

BOOKS and AUTHORS

New Books

The *Golden Legend of Ethiopia*, by Post Wheeler. United States Minister to Albania. You must remember this distinguished author of delightful

volumes of folk tales; in this new book of his the great legend of the African Empire is beautifully told. Here is the story of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba—as the Ethiopians tell it. It is delightful, if fanciful, reading, and will help pass the holidays in worthwhile pleasure.

It seems that in King Solomon's time the ruler of Ethiopia was a woman, chosen from the royal house. Her name was Maqueda (Queen Sheba to you and me), and she was extremely beautiful. According to the story, she heard of the great King of Judah and of his religion and great

temple, and decided to visit him. The resulting visit, with the love that sprang up between the King and Queen, and the son which was born to them, is the book's fascinating theme.

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Elliot Paul loved the Spanish people, and the inhabitants in the little country-town of Santa Eulalia. Therefore he wrote with feeling his *Life and Death of Santa Eulalia*. He said, "I believe it will interest my readers to know how fascist conquest and communist and anarchist invasion affect a peaceful town. By town I mean its people. I knew them all, their means

and aspirations, their ways of life and thought, their ties of blood, their friendships. I loved them and their animals and the shadows of the trees that fell upon their houses. They divided their lost *pesetas* and red wine and beans and gay spirit with me. I got away from their island, and they did not. This book is a debt I owe them."

The first part of the book dealt with happy, beautiful Santa Eulalia, where the women worked, healthy and joyous, in the fields with their men, loving the fragrance of alfalfa and understanding their wheat and their corn and their melons. Market-day was described in all its picturesque details, fishing-days and the care-free fishermen were painted with all the enthusiastic glow that only affection for a place and its people can incite. The characters of the story are also well chosen as to color and realistic touches. The church of Santa Eulalia, Sunday mornings, the congregations, were very picturesquely depicted. "The costumes of the women, always with a touch of gold, showed spots and flashes of red, blue, purple and orange which stirred to holiday vibrations the vivid greens of the trees, the buff of the wheat and the blue of the sky and sea." The setting was set for tragedy.

Communism, insidious, poisonous, crept into this little town. Elliot Paul says: "Ghosts and live men, for a moment take your places in the town as once it was.... Parents, husbands, wives and children, what figure would you have considered as an offer to your island, the land that was yours and your fathers', the sea and sky and air?" And in the end: "As I stood alone in that frightful hall, I sadly thought that in Santa Eulalia now there was not a house that did not have its emptiness and death or slaughter and desolation in prospect." Elliot Paul has written a beautiful book.

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The older generation says that we are living in a shame-

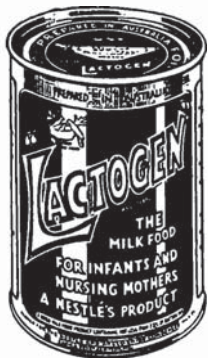
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THE NATURAL MILK FOOD

BOOKS AND...

(Continued from page 20)

less age; they decry the frankness of today's youth, the lack of modesty of modern young people. We have this to say, however, against present-day shamelessness—its utter honesty. W. Somerset Maugham's *Theatre* breathes that honesty in every brazen line of it. The author has tried, as he said he would, "to worm myself into a woman's soul and see life through her eyes." He succeeded almost perfectly—the almost is simply an afterthought to combat any possible contradictions. The analysis of Julia Gosselyn's character, her genuine kindness showing ever so faintly in every act of hers, be it a capricious whim, or an act of infidelity to her self-satisfied husband, is remarkably realistic and sympathetic. We follow her life, her falling passionately in love with her husband, and suddenly out of love; her glamorous career as an actress, her hopelessly carnal love for a boy twenty-five years younger than she, and the near-tragedy that the havoc almost wrought in her life, her indifferent motherhood, the vague questionings in her mind regarding the whys and the wherefores of her existence. Maugham makes up for the smutty passages in his book—of which there are many—by exquisite descriptions which leave the reader breathless, and makes his work literature. He has a wonderful knack for depicting emotions to their finest, most meticulous detail, so that one vibrates in delicate, almost painful sympathy with feelings of his personages. In parts recalling *Lily Mars* whose acting was as blended

with her living that she did not divorce one from the other, Julia Gosselyn is the more vibrant, more powerful, more intense character of the two. At the close of the book, Julia was also close to the solution of life. She says: "'All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players.' But there's the illusion, through that archway, it's we, the actors who are the reality.... We are the meaning of people's lives. We take their silly little emotions and turn them into art, out of them we create beauty, and their significance is that they form the audience we must have to fulfill ourselves.... We are the symbols of all this confused, aimless struggling that they call life, and it's only make-believe. That make-believe is the only reality." Viewed in that Platonic light, this illusion which is life, might be easier to sustain.

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A psychological novel is very often easy reading. And, we imagine, not easy writing either. *Dangerous Corner*, by Ruth Holden (who adopted her story from a play by Joseph Priestly), is a psychological novel. Tense with feeling from beginning to end the book asks the reader throughout its whole length—must truth really be told all the time? Or is it better to let "lying dogs lie" as the saying goes? The story is woven around a rather charming group of young people who, seemingly led by an outside force stronger than themselves, start telling the truth about themselves, and about one another. Ugly facts are unearthed, which end in the suicide of one of them, and the complete disruption of the group. Then, an epilogue—supposing the truth hadn't been let out? And an imaginary situation is brought up in which the charming company goes on in their apparent friendship, playing with one another, working with one another—in really sincere harmony. Truth broke their illusions, their ideals, shattered their beliefs. Is truth, therefore, worthwhile? It is an extremely teasing question.

—Pia Mancina

What Causes Epilepsy?

New York, N. Y. A booklet containing the opinions of famous doctors on the subject "CAN EPILEPSY BE CURED?" has met with great interest throughout the country. Doctors from all over the world have contributed to this interesting discussion, which contains a great deal of information and advice on the subject. Any reader will receive a free copy by writing to P. O. Box 1345, Manila, Dept. E.

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