

Herald and News Book Reviews

Literary Highlights

THE BEGGAR IN THE HAREM. By Leonid Solovjev. Harcourt, Brace.

Khoja Nasreddin enters this merry tale running away from a woman, leaves it running away with one and in between has a succession of picaresque adventures that will delight you.

A rogue and a wanderer, he has come back at last to his native Bukhara, where the people worship him as their benefactor where the evil Emir rules, where the villain is Jafar the Usurer, and the heroine, lovely Guljan, the potter's daughter.

Jafar is so miserly that, though drowning, the cries of would-be rescuers to "give us your hand"

are not heeded for he will give nothing, not even his hand. The Emir is so wicked that supplicants for justice must pay with their entire possessions, and the taxpayers are beaten and stripped till they settle their bills.

There is a price on Masreddin's head, and every now and then he risks it to aid the poor or repair a flagrant wrong. The danger is greatest when, after snatching Guljan from Jafar's clutches, he must next save her from the Emir; perhaps the greatest hazard to this roisterer comes when, in disguise, he wins the friendship of the Emir and is offered the post of chief eunuch in his harem.

Drugs And Pills Take Places Of Philosophers And Priests

DRUGS AND THE MIND. By Robert S. deRopp. St. Martin's Press.

The philosopher and priest who once upon a time offered about our only hope for a tranquil and happy life are beginning to yield, says DeRopp, to the pharmacist, the chemist and the pill.

You can take truth serums, happiness drugs and tranquilizers, as they are called. One concoction will help you to meditate—it is Rauwolfia, and Gandhi used it; but modified and refined, as reserpine, it may incite you to throw a plate at your wife. Others will make you whoop with joy and dance; banish your worries, make you brave or turn you timid—are you a man or a mouse, that is, a mesomorph with noradrenalin or an extomorph with adrenalin?

Blessed with a fine short name

himself, DeRopp works a powerful lot of long ones into his book. But he is always clear, and anyway, he is mainly concerned with the morals of mescaline, marijuana and morphine rather than their medical qualities. Cocaine, he thinks the evils of marijuana, opiates and alcohol have been exaggerated, and he quotes a doctor before a Senate committee claiming regular morphine doses can do good.

Is there perhaps a new way to sin, he wonders, and notes that long before the mortar and pestle, Eskimo, Aztec and jungle native enjoyed delights which we don't know about, or which we are too quick to condemn. Whatever else you use stimulants for, you will not need any to keep you reading this provocative book.

The Battle Of Cassino Makes A Fine Study For Ex-Officer

THE BATTLE OF CASSINO. By Fred Majdalany. Houghton Mifflin. Cassino was the strongpoint in the Gustav Line, a major peninsula-wide defense system on which Kesselring relied, at Hitler's order, to delay the Allies. It was in a larger sense an incident in Rome's capture. For the first half of 1944, it was headline news day after day.

Majdalany, an infantry officer there, puts the story together graphically. There was a political background to the drive up the Italian boot, and the Yanks were not the most enthusiastic members of the invading combine. The Allies were slogging along wearily when at last they ran into incredible difficulties at the mountains dominated by the great Benedictine abbey.

From then on the battle was in four stages: To match the landing at Anzio; then to recover from that stalemate; an assault in conjunction with the flattening of the town of Cassino by bomb and shell—all improvised; and finally the carefully prepared surprise attack by which Alexander reached the battered summits and cut loose on the roads to Rome.

In assessing the commanders, Majdalany is rough on Mark Clark. He justifies the bombing of the abbey. He catches the little things—the fight that began with 500 bombers and ended with a single carrier pigeon, the division that captured its second objective but missed its first. But more, he catches in his vivid over-all picture the fierce do-or-die spirit of foe as well as friend, the modern savagery with which the irresistible force meets the immovable body, the unforgettable heroism, the fortitude, the sacrifice, the tragic toll, and the incomparably paltry reward.

Author Of The Week



ROBERT S. DEROPP, author of a historical novel last year about the fall of Jerusalem, now writes a book closer to his calling as a scientist: "Drugs and the Mind." Formerly with the Rockefeller Institute and now a biochemist in a pharmaceutical house, he is the son of a Baltic baron, was raised in England by the composer Ralph Vaughan Williams, and has a University of London Ph.D.

Current Best Sellers

FICTION

PEYTON PLACE, Grace Metalious.

ON THE BEACH, Nevil Shute. **THE WORLD OF SUZIE WONG**, Richard Mason.

BY LOVE POSSESSED, James Gould Cozzens.

LETTER FROM PEKING, Pearl S. Buck.

NONFICTION

BARUCH: MY OWN STORY, Bernard Baruch.

THE HIDDEN PERSUADERS, Vance Packard.

THE DAY CHRIST DIED, Jim Bishop.

THE NEW CLASS, Milovan Djilas.

THE INNOCENT AMBASSADORS, Philip Wylie.

Try This Tale Of Adventure

BEDOUIN DOCTOR. By Herbert Pritske translated from German by Richard Graves, Dutton.

