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**RECOMMENDED NOVELS**

**The Doomsday Men**, by J. B. Priestley. Here is holiday reading. We begin with the final of the mixed doubles at a tennis tournament on the French Riviera. The handsomer pair are Malcolm, an architect in real life, and Andrea, an American heiress with golden shoulders and astonishing eyes, both dark horses in the tournament sense. Very properly the handsomer pair win. But Andrea is a dark horse in the tournament of life also, coming and going mysteriously, so that Malcolm, who during a whole week has barely had a dozen words with her, has only time to take her to dinner and tell her he loves her before she vanishes from the scene, carrying her secret with her. In the neighbourhood of the British Museum a young American physicist is on the trail of a missing American professor. In Los Angeles a cheerful little man whose brother has been murdered is on the trail of the Brotherhood of the Judgment. And in Hollywood Malcolm is on the trail of Andrea.

Mr Priestley is in a light mood, elaborating the mystery with skill and writing a book that is a smooth and pleasing mixture of sentiment and thrills.

**Thirsty Land**, by Joan Sutherland. Leon Carson, of the Indian Medical Service, lived for his work, loving the hard life of the North-West Frontier; but his health broke and he had to return to England, where he sought fresh and different interests on a Gloucestershire farm. Fortune proved just as harsh to Rupert, his brother, a District Officer who also found all that he desired on the Border; it was a rebel's bullet which crippled him, and so the two brothers were re-united. Their careers, their courage, and their mutual loyalty all combine to form a story which is frequently moving and dramatic; one, also, that never flags.

In **Crippled Splendour**, Evans John tells the tragic story of James I. of Scotland, ancestor of the ill-fated Stuart Kings. Always maintaining a scrupulous regard for historical accuracy, the author yet has the imaginative power that breathes life into the dim and unreal figures of the history text-book. As with growing sympathy, we live with James through the long years of his lonely captivity in England and the troubled years of his reign in a Scotland rent by the dissensions of warring factions, we wonder that history can ever be rated dull and dry. Seen through the eyes of an author who combines humour, knowledge, imagination, and a deep understanding of humanity, it can surpass the most stirring romance.

M.S.

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