

and the apostolate and priesthood of the laity. His probing of these contemporary subjects is not meant to be a catechism on the meaning of the lay role, but it will provide many lay people with points for the examination of their consciences in a meditative and introspective fashion.

Although each of the seventeen chapters has much to offer, what is written is sometimes so good you find yourself wishing there was more time and space for the author to develop his subject at greater length. But this is indeed a minor complaint in these days when all too often you wish the author had skipped his subject altogether. We can indeed be thankful that we have at least this much from the skilled pen of Cardinal Suenens.

Brief Reviews

THE SPY WHO CAME IN FROM THE COLD, by John Le Carré. 256 pp. Coward-McCann. \$4.50. One might as well start with the best in the current lot. Highly-acclaimed and rightly so, this new spy-thriller with overtones of psychological insight and moments of most striking realism is the best novel of its type I have read in a long time. What is most surprising is that it defies all the clichés of espionage fiction: the hero is neither young nor handsome, nor is he a wow with women, like the Ian Fleming fellow. Leamas, further, is involved in a spy-plot so complex and so contemporary as to be utterly authentic, or so the reader feels it to be as he reads it. The background is Eastern Europe right now and the Berlin Wall plays a major, central and almost symbolic role. I don't see how any lover of fictional action, of psychological realism, or, for that matter, of plain exciting writing can bear to put this novel down without finishing it in one gulp.

OH! TO BE IN ENGLAND, by H. E. Bates. 167 pp. Farrar, Straus. \$4.50. The Larkins, making their third appearance on the literary scene, are a family created (possibly) in retaliation for the long string of Ma and Pa Kettle movies we've exported to England. Their Kentish farmhouse sports an Olympic-sized swimming pool, and lies nestled amid acres of rusting iron because Pa Larkin is an enterprising junk dealer who drives a Rolls-Royce and decorates his house with choice finds: a pair of Regency chamber pots and ancient suits of armor wired with red and blue flashing lights.

All sorts of typical English characters troop through this stage setting: teddy boys, trollops, a botanist, a doddering general and a windbag colonel. The cynical reader might well wonder if Mr. Bates, a writer with a wonderful flair for words, has his eye on the golden hills of TV.

THE JOY-RIDE AND AFTER, by A. L. Barker. 280 pp. Scribner's. \$3.50; paper, \$1.65. These are, to my mind, very good short (or perhaps a little longer than short) stories, written with skill and an ear for the right and telling word at the right time that marks the talented writer. Often, I must confess, the idiom of the London slum characters means very little to me, but more often the force of their despair, their small gallantries, and the pathos of their lives of loneliness, insecurity and diminished vitality strike the reader with their originality (Miss Barker is above all a highly inventive worker in the vineyard of the short-story) and intensity. The three stories are connected in an ingenious manner; it is not so much that they have a great deal to say that is new as that the voice of the writer is so unique that you cannot help listening.

GOING TO TOWN, AND OTHER STORIES, by Yuri Kazakov. 315 pp. Knopf. \$4.95. By a young Russian writer of real skill, these stories do not sound like the old party-line stuff we used to read in the *New Age* and other Soviet publications. These are deeply felt, genuine sketches, reminiscent of Chekhov and especially good when they deal with rural subjects. His characters are not ideological types, but far older, Russian figures and genuine in every sense.

NOTES ON THE LORD'S PRAYER by Raïssa Maritain. 122 pp. Kenedy. \$3.50. Because of the illness leading to her death in 1960, Raïssa Maritain left her unfinished work on the Our Father reminiscent of Teresa's *Pater Noster*, to be supplemented and edited by her husband. Collaboration has combined these reflections the theology and mysticism of both authors. What emerges is a source-book designed to foster further meditation: having read, you will pray.

THE THEOLOGY OF MARRIAGE, by Joseph E. Kerns, S.J. 302 pp. Sheed and Ward. \$6.00. Drawing heavily upon patristic writings and the Tridentine decrees, Father Kerns presents a historical survey of the Church's theology of marriage.