

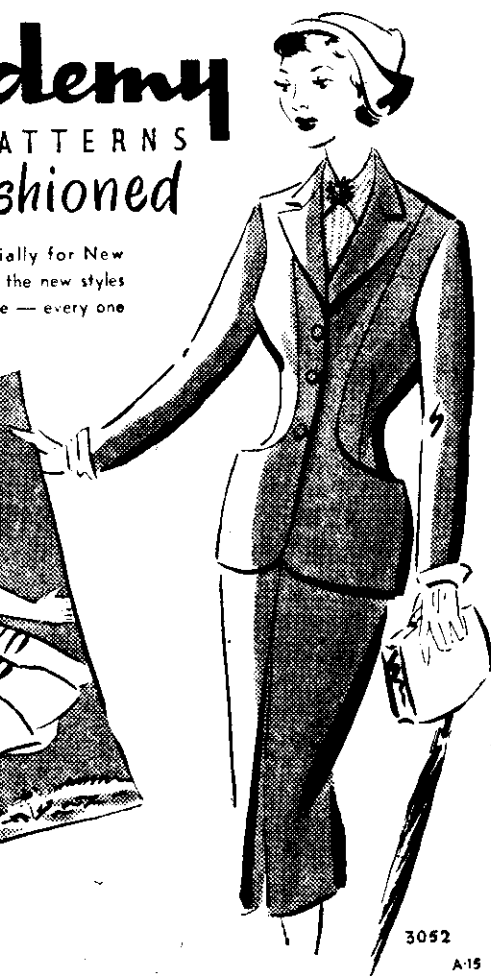
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Death at the fireside



THE DAUGHTER OF TIME, by Josephine Tey; Peter Davies. English price, 9/6. DEATH HAS DEEP ROOTS, by Michael Gilbert; Hodder and Stoughton. English price, 9/6. WHO KILLED BROTHER TREASURER? by Cecil M. Wills; Hodder and Stoughton. English price, 9/6. THE KIND MAN, by Helen Nielsen; Victor Gollancz. English price, 9/6. LILIES IN HER GARDEN GREW, by Stephen Ransome; Victor Gollancz. English price, 9/6. STARRY-EYED CHIPMONK, by Sturges Mason Schley; Victor Gollancz. English price, 9/6. A SHROUD FOR GRANDMAMA, by Gregory Tree; Victor Gollancz. English price, 9/6. THE ORIGIN OF EVIL, by Ellery Queen; Victor Gollancz. English price, 10/6.

(Reviewed by A.M.)

AN extra "First" should go to Josephine Tey for the originality of the idea in *The Daughter of Time*, and a "First" for the writing. Condemned to lie on his back in hospital, an English detective finds mental occupation through a portrait of Richard III. The King becomes a problem in detection. Was Richard the monster popular history makes him out to be? Did he kill the princes in the Tower? Sifting evidence brought by friends to his bedside, Alan Grant decides there is no case for a prosecution; indeed, Richard has suffered grievously at the hands of historians. As Gordon Daviot, author of the play *Richard of Bordeaux*, Josephine Tey should know something about history. She makes delightful play here with the animus, prejudices and easy acceptances of historians and their sources, and the little group of characters around the invalid detective are brightly drawn.

Michael Gilbert was a welcome recruit to detection a few years ago, and *Death Has Deep Roots* strikes me as the best story he has written. On the eve of her trial in London for the murder of her alleged lover, a young Frenchwoman changes her solicitors and counsel. She will have no apologies; no suggestion of a crime of passion; she is innocent and demands a fight to the finish. So a new hunt for evidence begins in London and France, where the parties had been involved in the resistance movement, and some strange and perilous things are uncovered. The court scenes are exceptionally well done, with cross-examination a model, technically and dramatically.

Entombed during fighting in France in the first war, an English colonel vows that if he survives he will found a religious order. It would have been better for a number of people if he had been left to die, for the establishment he sets up on the ancient family estate in the west country is very queer indeed, and it is not surprising that robbery and murder disrupt the colony of misfits. *Who Killed Brother Treasurer?* is an averagely good crime story.

Four of the five American books illustrate the growing complexity of the detective story. The least elaborate, and to my mind the best, is *The Kind Man*, a tale of ordinary people in a small Californian town, including a likeable policeman of the non-bullying kind and a loyal and sensible heroine. The others take us to glossy sophistication in New York and Los Angeles. In *Lilies in Her Garden Grew*, a private detective does most of the solving by staying in his office and using the telephone. *Starry-eyed Chipmonk*, a tale of a psychiatrist called in to treat a woman who is terrified of fish, would be more enjoyable if the style resembled less the stutter of an intermittent machine-gun. Gregory Tree's second venture, *A Shroud for Grandmama*, opens with a really hair-raising situation—an aged wealthy woman lying dead in her hall clad in the scantiest of swim-suits and surrounded by the marks of dancing feet, which led nowhere. Alas, as so often happens, the solution proves even more fantastic than the puzzle.

Of our old and valued friend Ellery Queen, I feel bound to say that his brains are going to his head. The trend of exotic, involved, super-intellectual yet lush plot and treatment, could hardly go further than in *The Origin of Evil*. Reading it is like trying to solve stiff crossword puzzles during an obstacle race, with an erotic ballet as a distraction. Ellery should take a holiday in a quiet place, say, the coast of Maine, or the Arizona desert, and simplify himself.

EXTERIOR TREATMENT

THE LIFE AND WORKS OF D. H. LAWRENCE, by Harry T. Moore; Allen and Unwin. English price, 25/-.

DR. MOORE belongs to the school of thought that holds that a critic of Lawrence "fulfils (his) deepest obligation" (continued on next page)

N.Z. LISTENER, MAY 9, 1952.