

# BOOK REVIEWS

**THE BIG SHOW**, by Pierre Clostermann, DFC. Translated by Oliver Berthoud, with a foreword by Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir John Slessor, GCB, DSO, MC. Chatto and Windus, London, England and Clarke, Irwin & Co. Ltd., Toronto, Canada. Pp. 256. \$3.

While "wars and rumors of wars" persist, while the nations of the world continue a policy of rearmament, the horrors of World War II are still fresh in the memories of most of us. Books on the conflict are still making their appearances and do little to help dispel the feeling that the effort was perhaps all for nothing. However, "The Big Show" is of a different pattern. There is no second guessing in this book, no appraisals of what did happen or might have happened, no accusations—this is strictly the actual story of fighting men, written by a fighting man.

Pierre Clostermann is a young Frenchman who served in the RAF during the last war as a fighter pilot and flew over 400 operational sorties. During that time he kept a day-by-day story in diary form of his life in the squadron, a record that was intended only for his parents in the event of his death. Now, published in book form the story has caught the imagination of readers of two countries—France and England—and promises to achieve equal acclaim in Canada.

The author makes no claim to having created a work of literature principally because he has published his experiences just as he recorded them at the time, but in the very simplicity of his language he has conveyed more of the suspense and action involved in air-fighting than an accomplished author could achieve through studied effort. There is drama throughout the book, but there is also the loneliness of the fighter pilot, a sense of split-second timing and the exhilaration of swift movement.

"The Big Show" should do much toward enabling civilians to share the experiences of fighting airmen, and those who contributed their share in the late conflict by helping to sweep the skies of enemy aircraft will find in it all the sensations so familiar to themselves but which they lacked the facility to describe. H.E.B.

**MY SIX CONVICTS**, A Psychologist's Three Years In Fort Leavenworth, by Donald Powell Wilson. Clarke, Irwin & Co., Ltd., Toronto, Canada. Pp. 369. \$4.50.

Dr. Donald Powell Wilson is a man who spent three years in prison—not as a criminal—but as a research psychologist. Truly they must have been among the most fascinating years any man has devoted to one purpose for they have resulted in this fascinating book.

Briefly the story concerns the six "residents" of Fort Leavenworth Penitentiary who made up Dr. Wilson's staff during his research work in drug addiction. Perhaps the men represented a cross-section of life in that particular penitentiary but each in his own way was a "character", with but one viewpoint common to all, a genuine affection for the doctor and a jealous pride in the work on which they were assisting him.

From their adventures—and those of their prison mates—Dr. Wilson has provided a most entertaining book, one filled with human interest stories, drama, psychological detail and more than a smattering of earthy humor. There is also a good deal of information on the history of penology in the United States—some of which is disturbing—as well as the reforms which have done so much to improve conditions for those who inhabit corrective institutions.

Whether you believe that the situations recorded by Dr. Wilson actually occurred or not, or whether you believe that they couldn't occur in a Canadian penitentiary—and according to information available to this reviewer, they couldn't—the book will be of special appeal to those whose occupations bring them in some contact with law enforcement. G.G.

**THE ESSENTIAL T. E. LAWRENCE**, selected with a preface by David Garnett. Clarke, Irwin & Co. Ltd., Toronto, Canada. Indexed. Pp. 328. \$2.75.

If your memory is good and you are well above the age of 30 you may remember a certain motorcycle crash in England in May 1935 which cost the life of an RAF aircraftsman, T. E. Shaw. You may also remember how the news gradually spread that this was no ordinary man who had died, that this was T. E. Lawrence, the famed "Lawrence of Arabia", and you may