

lying upon the appearance of sudden magic. But this is a minor flaw in an otherwise nicely-paced story.

The eggs in Nina's nest look "like a miniature flower garden laid out in the most gorgeous patterns of colors and borders." They are the first "pisanka" eggs which Katerina gathers and takes to the Spring Festival where their beauty amazes everyone. She trades them for the supplies she needs and Nina is rewarded with "a sack of cornmeal." Once introduced into the village culture, the eggs become part of the spring and Easter rites of renewal and resurrection, painted by grandmothers.

This solid tale works well with Czernecki's colourful, detailed illustrations. The intricate, finely drawn pictures of Katerina, her flowers, Nina and the cupboard are based upon the patterns and motifs of egg painting itself. Given Nina's diet of flower seeds, it's not surprising to see a brilliant array of floral patterns on her eggs. Czernecki's illustrations for *Nina's treasures* are a delight to the eye, endowed as they are with warm and happy feelings.

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A CHRISTIAN'S CAPTIVITY

A boy's war. David Michell. Overseas Missionary Fellowship, 1988. 175 pp., \$8.50 paper. ISBN 9971-972-71-9.

A boy's war tells of Michell's childhood experiences as a prisoner of the Japanese in Weihsien Concentration Camp near Tsingtao, Shantung province, North China during World War II. He recounts his adventures with the reminiscent tone of an adult, but also through the eyes of his childhood self. This latter perspective presents a different side of captivity, one which includes an awareness of humour that adults might fail to notice.

The cover blurb is rather misleading. It says *A boy's war* "is an account more about children and their adventures than the atrocities of a deathcamp." Yes, it does describe the children's escapades, but the description of Weihsien as a deathcamp seems to be an exaggeration; it is clearly an internment camp. The occupants do not live in great fear of execution. The hardship of having little food and clothing, few amenities, and no freedom cannot be understated. The internees are, however, able to smuggle food into the camp with the help of villagers. Reprisals for disobedience often take the form of a harangue by the Japanese camp commander. Even when punishment is more severe, it sometimes has a comical side. For example, a missionary priest sits by the wall and has eggs handed through to him which he hides under his long robe. Ironically,

one of the funniest bits in the story occurs when he is caught. The Japanese give him a fifteen-day sentence in solitary confinement near their quarters. At night he sings, chants, and prays loud enough to keep the soldiers awake. After a week they release him, and there is no need to mention why.

A boy's war is published by the Overseas Missionary Fellowship, the successor of the China Inland Mission, and Michell is the OMF's Canadian Director. Clearly, although the story he tells has a potentially wide audience, the explicitly Christian character of the book may limit its appeal. Michell does not fall into evangelical fervour and preaching, but Christ is definitely, if often implicitly, the centre of the action.

Questionable also is the degree of space devoted to the Olympic gold medalist and evangelical Christian Eric Liddell, who was interned in Weih sien at the same time as Michell, and who died there six months before the war's end. Since *Chariots of fire*, Liddell's name is now quite familiar to many, and some reference to his final days was in order; but for the young Michell the man was a hero, and for the older one he approaches sainthood. Judicious cutting was necessary here. But popularity does sell books; it's not for nothing that Liddell figures in the blurb.

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C'EST LA VIE QUI EST BIZARRE

Des vacances bizarres. Francine Pelletier. Montréal, Paulines, 1991. 117 pp., 7,95\$ broché. ISBN 2-89039-502-2.

Francine Pelletier, née en 1959 à Montréal, collabore à des revues et à des anthologies de science-fiction. En 1988, elle a reçu le Prix Boréal du meilleur livre pour un recueil de nouvelles, *Le temps des migrations*. Dans la collection Jeunesse-Pop, elle a déjà publié quatre romans: *Le rendez-vous du désert*, *Mort sur le Redan*, *Le crime de l'enchantresse* et *Monsieur Bizarre*. De ce dernier roman, Pelletier reprend le personnage de Mathieu Bernier et la camionnette de Monsieur Bizarre. Dans *Des vacances bizarres*, Mathieu Bernier, pour effectuer une cure de désintoxication, amène Hélène et sa fille Rafaële (Raf) dans un chalet dans les Laurentides. Raf, héroïne de l'aventure, est douée et sensible car elle peut sen-

