fellow there had one. . . . I don't like these [*sic*] kind of dances much, because they are too formal. The people I met are too sporty for me."

As student, two years later, again to his mother: "My friend [Ezra] Pound invited me to spend Saturday and Sunday with him. . . . He, Pound, is a fine fellow; he is the essence of optimism and has a cast-iron faith that is something to admire. If he ever does get blue nobody knows it, so he is just the man for me. But not one person in a thousand likes him, and a great many detest him and why? Because he is so darned full of conceits and affectation. . . . He is afraid of being taken in if he trusts his really tender heart to mercies of a cruel crowd and so keeps it hidden and trusts no one."

As husband, 1927: "Dearest Floss: I have been absolutely heartbroken this afternoon for lack of you. Just sick with it. . . . It doesn't seem right for you to be there. If I cannot be happy I will not be separated from you."

As father, 1942, to his son William, off in the service: "That relationship between father and son is one of the toughest things in the world to break down. It seems so natural and it is natural—in fact it's inevitable—but it separates as much as it joins. A man wants to protect his son, wants to teach him the things he, the father, has learned or thinks he has learned. But it's exactly that which a child resents."

As a poet, 1916, to Amy Lowell: "I thank you again for your suggestion of a meeting but finding myself totally opposed to the spirit of what appears to be your whole purpose of life toward art I must tell you the truth: I'm not interested."

Again, in 1952, to Robert Lowell: "I'm glad you recognized my affection for Pound and saw what I intended to make known of him. He too was an orchid in my forest, he had no interest, really, for my trees, no more than did Eliot."

To Pound himself, 1956: "Don't speak of apes and Roosevelt to me—you know as much of the *implementation* of what you *think* you are proposing as one of the Wops I used to take care of on Guinea Hill. *You don't even begin to know* what the problem is. Learn to write an understandable letter before you begin to sound off. . . . Never mind, Ez, I hope we can still be friends."

One more: 1945, to Norman Macleod: "For I know that whatever my life has been it has been single in purpose, simple in design, and constantly directed to the one end . . . Poetry, an art, is what answer I have."

WORLD WAR II

—Imperial War Museum, London.

"Bewildering succession of life-and-death decisions."

The Road to Rome

***"The Battle of Cassino," by Fred Majdalany** (Houghton Mifflin. 300 pp. $4), is an account of the six-months' Allied push up the boot of Italy to the capital. Gordon Harrison,* Detroit News *military critic and World War II Army historian, reviews it.*

By Gordon Harrison

WHAT Fred Majdalany calls "The Battle of Cassino" was actually a six-months' campaign which broke the Germans' Gustav Line and opened the road to Rome. It began with the disastrous Rapido River crossings by the U. S. 36th Division in January 1944, and ended when Gen. Mark Clark's Fifth Army entered Rome on June 4, two days before the Normandy landings permanently eclipsed the Italian theatre. Majdalany's book is an account of great undertakings, great courage, and great frustrations. It is a tale—as he tells it—of the ironies of a sideshow war, where men died out of the spotlight for reasons often not very clear to anyone.

The brooding central irony is the monastery of Monte Cassino, which the Allied air force destroyed in one of the heaviest tactical bombing attacks of the war. Mr. Majdalany argues persuasively that the bombing had to be done under the compulsions of war as they then existed. Yet he also has no doubt that the 576 tons of bombs dropped on February 15 only flushed from their sanctuary a handful of monks and a few frightened Italian refugees. The Germans never garrisoned the building, never even used it for observation. Destroying it contributed nothing to the battle stalled for so long in the valleys below. Nevertheless, the monastery, venerable and innocent, had to be destroyed. It was part and symbol of the natural fortress which the enemy exploited to the fullest. If it were not used, it might be. No commander could ask his men to put their lives in jeopardy without using every means in his power to let them win and live. So massive vandalism was carried out soberly, rationally, necessitously—and came to nothing.

That, one gathers, might almost be Mr. Majdalany's epitaph for the Italian war. He was present at Cassino as a British infantry officer and wrote a short account of his experiences published as "The Monastery" in 1946. He has done considerable research since, chiefly in British and New Zealand sources. He believed then and still believes that the fighting men in Italy were badly let down. Not surprisingly he blames the Americans, who he charges so bungled strategy as to treat the Italian theatre gratuitously as the poor relation and deprive it of just those extra military goods needed to make it a success.

