

Service proved that. With Communism everywhere triumphant to-day there is a real danger of totalitarianism gaining a foot-hold not only here but in other democracies as well; we can best suppress this threat by safeguarding the personal liberties of the individual citizen.

—Cyril Sinnott, '49.

BOOK REVIEW

Bruce Marshall, *The World, The Flesh and Father Smith*

Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1945 (191 pp.)

In her article, "Catholic Fiction" (*Catholic World*, December, 1940), Sister Mariella defined a Catholic novel as a "novel of grace, unfolding for the reader the magnificent reaches and depths of the life conscious of the indwelling of the Trinity," and could find only one example that fully answered her requirements. In ***The World, the Flesh and Father Smith***, Bruce Marshall, Scottish convert, chartered accountant, veteran of two wars, has done a job that must have warmed Sister Mariella's heart. For this is the life story of a parish priest, of all parish priests, of a man of God "conscious of the indwelling of the Trinity," living the life of grace in a drab industrial town, bringing the grace of God to weak human beings seduced by the devil's ancient lures of the world and the flesh.

The bald facts about ***The World, the Flesh and Father Smith*** are that it covers the activities of Father Thomas Edmund Smith in his urban Scottish parish from 1908 until his death in 1942. But the bald facts are only a framework on which the author hangs the glowing tapestry of Father Smith's spiritual life, a life of sanctity, humility, and burning love of God. Because Marshall himself realizes the transcendent importance of the spiritual, he has achieved what in this age is a difficult task; he has fashioned an intensely interesting book from the things of the spirit. And he has written a book that is Catholic not only in matter but in manner, a book that is frankly and naturally and uncompromisingly Catholic, a book that will be a sheer delight to those members of the household of the faith who have realized the implications and absorbed the meaning of their religion and an indirect rebuke to those who have not.

Because it is a Catholic book, this novel is a human book, of interest to all men because it deals with universal truth. It justifies the jacket's claim that Bruce Marshall "has a great fund of pity for humble, toiling people whose virtues are seldom proclaimed, a vigorous and delightfully malicious humor, and a savage dislike of bullies, stuffed shirts, humbugs and toadies." The jacket might have added that he has a violent hatred of social injustice; an unerring finger and a true though not original solution for the moral diseases of society; and a wisdom, a tenderness, an understanding that will touch any but a hollow heart.

Passages cry out for quotation and characters for analysis, but only their own author can do them justice. There are parts of this novel that will probably be misunderstood by those who are not yet intellectually mature and by those who never will be. But Mrs. Grundy and all her relatives notwithstanding, **The World, the Flesh and Father Smith** is a worthy successor in the line of **Father Malachy's Miracle**. Higher praise than that it is impossible to give.

—H. L. Johnston, Ph. D.

Nevil Shute, *Most Secret*

Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1946 (310 pp)

This novel is a dramatic account of adventure and unusual heroism by men who had personal reasons for revenge on the Germans. In sheer dramatic force and quiet realism it probably exceeds **The Pied Piper**, by the same author. It has been held up by the British Admiralty for many months, and only recently released for publication, because it contained information of vital interest to the enemy.

A burning hatred of the Germans and an obsession for immediate action brought four men together to wage a private war in the English Channel, while Britain was preparing for a second front. With a small crew of Free French and Danes they planned to mingle with a French fishing fleet in the channel seeking opportunities to stiffen the morale of the Breton French. In Britain they had got hold of a Breton fishing vessel, the *Genevieve*, in which some Free French had escaped to England. How their plan turned into a series of successful commando raids on the *Raumboot* and the harbour of Douarnenez, in the summer of 1941, and the effect their expedition had on the harassed German Occupation Forces is thrillingly told.

There was Charles Simon, whose knowledge of French language and customs made him leader of the expedition. He was a peaceful French engineer until he witnessed some of the German atrocities. The fact that he was also a British citizen helped him to work for the British Ministry of Information in France. The amazing results of the Genevieve's excursions into enemy waters were due principally to his influence among the native French.

Oliver Bodin was a carefree junior officer in the British Navy until his adored wife Marjorie, was killed in the blitz. After that he worked with fanatic zeal to obtain his revenge and finally lost his life in an attack on a German destroyer made with a new weapon the flame-thrower.

The chemical which they used was invented by sky, young Michael Rhodes, whose delight in feeding rabbits in off hours and killing Germans on duty made him a puzzling combination to his sweetheart, WREN Barbara Wright.

Their navigator was John Colvin, who learned from an experience in his rum-running days in the States the German fear of the Flammerwerfer.

It is interesting to note that the use of the flame-thrower was inspired by Father Augustine, a French priest, who tersely pointed out that the godless Germans could be purged from the earth only "by faith in the power of God and the Cleansing power of fire."

How these very normal young men seized an opportunity for action against the enemy with total disregard for their personal safety makes an unforgettable story which will be followed with unflagging interest throughout.

—Patricia Pendergast, '49