

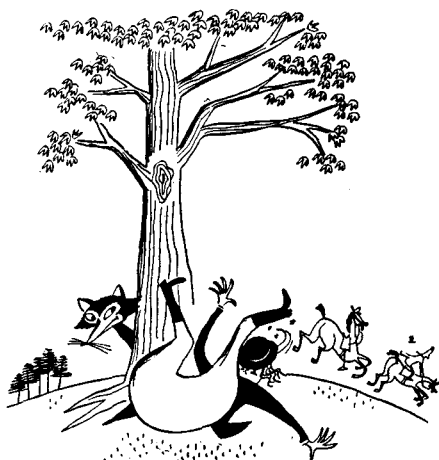
## FICTION

(Continued from page 19)

ginia Myers's first book about Southern California, "Angela's Wife" had much the same directly detailed technique. She writes her historical novels in the language of the women's magazines and, sensibly, entirely from the woman's point of view. Her concerns are those of the housekeeping of a big estate, complete with all sorts of big family affairs, jealous stepdaughters almost her own age, reckless brothers, a half-caste illiterate sister, and her own children. The novel's chief event is the very real problem of such Spanish landholders whose titles were held only in the vague Spanish manner, which had little force against the cunning and rapacity of the intruding Americans. There are, fortunately for us, some intelligent and friendly Americans. Miss Myers's unpretentious narrative is the more effective because she does not overestimate her powers. It is a book that will have real interest for Southern Californians.

—MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS.

*LADY ON THE HUNT*, by Clinch Calkins. Harper. \$2.50. If Rockefeller could restore Williamsburg, is there any reason why Caleb Treat, a fictitious Yankee millionaire, couldn't restore the foxhunt to its rightful habitat? Treat thought he could and almost did. He acquired a Virginia estate, complete with stables, grooms, and a horse-wise duenna to initiate him into the snooty county set. He then bought an entire hunt club, magnanimously allowing its members to continue paying dues. He also imported a film star named Delilah Winsor, who didn't know a horse's rump from its front end but who thought she could decorate any old nag. And did. In beruffled side habit and silk



—From "Lady on the Hunt."

topper. Luckily for Delilah her standing, a true-blue Virginia aristocrat named Sheila Rafferty, could ride like a demon. So could bemortgaged Domenico Milliken, another pure-blooded Virginian, who loved Sheila but hated Treat, who lusted for Delilah, who adored herself. Anyway, on the eve of the great hunt a bunch of insensitive farmers forbade Grand Master Treat from riding across their land. They even threatened to withhold their little foxes. So what did Treat do but order a fox to be flown down from New York. But it turned out to be a chinchilla, which happened to be Delilah's favorite animal anyway. Everyone winds up happy except the reader, who winds up nag-shy and rump-weary.

Probably a good satire could be written about followers of the fox. But "Lady on the Hunt" isn't it. It is cute rather than clever, tiresome and silly rather than witty. If the hounds couldn't move any faster than this "short" novel, they couldn't possibly catch the fox. And they didn't.

—RAY PIERRE.

*THE SAINT*, by Fritz von Unruh. Translated by Willard Trask. Random House. \$3.50. This is a strange book, and rather grotesque. On page 36 appears the following:

O Thou Who hast made that emerald-green lizard to slip so sly and quick among these warm mossy stones; Who hast made the red-freaked daisies there in the dew-pearled grass, and the green-gold beetles there among the red and yellow roses around that statue, and the white oxen in the podere, and the song of that young girl down there among the reeds by the well—the song that rises so pure, so silver-sounding, from the healthy ovaries of her slender, living self, like the song of this spring day!

And on page 45:

one dappled cow said, "Moo!"

The first passage is the language of Niccolo di Toldo, the second of Saint Catherine of Siena in the year 1378. The book recounts (1) her struggles to redeem his soul, and (2) his efforts to possess her body.

One wonders vaguely what impelled such a book to be written. The need to "prove" that we must love each other by loving God Who is within us all? The desire to illustrate the pantheistic belief that God exists in each blade of grass? Or was it to pseudo-historify the Guelf-Ghibelline conflicts in present-day terms?

The serious intent of Fritz von Unruh, whatever it may be, cannot be questioned. But his novel "of sacred and profane love" is not plausible. Character and story are infantile. And

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the spuriously romantic manner of the writing is so bloated that there is neither form nor grace nor taste.

The book has been translated from the German.

—MARTIN BLUMENSON.

*THE DARLINGTONS*, by Lady Sylvia Brooke. Farrar, Straus. \$3. The Darlingtons are a mid-Victorian family consisting of Papa, Lord Darlington, Mama, Lady Darlington, Henrietta and Susan, twin daughters. Susan is the narrator heroine. Lady Darlington is addicted to errors in judgment, but from the reader's standpoint the greatest error may have been the boring of Susan. The author seems to have some compunctions as to her own share in this creation, for in the opening pages little Susan makes an attempt at suicide, unfortunately abortive.

Whether Lady Sylvia was trying to satirize a Victorian novel or write a real one matters little; the satire is not necessary: if one is in the mood, any novel of that period can be its own satirist; and if you want to read

a real Victorian novel there are numerous not too bad examples to satisfy the longing. The Brontë sisters did quite well, and so did Mr. Trollope. They say a paper shortage is again nearly upon us. Publishers should consider twice before wasting paper, not to say ink, on a spurious attempt at something that has been done better and more honestly before.

Just before the end of the book the author lets a family retainer, whose delight it is to listen at keyholes, make a statement:

Life is a series of incidents, ladies and gentlemen, and fate and divine providence have their part to play. . . . There's an art to telling a story, and I'm praying to God I've got it. It's like opening a bag of tricks; you mustn't let out the contrivance of it. Keep them guessing, so to speak, and dangle the pith of the narrative in front of their noses. . . . It's a knack, ladies and gentlemen, and if you know a hawk from a handsaw it's an ingenuity only Satan himself gave to humans.

It's a knack, right enough. But though I may not know a hawk from

## *The Cool Gold Wines of Paradise*

By Robert Farren

**T**HE God who had such heart for us  
as made him leave His house,  
come down through archipelagos  
of stars and live with us  
has such a store of joys laid down  
their savors will not sour:  
the cool gold wines of Paradise,  
the bread of Heaven's flour.

He'll meet the soul which comes in love  
and deal it joy on joy—  
as once He dealt out star on star  
to garrison the sky,  
to stand there over rains and snows  
and deck the dark of night—  
so God will deal the soul, like stars,  
delight upon delight.

Night skies have planet-armies, still  
the blue is never full;  
rich massive stars have never bowed  
one cloud-bed's flock of wool;  
red worlds of dreadful molten fire  
have singed no speck of air:—  
all is in place, and, each to each,  
God's creatures show His care.

The soul will take each joy He deals  
as skies take star on star,  
be never filled, be never bowed,  
be airy, as clouds are,  
burn with enlarging heat and shine  
with ever-brightening ray,  
joyful and gathering thirst for joy  
throughout Unending Day.

*The Saturday Review*