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ERICH MARIA REMARQUE'S

# Arch of Triumph

co-starring

CHARLES LAUGHTON  
LOUIS CALHERN

with ROMAN BOHNEN • RUTH NELSON  
CURT BOIS • MICHAEL ROMANOFF  
A LEWIS MILESTONE PRODUCTION  
From the novel by ERICH MARIA REMARQUE  
Produced by Directed by  
DAVID LEWIS • LEWIS MILESTONE  
Released through UNITED ARTISTS

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way out at the very moment that it comes in. That is the penalty it pays for timeliness. In the rat race of female vanity today's "New Look" is bound to be tomorrow's old look. Most women, turning over the pages of their own photograph albums, cannot believe that they were ever willing to wear the clothes they were proudest of ten or twenty years back.

The well-made play was, so to speak, the drama's hobble skirt. Nowadays it seems as absurd as a hobble

skirt would. It is the confinements of its pattern which got in the way of Shaw when he wrote "You Never Can Tell," even as they get in the way of contemporary playgoers when they sit before it. By his own admission, "You Never Can Tell" found Shaw stooping to conquer. Fortunately Shaw was never meant to be a stooper. All of us are the better off because he has led rather than followed us. Leading is his life work.  
JOHN MASON BROWN.

## FICTION

(Continued from page 19)

ever happen to *them*. And the holocaust of the book's final scene might lead the reader to suppose indeed that nothing ever does, in any sense of the word.

Considering the nature of the issues involved, it might seem permissible to do a lot of intellectualistic hedging in a book like this, and in view of Mr. Kaufman's obvious gifts it may appear surprising that he chooses to do without such tools. But with a sophistication born of simplicity he manages to suggest, in the childish metaphor, the logical consequences of questions which have engaged the subtlest of religious thinkers from St. Paul to Pascal. Is faith, for example, "an inflow of outside energies," or is it an instrumentality by means of which we ourselves can affect, in a real sense, the outcome? About one-sixth of the world's population seems to be asserting, against its will, the truth of the latter proposition. Mr. Kaufman, with telling irony, would have us know that the problem, thus stated, is by no means a sufficient account of morality.

### Hassidic Voyage

IN THE HEART OF THE SEAS. By S. Y. Agnon, New York: Schocken Books. 1948. 128 pp. \$1.50.

Reviewed by NATHAN L. ROTHMAN

AGNON'S tale of the hegira of a group of Jews of Palestine seems peculiarly timeless, even spaceless, despite the internal evidence which places it somewhere in nineteenth-century Poland. It seems so because the long voyage is traced with landmarks that are metaphysical rather than physical; the geography traversed is that of the spirit rather than of the earth. These pilgrims are of that group known as Hassidim—religious mystics to whom miracles and direct words from God are the bread and butter of existence. Their talk

is naturally pitched upon a level of unearthly scholasticism: quotations, commentary, and sub-commentary upon the Torah and the Gemara, legends and anecdotes to illustrate every hap or mishap, every tumbled pebble in their way. And yet their speech is withal salty and wet with folk spittle. When they are joined by Hananiah, a certain mysterious voyager who is plainly more than common man, they ask him: where were you? Where was I? (he answers) And where was I not? Such is the familiar intoned music of Jewish speech. There are two musics here, reminding us

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of that portion of Moussorgsky's "Pictures at an Exhibition" which describes dialogue of two Jews: one sonorous and stately in heavy, portentous brass, the other shrill, complaining, ingratiating, in an erratic piccolo. Such are the dialogues in Agnon's tale, the music almost more than the words. It is a little book of tone and mood, the spirit rising up between the lines.

The book was translated from the Hebrew by I. M. Lask, who seems to me to have performed a very sensitive little miracle of his own; and there are ten line drawings by an American artist, T. Herzl Rome, that are as infused with the text as though Agnon had drawn them himself. I can think of no other way to express their quality. The format of the book, one of Schocken's new library of Jewish literature, is wholly pleasing, in size, type, and binding.

### "For Adults Only"

*EVERYBODY SLEPT HERE.* By Elliott Arnold. New York: Duell, Sloan, and Pearce, Inc. 1948. 346 pp. \$3.

Reviewed by MERLE MILLER

TO GET right down to it, Elliott Arnold has written a vulgar book, an admission which will probably triple the sales his novel deserves. The jacket, for which the author cannot be blamed (although he surely approved it) is in the too-current publishing tradition, only a little more so. It looks like a poster for one of those "D" movies for which astute theatre managers assure an attendance by advertising "for adults only," thus attracting children of all ages. Mr. Arnold's title might be considered an innocent play on words, but I doubt it because from his opening paragraph on he deals with the more sordid aspects of the sexual and drinking habits of as dull a group of crackpots, tin-horns, phoneyes, and fools as could be found in Washington, D. C., during the last or any other war.

There is Kitty Williams, a voluptuous young lady who married a doltish first lieutenant; fortunately for her, he is shipped overseas, and after his departure, Kitty continues to be heavy-drinking, rattle-brained, and enormously hospitable; she has, of course, a heart of gold or, if you prefer, as big as the world. Mrs. Amy Dwight is the secretive, vicious landlady who closes her eyes to the activities of Kitty and most of the other tenants of the Washington apartment house—so long as they furnish her with enough gifts and bribes. Need I add that Mrs. Dwight reads porno-

graphic literature (secretly—shh!). Willy and Louise Temple have one of the smaller apartments; Willy is a dim-witted colonel from California whose job is to keep Congressmen happy; Louise is a kindly, middle-aged alcoholic. But she reforms. What did you expect? Sally Lawrence, whose husband is usually out of town, is another occupant of the house Mrs. Dwight manages, as is her close friend, Colonel Hank O'Malley, an extremely attractive and amorous middle-aged bachelor.

Other characters (to use the kindest possible word in describing them) are Philip and Caroline MacGregor, a pathetic young couple who fall out of love when their daughter is killed. (N.B. This comes out all right in the end, so don't worry). And then there are Lieutenant Colonel John Brent, whose heart is so pure, instincts so admirable, deeds so courageous, that he is apparently just on loan from King Arthur's fraternity; his wife Nancy, also wonderfully virtuous, does waver once in a while, but

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