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The Globe and Mail (Toronto, Ontario, Canada) · Sat, May 29, 1954 · Page 25
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SATURDAY REVIEW OF BOOKS

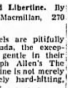
William Arthur Deacon
Literary Editor

Novel of Disillusionment Sex Appeal in Baseball

By WILLIAM ARTHUR DEACON

The Chartered Libertine. By Ralph Allen; Macmillan, 270 pages, $3.50.

SATIRIC novels are pitifully few in Canada, the exceptions being gentle in their humor. Ralph Allen's The Chartered Libertine is not merely *funny*, not merely hard-hitting, though that is rare enough among us. It is an angry, bitter, savage book that lashes out at politics, at the entertainment business in the fields of publishing and *broadcasting*, and, above all, at the nit-witted advocates of moral reform who, meaning so well, do so much harm. Himself editor of a popular magazine and prominent on a quizz program—formerly sports writer and war correspondent for this paper—Mr. Allen is here desperately asserting *true* values and suggesting that the public should not be so easily fooled. His yarn is worth reading either as a piece of well controlled burlesque on things as they are or for its championship of reason. We must go a long way back to find a writer exhibiting equal courage.


Ralph Allen

The story is about a Toronto publisher who owns a broadcasting station that pays well. Garfield Smith is planning his next coup, which is the formation of a girls' baseball team, the members of which will be chosen for their sex appeal. They will be dressed to emphasize their charms. But to make this venture pay, radio and TV publicity are necessary. So Smith offers CBC $200,000 for 13 weeks of two-hour performances on Wednesday night, which an honest chairman refuses in the interests of Canadian culture. This is the conflict.

Smith makes his own station say: "This is CNOTE, a station that is listened to and makes *money*. In your interests as a taxpayer, you are reminded that the nationally owned CBC maintains two radio stations in this area, that neither is listened to and both lose money."

CABINET discussions reveal the basic political fact that expediency (the need to get elected in a majority) governs government decisions. The story takes place a few years hence and the major parties are called the *Liberal-Conservatives* and the Conservative-Liberals. There is shrewd play with family allowances—"the great invention of bribing the taxpayer with his own money." The deadly part is that these politicians are not crooks; they just make policies fit necessities.

Garfield Smith gets his main assist from an organization of do-gooders called League for the Incorporation of Godly and Humanistic Training, LIGHT for short. This outfit is headed by a clergyman, who has made the pulpit pay by saying nothing in it. He is abetted by a woman professor. By clever promotion LIGHT carries on its nominal rolls more than seven million citizens, all pledged to the rigorous censorship of CBC programs. The targets are H. G. Wells, Bernard Shaw, Bertrand Russell, together with birth control, science that is not pious, etc.

The final issue is whether the government will be forced to give radio and TV to private ownership, whose sole aim is to make money by pandering to the vulgar, sensation-loving mob. "If LIGHT captured CBC, it captured everything: Books, magazines, newspapers." Thus the honest *but middle-headed reformers* play into the hands of a ruthless, grasping individual, devoid of public responsibility. Just how far Garfield Smith was willing to go is illustrated by his having his male secretary, Hubert Rodney, changed into a girl (Honeybear Rodney) by one of those operations, and then marrying her before the TV cameras at the end of a ball game.

USING imaginary characters has allowed Mr. Allen to preach a needed sermon on such things as the fallacy of censorship and the services performed by publicly owned radio. Yet the skill with which he gets essential truth into an absurd story only shows his cleverness. There is the *more* important item of his honesty. The Chartered Libertine is a brave book because it challenges a great deal of hokum in which many worthy souls believe.

Unfortunately, this novel stands in danger of being read by the wrong people. Those who look forward to a classic Greek play or a talk by a famous astronomer will *enjoy* The Chartered Libertine, though they don't need the sermon. Readers of this page, too, will assuredly read Mr. Allen's novel in great numbers; but the vehement pro-censorship crowd must have quit reading us long ago. Yet the books' popularity will undoubtedly get it into the hands of some who need it. Whether they can be converted to a more rational view of things by Mr. Allen's wit is beyond our capacity for guesswork.

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AGAINST WHOM?
by Phyllis Bottome
The conduct of a dying man impresses four other patients in a sanatorium in the Swiss Alps that they must love their neighbour as themselves or become their own mortal enemy. How Elizabeth and John, Konrad and Celeste are aided by a fellow-patient to overcome a vital flaw in their personal relationships makes Against Whom a story that reaches to the heart of human understanding.
Published in the States as The Secret Stair.
Faber & Faber $3.00
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Quiet Charm

That Yew Tree's Shade. By Cyril Hare; Faber, 222 pp., $2.50.

