

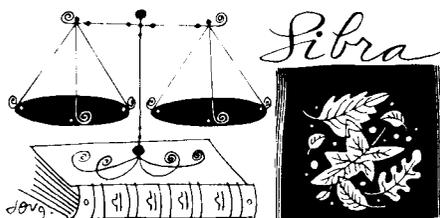
## A Winter in Drumberly

SHOULDER THE SKY. By D. E. Stevenson. New York: Rinehart & Co. 275 pp. \$2.75.

By EUGENIE BOLGER

THE CHILL wind whistling through the streets of Drumberly, sending the inhabitants scurrying to the warmth of their hearths, is not in any way related to the violent storms of passion which assail the soul in other places and other books. It is merely the winter wind of the Scottish borderland, from which the good Drumberlians have found snug haven.

In "Shoulder the Sky" D. E. Stevenson tells another story of Jock and Mamie Johnstone of Mureth Farm. It concerns itself chiefly with their nephew James and his bride, Rhoda, who have come to settle in Drumberly. James fears that Rhoda, who has lived much of her life in London and has sacrificed a promising career as an artist to marry him, will be lonely and unhappy in the isolation of Boscath Farm. The rigors of a Boscath winter would contrast sharply with a winter of London's crowded social gaiety. Even in summer the daft road leading from Boscath to Drumberly is hard going; winter's ice and



## Fiction Notes

I KILLED STALIN. By Sterling Noel. Farrar, Straus & Young. \$3. From his compelling title to the final accomplishment of its program, it is clear that Mr. Noel has us all by the nose and may lead where he will. He is making use, of course, of a powerful mass phobia, and it is useless even to suggest that his is an irrational palliative that could not possibly hold any cure. This is romance. Ten years ago Tommy Hambleton was rambling through the novels of Manning Coles disguised as a Nazi general, nudging Goering, shouting Goebbels down, playing hob with Hitler's plans. And here we are now with one Jan Miles, planted within the Russian MVD by a mysterious intelligence bureau, with one grim, timed, inexorable mission to perform. There may or may not be some significance in the difference in temper between the cheery and charming Tommy Hambleton and this hard, humorless, sanguinary Miles, who works with the precision and inflexibility of a hired nemesis. This kind of thing isn't as much fun as it used to be. Maybe Mr. Noel is too close to reality.

So far as detail is concerned, he is inexhaustible. How would a determined man progress from a picket line on the New York waterfront to the inner circle of Beria's secret police? How would he be trained to meet with familiarity and resourcefulness every situation that must appear on the way? How would he keep in contact with home base? Mr. Noel has set up a labyrinthine world of intrigue and violence so convincing in the half that we can recognize from our own limited newspaper knowledge that we are led to concede the rest. It moves at high speed, and quite apart from its political appeal it will hold the thriller addict to the bitter end.

—NATHAN L. ROTHMAN.

THE PICTURE WINDOW. By Josephine Lawrence. Morrow. \$3. The number of people over sixty-five is said to have doubled in the last fifty years. Therefore the problem Miss Lawrence deals with in "The Picture Window"—how can the younger generation marry and lead their own lives while saddled with the emotional and financial care of their elders—is a real one.

Marriage seemed impossible for Bonnie and Garth. Both worked, but their combined incomes could not support three households. Bonnie has a gentle unworldly father, an irresponsible young brother; Garth has a semi-invalid widowed mother and a sister

snow make it treacherous, well-nigh impassable. For most of the year the river separating Boscath from Mureth can be easily forded, but with the flood tides of winter storms Boscath becomes an island amid snow-covered hills. Although it is autumn when Rhoda and James come to Boscath, she soon feels the discontent of idleness and isolation. The worst of James's fears appear to be realized. It is not long, however, before Rhoda resumes her painting and becomes happily settled in country life. New friends are not denied her, and their strangely abundant mysteries and sorrows are a challenge to her warm interest in others. Then, too, there is young Duggie, the son of Mamie's cook, in whom she finds a genuine talent, and who becomes virtually a part of her studio's accouterment.

Unfortunately, the problem of Rhoda's adjustment, a very real and difficult one, is merely glossed over, as the author moves on to unravel the romantic tangles of her other principals. The affair of Henry Ogylvie Smith, whose conscience prevents his freeing himself from a marriage which has been unhappy for both his wife and himself, in order that he may marry a girl of his own social and intellectual level, is too flimsy and contrived to engage the reader's sympathies seriously. Although much space is devoted to them, neither Henry nor the girl he loves are sufficiently convincing. It is difficult to accept such simplicity of thought and pure moral motivation. Life is a continual conflict of good and evil, each decision a battle won or lost by conscience. But these pages are as neatly insulated against the soul's torments as are the walls of Mureth House against the winter's cold blasts.

There is nothing lacking, however, in Miss Stevenson's understanding of the Scottish countryside. Drumberly and its environs, Boscath Farm and Mureth House have physical reality. The hilly country with its burns and bogs, the sharp tang of autumn weather, a blizzard's cruel beauty, are all vividly described. The homely businesses of farmers and their wives are warmly portrayed. In "Shoulder the Sky" Miss Stevenson's loyal readers will once more find a world far happier, far more simple, than the one in which we live.

### FRASER YOUNG'S

#### LITERARY CRYPT No. 436

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 436 will be found in the next issue.

BC KFKKMT YP PC

YEYSTPLTBQ CE UMCJQP

MCBVTE QWJB QWJQ KMCRB

KI QWT PFLLTTPUFM

QTJLWTE.

—PYE RYMMYJN CPMTE.

Answer to No. 435

Marriage resembles a pair of shears, so joined that they can not be separated; often moving in opposite directions, yet always punishing anyone who comes between them.

