

## THE NEWEST BOOKS

## Back to Gaol—A Haven of Peace

"Who Once Eats Out of the Tin Bowl," Hans Fallada's New Book, Traces Career of an Ex-Convict—Will Kufalt Rebels—"Red Saunders," Thorn in the Side of Petty Officialdom.

THE saying is: Who once eats out of the tin bowl eats out of it again and again. And knowing this, and knowing that it means once a gaol-bird always a gaol-bird, it is easier to understand the meaning of the title of Hans Fallada's new book, "Who Once Eats Out of the Tin Bowl." Herr Fallada first brought himself to notice with "Little Man, What Now?" and his new novel has a depth, a sympathy and a complete lack of sensationalism that will make it one of the really memorable books of the year.

Willi Kufalt has been in gaol for five years when the book opens, and he has become versed in the art of fawning and scrounging. The reader likes him for his occasional flashes of fire and spirit, despises him at other times for his lies and his weaknesses. Fallada gives a brief picture of him:

There he stood, in blue dungaree trousers and a striped prison shirt, his feet in list slippers, with a pointed yellowish nose, pale and thin, but noticeably pot-bellied. About 28 years old. His brown eyes should have been frank and friendly, but they looked haunted, and furtive, and unsteady. His hair was brown. He stood and listened, and tried to catch what was being said. . . . It is May; the sky is blue beyond the wall, and above it the chestnuts are in flower. The circular yard, round which the prisoners are marching, has been planted with swedes, which are just coming up—a patch of meagre yellowish green against the melancholy bleak background of cinders, dusty earth and cement. They walk in a circle and whisper . . .

Upon his release Kufalt goes to a place in Hamburg recommended by the prison chaplain—the Home of Peace in the Apfelstrasse. Here the men are expected to type addresses for their keep, under the watchful eye of Herr Seidenzopf. Seidenzopf is one of those people who has never done anything that is punishable under the law—and feels smug and righteous for this reason—but he has brow-beaten the men under his care under-paid them, under-fed them, and continually reminded them of the love and mercy of his God and the blessings of the Home of Peace.

Willi Kufalt rebels and gathering some of his gaol friends about him, starts a typewriting agency of his own. But disaster was in the air before the little agency even opened its doors, and Kufalt eventually finds his friends deserting him and the police on his heels over the matter of some typewriters purchased on the time-payment system. Seidenzopf comes to him, wily old Seidenzopf, and reproves him for his ingratitude:

"Oh, my dear young friend, we of the Home of Peace took you in when you came out of prison, when you were helpless and in despair, and almost penniless. We gave you food, good plentiful homely fare, a roof over your head and a decent life. We of the Home of Peace first taught you to work, with unwearied patience we trained you to the habit of regular work once more—and is this your gratitude?"

His voice shook with anguished emotion, and in that moment—God knows—the old Pharisee may really have believed in what he said. . . . Then he shook his head and roared like an infuriated lion: "You'll come whining to us on your knees: Give me shelter. Father Seidenzopf, give me a warm meal! For God's sake help me. Father Seidenzopf, you can't let me starve! . . . But then we shall . . ."



## RECOGNITION ABROAD.—

Miss Mary Wigley, of Whangarei, whose book of New Zealand poems, "Some Southern Songs," has been given a notice of a column and a half in "The Times" Literary Supplement, London. This is the first time that a New Zealand poet has received the honour of a long notice in the world's most famous (and probably most critical) literary paper. Miss Wigley's poems are mostly about Canterbury, a province whose destiny has been largely shaped by Miss Wigley's grand-parents and great-uncles.

But Kufalt thrust himself into the fray, too, and accused Seidenzopf of living on the men, called him a dirty swine, and finally threw him out. The ex-convict endeavoured to "keep himself on the rails" but the set of the tide was against him and he was soon on the rocks. He takes to bag-snatching, becomes mixed up with some of Hamburg's "undesirables" and finally lands himself back in gaol. But he is not sorry; the book ends on a note that might offend the moralists: "In gaol a man could live in peace. The voices of the world were stilled. No making up one's mind, no need for effort. Life proceeded duly and in order. He was utterly at home. And Willi Kufalt fell quietly asleep."

"Who Once Eats out of the Tin Bowl," Hans Fallada. Putnam. Our copy from the publishers.

"RED SAUNDERS" is essentially a man's book. Written by "Sinbad," the author of "A Modern Sinbad," it chronicles the true adventures of his companion in sail whose audacious exploits were notorious from Zanzibar to the South Seas. The author met him in the East, sailed in his schooner in the South Seas and spent eleven weeks with him on a remote island in the Indian Ocean. Saunders was a genial red-headed giant who as free lance trader, smuggler on occasions, and thorn in the side of petty officialdom was well known to thousands of men alive to-day.

It is a fascinating story of almost unbelievable adventure and thrills. Saunders was launched on his career of adventure when he broke a man's back over a billiard table in defence of a woman's honour. Afterwards his life seemed to be unending strife. He chased stolen gems in Singapore and bird of paradise plumes in Papua. . . . kidnapped the Sultan of Zanzibar's harem. . . . fought a champion boxer in a circus. . . . smuggled opium to convicts by means of a coffin. . . . outwitted renegade white men, "red tape" officials, grafters and gunrunners from Iorneo to Madagascar. Eventually he met his death in the jungle at the hands of an ancient enemy. Altogether a book nobody should miss reading.

"Red Saunders," "Sinbad," George G. Harrap and Company, Limited. Our copy from the publishers.

R. H. BRUCE LOCKHART'S "Retreat from Glory" has just been published in Sweden, and German and Danish editions will appear shortly.

ISAK DINESEN'S "Seven Gothic Tales" has taken second place in a contest organised among 16 of the leading Swedish booksellers to find the year's best-sellers. In England this unusual book is still selling at the average rate of 100 copies a day.

HANS FALLADA'S "Little Man, What Now?" has been presented by the American book trade to President Roosevelt for his library at the White House. The author's new book, "Who Once Eats Out of the Tin Bowl" (reviewed on this page), is now in its third edition in England.

YOU, my Leader, have given us again our daily bread.—Dr. Goebbels.

MANY were the causes of the fall of the Roman Empire, and perhaps they all could be reduced to this. The more an empire gains in area the more it loses in consistency and depth.—The Duke.

IF the Labour Party says that we can leave liberty to them, I say that I would rather not touch the water of liberty after it has served their sanitary and ablutionary purposes.—Mr. Isaac Foot, M.P.