The point of view has been most vigorously stated by Sir Winston Churchill. And it has been as vigorously answered many times. In this case no answer is needed because no one could offer a more convincing

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refutation than Mr. Majdalany himself, who is at his best in describing the incredible difficulties of moving anything that could fight up the horny boot of Italy. "It is a significant fact," he writes at one point after analyzing the failure of the Anzio end run to run, "that the most outspoken critics of the Italian campaign, including Churchill, never saw the battlefields." How curious that one who fought there and sees so clearly the lessons of that experience should now write in Churchillian vein of his regrets that Italy was not made a main show and jumping off place for the climactic push to beat the Russians into central Europe!

But strategy is not really Mr. Majdalany's concern. He is interested in how brave men time after time flung themselves against the all but impregnable German lines chiselled into the rocks of the Cassino mountains. Out of that situation he fashions a dramatic, smoothly written, and memorable tale. One might have been tempted to call it a great battle narrative if S. L. A. Marshall had not shown how the story of battle can be written. Majdalany working mostly from records—curiously he seems not to have consulted German records except a few prisoner diaries and letters—has had to "write up" the material, generalizing what it was like from his personal memories and creative imagination. Marshall, most notably in his Korean books, worked from material gathered immediately after battle from the participants. He could thus write what appears almost never in the written record: The real impact of battle situations on individuals, from private to general, who confronted them. Battle is seen as a bewildering succession of life-and-death decisions by people continually under test.

"The Battle of Cassino" is an impassioned book filled with angry sympathy for the forgotten soldiers of the Italian front. Yet it contains not a single name below the rank of division commander. The hero is Everyman, distinguished sometimes by nationality—Polish, American, Indian, British, New Zealander—and sometimes by unit, but never, even anonymously, by personality (except among the monks). The method permits the author a clarity and rhetorical freedom he would not have had working closer to the individual facts, and he takes full advantage to make up in pungent and imaginative commentary a part at least of what he has sacrificed in emotional immediacy. If the result is not completely satisfactory, it is an impressive literary performance.

Bou-Vivant's War

***"Drive," by Col. Charles R. Codman** (Little, Brown. 335 pp. $5), is the memoir of an officer who served with Patton in Africa, Sicily, and western Europe, pieced together from letters he wrote at the time to his wife. Our reviewer, Brig. Gen. S. L. A. Marshall, was chief U.S. Army historian in the European theatre.*

By S. L. A. Marshall

LIKE the World War I memoirs of the late Col. Charles Repington, "Drive," the posthumously-published writings of the late Col. Charles R. Codman have a tone of delightful whimsy and more than occasional irrelevance.

They were written effortlessly by a man richly gifted in self-expression, accustomed to moving among charming people, with a ready ear for any anecdote and a passionate interest in great events which centered more in their byplay than their moving currents.

They will be read joyously with no strain and no afterglow of deep reflection. For many reasons, the best one being that Codman was an exciting and warm personality, who had led a story-book life, this is an unusual book.

Save that it was not intended originally to be a book, but is largely drawn from the letters Mrs. Codman received from her husband while he trooped through Africa, into Sicily, and across Western Europe at the left hand of the late Gen. George S. Patton, Jr., it might have been called: "A Bon Vivant's War." In his bon-vivant nature, great inner strength combined with outward polish and gentleness. Codman was the thoroughly "good" man. His letters reflect his great love for his wife, his intense desire that she know all that passes with him. Only one other military writer, Maj. Gen. E. L. Spears, lets himself go in this way. Yet it adds power and grace to all military discussions.

Codman was a retread. In World War I, he was first an ambulance driver, then a U.S. pilot. Wounded and shot down over Germany, he later escaped in company with James Norman Hall, to become afterwards generously decorated.

Then in the 1940s, what truly famous fortune became his! He got a job as wine taster for S. S. Pierce and romped through twenty years of sampling Europe cellar by cellar. Of that task, he kept company with lovely people, including Mrs. Codman.

Such men must invariably go back to war, if health permits. Codman entered the Air Force. His mastery of French, more than pure personal luck, won him assignment to Operation Torch, the North African invasion. He functioned at several high-level conferences. So he met Patton and Patton quite promptly preempted him from the Air Force. He stayed Patton's aide until a few days before the fatal motor accident near Heidelberg.

Reading between the lines of Codman's correspondence with his wife, one suspects that what endeared him to old Blood-and-Guts and made him the indispensable man, was not his

—Wide World.

General Patton—". . . that man of Mars."

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