—SYDNEY SMITH.

in her forties who waits on her. Bonnie and Garth are not willing to buy their happiness at the expense of others. As the story opens they are coming home from a brief honeymoon to the big old city-surrounded house in which they have already gathered their dependents. Here is an interesting and human situation filled with dramatic possibilities, and one feels both sympathy and real concern for the bold and blithe pair who have plunged into it.

There is technical skill here in the writing, an easy movement of dialogue and scene. The complications arise out of the clash of character and include such events as the young brother's marriage to a teen-age girl—he brings her home, of course—the father's loss of a job, the sister's dental troubles, the maid with two children, and the boarder taken in to pay for her. There is also a chance acquaintance's dying mother who is rescued from being thrown out by a cruel son-in-law. These things are smoothly handled by Miss Lawrence in the writing and by her heroine in the action of the book. How does Bonnie manage to do all this? Garth, the good and understanding, says: "She does it for love."

Now this is so right, so ideally the solution for all problems of personal or more general nature that one longs to believe in Bonnie and Garth. Often, thanks to their flashes of humor, one does. But the scales are overloaded. Practically all of Bonnie's friends are wrestling with parent problems.

In fact, the characters in this book can talk of little else, except perhaps their teeth and dentures. We can swallow the teeth because they are amusing; what we cannot swallow is the high incidence of parent trouble. Unity is an admirable thing in writing, yet if every character and incident is so obviously chosen to point the moral of the tale, all sense of proportion, of life as a whole, is lost. If one accepted as complete and entirely true this view from Miss Lawrence's picture window, he would conclude that the parent-child relationship is an unhealthy, an unnatural one and should be done away with at once, perhaps by euthanasia of all parents as soon as the eldest child reaches marriageable age.

Just the same, it is quite a readable book.

—CID RICKETTS SUMNER.

**OTHER LIVES TO LIVE.** By Herbert Lyons. Dial. \$3. Mr. Lyons proved himself an acid master of the light comedy of modern manners and morals in his first work, "The Rest (Continued on page 33)

**U.S.A. & the World.** *The ancient Romans were fond of calling the Mediterranean "our sea"; now, with air and naval bases burgeoning along its shores, some Americans are coming to regard it as their concern. Mediterranean lands are the subject of four books reviewed this week: The Near East of the Arabs and the Jews is discussed somewhat sensationally in John Roy Carlson's "Cairo to Damascus" and in solidly factual fashion in "The Near East and the Great Powers," edited by Richard N. Frye. The unhappy land of Spain is described in Gerard Brenan's "The Face of Spain," which is hostile to Franco, and Carleton J. H. Hayes's "The United States and Spain," which is inclined to be friendly. Not only the Mediterranean, but all theatres of American foreign policy, are treated in John Fischer's shrewd "Master Plan U.S.A." Our policy in the Far East and its foremost critic, Douglas MacArthur, are the subjects of Rovere's and Schlesinger's "The General and the President."*

## Conflict with Civil Authority

**THE GENERAL AND THE PRESIDENT.** By Richard H. Rovere and Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. New York: Farrar, Straus & Young. 336 pp. \$3.75.

By JAMES M. MINIFIE

CONFLICTS with Presidents, actual and potential, are in the MacArthur bloodstream. A true MacArthur rares up at the drop of a Presidential hint like a Hatfield at a McCoy's footstep.

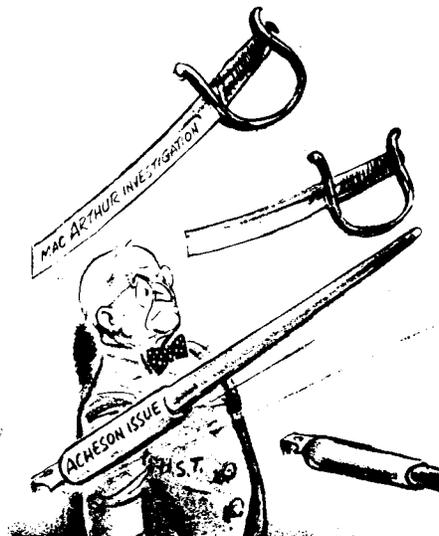
William Howard Taft and Theodore Roosevelt share with Harry S. Truman the privilege of being parties to President-MacArthur feuds. The MacArthur allergy to the civil power was handsomely displayed in 1900 when Mr. Taft arrived in the Philippines during the rule of General Arthur MacArthur, father of Douglas. Mr. Taft came as

Civilian Commissioner invested with full authority by Washington. General MacArthur declined to meet him at the dock, assigned him a small, uncomfortable room, and ignored him. Mr. Taft reported back to Elihu Root, the Secretary of War, that the General's sense of humor was more limited than his self-esteem, and asked that the choice be made between the General and him. General MacArthur was relieved of his command.

He had not been home long before he made a public speech in which he cast doubt on the loyalty of German-Americans. This brought on him the wrath of Theodore Roosevelt, who declared roundly that he was unfit to hold a commission in the National Guard. It is not surprising that when Mr. Taft became President he passed over General Arthur MacArthur for the post of Chief of Staff.

There was thus a family tradition of feuding with the civil authority, combined with an inherited feeling of persecution, which was bound to make for trouble in a man of General Douglas MacArthur's gifts. Men who are abundantly endowed do not find their path easy. The heroic figure in a democratic state is apt to feel hemmed in. One or the other is usually reduced.

These are the essentials of the story brilliantly told by Richard H. Rovere and Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. Among many curious things, it brings out the number of times the younger MacArthur has been in conflict with authority. He got away with much more



—Burck in the Chicago Sun-Times.

"The Great Knife-Throwing Act."

James M. Minifie is a member of the Washington staff of the New York Herald-Tribune.