Made prisoner by the British in the desert, Pritske suffered so much that, though war was over and automatic release seemed near, he escaped. He was warned of the risks—other Germans who for a price would betray him, Arabs who would beat him to death, and above all the devouring sun and the unendurable thirst.

But he evaded those dangers and even one he had not foreseen: An encounter with British tanks engaged in maneuvers, and he joined some Bedouins and became their comrade and doctor, and was thereupon confronted by even greater hazards.

He had a hand in an illegal deal in arms; he saved the life of a cholera patient and, thereby, his own as well; he clouted a smuggler in Cairo and was nearly nabbed by police; he even stole a bath; joining the Arabs in the irregular fighting along the Jaffa front, he missed death by inches from bombs, bullets and knives; he hobnobbed uneasily with an executioner.

Evidently these hair-raising adventures took place about 10 years ago, and the doctor himself, unscathed, wound up with UNRRA and a private practice, too, in Beirut. He is a handsome, bearded and imperious looking gent, according to the photos, though a couple of them, including a shot of a very unruffled corpse at a waterhole, strike me as slightly puzzling documents. However, he had enough adventures for a library, not merely a single book. Death came at him in all shapes from all sides, to pummel, thrust, slash, shoot blast and rend him, and he foiled it and fobbed it off with skill, courage and luck.

HUGE WHEEL

So vast is the wheel-shaped Milky Way that it takes light, traveling at 136,000 miles a second, a hundred thousand years to cross it from rim to rim.

SEE AND BE SEEN



WEAR BRIGHT CLOTHING

KEEP HUNTING A SAFE SPORT

PREVENT FOREST AND GRASS FIRES



PASTOR-PLAYWRITE Guenther Rutenborn, who preaches in Communist East Germany and wrote the recent New York play, "The Sign of Jonah," tells about his new East-West comedy, "The Potsdam Treaty."

Playwright Offers Laughter Remedy

By SEYMOUR TOPPING

BERLIN — Guenther Rutenborn, the pastor-playwright who preaches in Communist East Germany, says the theater should help end the Cold War by making people laugh.

This is what the pastor tries to do in his latest play "The Potsdam Treaty," which follows his "The Sign of Jonah," which received excellent notices recently in New York.

Rutenborn says Christians and Communists will find it easier to live together if they can "laugh at the problem of our time." "And through the medium of the theater I want to teach people how to laugh."

Coming from a man who for 12 years has preached the Evangelical (Lutheran) faith under the hostile eyes of the Communists, the laughter formula for getting along with the Reds can't be dismissed lightly.

PASTOR IN POTSDAM Rutenborn, 45, the first of Germany's postwar dramatists to win critical acclaim in New York, is a tall, spare balding man with merry blue eyes behind thick horned rim glasses.

Under Communist rule Potsdam remains a bomb-shattered town suffering the regimentation and economic pinch common to East Germany. This is the setting for Rutenborn's "grin and bear it" comedy "The Potsdam Treaty."

To be interviewed the pastor walked over the bridge from Potsdam to meet the writer in free West Berlin.

"I always tell my congregation," said the pastor: "Don't forget the sun is shining even in Potsdam. That is the primary fact."

The other facts include Communist officials. But we have had to learn how to live with them, to invite them to have a drink or tea with cake.

"The world of the 20th Century is divided between communism and democracy and we cannot destroy their world."

"In Potsdam we have not been able to wait until the Communist officials turn Christian and confess our opinions."

LIVING TOGETHER IS THEME. "Therefore the theme of my comedy is the wisdom of living together."

"The Potsdam Treaty" takes place in a house divided into two apartments, one of a Christian family and the other belonging to the family of a Communist offi-

cial. They share a common kitchen and bathroom.

The Christians fear the future. But the wife of the Communist official—"wives are so much wiser than husbands"—teaches her spouse that while at home he must behave like a Christian.

Peace then reigns in the house and Rutenborn explains that the two families have accepted the lesson of the Bible which teaches that "in the olden days men of faith lived beside men without faith."

Rutenborn's one-act play "The Sign of Jonah" is to be televised in the United States this fall. The play was first shown in America at New York's Union Theological Seminary where it won excellent notices.

The pastor likes to quote one distinguished New York drama critic who said of the play: "In one hour is concentrated the tragedy of human life."

Rutenborn said: "You know when you write a play, you don't always know what you are writing. But when I read what this man wrote about 'The Sign of Jonah,' I said to my wife, he is right. That is what I meant."

MORALITY PLAY "The Sign of Jonah" is a morality play. It deals with war guilt and responsibility for the Nazi massacre of Jews.

Rutenborn is elated with his American success. "Columbus discovered America in 1492 and America discovered me in 1957."

The pastor looks to the American stage because the German theater recovers the vitality it lost in the war.

Rutenborn attributes the German theatrical malaise mainly to two factors. First, the war killed off too many young German dramatists. Secondly, Hitler wiped out the Jewish producer and staging talent that once made the German theater outstanding.

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