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we were offering Japan, I did not want a part in it. But it could be no more than a gesture. Japan was already changing, and the scene I describe may even now no longer exist. As her ancient culture falls a prey to Westernism and her optimistic folk-religion is encroached upon by Christianity and its handmaiden Mrs Grundy, standards are changing. The bar-girl will come to be looked upon as a Scarlet Woman, a corollary to which will be the attachment of the new-found label of 'sin' to the love of man for man.

\*

Once again it is Spring. The cherry-blossom is overhead, and on this same seat is sitting a neat little Japanese. But this is not Japan, it is Regent's Park; I suppose he is an Asian student. He smiled at me when he sat down. Shall I try him with the only sentence I remember from my phrase-book: «Sakura wa kirei desu, ne?»

Perhaps he, too, is thinking of a far-away land. One gets homesick for Japan at the time of the cherry-blossoms.

by «Centaur»

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## Book Review

THE GOLD-RIMMED SPECTACLES  
(Atheneum New York 1960 — 143 pages)

by Giorgio Bassani

This slim novel, lucidly translated by Isabel Quigley from the Italian, is most subtle in its penetration of two minorities: homosexual and Jewish.

Dr. Fadigate is well liked by his fellow citizens in Ferrara, who become aware of his homosexual proclivities only gradually. The discovery does not militate against him, as he is a model of sobriety—until he falls in with the handsome Deliliers, a student friend of the narrator. The doctor's infatuation with this irresponsible rascal, at a seaside resort where they spend the summer, is a degrading experience for him.

The parallel between his ill-fated liaison and the tragedy of the young Jewish adolescent caught in the wave of antisemitism enkindled by Germany before the war is delicately drawn. Fadigati's suicide at the end is fitting, in view of the holocaust soon to be unleashed on Europe.

The only slightly false note in the book is the improbability of the link drawing together a young university student and an elderly doctor, between whom there is no fleshly bond. Perhaps this is a minor flaw in a story that sympathetically and sensitively explores the plight of misunderstood minorities.

*Diego de Angelis*