

FICTION

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They Need," published last year. For his second novel he has moved into an old Southern city, complete with azaleas, a Mardi Gras parade and ball, and belles and beaus of every age. He has taken his acid with him, but he has also added—or developed—a gentler note of kindly understanding and warmth which makes "Other Lives to Live" a more roundly satisfying performance than was his first novel. There are echoes here of Anne Parrish at her sharpest, but also of the Ellen Glasgow who wrote "The Romantic Comedians" and "They Stooped to Folly."

Our concern is with Emily Waring who, past sixty, widowed, with grown children and growing grandchildren, finds herself in love with Julian Seabright. Julian is a rather battered old beau, an admitted failure, dependent upon his successful fashion-editor daughter, Doro, and withal a real charmer. The reactions of Emily's family and friends to her discovery of her love provide Mr. Lyons with some nice opportunities to impale the emotional immaturities, the prejudices, and the rigidities with which so many of us try to keep ourselves and our friends on a chosen line.

Mr. Lyons's major characters, Emily and Julian, are soundly drawn, warmly human, with lovable frailties and sudden depths of strength. His others, Emily's petulant children, her half pompous brother, the Southern gentleman Senator, flighty Maudie, are perhaps etched with a little too much acid or, to shift metaphors, are balloons a little too easily pricked, but Mr. Lyons handles them with engaging deftness and keeps them moving through the artful contrivances of his tale at a nice pace. I think you'll enjoy his story. —EDWARD J. FITZGERALD.

FRIGHT IN THE FOREST. By Benn Sowerby. Knopf. 272 pp. \$3. Throughout this book, as the reader finds himself carried along on the tide of its beautiful prose, he may expect one of those it-was-all-only-a-dream denouements apt to restore his somewhat shaken feeling of reality. But there is no such ending. As in Plato's Parable of the Cave, the feeling of reality as such is the theme; that feeling's enigmatic nature forms, so I think, the subject of this curious and curiously fascinating slender novel. Its author, a Cambridge-trained and widely traveled Englishman in his middle forties, has three volumes of verse, ap-

parently not published as yet in this country, to his credit. And I submit it is as poetry — as poetic images — that the short fifty-one chapters of his book may and will be enjoyed. Some of them come close to being unforgettable: the little boy atop the hay wagon, or his escapade from boarding school into a world filled with *Urangst*, or the boys' swim in the ocean, or the grown-up narrator's oddly dimmed affair with a girl who just walks in, or his encounter with a gang of tight-lipped underworld characters in a tavern, or his flight to the countryside, or his dealings with a Hogarthian pawnbroker, or a brawl he gets himself involved in, or a fire he watches under the suspicious eyes of another onlooker, or any of the various pursuits or futile searches through crooked, nightmarish alleys. Through all these scenes there wander three men — at first one of them, an officious and increasingly demanding "friend" who disappears soon, and then a couple of even less pleasant fellows. Each of the three, or their weird trinity, is occasionally referred to as the "Enemy."

There is enough in "Fright in the Forest" that is Mr. Sowerby's most original own to arouse our curiosity as to his future work as a teller of meaningful eerie tales.

—ROBERT PICK.

SUGAR ON THE SLATE. By Don Fontaine. Farrar, Straus & Young. \$3. This is a clever take-off of modern education, particularly of the brand which has the "progressive" tinge. Mr. Burkhardt, principal of the junior high school in the small community of Pey-

ton, was not the man to let well enough alone. The school had for years been run in a reasonable way, that is until the over-enterprising principal was appointed chairman of the Committee on Techniques for Administering a Program of Instructional Activities. The teachers were instructed to put a little realism into the studies, to dramatize the contents of the textbooks, to transform theoretical lessons into active form. The Latin teacher set to work preparing an ancient tableau with home-made togas and a Roman Emperor, who was greatly embarrassed to discover how absurd he looked in his bifocals. The teacher who had dispensed social studies in the traditional manner now undertook to guide her students to a neighboring farm in order to give them a first-hand knowledge of cows and rabbits and chickens, with results tremendously entertaining for the reader but not so much for the fond parents of the youngsters.

Then the persistent Mr. Burkhardt conceived the brilliant idea that the best way to make "good citizens of tomorrow" was to give them a chance to run the town for a day. The genial mayor was willing to hand over all the departments, including that of the police. And didn't the teen-agers have a grand time! They discovered outworn ordinances of generations ago never repealed, including those of having dogs wear bells on their necks and having houses bear the names of the tenants. The enterprising female "chief" of police did some startling things, and the "counselor" got into court to be judged by one of her own pupils. There was a great hullabaloo,



"Forty-three beefs, two threatening letters, eighty-one requests for donations, and a questionnaire from a public-opinion poll asking what you like best about being a publisher."

A DECLARATION OF Freedom

FREE MEN must re-dedicate themselves to the cause of freedom. They must understand with a new certainty of conviction that the cause of freedom is the cause of the human individual.

Human individuality is the basis of every value—spiritual, moral, intellectual, creative — in human life. To preserve it in a world of expanding and aggressive authoritarianism there must be a determination that freedom shall be defended wherever it is attacked and under whatever color or excuse.

Those who attack freedom in the name of freedom are no less dangerous than those who attack it in the name of authority and discipline. Those who profess a belief in freedom but shirk the obligations it imposes, share the guilt of its enemies.

WHAT IS FREEDOM?

Freedom is the right to choose: the right to create for oneself the alternatives of choice. Without the possibility of choice and the exercise of choice a man is not a man but a member, an instrument, a thing.

Freedom is the right to one's soul: the right of each man to approach God in his own way and by his own means. It is a man's right to possess his mind and conscience for himself.

To those who put their trust in freedom, the State can have no sovereignty over the mind or soul, — must be the servant

How can the faith in man survive in a time of human cruelty and treachery and wickedness beyond all precedent? How can it survive in a time of vast impersonal mechanisms — political and social and material — when individual human beings often feel, and sometimes say, that man has lost control of his destiny?

Faith in man can survive even in our time, because the conscience of mankind has survived and still protests. As long as the conscience of mankind survives—as long as mankind knows the “unwritten and undying laws of God”—man can believe in man.

Why should men believe in freedom now? Why should the exploited populations believe in freedom? Why should the poor believe in freedom? — the victims of economic greed? — the persecuted races? Why should those who crave an answer believe in freedom which is not, itself, an answer but a means of finding answers; which is not itself an end but a means to ends?

Men, whatever their situation, whatever their anxiety, should believe in freedom now precisely because freedom is not a preconceived answer, a predetermined end. What counts in a world of men is the beginning and the opportunity, not merely the end and the answer.

This age of ours is big with a future of infinite possibilities. Prophets of darkened vision have invoked its horrors for us.