Debates have been going on in *publishing* circles as to whether some new type of escape fiction, such as imaginative science stories would replace the whodunit in popular favor. Those who believe the whodunit will hold its own note that discriminating detective fans value the company of the everyday characters one meets in conservative English detective stories. That Yew Tree's Shade gives a prime example of that appeal. Mr. Pettigrew, the semi-retired lawyer whom Mr. Hare hase created, is a prize as company for an evening. When Pettigrew is called on to preside over the county court, the reader gets a highly entertaining and very human glimpse of his fellow-man in various predicaments.—P. McC.

the chartered libertine
Which side are YOU on?
Baseball in pants? or Baseball in panties?
Liberal-Conservatives? or Conservative-Liberals?
Macbeth? or "I Adore Adele"?
Sex? or Salvation?
Representation? or Regimentation?
Read RALPH ALLEN'S new satirical novel
THE CHARTERED LIBERTINE
which probes vividly at those who would direct and those who would exploit public opinion in Canada.
At your bookseller's $3.50
MACMILLAN

"He'll feel better now. I just told him he's too sick to go to school" is one of 138 cartoons about doctors and patients from You've Got Me in Stitches, edited by Lawrence Lariar (Dodd Mead, 98 pages 7½ x 11½ inches, $3.50). While it is one of the funniest books of *pictures yet published*, it might not be tactful to give it to a person in hospital. There are jokes about the doctor who tells a man to take one of the pills on going to bed "and the other if you wake up in the *morning*." There is the boy who explains to his sick mother that his father's friends are so kind they come in and play cards with him every evening. And the husband: "Don't worry about the hospital bills, dear—they're less than you would spend if you were well."

Home of the Brave Land of the Free?

By SALLY TOWNSEND

Freedom, Loyalty, Dissent. By Henry Steele Commager; Oxford, 155 pp., $2.75.

Freedom, Loyalty, Dissent is a book to be read along with But We Were Born Free, by Elmer Davis—reviewed in this department on April 17. Henry Steele Commager thoughtfully and amply supports Mr. Davis' fight for independent thought in his countrymen. With a calm mind and trenchant pen, he analyzes the disturbing malaise from which this generation of Americans is suffering. By their increasing fear of communism, fostered by such men as McCarthy, their thinking and behavior is fast reducing them to something of the same pattern as the thing they fear. Their most urgent problem is "that of preserving freedom in a society wracked by fear and confused by counsels of unreason."

Consisting of five essays, written over a period of six years, *Freedom, Loyalty, Dissent* has a consistent unity of thought. Mr. Commager appraises the whole distressing scene from pretty well all angles. His central theme is the censorship that has come about through the search for subversives under the House Unamerican Activities Committee: "If you are going to silence dangerous ideas," he says, "you must *establish what ideas are safe*. . . . Who in our government or our society is to determine what ideas are safe?"

Mr. Commager insists that freedom must be maintained in order that society may profit by criticism: "We encourage dissent because we cannot live without it. . . . Everywhere textbooks of *history, politics, and economics* are under attack. . . . If you succeed in banning textbooks," he points out, "that are written by men who are critical and independent, you will get textbooks written by men who are not critical nor independent. What kind of teaching are we going to have? What kind of students are we going to turn out?"

The author continues: "If in the name of security or of loyalty we start hacking away at our freedoms, freedom for the critic, freedom for the scientist, freedom for the scholar—we will in the end forfeit our security as *well. . . . The fact* is that censorship always defeats its own purpose, for it creates in the end the kind of society that is incapable of exercising real discretion, that is of doing an honest and intelligent job, and thus guarantees a steady intellectual decline. . . . A society that encourages state intervention in the realm of ideas will find it*self an easy prey to state inter*vention in other realms as well."

It is to be hoped that Freedom, Loyalty, Dissent will be widely read by those for whom it was written. Its clear thought and analysis is like a cleansing breeze *that may* help to clear *away* a smog.

The Fly Leaf

Stephen Leacock Memorial Committee announces that the 1953 Medal for Humor will be presented to Joan Walker of Kirkland Lake, who won with Pardon My Parka, at a dinner to be held at The Birchmere, Orillia, on the evening of Friday, June 18. Presentation will be made and principal speech delivered by Dr. Frank Stiling, principal University College, University of Western Ontario, and chairman of the Governor-General's Awards Board. Any interested persons are welcome to attend if reservations are received by secretary Miss Maude Ardagh, 103 Matchedash St., N., Orillia, by June 15. (Tickets, $2.50).

