

STAGE

"An enormously enjoyable musical"
—ATKINSON, N. Y. Times

ARTHUR SCHWARTZ presents

BEATRICE JACK
LILLIE HALEY

IN THE NEW MUSICAL REVUE
Inside U.S.A.

Lyrics & Music by HOWARD DIETZ & ARTHUR SCHWARTZ
Dances & Musical Numbers by HELEN TAMIRIS
"Inside U.S.A." suggested by John Gunther's book

CENTURY 7 Ave. at 59 St. Evgs. 8:30. Mats. Wed. & Sat. 2:30

HENRY FONDA
in
Mister Roberts

A play by THOMAS HEGGEN & JOSHUA LOGAN
with DAVID WAYNE
ROBERT KEITH • WILLIAM HARRIGAN

ALVIN Thea., W. 52nd St., Evgs. 8:30, Mats. Wed. & Sat.

"A RIOT." — Morehouse, Sun
JOSEPH M. HYMAN presents

Make Mine Manhattan

The Gay New Musical Revue
Staged by
HASSARD SHORT

Sketches & Lyrics by
ARNOLD B. HORWITZ • RICHARD LEWINE &
BROADHURST, W. 44 St., Mats. Wed. & Sat.
Air-Conditioned

PULITZER PRIZE & CRITICS' AWARD

IRENE M. SELZNICK presents

A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE

by TENNESSEE WILLIAMS
Directed by ELIA KAZAN
with JESSICA TANDY

BARRYMORE, W. 47 St., Mats. Wed. & Sat.

"HERE'S A HAPPY HIT." Garland, Jrn'l-Amers
MARJORIE and SHERMAN EWING present

THE HARTMANS & HANK LADD
in The Smash Musical Revue
ANGEL IN THE WINGS

CORONET Thea., W. 49 St. Mats. Wed. & Sat.

New Stages, Inc. presents JEAN-PAUL SARTRE'S

The RESPECTFUL PROSTITUTE

CORT THEATRE • 48th St. E. of B'way • CI-5-4289
Evgs. 8:45. Matinees WED. and SAT. 2:45

FICTION

(Continued from page 11)

cusations, "Exactly! To buy a headline we need! To buy the politicians! To buy the skeptics who don't believe we've got the stuff to hit a tough target in spite of hell! To buy the airplanes the pressure groups will send somewhere else. . . . I still make the decision here! . . . They'll go this morning, even if we don't get one airplane back!"

That's the point and it is pressed home powerfully, with the roar of B-17's (which dates the action pretty well) and the familiar, irresistible pattern of war in the air and sweating it out on the ground. I have suggested a lesser degree of dramatic skill here, because the authors have been willing to obscure, somewhat, the realism of the tale with some of the cliches of romantic fiction. That is, Frank Savage is a little too much like Superman up to the very end, when battle-fatigue removes him, whole and eloquent, from the stage. And there is his soulful romance with a flight-leutenant named Pamela. But these things are happily minor irritations. The men run the show in rugged fashion and at a terrific pace. No devotee of stories of the Air Corps is going to be at all able to resist it.

California Charade

WESTWARD THE DREAM. By Frances Marion. New York: Doubleday & Co. 1948. 312 pp. \$3.

Reviewed by EDWIN SEAVER

IN "Westward the Dream," Frances Marion has dragged out Great-Grandmamma's and Grandpapa's clothes from the attic and acted out a charade of early California. One of our popular book-club mentors is reported as saying that "most readers want a forward-moving, fast-paced story with a plot. . . . Something has to happen to somebody." This describes Miss Marion's novel pretty well. In fact, as in hundreds of other such novels, just about everything happens to everybody.

"Westward the Dream" tells how tall, lean, young John Markham and his delicate, dedicated young wife, Melody, take the long trek from Iowa to southern California, where eventually John carves out a great ranch for himself. Bighearted, red-haired, desert wanderer Jim Burke joins up with him; a true pal if there ever was one. All would be just ducky if beautiful, black-haired, green-eyed Consuelo Moreno did not fall in love with John

SCREEN

RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL
Showplace of the Nation
Rockefeller Center

An exciting new musical,
brimming with laughter
and song . . .

BING CROSBY • JOAN FONTAINE
— IN —
"THE EMPEROR WALTZ"

Color by TECHNICOLOR
with
Roland Culver • Lucile Watson
Richard Haydn • Harold Vermilyea

Produced by Charles Brackett
Directed by Billy Wilder

A Paramount Picture

— • —
ON THE GREAT STAGE
"AMERICAN RHAPSODY"—Cavalcade of Gershwin music, produced by Leonidoff, settings by Bruno Maine . . . with the Rockettes, Corps de Ballet, Glee Club. Music Hall Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Alexander Smallens.

