



—Fabian Bachrach
William Bradford Huie

Scottsboro affair. They complement each other and give a fresh angle to the whole subject. Huie must have been a fine reporter.

Every kind of pertinent detail is here, about college life in Birmingham, strikes and unions and labor war in the mines, anti-Roosevelt sniping, communist agitation, incipient fascism, and incipient democracy. For there is that too, with men like Lafavor heading from one to the other, not because they are humanitarians or New Dealers or idealists, but because they have old remembered roots in an American tradition of individualism, and individualism must seek democracy to survive. This novel is the struggle of Peter Lafavor toward that hard truth, scraping the mud off the stars to find it. If we're ever going to understand the South, if we want to, we'll have to get our facts from men like Huie.

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Thompson . . .

LISTEN FOR THE LAUGHTER. By Edward Thompson. Macrae-Smith Company. 1942. 328 pp. \$2.50.

Reviewed by JOHN TEMPLE GRAVES

IF Mr. Thompson had a real story to tell and real people to write about, he might do it well for he has the manners of literature, and imagination too. But not once in this first novel is he able to make you believe in anything or anybody he pictures. You have the effect of a by-no-means unskilled artisan exercising on dummies. The narrative never clicks, the characters never come alive. A combination of ability in the author and vacuity in the story accounts perhaps for passages which seem to have a department of the *Readers' Digest* more in mind than the momentum of a genuine something to say. For example: "A distant roll of thunder, rising and tumbling away like logs rolling in a marble corridor, penetrated into the sensitive, volatile light and shadow of the parlor as day whisked away the hem of its underskirt and left night with its face exposed at the window."

The love of a roving and rascally but sensitive father for his daughter is the theme. Jonathan Slocum, as the author means him to be portrayed, leads what is a picaresque life in the early part of this century around New Orleans and Memphis. (The South could do with a truly picaresque novel about itself after its long diet of social and economic problem stuff to the point of something pathological, but this is not the one). He leaves the drug store business to tour the countryside selling a quack cure-all. When his daughter Roxana is old enough, he takes her with him. His health fails and he retires with her to live in New Orleans where he is enticed into the rum-running business (it is in prohibition days). Roxana is said to be the love of his life, just as was her mother who died at her birth. She marries a young assistant rum-runner who is said to be very tough but very tender. An old love (not of Jonathan's life but of a part) returns after twenty years, a baby girl is born to Roxana, and the story ends with a title-justifying but up-to-now missing suggestion that there is "eternal laughter in the hearts of men. Listen for it! You shall hear it!"

Sinclair Lewis, Minnesota-born author, and Robert Penn Warren, until recently editor of *The Southern Review*, have been added to the faculty of the University of Minnesota's department of English for the coming college year, according to Joseph Warren Beach, department head.



Elizabeth Goudge

Goudge . . .

THE CASTLE ON THE HILL. By Elizabeth Goudge. New York: Coward McCann. 1942. 346 pp. \$2.50.

Reviewed by RICHARD R. PLANT

IT is not too thankful a job to judge by its literary merits a book that overflows with good intentions, stands for a cause dear to all our hearts, but falls short of its aims. Elizabeth Goudge presents English people during the dark hours of air invasion, she presents sympathetic people who fight for their way of life and that of the Island, and she makes us like right from the start the spinsterish Miss Brown, a perfect understatement of a heroine. Even more: the characters that go to make the story around Miss Brown ring true, are well individualized and, with the exception of the romantic violinist Mr. Isaacson, have everything necessary for characters in an excellent novel.

But "The Castle on the Hill" is not the excellent novel it could have been.

WHAT DEMOCRACY MEANT TO THE GREEKS

By W. R. AGARD

It was not enough to have invented a new form of state. The Greeks found that they had to fight to preserve their way of life. A thoughtful study with amazing modern parallels. \$2.50

The University of North Carolina Press

There is too much ideological talk of the sort in which the figures seem to address each other but in which really the author lectures the reader; one somehow feels that Miss Goudge is so eager to explain the impact of this war on the British people that she says many things directly rather than through the story. Also, one cannot avoid the impression of a certain haste, both in story development and in style.