At the Amen House reception for Mr. and Mrs. G. E. T. Cumberledge, Canadian manager C. C. Johnson informed me that it was the 50th birthday of the Canadian branch of Oxford University Press and presented me with a handsome book of pictures, displaying prominently the portrait of the first Canadian manager, the late S. B. Gundy (1904-36). On page 16 is a valuable historic memoir by Wilfrid Ford, who fixes the date as August, 1904. He was then an office *boy of* 13. George Stewart, now of McClelland and Stewart, was then the travelling salesman covering, apparently, the whole Dominion. For some time I have been trying to persuade Jack Gray of Macmillan to disclose when his firm opened in Canada. Mr. Ford relates that Oxford Press painted the second story of their original building at 25 Richmond St., W., in anticipation of having Macmillan as tenants; but fire broke out Dec. 30, 1905. Perhaps Mr. Gray would walk across Bond St., and consult the Canadian head of Doubleday as to whether Macmillan should celebrate with McClelland and Stewart in 1955, or whether the fire held up their opening till 1906. It is to be hoped that some of the younger firms, such as McGraw-Hill, are keeping historical records. When the firms of Allen, Musson and McLeod commenced I don't exactly know but about half a century ago.

Canadian painter James Houston, briefly written up in Life (May 24) is, of course, the husband of Alma Houston who, last month, received the Toronto Women's Canadian Club prize to encourage a young writer. They have brought 20,000 Eskimo carvings out of the Arctic, which have been sold for anywhere between $1 and $50. All the cash goes to the native craftsmen. Expenses were first paid by Canadian Handicraft Guild, Montreal, now the Dominion Government. The show now in Washington contains 130 specimens. The magazine contains nine photos of carvings.

Alexander Fullerton, author of Surface and now living in Cape Town, South Africa, is the son of Mrs. Roberts and stepson of Major-Gen. Hamilton Roberts of Clarkson, Ont. The latter was Canadian commander of the Dieppe invasion. Young Fullerton's uncle, Rear Admiral Sir Eric Fullerton, wrote the boy when he was 15 and attending Royal Navy College, Dartmouth: "You will be an admiral in 1973." At 18 he went into submarines as a second lieutenant. Mrs. Fullerton and Gen. Roberts were married in England during wartime. Alexander Fullerton, encouraged by the success of his first book, has written a second called Bury the Past, which became a best-seller on publication in South Africa and will be reviewed here shortly.

J. B. Priestley's article on being a writer, and advice to young writers is both practical and amusing. The page of New York Times Book Review, May 30, should be treasured permanently for instruction in the early years, consolation later on. "The work never becomes easier; you merely tire sooner as you get older. If I had had any sense, I would have bought myself a handsome tobacconist's shop." His remarks are mostly positive but one negative is priceless: "One of my complaints against so much of the newest fiction is that while it is often brilliantly done, it seems terribly gimcrack, is happening in a world hastily improvised out of plaster, like a film set." Jack Priestley is a sound craftsman, never more so than here, where he talks about "architecture" in a book.

—W.A.D.

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By ENID DONLY

County Kerchief: Louis Blake Duff, from Last Poems: The Culprit by A. E. Housman:

O let man not remember
The soul that God forgot,
But fetch the county kerchief
And noose me in the knot,
And I will rot.

British Submarine Officer Bases Novel on Experience

By KEN W. MacTAGGART

Surface. By Alexander Fullerton. Peter Davies, 215 pages, $2.50.

This is the story of life during wartime in a British submarine, told in a very simple, almost schoolboyish manner. *It* lacks plot, has an almost disjointed style which results from its series of often unrelated events. Yet it adds up to a gripping, vividly sharp story that presents every aspect of life for the men who serve in the least attractive branch of the navy. Perhaps the skilful method of understating the case gives it a greater force, and the author would appear to come from that strata of English life which inevitably understates things.

For a first book, and this is Fullerton's first effort, Surface is good, if not excellent. It pulls *no punches*. Whether describing HMS/M Seahound creeping through Jap minefields, boarding a Japanese coastal ship, engaging a cruiser in close action, evading depth charges or the varying emotions of crew members ashore for brief leaves, the reader will find himself breathlessly sweating or alternately revelling with the crew members *who had been hand-picked* to make up a complement that could live together for months on end.

Fullerton obviously loved the sea, unlike many authors who depict her as a tyrant mistress or a rapacious monster. Wallowing in heavy going, hiding beneath its green shelter, to him the sea was a wonderful place, with the only fears of his fictitious hero—*very obviously himself* — being those connected with his duties. *He worries about miscalculations* in navigation, about failure to recognize a signal or pick up a light.

In a foreword, Fullerton, who served in HMS Seadog, hence the fictional Seahound, tells about *a group of submarine officers* in Ceylon idly discussing a book about submarine service, and his boastful opinion that he could do it. He has done it very successfully, presenting the various characters with nameless identities that make them very real persons. Their simple longings and arguments are stark against the background of their task. *Saunders of Dorsetshire, a farmer* till he joined, gripes as he sits at his radar set, depth charges shaking his refuge, about the Germans and the Japs forcing England to water her ruddy beer.

