

gles earnestly to do good in the town near his home-site. But school-board membership, local journalism, and community improvement — like Mr. Blandings's hayfield—promise richly only to end in ashes. Hope returns when Blandings sells the country home and returns to the simple, care-free life of the city and the humble toil of an advertising executive.

Mr. Hodgins's conclusion is similar in thought but precisely opposed in content to that of another satirist whose hero tried to take the world on two centuries ago: let us cease, Mr. Hodgins is saying, cultivating our gardens. If the conclusion suggests Voltaire the manner and matter of the story are closer to those used by Mr. Hodgins's smoother but more sedate contemporary J. P. Marquand. Dealing with the things which make tired business men tired, both writers combine slick improbabilities and cunning suspense tricks with passages of thoughtful writing, eloquent description, and rousing burlesque.

—VANCE BOURJAILY.

NO TIME FOR FEAR. By Davenport Steward. Hale Publishing Co., Hopeville, Ga. \$3. All the staple ingredients of the period novel have been tossed into "No Time for Fear," which deals with one aspect of the Revolutionary War—Francis Marion's dogged campaign in the Carolina low country. Like a mixed green salad, it contains selected ingredients: so many grim battles, hard-won victories, and cruel defeats, ruined families and divided loyalties, and, for seasoning, a dash of love. But the success of a salad partially depends on the manner of mixing. In his first novel Mr. Steward, a Southern newspaperman, has exhibited a certain skill in blending his various elements and has produced an edible concoction.

The book has two heroes, who serve as admirable foils for each other—Penn Thomason, a backwoods Quaker

pacifist, who joins the rebels after his father is brutally murdered by a sadistic English officer and Eugene Laurence, a Charles Town aristocrat, who breaks with his Tory father to espouse the Revolutionary cause. With the indomitable little General Marion and his ragged, undisciplined troops they fight in numerous skirmishes, endure grim hardships, help each other out of serious scrapes. Like soldiers in any war, they grow weary of the seemingly endless conflict and beef about rations, ammunition, and weather. Of the lesser characters Ervin, the blunt Scotch-Irishman, and Hertz, the former bondservant who sacrifices his life for his friends, are the best drawn. As for the dressing, the love scenes between Penn and Arline Laurence and those of Eugene and arrogant Pauline Carson are rather spiceless and cliché-ridden. Also, aren't such phrases as "war of nerves" and "you want to make something of it?" anachronistic in 1780? —R. P.

MISS WILLIE. By Janice Holt Giles. Westminster Press. \$3. This is a sequel to "The Enduring Hills," the first book about Miss Willie and her adopted niece, Mary, who married a Kentucky mountaineer. The author has lived for years among the mountain people, and she and her husband have taught there. Piney Ridge is obviously authentic both in setting and in characterization.

Miss Willie, teaching school in El

Paso, is a small, discriminating woman in her forties. Her life is so perfectly ordered that it is like a freshly made bed, neat, cool—and empty. When Mary writes and asks her to come to teach the mountain school Miss Willie, facing the loneliness in her well-ordered life, accepts the challenge.

The mountain school, unsanitary and lacking nearly everything, the parents and board members, "sot in their ways," are more of a problem than she has bargained for. It takes all of her courage and ingenuity to meet life each day. Weary and at an age when many women give one last longing glance about for a sturdy shoulder and security, Miss Willie falls in love with Wells Pierce, a widower with several children. It is through the tolerance and quiet common sense of this man that Miss Willie gradually begins to understand the "quare" ways of the mountaineers.

Her emotions fluctuate, with the death of a child whose parents' religion forbids having a doctor for him and with the bitter reproach of Pierce's son, who finds her sanctimonious and condescending. But in the end Miss Willie and the mountaineers accept each other, and she finds a life that is rich, demanding, and satisfying.

The book is frankly sentimental. So are mountain ballads. It has as much flavor as woodsmoke and is as sturdy and clean as a freshly washed "coverlid" patched on a cabin porch.

—CHRISTINE NOBLE GOVAN.

LITERARY I.Q. ANSWERS

1. Poker. ("The Benson Murder Case" and "The Canary Murder Case," by S. S. Van Dine.) 2. Billiards. ("Antony and Cleopatra" Act II, Scene 5, By Shakespeare.) 3. Frog jumping. ("The Celebrated Jumping Frog," by Mark Twain.) 4. Poker. ("The Outcasts of Poker Flat," by Bret Harte.) 5. Whist. ("Around the World in Eighty Days," by Jules Verne.) 6. Pistol practise. ("The Musgrave Ritual," by Conan Doyle.) 7. Euchre. ("Plain Language from Truthful James," by Bret Harte.) 8. Whist. ("Mrs. Battle's Opinions on Whist," by Charles Lamb.) 9. Manhunting. ("The Most Dangerous Game," by Richard Connell.) 10. Solo whist. ("The Shooting of Dan McGrew," by Robert W. Service.)

