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THE LAST UNICORN, by PETER S. BEAGLE, reviewed by B. Took.

(PAN BOOKS, paperback, 40p.)

This very delightful book has already been reviewed in MALLORN i. by our late and much regretted Alex Holdschmidt. Since that review, however, Pan Books have brought out this new paperback edition from Ballantine Books U.S.A., with a beautiful cover that many may think worth the money alone. This book is a 'must' for Monocerophiles --(think that one out!) It has obvious traces of derivation from T.H. White--- in White's 'The Sword in the Stone,' Captain Cully is a mad hawk, here he appears as an almost equally mad outlaw, a kind of anti-Robin Hood--- but none the worse for the derivation. Indeed Captain Cully, with his slightly 'send-up' folk songs, is one of the book's most attractive features, and we shall all be glad to have met him. Apart from that, the book is a lovely colourful fantasy, and what more could one ask?

Also from Pan Books:

THE WATER OF THE WONDROUS ISLES, by WILLIAM MORRIS.

As I remarked in my review of 'The Wood Beyond the World,' William Morris's pseudo-mediaeval style is a stumbling-block, though some may find it an attraction. This book begins: 'Whilom, as tells the tale, was a walled cheaping-town hight Utterhay....' Tolkien, I feel, would begin plainly, 'There was once a market-town...' Lin Carter may admire Morris's 'singing, ecstatic prose,' but it is as bogus as a stockbroker's Tudor cottage, or as the present silhouette of Windsor Castle. But like the latter, it can be intensely dramatic, and perhaps one should not begrudge the 'Society for Constructive Anachonism' their thrill. Nevertheless, Morris tells a wonderful story, and sets a scene of real enchantment. And who but William Morris, in the overclothed nineteenth century, would leave his heroine running about for days beautifully and innocently naked? One senses a certain revolt against the stuffiness of his century. A lovely book --Pan Books has also 'The Well at the World's End,' in two parts, and (as previously reviewed) 'The Wood Beyond the World.' All delightful reading, but don't get infected with his style if you want to write.

LILITH and PHANTASTES, two more Pan Books, are among the classics of fantasy literature. These are mystical adventures in the country of the mind, and nobody could say they are easy to understand--- some readers will puzzle over them and try to pin down the allegorical meanings--- others will just be content to dream along and take the adventure as it comes. But certainly more than one reading will be called for.

I have also received from Pan Books A VOYAGE TO ARCTURUS, by David Lindsay, THE CREAM OF THE JEST, by James Branch Cabell, and LUD-IN-THE-MIST, by Hope Mirrilees. These I shall review in MALLORN 6.

RED SHADOWS, by R.E. HOWARD

Reviewed by Hal Broome, of the Exiled Istari.

Robert Erwin Howard is known largely today as the creator of Conan, but long before Conan entered his stories, Howard was writing of Solomon Kane, Kane makes an interesting counterpart to Conan, the two being almost opposite in character. Conan was a tall, lusty barbarian, swinging a broadsword for his own aims, partaking in the joys of mortal flesh; Kane, a sombre Puritan, ever seeking for adventure and some indefinable goal that is never found or made clear. He is vengeance incarnate, descending upon all evil-doers in his path, pursuing them even to the black heart of Africa. All the while, a loner he remains, mysteriously travelling the world of the 16th Century, at times far away from his home in Devon, England. In RED SHADOWS is found all the known Solomon Kane works, twelve stories (of which a few are incomplete) and three poems. They are mostly tales of sword-play (or rapier, as that is Solomon's chief weapon--- Solomon himself seems a personification of the rapier, tall, light and wiry).. and of horror, with mystical elements thrown in. Written in Howard's earlier years, they are not, perhaps, as well written as the Conan saga, but well above the average 'Sword-and-Sorcery' tale.