DAN DALEY
in
"GIVE MY REGARDS TO BROADWAY"

color by
technicolor
A 20th Century-Fox Film

Plus Big Stage Show
now
ROXY
7th Ave. at 50th St.

STAGE

"A SONG-AND-DANDY. Gayer than a Mardi Gras."—WALTER WINCHELL

HIGH BUTTON SHOES

SHUBERT Thea., 44th St. W. of B'way.
Ev'gs. 8:30. Mats. Wed. & Sat. 2:30

"MERMAN'S A WOW."—Chapman, News

ETHEL MERMAN
In the World-Wide Musical Smash
"ANNIE GET YOUR GUN"
with RAY MIDDLETON

IMPERIAL THEA., 45 St., West of B'way
Air-Conditioned. Mats. Wed. & Sat.

and marry Jim, just to be a member of the household, so to speak. As you might expect, something happens to somebody, and I would not for the world give Miss Marion's plot away in this ill-tempered review.

On the whole, "Westward the Dream" reminds me very much of those bicycles a certain German industrialist was reported to be manufacturing in Argentina during the war. The strangest thing about those bicycles, more than one commentator remarked, was that no matter which way you put them together they always turned out to be machine guns. No matter which way you put Miss Marion's novel together it turns out to be a prefabricated movie script.

Nineteenth-Century Quadrangle

THE MILL ON MAD RIVER. By Howard Clark. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1948. 278 pp. \$2.75.

Reviewed by BRADFORD SMITH

HISTORICAL novels are of three kinds—the Gadsooks school, the Weather Bureau school, and the Hurray for Us school. In the Gadsooks novels, atmosphere is as thick as a London fog, with dialogue full of "La, sir," "Gadsooks," and "I vum." The Weather Bureau novel is committed to accuracy of physical fact. It may garble and misinterpret human behavior, but it will never have a snowstorm going on at Lexington, Massachusetts on the morning of March 17, 1773, unless there was a snowstorm there and then. Novels of the Hurray for Us variety make it their chief business to congratulate us for having had remarkably fine ancestors

I hope I am not being too severe with "Westward the Dream." It is no better and no worse than hundreds of other such novels; is, in fact, rather better written than many. The whole thing takes place in southern California in the early nineteenth century, but shucks! it could also take place in Brooklyn today, given the proper costumes and a lot of open space to run around in; that's what gives a story like this its universality, I suppose. When will the American people grow up and demand historical novels commensurate with the magnificent enterprise and heroism of their past? Until then we shall have to be content with slick versions of pulp magazine fiction like this.

tory burned down by an incendiary and his wife's beauty scarred from the fire. There is a sister from whom the hero is separated in youth and whom he recovers by coincidence. There is a villain who turns good when the plot requires it, and also turns out to be the twin brother of the real villain. There is the faithful boyhood friend.

Perhaps it is unfair to summarize the plot of such a novel so badly. Yet the writer who makes his plot the main thing must presumably be willing to be judged by it. This plot has been so influenced by all the other plots of similar kind, that one wonders whether it too was settled by computation of averages.

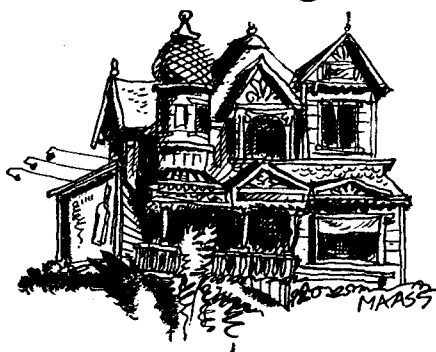
There is enough awkwardness of dialogue, and stereotyping of character, and working in of historical facts accumulated in research, to suggest that Mr. Clark is having his first go at this kind of thing. Yet there is, too, a vitality and naive pleasure in the telling which makes the reader willing to keep going. There is a reassuring familiarity with the place and period, and some interesting information about the infant American brass industry struggling to be free of British monopoly.

The question is whether this is enough for a good historical novel, particularly when the style and tone are of this familiar sort:

The pressure of her hand in his, and the sweet welcome in her smile, told him all he wanted to know more than any words could have done.

The purpose of historical fiction to glorify a nation through the retelling of its past is as old as Homer. It can be a noble aim. It can be widely noble when, as in America, the hero is no exalted king but rather is all of us—the common man. It is because of this revolution in the concept of the hero that the building of America has become, with ancient Troy and King Arthur's England, one of the great themes of fiction. But because the theme is great and because in our day a firm faith in the dignity of the common man as hero is a necessary element in our struggle to make democratic values survive, it is inadequate to treat it with less than a full understanding, or to suppose that a cheerful gusto and an unreflective romanticism are enough.

Homer made Achilles great because he saw the faults in him. Have we not long enough been praising our cultural hero with an outlook naive and starry-eyed? There are still great stories to be written about him. But first we must grow sufficiently to match our seeing with Homer's lighted blindness.



