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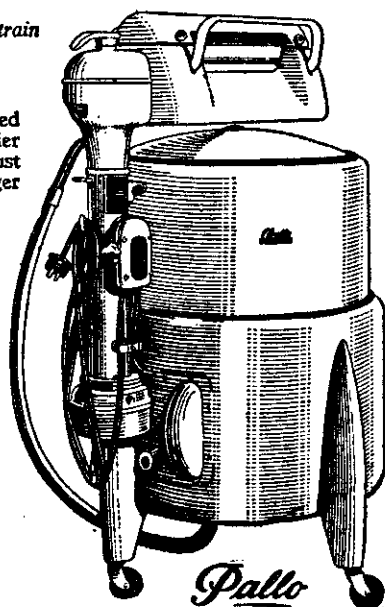
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BOOKS

(continued from page 12)

in three stories, reaching his fullest development in Muller, self-reliant and solitary, in "The Stone." Otherwise the persons of the stories, even Prof in "The Corporal's Story," are those we know well and afford us that pleasure of recognition which is not the least of the gifts of the artist. These are five good stories, four previously unpublished, and they make one glad O. E. Middleton is still a young man.

The book is elegantly produced and is adorned by some of Dennis Knight Turner's drawings. These do not "illustrate": they are works of art in their own right.

—David Hall

THE MYSTIC'S LIFE

EVELYN UNDERHILL, by Margaret Cropper; Longmans, Green & Co., English price 25/-.

ADULATION can pervert understanding. Miss Cropper's book contains too much of the mechanism of her subject's prayer life, too much of the spiritual groping of one who was so far ahead of her fellow-climbers. Evelyn Underhill was one of this century's greatest mystics. Her leadership of retreats and her writings have been the inspiration of thousands of people in their devotional life. She does not come to full stature in this book.

Many people will no doubt be glad to learn of Evelyn Underhill's domestic life, her period of "spiritual deprivation" during the war years, the help she gained from that other great mystic, Baron von Hugel, in her search for mental peace, her exuberant vitality issuing in voluminous writing, lecturing and personal counselling, and the part she played in many important Church conferences. But somehow the structural mechanism stands out too much in the telling. The giant stature of the mystic whose faith moved multitudes does not emerge. It may be that one should not attempt to write a biography of such a person, but rather an appreciation, an admiration, or even only a carefully designed and edited selection of the mystic's own words.

One values Evelyn Underhill's contribution to religious mysticism too highly to be satisfied with Miss Cropper's warm-hearted telling of her story and her unintentional reduction of her subject to merely human size.

—G.D.

FRAILTY AND STRENGTH

LIGHT IN SILENCE, by Claude Koch; Victor Gollancz, English price 16/-; RETURN, by Kathrine Talbot; Faber & Faber, English price 15/-; LEOPARD WITH A THIN SKIN, by John Watney; Jonathan Cape, English price 15/-.

LIGHT IN SILENCE tells of the struggle of a man with his conscience. He is a member of the Order of St Bardolph which has a House above Niagara Falls. The Prior understands and sustains him: when the Prior dies he comes to doubt his vocation. His contacts with the outside world, especially with a young widow and her children, pull him strongly away from the Order. He leaves, and for a time lies hidden far away. The moral issues are

squarely presented and the story is most skilfully developed: the characters are much more than satisfactory. There is one old Brother, Didymus, a saint, who is vouchsafed a vision; another, like the central character, is resolving doubts far from the monastery, carving figures for a crib and working steadfastly towards peace of mind; there is the new Prior, a good man, but one whose limitations are just those that are most unfortunate. True values can be laid bare in this world, but even here they can be obscured again. The theme of the book is that for neither Community nor individual Brother are they likely to be obscured for ever.

Kathrine Talbot's novel is about a young American who is made welcome in the family of a great man, since deceased, and cuts his teeth on them. They are a strange, undisciplined lot, and his emotional growing-up is unusual. The swiftly changing situations are cleverly handled. *Leopard with a Thin Skin* is about a man confined in a psychiatric ward, simply, he maintains, for national security reasons and to cover up a shady transaction. It is quite dramatic but chiefly notable for a capable sketch of the man's rather pathetic wife.

—S.P.

RESOURCEFUL WOMAN

ONE WOMAN FARM, by Betty Lussier; Jonathan Cape, English price 18/-.

MRS BETTY LUSSIER, Canadian by birth, American by adoption, Spanish by marriage, 38 years of age, and mother of four boys, is obviously a woman of great vitality and immense resourcefulness. She grew up and worked hard on a farm in Maryland; and when the war came she served in the Air Transport Auxiliary doing ferry service for the Royal Air Force. But this book doesn't dwell on that. It's about her suddenly conceived idea of growing maize, from American hybrid seed corn, in Spanish Morocco, an idea she at once translated into action. On a half-share contract with the Serra Agricultural Company, with modern American machinery, she plants and harvests one thousand acres of corn which, yielding a fifty-bushel crop sold to the British Ministry of Food, is a tremendous financial success for both parties. But the Spanish manager of the Company would have no more of her. Why? Betty had too many democratic ideas about better housing and better conditions generally for the farm hands—mostly Arabs. Most disturbing ideas in the view of the Spanish land-owners.

—L.J.W.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THE SHADOW OF THE ALMIGHTY, by Elisabeth Elliot; Hodder & Stoughton, English price 16/-.

A biography of Jim Elliot, one of the American missionaries martyred in Ecuador in January, 1956, written by his widow.

INTRODUCING ASTRONOMY, by J. B. Sidgwick; Faber and Faber, English price 6/-.

A cheap edition of a popular introduction to astronomy, based on the author's *Astronomy for Night Watchers* but less superficial and covering wider ground.

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