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partisans were receiving the customary pre-hanging torture from Brücken's SS men (a mere detail he does not mention to his interrogators), Wila had begged him to spare the life of one of them, her brother. On his refusal she had spat in his face, and he had ordered her strung up along with the rest. "... Brücken finished stating the essential facts, adding a discreet lie: '... and they found a Mauser under this woman's mattress.' A superfluous accusation: in front of his men and under the eyes of the Polish civilians... this woman had spat in the face of a German officer. A war crime."

But through his remaining years the Colonel was to remember "... the little blue tongue of Wila Kasprovicz and her long silky hair: that ash-blond hair which was the only living thing that remained of her at the end of the twisted cord that swayed in the wind. Duty. Germany! The war."

The Needle

Here we perceive how useful it is to discard the bludgeon for a hypodermic needle—a needle so sharp that the reader does not even feel it enter. Numbed, perhaps, by the novelist's injection of sympathy, he has gone along with the hanging of

the wretched civilian Volkssturm who had tried to escape a hopeless last-stand fight, and perhaps the reader has even vaguely approved the military legality of the execution of the partisans—Poles defending their own soil against a cruel aggressor. But this, says author Groussard in his almost inaudible fashion, is the real Germany at war: Brücken, a brave, proud, honorable professional, committing these grotesquely barbarous acts and feeling justified about every one. Here is the real horror, though the novelist refrains from saying so aloud.

BEFORE Groussard takes leave of his hero, Brücken, acquitted of all charges, has joined the staff of Defense Minister Theodor Blank's shiny new "democratic" army. He is chauffeured from establishment to establishment on his inspection tours in a silver Mercedes-Benz. Needless to say, the Colonel is a stern disciplinarian. "During his latest barrack inspection at Bonn, he had put two officers under close arrest; one for being lax enough to wear a colored shirt, the other because his collar was doubtful. And he had had a notice put up reminding the soldiers that under no pretext must they go out in uniform without gloves."

The Actress And the Writer

GOUVERNEUR PAULDING

HERITAGE, by Anthony West. *Random House*. \$3.75.

One of the most difficult things in fiction is for a novelist to say that one of his characters is a great writer and get anyone to believe it. In *Heritage*, Anthony West has a famous English author and, compounding his peril, a famous actress as well. Both are believable: the actress coming onstage as Cleopatra in "that most gloriously contrived entrance—one of the greatest gifts of the race of playwrights to the race of actresses..."; the author recalling his youth and dismissing all unpro-

fessional nonsense about inspiration—"I don't really know what makes a man write. I began for the odd guinea...". But Max Town and Naomi Savage are more than just believable; their authenticity is never for a moment open to question.

They are brought to full stature as human beings through the eyes of the child born to them out of wedlock. But perhaps it is better to put it the other way round: The narrator, Richard Savage, seems real to us because Mr. West has invented parents real enough and fascinating

enough to warrant a narrator who will be real enough too as he tells about them.

The Inquiring Child

Richard Savage was left to find out his father's name the way some children are left to find out about sex. He stumbled upon it at boarding school when a friend's father, taking the two boys to lunch, blurted it out: "I'm sorry, Savage, it just slipped out. You're so like your father it's funny. . . ." The famous father who had shown no interest in the nursery stage of Richard's existence soon came down to see the schoolboy. He came down in a racing car driven by his German mistress; he wore a black caracul hat he had brought back from Moscow and "a long coat reaching almost to the ground with a hint of the Cossack about its waistline and its flared skirt." The Graf in was adorned with a leopard-skin coat and a man's polo-necked sweater. A shock for a British schoolboy. But the drive they took was wonderful. Max immediately began talking about "the beginnings of history in England, about farming, about the civil wars between King and Parliament, and about the early days of flying." At that first meeting with Richard he began to show the incomparable fascination of his alert and encyclopedic mind. The struggle was on between Naomi and Max for the child's allegiance.

That is the story young Savage has to tell. He never whines in telling it. He is not the self-pitying sort. Perhaps his great ability to observe, his deep need to understand, comes to him from his parents.

After separating they had rearranged their lives; they were compelled to rearrange them in the changing patterns of their creative imaginations. The actress had left the theater to play the role of the lady of a great country house as the wife of Colonel Arthur; the writer, after fifty novels, was reluctantly playing the role of grand old man of English letters but breaking out of it at all occasions to warn the world about Hitler and the atom bomb, which he had already predicted. They were living as they always had in the dreams they created for themselves and for the public. But Richard was a fact that could not be put

into a dream. They had forgotten each other or rather each had created a separate and very different story of their relationship.

In Naomi's version, Max, selfish and faithless, had seduced a young girl at the moment of her suffragette belief in the "new woman's" freedom from Victorian convention. In Town's memory, Naomi had looked very lovely as she stood in the rain outside his house begging him to take her in. And now each told Richard about the other as he shuttled back and forth between his father's

place at Cannes, his father's London house, and his mother's great estate in Wiltshire, observing his father alternately artful and helpless in his relationship with women, his mother playing the role of devoted wife and exquisite snob in the quiet English countryside.

