technical stuff in the tale but plenty of human interest to keep it company, and the pen pictures of Welsh landscape are fine.

—A.M.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

NURI AS-SAID, by Lord Birdwood; Cassell, English price 30/-. A biography of the former Prime Minister of Iraq, who was assassinated in the July, 1958, revolution, set against the background of the Middle East question as a whole.

THE BOOK OF JAZZ: A Guide to the Entire Field, by Leonard Feather; Arthur Barker, English price 21/-. A useful text for anyone beginning a serious study of Jazz, or extending a general study of music into that field. The author is knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and a practised interpreter, in print and on the air, of the jazz idiom. At 280 pages, including a good index, the *Entire Field* of the sub-title is perhaps an excessive claim, but the book covers a wide area of past history and current activity, and even includes a final chapter on "Horizons: Jazz in 1984." The most interesting innovation, perhaps, is the section on "The Anatomy of Improvisation" which examines at length (and with illustrations supplied by leading players) an essential element of authentic jazz often neglected by "academic" critics.

VANCE PALMER

THE latest issue of *Overland*, an Australian literary quarterly, brings news of the death of Vance Palmer. This Australian writer, always much respected in New Zealand, made a deep impression as guest speaker at the Writers' Conference in Christchurch in 1951. "To us," says *Overland* in an editorial tribute, "he was something of a symbol, embodying in his work and person the calm and rational optimism and faith in life which is the foundation of humanism and the link between its various traditions. As a biographer and essayist, past and present met in him; as a critic he interpreted to us the great novelists of Europe and as a novelist and short story writer he taught us how one could be objective and still have a warm heart beating in the right place. He was a good radical, a good Australian, a good writer and a good man."

Vance Palmer's better known novels include *Cronulla* (1924), *The Man Hamilton* (1928), *The Passage* (1930) and *The Swayne Family* (1934.) He died at the age of 74.



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