

Oh my sore eyes! I wish mid-term examinations were eradicated
And just think, I never even opened History 1.

"What time is it, Leo"

"11.15, Dom." I guess Father George will be around anytime
now. I must wash my face and give my teeth a bed-time brushing.

A squeaky step pervaded the stillness. Tap! Tap! Tap! A
swagger stick struck the door. A slight hesitation ensued. The door
finally opened. A man peered over his glasses at us. The shrill
voice of our vexing prefect rang in my newly-washed ears. "Don-
nelly . . . Albert . . . Eleven-twenty. Go to bed."

I said my prayers, turned off the lights, and fell into bed. Then
I hit the pit I heaved a deep sigh. Poor little ego! The night was
wasted, four subjects still remained a mystery. Tomorrow, I, as
well as seventy-five percent of my classmates, had to face the grim
facts . . . We were clueless.

—KENNETH DONNELLY '50

- BOOK REVIEWS -

ALL YOUR IDOLS

Harry Sylvester

New York,

Harry Holt & Co., 1948

(245 pages)

This book is a compilation of short stories, fourteen in all.
These stories have appeared in many of the more popular magazines,
such as **Colliers**, **Esquire**, **Story**, **Commonweal**, and others.
They have been published over a period of sixteen years.

The author is among the best of the younger American writers
of today. He began writing while still an undergraduate at Notre
Dame University and since then has written one hundred short
stories and four novels. **Moon Goffney** and **Dayspring** are the
more popular of the latter.

In **All Your Idols** the author chooses a wide variety of topics for his short stories: he tells about boxers, bull-fighters, soldiers, doctors, students and priests. His characters are real and true to life. The troubles they get tangled in and the obstacles they run up against are also very ordinary and common, the things that we have or will meet up with ourselves in daily life. All this helps to make the stories appealing.

Many of the characters in the short stories are American but the setting is mostly in Mexico. Certain traits and customs of the Spanish natures are touched upon incidently, which prove to be very interesting as well as being instructive. The language which the author uses is plain and easy to understand with a limited number of Spanish words and expressions thrown in here and there.

As an example of one of the stories he tells of a young American priest in Mexico. This priest, after hearing from the superstitious natives that a statue had come to life in a church in some remote part of the country, determined to do some investigation on it. It was a matter of no little concern to him because the natives placed a great deal of faith in this statue, and even worshipped it as a god. The story of how the priest uncovered the mystery and exposed it as being one of the many "fakes" that spring up at different times in that country, is very vividly and interestingly told. This story, from which the book fashions its title, serves as a good example of the author's ability as a short story writer. The frequent changes in conditions and in scenery make his stories attractive, and his rapid introduction to the main theme makes them inviting. "**All your Idols**" is a book of character and action, neither of which is wanting in any of the short stories.

—L. O'HANLEY '51

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

Graham Greene

New York

The Viking Press, 1948.

(306 p.)

A strong sure style, a masterful style of narration, and a genuine understanding in the presentation and developement of a spiritual conflict combine in **The Heart of The Matter** to prove the superiority of Graham Green's skill as a novelist.

This is the story of the spiritual struggle of a man who successively becomes the victim of intrigue, illicit love, blackmail, murder, sacrilege and suicide, as a result of circumstances involving from a sense of personal responsibility to secure the happiness of an unhappy woman.

The background of this three book story of Henry Scobie, British Colonial police commissioner, is centered in the tropical heat, rain and primitive life of the West African Coastal town of Burnside. Scobie in his fifteen years at Burnside has gathered a complete understanding of the native mind, while his sense of responsibility for the welfare of others and also his sagacious administration of justice have won for him the respect of the town-folk. Yusef, a wealthy Syrian merchant, had many times tried to buy Scobie's services but all to no avail.

Scobie embraced the Catholic faith with marriage fourteen years previous to the time of the opening of the story but life with his wife, Louise, has now become a burden which he endures only because of his marital vows. Louise is a very ambitious woman and when Scobie is passed over for promotion to the commissionership, she, stung by the insult to her pride, asks to be sent to South Africa. In an attempt to borrow money for Louise's passage south, Scobie starts on the way to the destruction of his soul by lying. After this follows the incident of the concealment of contraband mail which he goes through without pity for a Captain of a boat. His compassion over Louise's need for money finally drives him into the hands of Yusef.

After Louise's departure his sense of responsibility shifts to Helen Holt, who, though much younger than Scobie, is a widow and is also a survivor of a shipwreck. Scobie is drawn to her by her utter helplessness and the number of his sins are increased by his attempts to conceal the intimate relations which result. Great conflict exist in Scobie's soul because of his realization of his sin and his case is rendered even more hopeless by the return of Louise to Burnside.

