

THE SCARLET SWORD, by H. E. Bates  
(Atlantic-Little, Brown). The story  
of a group of people trapped in a  
Catholic mission in Kashmir during  
the partition riots of 1947. Before  
the rioting is over, these people—

nuns, priests, English men and women, and native refugees—have suffered rape, torture, and other terrors, and some of them have been murdered. Mr. Bates writes in a disjointed, thoroughly detached way that makes this story read like a bad dream, in which everyone is afraid and a lot of blood is spilled, but he leaves us unaffected in the long run, because his people are shadowy, and the blood, only make-believe, will disappear as soon as we wake up.