Latest Works of Fiction

The Lost President

THE PRESIDENT VANISHES. (Anonymous.) 296 pp. New York: Farrar & Rinehart, Inc. $2.

NEARLY every big news story of recent months except fire at sea and the birth of quintuplets goes into the making of this highly topical mystery story. Kidnapping, threats of war, munitions investigations, an American organization called the Gray Shirts, rioting, Communist agitation and political intrigue furnish a fairly sensational set-up. Crowded into the plot is also a slim love story between a White House detective and a White House secretary. There are illustrations, newspaper style, of some of the most exciting goings on.

When Congress is on the point of declaring war, abandoning the United States' position as the last neutral in a world-wide conflict, the President vanishes. He was last seen walking in the garden of the White House at 10 o'clock in the morning. After he had failed to appear before Congress to deliver his message, the news that he has been kidnapped is divulged. The whole nation is agog. Since it is widely known that Congress was ready for war and the President against it, every one feels that some element of the pro-war party has perpetrated the crime of kidnapping the President. The indignant country goes suddenly pacifist. Meanwhile, no declaration of war can be valid without the President's signature.

The whole nation turns out to find the President, but there is no clue. Suspicion turns on the Gray Shirts, the munitions manufacturers, the Communists. Wholesale arrests are made. Martial law is declared in Washington. There is rioting in big cities all over the country. There is such a hullabaloo, such an army of characters is introduced, that the reader finds himself pretty well confused and baffled. He hasn't much chance to do any detective work for himself, and when the mystery is finally cleared up it seems flat and childish. Unless the reader greatly en-