Surface is good reading for *anyone who tends to forget what* men undertake in wartime, and reminds its readers, too, of what some must leave to return to prosaic civilian life. There is adventure on almost every page, even if it is only the adventure of trying to be the best polished ship back into port on the occasional returns for refuelling, revictualling and more torpedoes. And there is adventure in the young officer's worried computations of how many shells were wasted in sinking an enemy freighter.

Alexander Fullerton, author of Surface and Bury the Past.

Pearlers

By R. R. SMITH

The Pearl Seekers. By Norman Bartlett; McGraw-Hill, 309 pp., $3.75.

The opening by the British of the great northwest coast of Australia in the general region of the Torres Straits is an exciting epoch in the march of Empire. Historian Norman Bartlett has dealt with it in that vein. He has produced excellent descriptions of the sea and landscapes in the *early portion of his narrative*, evidently based upon personal experience.

Mr. Bartlett has gone considerably farther afield in his research into the origins of development of a large portion of a great subcontinent than the title would indicate. Files of the Admiralty and the Colonial Office in London, and possibly Australian newspaper libraries and contemporary publications apparently have been carefully scanned.

It may be suspected that like all good historians, Mr. Bartlett kept a card catalogue of his findings. Possibly some of the cards were shuffled in the process of exchange from author to printer. The result is a rather diffuse and *episodic report. In history*, of course, no definite narrative line can be maintained. Nevertheless, there is a haphazard effect that possibly might have been avoided.

For readers deeply interested in an authentic and documented *account of the early adventurers* and Empire builders who opened the great mother-of-pearl shell fields in the Torres Straits area, where finding of a pearly was secondary to the shell tonnage, this no doubt will be absorbing. For those who pick up the book casually, the somewhat unrelated short stories may prove to be rather heavy going.

Life of Devotion

By SALLY TOWNSEND

No Thought For Tomorrow. By Cecilia Jowett; Ryerson, 104 pp., $2.75.

A little girl of five years of age, *travelling* alone from England to the strange, new land of Canada, had already decided that some day she would become a nurse, so that she might devote her life to her fellow-man. This she hoped to do so that she might in some measure repay the great kindness that had been shown her in the Barnardo home in England.

No Thought For Tomorrow is the life story of that little girl as it has been spent in Canada. Cecilia Jowett recalls her great delight in her first home near Shanty Bay on Lake Simcoe. Later came her graduation as a nurse from the hospital at Orillia. Then there were 10 years of nursing in Hamilton. But it was not until she went into Northern Canada in the late 1920's, to live among the European settlers there, that the flame of her devotion found its opportunity for service.

The story of the seven years she spent there, living alone, answering every call for help, often when no doctor could be reached, travelling alone on skis, sometimes for miles and in the dead of night, is *a record of* courage seldom equalled. The light of her spirit has given her great joy in her life. She now lives on Lake Couchiching near the Rama Indian Reserve, where she finds again ample scope for her devoted services.

Cook Sails Down Under

The Endeavour: Captain Cook's First Voyage to Australia. By Lynette Roberts; Copp Clark, 280 pages, illustrated, $3.50.

By a considerable feat of research Lynette Roberts has re*constructed* Captain James Cook's first voyage to Australia from his own journal, which is well known though some editors have taken liberties with it, from his logs, which are not well known, and from an abundance of related *documents*, even to letters by members of the crew. For this long voyage of exploration in the small ship Endeavour, which was much too small, also included a party of scientists—a botanist, an astronomer and so on—and each left *separate records*.

All these Miss Roberts has skilfully amalgamated into one narrative, being careful to preserve the original diction in all cases. The trip lasted from 1768 to 1771 and landfalls were made at *many places*, such as Tasmania, Tahiti and New Zealand. Many contemporary drawings are used as illustrations, including the delicate and accurate pictures of flowers by Sydney Parkinson. The writing is not particularly *smooth* because *none* of these men were writers but the composite account compiled by Miss Roberts is probably the most authentic statement yet made.

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Mr. George Adamski, co-author of the book, is lecturing in Massey Hall on June 1st, at 8:15 p.m., on this subject.
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Without freedom, says Mr. Commager, no nation can survive for long. In FREEDOM, LOYALTY, DISSENT he denounces those forces which are seeking to destroy traditional American liberties while pretending to serve them. In five chapters he looks at recent phenomena such as loyalty purges, the irresponsible smearing of individuals by Congressmen and others, and the growing acceptance of 'guilt by association'.
This timely and important Oxford book is available at all bookstores
$2.75

Noel Coward's
future indefinite
The long-awaited sequel to Present Indicative
Mr. Coward continues his autobiography covering the years just before and during the war. Brilliant and witty as usual, we are given fascinating glimpses of famous people and great events, as he tours the world to help servicemen enjoy their moments of relaxation.
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