

ruption. Bitter, he starts with crime, becomes a corrupt cop, tangles with gangsters and politicians, slugs, slashes and is too busy to rape. Eventually, since he is the hero, he comes up on top after a career as ruthless as anything Peter Cheyney has chronicled.

Since no credit is given, I haven't run down the magazine version of a couple of years ago. Presumably the book has been "hotted up" with a little extra roughness for the sophisticated rental library trade.

PLANET OF NO RETURN, by Poul Anderson

STAR GUARD, by Andre Norton. Ace Books, New York; No. D-199. 1957. 105/214 pp. 35¢

The original section of this Ace Double appeared here as a two-part serial in 1954, under the name "Question and Answer." You'll recall it better, perhaps, as the parallel to Isaac Asimov's "Sucker Bait." Both stories were written to develop the same setting and situation, but there the similarity ends. Asimov fattened his cast with the neurotic human thinking-machine; Anderson is content to throw in some paradoxical, furry natives who—to tangle a phrase—seem not to be what they seem. The conflicting personalities of the crew of the *Hudson* contribute some nice touches, but the whole story is run-of-the-mill.

The reprint half is one of Andre Norton's competent, fast-moving contributions to interstellar adventure yarns. The book was out in 1955, and it's good reading on an entertainment level—which is all the author ever intended it to be.

THE GOLDEN ARCHER, by Gregory Mason. Twayne Publishers, New York. 1956. 296 pp. \$3.50

This oddity apparently was not generally reviewed when it appeared, and may sneak up on you via the remainder table. However, you'd better know what it is.

Subtitled "a satirical novel of 1975," the book is all of that. It gives us a United States in which organized bigotry is on the verge of stamping out free-thinking and science, and in which the nudist, bridge-maniacal set of geniuses in the Archer family have set up a kind of counter-revolution and are doggedly hounding down the heresy of anti-heresy. Mixed up in all this are a red-headed whore, an inconvenient corpse, a fickle undertaker, a philosophical jackass, a noble FBI agent, a New Jersey nudist camp, assorted clergymen, and the opinions of numerous pertinent philosophers and natural philosophers, plus one small and climactic puffer—*Spherooidus-maculatus*.

The author is a professor of journalism and sometime anthropologist. His style is uneven, falling somewhere between Thorne Smith and Elliott Paul, and sniggering as often as it is honestly bawdy. In juvenile hands it can set science fiction back a generation or so, and I can't see that it advances either pornography or satire significantly. Yet parts of the thing are fun, and it all could have been. Too bad.