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Ideas on Film

Eyewitnessing the World of the 16mm Motion Picture

DOCUMENTARY—RALLYING POINT FOR EUROPE

ANY American who was abroad during this past year could only be impressed by the ferment of film activity in the European countries. From early spring to late fall the Continent fairly seethed with film festivals, film conferences, and film manifestations. It was all but impossible for a feature picture not to win some special award somewhere. The modest short subject, on the other hand, while considerably less heaped with honors was even more in evidence. Documentaries were shown daily, three different programs a day, for two weeks before the feature presentations began at Venice—and even then one or two generally turned up on the programs. There were special documentary and experimental film manifestations at Florence, Knocke-le-Zoute, Cannes, London, Antibes, and Basle. And in three crowded weeks the annual Edinburgh Film Festival presented an international selection of over one hundred shorts in the realist tradition, plus seven documentary features.

It is these fact films that prove most illuminating to the American traveler. The better features generally manage to get across the water sooner or later. But for documentaries the going is harder. We see in this country only a fraction of the total output—and a very specialized fraction at that. We are now becoming conscious of the European art films, the films about painting and sculpture, music and ballet. But while the European film-makers are indeed turning out art films in profusion much more of their effort is concentrated on films about living.

Italy, for example, with a large illiterate farm population, has turned to the motion picture on a vast scale to explain new agricultural techniques and machinery to her working people. Shown in farm collectives, in schools, in public squares, these films are generally simple and efficient little jobs and fascinating, too. "Strange Bodies in Cows," a picture to warn farmers to keep nails and similar sharp objects away from their herd's fodder, may never lure anyone into a movie house, but for its purpose it is ideal.

Other pictures explain to Italians how to grow better corn, more and healthier chickens, how to improve sanitation, what to do about the ma-

laria mosquito. A long series of films celebrates the bringing of water to inland villages that never before had any or enough; others depict the stages in postwar reconstruction. These subjects are treated in a determinedly experimental manner; the young Italians, often graduates of the State-operated film school "LUCE," will insist on injecting "art" into subjects as prosaic as the housing problem and public safety. But the eagerness of these film-makers is fast producing an impressive and solid documentary tradition in Italy.

Only against this background of genuinely utilitarian films is it proper to talk about the surge of Italian art films since the war. Led by Luciano Emmer and Enrico Gras, whose first two efforts toured the United States with the Italian Masters art show in 1947, many of Italy's best directors are turning to this medium. Alessandro Blasetti, whose "Four Steps in the Clouds" was such a delight a few years back, has already done quite a number. So has Francesco Pasinetti, though better known in Italy as a critic and writer than as a film-maker. Antonio Marchi, Tomei, Ardolini, Magnaghi, Ferroni are all names that add up to a film movement whose influence has been felt—and imitated—throughout Europe and perhaps nowhere quite

so much as in Belgium and France.

Young people like the American William Novik, established film-makers like Henri Storck are turning with fresh enthusiasm to the arts and artists of Europe. The problems of reinterpreting the artistic expression of one medium in the terms of another seem to fascinate them; their solutions—as in Henri Storck's "Rubens" film seen here last year—are often quite arresting. Jean Gremillon, director of the documentary feature "Farrébique," completed this past summer a gently satiric film on the painters of the French Academy, "Les Charmes de l'Existence." In Paul Haesaerts's "Visite à Picasso" the artist's brush technique is demonstrated admirably when Picasso draws with white paint on clear plastic material placed between himself and the camera.

LIKE the Italian farm films, these art pictures too have an audience. They are not created in a vacuum, neither is their distribution left completely to chance. Throughout the Continent exist the "Ciné-Clubs," clubs in which film classics are constantly being revived, exhibited, and discussed. France alone has almost a hundred such groups, all organized along the lines of our own—and solitary—Cinema 16. There is an annual membership fee which entitles the individual to attend a certain number of showings. Films are circulated about, assuring the producer of both an audience and some income. Although Ciné-Clubs have existed in France since the mid-Twenties, never before have they been so extensively organized or so popularly attended. And both art films and documentaries are regular features.

England, long known best for her



Gerald Pearson in "The Undeclared"—"determined to become active and useful once more."