

LERMONTOV AFTER ONE HUNDRED YEARS

(Continued from page 4)

phrase, Pechorin felt no obligation towards Maxim Maximich and showed no inclination to renew the past. It is one of the most realistic and touching scenes in literature and incredibly up-to-date. In reading it a hundred years disappear and before us is not Pechorin, but the hero of our own time.

It is perhaps disconcerting to discover Pechorin alive and among us a hundred years after the death of his creator. But upon reflection, and in

SALLY BENSON hails:

"A master of horror..."

THERE is no one quite like Shearing." — *New Yorker*. * "A horror-thriller of the most sinister and horror-thrilling kind." — *N.Y. Times Book Review* * "A truly devilish conclusion... Here is one of the most malevolent females in song or story." — WILL CUPPY, *N.Y. Herald Tribune*. \$2.00, Smith & Durrell, Inc.

THE CRIME OF

Laura Sarelle

BY JOSEPH SHEARING



"Fine reading with no loopholes" — *New Yorker*

Joshua Clunk, great (and not too scrupulous) criminal lawyer follows a trail of ruthless murders that stirred official war-time London. "A whiz of a plot—the story is as smooth as silk." — *Herald Tribune BOOKS*. August CRIME CLUB selection. \$2.00

ORPHAN ANN

by H. C. Bailey



view of the vast general advancement of these hundred years, it is reassuring to find that human progress is not dependent upon heroes but on the steadily plodding masses.

Such is the immortal portrait which Lermontov's cynical brush painted of himself and to which he gave the ironic title, "A Hero of Our Time." It is the offspring of an author twenty-five years of age, who is only four years older than his literary child.

The women in the novel, or for that matter Lermontov's female folk in general, are not particularly distinguished. Not one of them remotely approaches the superb personality of Pushkin's heroine in "Eugene Onegin." Princess Marie has charm but is somehow incomplete and Vera we see only as through a veil. Lermontov enjoyed the friendship of a number of real women, but he was too subjective and far too cynical to recreate one of them. Sushkova, after whom Marie was modelled, appears to much better advantage in her own letters, diaries, and conversations than she does as the object of Pechorin's attentions. In his attitude towards women Lermontov was decidedly more parochial than Pushkin. The latter

was as conversant with the fair sex as the younger poet, but that did not lessen his appreciation of Tatiana.

The comparison is unfair in the sense that Lermontov did not compare himself with Pushkin, either in his prose or poetry. Before his last departure for Pyatigorsk he read one of his poems at the house of the historian Karamzin. Some one remarked that it was as good as Pushkin. Whereupon Lermontov protested, "Do not compare me with Alexander Sergeyevitch. I will never reach his eminence. There is no time for it. I will be killed." This prediction was not necessarily as inspired as some assume. In view of the character of the poet and the prevailing fashion of the period his early death was highly probable. He died, July 27, 1841, at the age of twenty-six, in a duel with his school friend Martinov. He truly was not granted time to reach Pushkin's exalted position. Judging by the superb work that he left behind and particularly by the speed with which he developed during the last few years of his life it is not too much to assume that had he lived as long as his great predecessor he would have climbed as high.

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	Crime, Place, and Sleuth	Summing Up	Verdict
SEEING IS BELIEVING <i>Carter Dickson</i> (Morrow: \$2.)	Rubber dagger in hand of hypnotized wife turns into real poniard and slays husband before horrified guests. Enter Sir Henry Merivale.	Ennobled sleuth's robustious memoirs vie with excellent detecting in fantastic and shrewdly tangled mixture of laughs and horror.	Essential
THE WHITE WOLF <i>Franklin Gregory</i> (Random House: \$2.)	Young Penna. heiress with lycanthropic forebears flirts with black magic and, whoosh, one night she's a big bad murderin' wolf.	Twentieth-century American version of 'loup garou' lore handled with due regard to traditional trappings and plentiful, if heavy-handed, thrills.	Scary
AWAKE DEBORAH! <i>Eden Phillpotts</i> (Macmillan: \$2.50)	Search for rare vaccinium leads plant-lover to grisly find on Dartmoor and starts unraveling of doubly twisted murder skein.	Old-fashioned gentleman narrator of great help to perplexed professionals in solving wordy and slow-moving but always interesting case.	Bulldog British
SHE FADED INTO THIN AIR <i>Ethel Lina White</i> (Harpers: \$2.)	Two girls enter innocent looking London flat and inexplicably vanish. Corpse of one is found. Investigator Foam saves t'other and elucidates.	Baffling trick—with simple explanation—gives tale good start. Profuse action and nasty villain keep it moving rapidly.	Good puzzle
HALLOWE'EN HOMICIDE <i>Lee Thayer</i> (Dodd, Mead: \$2.)	Bludgeoning of venomous lady in Greenwich Village hideaway provides Peter Clancy with tough and tangled case.	Rather feverish but neatly plotted, tale of sudden death amongst artists, dress-designers, interior decorators and the like.	Average

Last Roundup

LAST MAN AROUND THE WORLD.
By Stephen Longstreet. New York:
Random House. 1941. 368 pp. \$3.