Scobie's life becomes further involved when Edmund Wilson of the secret service attempts to prove that Scobie is a member of a smuggling ring. Wilson, while adding a mysterious touch to the story, also completes the triangle when he finds himself in love with Louise. In the meantime Yusef has secured a written declaration from Scobie of his love for Mrs. Holt and proceeds to blackmail him.

The last book holds the reader in dramatic and gripping suspense as Scobie battles for salvation; and the reader finds himself hoping against hope for the repentance of the sinner. The enormity of Scobie's offence in receiving Holy Communion while unshriven, the plea of Scobie's conscience in his last visit to the church, and the description of his subsequent suicide are perfectly portrayed in this last part of the novel.

This is a story of Scobie's life. Step by step, from his first erroneous act to his last, circumstances multiply and pyramid until he is so entangled in a web of sin that finally unable to wound further the heart of his wife, his mistress, and his God, he takes his own life by suicide in order that they may be free of him forever.

This novel reveals to us how little outside appearances reveal the true facts of the heart of the matter; and into the heart of the matter the author has delved in order to present the responsibilities of a Catholic. This book is a masterpiece and, if read, will certainly be appreciated. Its reading, however, should be confined to adults.

—PAUL LANDRIGAN '49

HIGH TOWERS

Thomas B. Costain

Garden City, New York, Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1949 403 p.

In **High Towers**, Thomas B. Costain, author of **The Black Rose**, **Ride With Me**, and **The Moneyman**, has woven a piece of historical fiction, of particular interest and appeal to Canadians, around remarkable but obscure historical personages. The central figures around whom he has built his story are the famous Le Moyne family, who, as he states in the introduction to the book, are "shadowy figures, these French-Canadian heroes". Little historical data exists concerning the ten Le Moyne brothers, and the author points out that to treat them as characters in a novel is an almost impossible task. Costain has told the saga of this group "to attempt the rescue of these remarkable brothers from the oblivion into which they have sunk . . ." This he does by setting the story in the guise of historical fiction.

The main locale of the novel is Montreal around the turn of the Seventeenth Century. There, and at the family seigneurie across

the river at Longueuil on which he has built a chateau with four high towers, Charles, the oldest member of the family and head of its fortune building fur trading interests, directs the affairs of the group who have set for themselves a goal which was to cost the lives of three of the seven who were still living as well as the sacrifice of family interests, fortune, and friends in its attainment. The Le Moyne family had conceived of establishing a French Colonial empire embracing the entire North American continent, and their struggles and sacrifices in the fructifying of their ambitious plans form the background for this story.

Pierre, better known as the *Sieur d'Iberville*, is the best known member of the family. It was he who undertook the military expeditions which kept the lucrative fur trade from the English. To him goes the credit for the conquest of Hudson's Bay in a brief but decisive naval encounter with the traditional foe. Jean-Baptiste, the eighth brother, is the diplomat of the group. It was he who in establishing a French outpost in the wilderness of the lower Mississippi sealed the west from the English. To him goes the credit of being the governor of Louisiana for over thirty years and the founder of New Orleans.

These are the three main historical characters in **High Towers**, and with so little of a factual nature available for the delineation of character, it is necessary that fictitious personages should play an important supporting role in the book. Chief of these is *Félicité Halay*, whose mother, returning to France, has left the child behind as a ward of the family. She becomes filled with the same spirit that imbues her benefactors. Much of the story is built around her romance with the orphaned *Philippe Girard*, a carpenter, who has also come under the Le Moyne wing and, like his beloved *Félicité*, has become infected with the family spirit. Although they fall deeply in love, the pair set aside their self-interests to work for the attaining of the Le Moyne goal. *Félicité* becomes a most valuable assistant to Charles in his work, and *Philippe*, though desirous of going to New Orleans, remains at Montreal because the brothers believe him more useful there.

Throughout the story the corruption of the French court and its officials is ever present. It necessitates the expenditure of vast sums by the family to insure the success of their dream. Because of it *Félicité*, in order that Jean-Baptiste retain control of the new colony, leaves Montreal and goes there to marry the obnoxious *Auguste de Mariat*, to whose father Charles is forced to pay a bribe

to keep the colonizing efforts of the family from coming to naught. If there is anything which cannot be condoned in **High Towers** it is the attitude towards marriage, for Félicité's first marriage, although there is no question of its permanence, is one of expediency, not love. Auguste, however, is massacred after an indian raid designed by him to wreck the colony. The climax of the story occurs when Félicité and Philippe, who has come to work in the building of the colony, are married and look to the future with hope and confidence.

Life in the thriving center of French-Canadian life, Montreal, is well depicted, and we find, by means of the characters whom the author has introduced, a study of the Catholicism of these people. Mr. Costain has written a highly readable book, in which are found history, adventure and romance, and which will probably enjoy a wide popular reading. If this is the case, he has rescued the Le Moyne family from oblivion.

—ARTHUR F. McINNIS '50.