—on the theory that we are all descended from the hero.

"The Mill on Mad River," though straddling all three schools, leans pretty much to the latter. It gives the impression of having been written by a man who, after reading a good many historical novels, said to himself, "By George, I could do as well as that." And, on average, he has. But the more novels of this sort there are, the harder it becomes to do a good one. That, perhaps, represents the error in his calculations.

Following the principle of averages, Mr. Clark has judiciously chosen a period halfway between the two wars (Revolutionary and Civil) to which most historical novelists are drawn. The story begins in 1810. Anson Holt, orphan, is brought into the Connecticut home of his grandfather where he is sadistically handled by a churchly great aunt. He grows up in spite of her, displaying the self-reliant traits that we have been taught by historical romance to think of as American, falls in love with a Southern belle who is mixed up with an English villain determined to gain her hand, snatches her out of his clutches and brings her home, builds his own brass factory on the money gained from a Yankee peddler tour in the South, and returns from a business trip to England to find his fac-

STAGE

"TOPS IN TOON—SCOTCH AND SO-DA-LIGHTFUL."—Walter Winchell
CHERYL CRAWFORD presents A NEW MUSICAL
BRIGADOON
Book and Lyrics by ALAN JAY LERNER • Music by FREDERICK LOEWE
Dances by AGNES de MILLE • Staged by ROBERT LEWIS
Scenery by OLIVER SMITH • Costumes by DAVID FOLKES
ZIEGFELD Thea. 6th Ave. & 54th St. Evs. Incl. Sunday 8:30
Matinees Saturday at 2:30 and Sunday at 3:00. No Monday Perf.

MAX GORDON presents
BORN YESTERDAY AIR COND.
The LAUGH HIT
with JUDY HOLLIDAY • JOHN ALEXANDER
by GARSON KANIN
LYCEUM Thea. 45 St. E. of B'way

NURSERY REBELLION

(Continued from page 20)

"This research establishes the following facts:

"The originator of the Mother Goose rhymes was Charles Perrault, a seventeenth-century French satirist. He wrote about a dozen of the ditties, publishing them under his son's name, Perrault d'Armancour, in 1697. They were represented as fairy tales under the title "Contes de ma Mère l'Oye," and incorporated some fiendish tales which had previously appeared in Italy under the title "Pentamerone," although Perrault recast them in singsong ditty rhythm.

Perrault was one of the most controversial literary figures of his time, largely as a result of his four-volume study comparing classical times with his own in "Parallèle des Anciens et des Modernes" (1688).

"I had to brush up on my French before I could get through the "Parallèle," but there is one passage in particular, in which he discusses the deplorable readiness of people to be victimized by superstition or the spurious. He insists that the most ridiculous statement, if presented plausibly, will be readily taken up.

"Then, in letters written by Perrault and tucked away in the back pages of an obscure book by Nicolas Boileau-Despreaux, a contemporary critic, we find the outline of Perrault's grand hoax. He will write vicious commentaries on current events and current personalities, but he will dress them up with charming illustrations in rhymes to be read to children 'during nursery hours.'

"Perrault predicted that people would buy them as charming and harmless ditties—completely insensible and insensitive to the fact that the words themselves conveyed ideas and images which were suitable for anything except the nursery.

"He once claimed that the distance from the sun to the earth was as nothing compared to the distance from the tongue to the brain—and that the mouth could form sounds without the mind even dimly comprehending what was being said. And he proved it with Mother Goose—millions of copies of which are still being sold every year! Too bad Perrault didn't arrange to collect royalties! In any event, he predicted that human gullibility would be his monument, and there is apparently no danger of that monument ever toppling—now that it has endured for more than 350 years.

"And here you are expecting an old gaffer like me to get excited about the inaneness of the terror comics..."

N. C.

THE KING AND THE QUEEN

a novel by
Ramón J. Sender

Two new
books

A baroque story of the love duel between a duchess and her gardener during the Spanish Civil War.

"This could have been a modern counterpart of one of Balzac's or Alarcon's droll stories . . . Worse, it could have led to the socio-sexual dialectics of the pooped aristocracy and the vigorous proletariat that reached its seamy peak in the confusions of *Lady Chatterly's Lover*. But Ramón J. Sender's brilliant novel avoids both pitfalls: the arch and the dubious . . . Its richness derives for the most part from the multiplicity of the levels upon which it can be read."—GEORGE MAYBERRY in *The New Republic*.

\$3.00



CHAPLIN

Last of the Clowns

By PARKER TYLER. A revealing study of Charles Chaplin, the poverty-stricken English boy whose reputation as an artist has lately been obscured by his tabloid notoriety. Parker Tyler has achieved a brilliant analysis of the strange contradiction that is Chaplin—the artist and the man.

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