Mr. Isaacson, the romantic violinist with his melancholy inherited from centuries of suffering, finds too pat a solution for his problems; the other characters at the end of the story also seem to run towards the solution thought out for them by the author; and since an author unfortunately sets his own standards, Miss Goudge's prose is not as immaculately polished as it was in previous books.

Only in the chapter describing the fight and death of the R.A.F. pilot does Miss Goudge show her strength, in the lyrical and clear rhythm of a prose of which each word seems to be chosen with infinite care. This chapter stands almost by itself and could, with little trouble, I suppose, be transformed into an excellent short story.

The figures, however, that one will remember out of the novel are Moppet and Poppet. A pair of London Cockney children as vital, noisy, and endearing as ever appeared in a novel, crying desperately over a teddybear's misfortunes, and behaving admirably, not to say in the grand tradition, when the Blitz comes and with it the destruction of the little world they knew. One wishes that the whole book were written around Moppet and Poppet—quite different personalities, by the way, despite the deceiving similarity of their names—or that Miss Goudge would make us the gift of a book of stories of Moppets and Poppets and how they played Peter Rabbit in the ruins of the cities of England.

ANSWERS TO LITERARY QUIZ

4. The Bible. Psalms 107, 23-24.
10. Byron: Don Juan.
8. Lewis Carroll: Through the Looking Glass.
6. Charles Edward Carryl: Davy and the Goblin.
3. Coleridge: The Ancient Mariner.
9. W. S. Gilbert: Pinafore.
2. Longfellow: Elizabeth.
1. Marlowe: Doctor Faustus.
5. John Masfield: Sea Fever.
7. Shakespeare: The Merchant of Venice.

Polyphemus Dances

By Ben Ray Redman

MASSIVE in grace, his single eye aglow,
The sleek blonde head against his swelling chest,
Lustful, perfumed, pomaded, slow,
Old Polyphemus, to the rhumba beat,
Shuffles and dips on patent-leather feet,
Dreaming of flesh, white flesh:
Whiter than privet leaves in snow:
Of Galataea's flesh within his arms.

Music has charms that stir fires faint or strong:
Power has charms that beauty cannot long
Deny if beauty would survive: no nymph alive,
Thinks Polyphemus, could refuse to thrive
Through love, or buy her fortune with a song.

The tables watch with eyes that know the tale:
The girl is pretty but the story's old.
The waiters whisper and the saxophone
Winks to the drum: for them the story's told.
A gossip columnist checks on her name,
Then says he'll have another of the same.

The sleek blonde head is dreaming, too, but there
The dreams of contract, options and career
Are over-clouded by one tall and fair,
By Acis, poor, and infinitely dear:
Player of bits, who's never had a chance.
And Galataea's thoughts sway with the dance:
If I can keep old Poly on the string
For just six months, and prove what I can do,
Then I'll be set, and so will Acis too;
We'll show the world that we have everything.
Just six short teeny months is all I ask:
Her firm young body rises to its task.

The nymph does not believe in cannibals,
She's never faced the cheated carnivore:
All men are really little boys at heart,
And men are easy if you know your stuff:
Giving so much, you need give nothing more:
They'll always stop when told that that's enough,
But still return to beg and to implore:
And that is where the wise and careful score.
Virtue's rewards are only to the smart.

The future's veil is happily opaque:
Behind it hides the shabby one-room flat
Where rocked in love and Acis' arms she'll lie,
White as a pool of milk, still as a cat,
Content and surfeited: but to awake
From all her dreams in terror when the eye,
That Cyclopean eye, shall see and break
Her universe to fragments with a glance.

Bodies press closer in the swelling dance:
All that you need in pictures is a chance.

Behind the veil: the gates that will shut tight
Against ambition, and the subtle web
Holding you helpless, and the stony walls
Against which fingers bleed: the sound unheard
Of young love weeping through an endless night:
The quick and tragic breaking of a reed,
And Acis killing love with one short word.
Fool is a word that calls for nothing more.

The nymph does not believe in cannibals:
She's never faced the cheated carnivore:
She's never met the Cyclopean breed.

Massive in grace, his single eye aglow,
The sleek blonde head against his swelling chest,
Lustful, perfumed, pomaded, slow,
Old Polyphemus, to the rhumba beat,
Shuffles and dips on patent-leather feet,
Dreaming of flesh, white flesh.