Reviewed by LINTON WELLS

“JUST before the curtain went down” on what we used to think of as Civilization, that master word-craftsman, Stephen Longstreet, circumnavigated the globe and became the “Last Man around the World,” as he calls his book.

Longstreet says modestly that “Last Man around the World” is no guide book, no history, no book of detailed economic charts. “It is one man’s picture of his world with the sketches of things seen and heard.” Actually, it is an infernally clever portrayal of peoples and places, exhilaratingly caustic and bluntly sagacious—gratifying proof of the wisdom of the author’s admitted policy of “drifting around without a guide book, talking to people and asking stupid questions,” then writing of what he has seen and heard and admitting that of which he is ignorant.

For the most part, Longstreet voyaged aboard a luxury liner during those halcyon pre-war months. He has seen fit to conceal the identity and actual course of the vessel, but from her he digressed into the hinterland of Europe, the Balkans and Near East, Africa, and Asia. The true names of his heterogeneous traveling companions are also concealed, manifestly with good reason.

There was, for instance his bibulous roommate, wealthy Big Boy, chronically afflicted with DT’s and incessantly in search of comely “tomatoes” to sample; there was an aggressive, acquisitive, soul-examining Pamela, unhappily retreating from marital memories; there was a lusty, Kansas-



—Sketch by the author.

born Duchess, “not a woman, but a gland.” Others were the erudite Proust’s Pal—an elderly Peter Arnoish elegant; the liner’s Captain, a “shy but very passionate man;” and divers other human oddments who “dined and drank and squabbled and got emotionally snarled up and saw sights and scraped up strange acquaintances and listened to strange tales in bars wherever they went.”

Among many other matters of more or less importance, Longstreet learned abroad that the fleas of Rumania “seem to hold the upper hand and abuse one’s confidence”; that “graft is not a habit but a tradition”; that “nepotism is a national sport and children are born with delinquent taxes; and that “the only trouble with Hawaii is the fact that it is so like the travel posters.”

The author took time out in China to become a war correspondent and his understandable reaction to Japanese aggression against China, carried on with hypocritical American aid, was:

“I think I shall study to become a hermit, or shake hands with a leper.”

China also provided Longstreet with gastronomic material for perhaps his most graphic descriptive writing, which I can attest is not exaggerated:

“New-born cage-bred mice are nude and pink. Before hot wine is drunk, they are dipped alive in batter, held by the tails and fried, then stirred in cold honey and popped into the mouth while one chews off the tail. Big Boy had six, but he had been drinking bowls of warm wine and thought they were radishes. He was still gregarious and friendly when he found out what he was chewing.”

“Last Man around the World” conceivably may be the last chronicle of its kind written, because this earth may never fully throw off the effects of the current war virus, so it represents a legacy by Stephen Longstreet which well deserves reading.

Linton Wells, foreign correspondent, news broadcaster, is the author of “Blood on the Moon.”

Be Focal

Writing with frigid insolence of modern architectural problems, a fellow hack claims that the architect must henceforth establish “a developmental ratio between the utilitarian and the æsthetic.” He forgets the great Corbusier’s hoarse cry at Passy in 1929:

“Resolve the dominant! Be focal! Fuse the nodal pentatonic line into an organic higher dynamism! Rhomboidalism is the enemy! Waiter! A crème de menthe!”

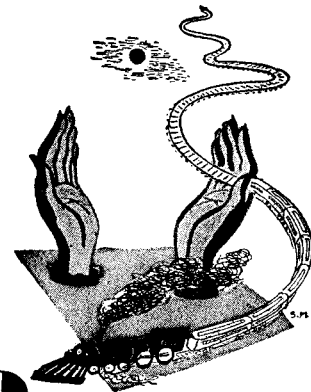
—News Chronicle, London.

Basic English Bible

THE NEW TESTAMENT IN BASIC ENGLISH. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc. 1941. 548 pp. \$2.

Reviewed by KIRSOPP LAKE

IT has often been said that a committee cannot write English, and it has as often been replied that this is refuted by the King James version of the Bible which was the work of a committee. Nevertheless, the former statement is true, and the King James version is no exception, because the committee appointed by the King did little more than accept Tyndale’s version with a minimum of change, not always for the better. To illustrate the fact that it was not always for the better, the Book of the Psalms of David in the King James version should be compared with that in the Prayer book, which took the Psalms from the Great Bible of King Henry the Eighth, of blessed if matrimonial memory, and represents almost unchanged the version of Tyndale,—Coverdale—(Matthew). For instance, the Prayer book in Ps. 108, 28-30, says “So when they cry unto the Lord in their trouble . . . he bringeth them unto the haven where they would be,”—which is lovely English, but the King James version says “unto their



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