

TIMESTYLE BOOKS

THEATRE • MUSIC

Spring has sprung and romance is in the air

Paperback issues

• By LYN FROST

SPRING'S in the air, so it must be time for a little romance.

Two books are set in this century. 'Far from Innocence' (Lois Wyse, Bantam, 486pp, \$3.25) follows a boy who waits on tables and his teacher wife through the founding of their "dynasty". They start after the Depression with nothing, then work their way into restaurants, horses, even oil. Wife, mother, grandmother, Sophie is hard head behind the business and her sons marry similar women who make them equally unhappy. Meanwhile in Scotland from the 1920s to 1970s

Scotland from the 1920s to 1970s the Flemings battle through depression, war and the fight for independence. **'Beggarmen's Country'** (Fontana, 318pp, \$4.50) is Jan Webster's sequel to **'Colliers Row'** and **'Saturday City'**. Mairi Fleming's love leads her into poverty but gives her a daughter fit to lead the devolution struggle. Brother Paitie dreams of the new Scotland, of fast cars and beautiful women. The characters are appealing and the background carefully observed.

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'The Heritors' (Agnes Short, Corgi, 300pp, \$4.75) is also set in Scotland, in 17th century Aberdeen, Margery Montgomery, a crippled orphan, was born as the great tower of St Machar's Kirk collapsed in 1688. The link with vengeful, kind, sanctimonious or sincere Presbyterianism continues throughout her life. Despite her afflictions Margery prospers to become a gentle beauty

prospers to become a gentle beauty much loved by the men about her. More in the traditional mould is "a Georgian romance" called 'Tenant of chesdene Manor' (Alice Chetwynd Ley, Corgi, 192pp, \$3.19). A gambling lord dies, leaving his wife and daughter in a manor entailed in the male line to some distant cousin. The women manage to stay in their home and lease most of it to a mysterious tenant. Of course, beautiful penniless heiresses must marry heirs, however un-apparent. It continues so to be written.

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For an "enchancing Regency heroine in the romantic tradition of

Georgette Heyer" try 'Damaris' (Jane Sheridan, Fontana, 379pp, \$4.95). She is the Countess of Malfrey — how like the Duchess of Malfi — the toast of London, "flower of the ton", One of her lovers turns out to be a spy for Bonaparte. She is forced to flee with him in the face of scandal to the battlefield of Waterloo. It's a complicated route to the Americas and true happiness. Rather more explicit, too, than Ms Heyer's genteel tales. Royalists may prefer 'The Green Salamander' (Pamela Hill, Coronet, 272pp, \$4.95) The indestructible salamander living in the heart of fire is shown on the

in the heart of fire is shown on the family crest of Margaret Douglas. The niece of King Henry VIII, she sought refuge at his court from her royal Scottish kinsmen. She was also the mother of Mary Queen of Scots' husband, Darnley, thus the women who provided the double inheritance of the English Crown. An interesting sidelight on British history.

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'Paloverde' (Jacqueline Briskin, Mayflower, 608pp, \$4.95) is "in the tradition of 'Gone with the Wind'" but far from the land of mint juleps. The Van Vliet family saga is set in California, amidst the coming of the railway, the oil boom and the glamour of early Hollywood. Brothers love one woman. It's a surefire formula for torment, destruction and love for generations to come.

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Real-life passions and romance make the grade in a book which has been around for a while but missed a mention here, **'Nostalgia Isn't What it Used to Be'** (Simon Signoret, Panther, 446pp, \$4.95) captures a remarkable woman. She won an Oscar for best actress for her performance in 'Room at the Top'. "Being 'discovered' at age thirty-eight gives you an odd feeling", she remarks. Signoret had tried to write



her biography in the conventional way. She talked to an interviewer, put yards of memories on tape and felt the whole thing was impossible. One day she sat down and began to write. What emerged is rather like a long chatty letter to a friend from someone whose acquaintances

ranged from Monroe to Tito. Her life-long affairs with Yves Montand

...long affairs with eyes mountains
and with the Left make fascinating
reading.

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Finally, two for the curious. **'Sun Songs, Creation Myths from Around the World'** (edited by Raymond Van Over, Mentor, 402pp, \$4.50) ranges from the fables of North American Indians to the epics of Northern Europe, from the myths of Babylonia and Greece to the legends of the Pacific islanders, from the poetry of India to the stories of South America. An intriguing theme for a collection and well worth any browser's attention. **'The New Soviet Psychic Discoveries'** (Henry Gris, William Dick, Sphere, 448pp, illustrated, \$4.95) is by two American journalists. They established "utter trust" with the Soviet Union which allowed them to make six research trips. After studying Russian work on such things as telepathy, unidentified flying objects and psychic healing they concluded the Soviet Union regards parapsychology as its latest weapon of war.