The Bathless

Max Town knew about snobbishness. He had found out all about it when he came up from the country as a young man with no money and a hopeless accent. He owed his educa-

To those living in a trance

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tion to the kindness of humble folk and he never forgot the poverty and misery he came from. Once as a farm boy a farmer had slashed him across the back with a whip for not doffing his cap to his betters. He had taught school and then, for that "odd guinea," he had found his way into journalism. He remained, despite his amazing prevision, a nineteenth-century believer in progress. It is unfashionable to believe in progress now, and we forget some of the thoroughly convincing reasons a man of Max Town's generation—who had known the world before the turn of the century—had for believing in it. As usual, they were very simple, down-to-earth reasons: "People smelt then"—when Max was a boy—"in a way they don't now. Nice people had baths, but the poor just didn't. They washed their faces and hands and they went to bed in their underclothes. I don't know when pyjamas, cheap pyjamas, came in but they didn't exist when I was a boy. Not for my sort anyway. On a holiday night like this the streets were filled with a crowd that stank of stale sweat. . . . You don't realize what a liberation cheap shoes have meant. . . ." Max Town had reason to believe in the future—and hardheaded realism to see that Hitler and the rest were intent on spoiling it.

Naomi did not play fair with Richard, but her husband, Colonel Arthur, did. He made him heir to Marshwood; he gave him his complete trust and friendship. Incidentally he gave the narrator the opportunity to paint the lovely English countryside—as his father gave him occasion to describe the French Riviera and London—simply and movingly.

Beyond Hate

Richard was away from Oxford with some archaeologists when the telegram came from Colonel Arthur. Naomi had abandoned the Colonel, and was divorcing him, to open in a play in New York. "She's an actress. . . ." Richard told the Colonel. "She doesn't exist anywhere else." And then in the room of the great house he was about to leave to go to the war, Richard summed it all up to himself. He passed beyond the hate he had felt for his mother, beyond the excitement and admiration he

felt for his father. He reached the freedom of the grown man. He understood. His mother "was one of the leads round whom the plays of life turned. The curtain had come down on the Marshwood comedy and we, the supers, had to look for other parts. . . . I would be able to choose my own. . . ."

This absorbing novel has a quotation on the title page: "These are long vendettas, / A peculiar people neither forgivers nor forgetters . . ." It is curiously inapposite, for if the narrator does not forget, he most certainly forgives.

Book Notes

START FROM SOMEWHERE ELSE: AN EXPOSITION OF WIT AND HUMOR POLITE AND PERILOUS, by Oliver St. John Gogarty. *Doubleday. \$2.95.*

"Where does the eighteenth century still linger without the squalor and the horror of the period? . . . In Dublin, of course . . ." And it is true enough, as St. John Gogarty remarks, that "the Orangemen who built the town after the Battle of the Boyne had the art, even if it was their only art, of building a beautiful city and making its ways wide." It is true also that no Irishman can ever write a sentence about Dublin or his country without putting a dig into it about somebody or other. In this slight volume Mr. Gogarty is often funny, often superficial and malicious, as when he calls T. S. Eliot "the greatest English poet who ever came out of St. Louis," but ever constant in his attendance at the altar of Irish wit.

NOT THE GLORY, by Pierre Boule. *Vanguard. \$3.50.*

Another short novel by the witty French author of *The Bridge Over the River Kwai*. This one details the adventures of a top-notch German spy in the Second World War who worms his way into the confidence of government officials in London and comes to a sticky but surprising end. As in *The Bridge*, M. Boule pokes fun at the English (" . . . the gentlemen were all red-faced, levelheaded, dull-minded, and dim-witted, while all the ladies, with very few exceptions, looked exactly like the gentlemen"), but as a wartime member of British Special Force in Calcutta,

he has a profound respect for the efficiency of their intelligence services.

GERMINIE, by Edmond and Jules de Goncourt. Introduction by Martin Turnell. *Grove Press. Hardbound: \$3. Evergreen Edition: \$1.25.*

One always sees these two brothers almost smothered in their Paris apartment beneath a mountain of artistic bric-a-brac, meticulously showing one another a Japanese print, endlessly telling one another what so and so had said at a party, and then each day setting to work on their famous and complicated diary. They had the most precious—one would say finicky—good taste, and it is difficult to realize that they were outraged by precious and finicky good taste in the literature of their times. How they managed to find out all there was to know about Germinie, a servant girl destroyed by love, is hard to imagine.

CARTOON TREASURY: PEN AND PENCIL HUMOR OF THE WORLD. Edited by Lucy Black Johnson and Pyke Johnson, Jr. *Doubleday. \$4.95.*

Copious and not overpriced, this excellent selection provides a pleasant occasion to argue once again about whether what is funny in one country is funny in another. Evidence for the One World theory is pretty strong. So, unfortunately, is the evidence that contemporary cartoons in general are ugly to look at—even the funniest of them. There is no Gavarni for style, no Caran d'Ache for charm, no Daumier for caricatures that still show the living form.

MANDARIN RED, by James Cameron. *Rinehart. \$3.50.*

The author, chief correspondent of the *London News Chronicle*, traveled through China in 1954, and if the Communists let him in with the idea of impressing him with their system, they failed. But he did not fail the Chinese people, who must desire more than anything else to have the outer world reminded of their human presence. Our readers will remember Mr. Cameron's article "Are Religions the Opium of the People?" (May 19, 1955).