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BOOKS

My Life for My Sheep
 By Alfred Duggan. 320 pp.
 New York. Doubleday & Co., Inc. 95C
 Reviewed by JOSEPHINE MASON

One hundred years after the Battle of Hastings medieval England was torn by strife, the struggle between King Henry II and his once favorite chancellor, Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury. This romanticized version of the battle between omniscient kingly sovereignty and the power of the church is told with understanding and compassion by Alfred Duggan, an acknowledged authority on the middle ages.

A wealth of painstaking detail has gone into this book which gives us a colorful picture of 12th century England with its feuds and vassals, its high regard for kingly power—might is right.

The tale of St. Thomas a Becket has been told many times in story, play and poem—the rise of the obscure son of an unknown Norman merchant to one of the highest positions in England.

IN THE 12TH CENTURY the Archbishop of Canterbury was next rank to the king, was temporal ruler of vast church property and possessed the right to excommunicate at his discretion, in those days a positive condemnation in the next world.

Mr. Duggan's interpretation of Thomas Becket is that of an iron-willed churchman, an austere, almost ascetic character. Though he wore a hair shirt, ate sparingly, fasted continually and was chaste to his dying day.

Thomas Becket came to the attention of the king because of his cleverness as a clerk, and the king was in dire need of an experienced clerk. In medieval England a clerk was a lay priest, one who had studied for the priesthood but who had not as yet been ordained. He soon became Henry's chancellor and in fact for a while was actual ruler of England since King Henry was more interested in hunting than in ruling.

WITH THOMAS'S TRAINING in the law, plus his ability as an administrator, England prospered and all might have gone well if Henry had not determined that his favorite chancellor was the man to fill the vacancy of the Bishopric of Canterbury.

Theoretically the king did not have the right to choose his Archbishop, but the canons of the Cathedral Chapter found it wiser to do as the king wished. Thomas had a forewarning his appointment would lead to tragedy. "If I accept, all your love for me will turn to bitter hate."

For the next eight years the famous quarrel grew in proportion, touched off by Thomas's refusal to bow to the king in matters of church law. At Clarendon, October 1, 1163 he challenged the king to his face. "The clergy who are ruled by God and His Vicar the Pope may not swear to abide by the customs of any king."

THOMAS FLED to France where he sought protection of the Pope in exile, who though sympathetic to his cause, did not wish to antagonize his ally, the ruler of England. Threat of persecution, confiscation of church property, illness and poverty did not deter Thomas from his determination that the sovereign was king of his domain but should not interfere with the church, the right of the Archbishop alone.

The day came when King Henry rolled on the floor, foaming at the mouth in one of his famous Anger rages, screaming "... Will no one deliver me of this turbulent priest?" What followed was martyrdom and canonization for St. Thomas a Becket.

My Life for My Sheep is a superb biography of one of the world's great religious figures, well worth the reader's time.

Deadly Summer
 Philadelphia. J. P. Lippincott. \$2.95
 Reviewed by ROBIN R. BAHR

This is a top-flight mystery. The author has slowly and carefully built the suspense and tension up to a terrifically exciting climax. The action takes place in a small quiet town in the heat of summer. Against this hot, lazy, sleepy background, the violence is intensified. Disguised as a vagrant workman and driven by a desire for revenge, McDermott, New York city policeman, goes to his wife's home town to find the real cause of her death.

IN THE PROCESS he stumbles onto another murder involving dope peddling and is forced to reveal his identity. Having uncovered his hand, Lieutenant McDermott becomes a wide open target for the murderer and a subject for distrust and suspicion by the local non-people.

The whole range of small town characters are interesting, particularly the murderer, whose twisted mind is cleverly concealed; the action is fast-moving and increasingly exciting, and the story is thoroughly absorbing.

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Made in Detroit
 By Norma Bensley and George Stark. 305 pp. New York. G. P. Putnam's, \$5.00.
 Reviewed by JULIE Candler

Like the old friend of the family who looks at a mature adult and says, "I remember when you were just a baby," Norma Bensley and George Stark recall the auto industry's early days in "Made in Detroit."

The two veteran writers recreate in word scenes the Detroit of the giant industry's beginnings through a succession of scene changes, often jerky and disconnected, but nevertheless interesting. The book gives some intimate pictures of the people and events affecting the Detroit story from 1900 to 1930.

In those 30 years Detroit grew from a horse and buggy town reminiscent of an old timey to the colorful photographic mural of a city of tall skyscrapers and sprawling factories.

STARK and BENSELY saw a lot of behind-the-scenes action in the Detroit of those days, and their book is full of anecdotes and character sketches of names behind the news of the period.

Sound of Thunder
 By Taylor Caldwell. 608 pp. New York. Doubleday & Co. \$3.95
 Reviewed by BETE GILLESPIE

"Sound of Thunder" is bound in black, which fits this book to a "T." It's an oppressive tone of the unhappiest family we've known in years.

The story is centered around Ed, the second eldest of five children. He supports his parasitic family and relishes his domination over the four stereotyped brothers and sisters (a pianist, actress, painter and writer).

"Sound of Thunder" begins with the children's parents, German immigrants, who live a shabby, cold, dismal life. Heinrich Enger, a kind, shy, unexpressive little man is a small delicatessen owner. There is a happy ending but I thought I'd never get to it.

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The Cat Who Couldn't Purr
 By Polly Cameron. 26 pp. New York. Coward-McCann. \$2.25
 Reviewed by LEE ADAMS

Just as a child might see it—void of scale, perspective, and a true sense of color. Compared to the bright orange of the hero, even the sun is a dull gray.


BACKGROUNDS are mere backdrops for the mighty feats of this marvelous, if not quite happy, cat. Thus, both as author and artist, Miss Cameron gently poses the possibility of a correlation between human and feline felicity.

The Cat Who Couldn't Purr is definitely one of those "Read it again, Daddy" treasures which not only bears but encourages compelling drawings. Here is the world

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