

**Fiction.** *Nearly all of this week's works of fiction contain ingredients that guarantee them wide popularity. In "The Bogman" Walter Macken combines the romanticism that has made Irish stories popular with generations of readers throughout the world with a touch of modern realism—a neat trick if you can do it as well as Mr. Macken. A writer who over the years has won a large audience with his fast-moving adventure tales chooses a new name (Hall Hunter) and a glamorous place and time (India in the 1850's) for another certain winner, "The Bengal Tiger" (page 15). Readers seeking well-conducted excursions through the pitfalls of romance and domesticity will find them in Caroline Ivey's "The Family" (page 15), Worth Tuttle Hedden's "Love Is A Wound" (page 16), and Mary O'Hara's "The Son of Adam Wyngate" (page 40). The writing of Wyndham Lewis is much more special, but Lewis fans find "Rotting Hill" (page 40), something particularly special.*

## Ireland's Strong Poverty

THE BOGMAN. By Walter Macken.  
New York: The Macmillan Co. 316  
pp. \$3.50.

By HARRISON SMITH

THE fisherman, the peasant farmer, and the inhabitants of Dublin's slums have furnished material for a whole generation of Irish writers. Most of the younger school have grimly turned their backs on James Stephens's "Pot of Gold" and have illustrated through stark tragedy their disappointment in the revolution which has turned Eire into a republic independent of the British Crown, but which has not relieved the poverty of the common people. Since it is impossible to continue to attack the English landlord or the "Black and Tan" army of occupation, they now find their subjects in a puritanical and socialistic Government or the continuing power of the Church.

The rest of us prefer to think that there is something romantic in Irish poverty like the gnomes and hobgoblins, which does not exist, anywhere else on the earth. The writing of Walter Macken may be said to combine the qualities of Liam O'Flaherty and James Stephens, with a strong flavoring of Irish drama he honestly acquired as a playwright, as an actor in Dublin's famous Abbey Theatre, and as a director of the Galway Gaelic Theatre.

Mr. Macken's earlier novel, "Rain on the Wind," was concerned with the tribulations and passions of a young fisherman on Galway's wild and picturesque coast. His new work, "The Bogman," is the story of what happened to the illegitimate grandson of a farmer who had turned his daughter



Walter Macken—"realism and reality."

out of his home and sent her child to a state industrial school. At the age of eighteen young Cahal Kinsella came home to this crabbed and lonely old grandfather as happily as if he were going to his own wedding. He had been taught to obey any authority, and he gladly worked for him like a dog; at his command he even married a woman old enough to be his mother, for the ancient farmhouse needed a cook and a domestic slave. Cahal drove her home from the all-night celebration of her intoxicated family and fled from her early the next morning. Thereafter he slept alone. This was the beginning of his revolt and of his downfall.

Cahal belonged to the tribe of the black Irish, powerful and hairy men who had Spanish blood in their veins. In a previous generation he would have been a bard, for he sang songs

about his neighbors that were popular through the countryside and were printed in broadsheets. The village was made up of only a half-dozen families, hard-working men and women living on the verge of bankruptcy. Some farmsteads had been abandoned when the sons and daughters fled to America and left the old people to die in the poorhouse; others had been bought up by dishonest Murphy who became Cahal's bitter enemy. Slowly the villagers turned against him; he was different and therefore dangerous.

Inevitably, Cahal fell in love with a red-headed girl whose father was the most intelligent of all the inhabitants. He became in the minds of his neighbors a bastard and a lecher, a menace to every maiden in the parish. His fate was sealed when it was discovered that his natural father was the shameless, rowdy tinker who traveled to the fairs and market-day celebrations with his gipsy woman. What happened eventually to free Cahal and send him away penniless with his girls is Mr. Macken's story and should not be disclosed here. It is enough to say that it is the essence of romance, that it appears to be the inevitable climax of a story which portrays the Irish peasant as either tormented and doomed to a bitter and savage old age or the surviving remnant of a once carefree and poetic race. Eire has long needed a romantic writer who can combine realism and reality, now that those staples of Irish literature, the beautiful colleen and the fairy-tale, have lost their appeal. It has found him in Mr. Macken.

### FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT No. 465

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 465 will be found in the next issue.

FCL ALKB-GHHNFEECM  
DFSN PDFKL WLGN  
FSOPLEMDA FB AOSHET  
AOGNLNA GCT FB  
KFST DSRRGA.

—G. HFHL.

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 464  
Society is like the air, necessary to breathe, but insufficient to live on.

—GEORGE SANTAYANA.

## Indian Musk

*THE BENGAL TIGER.* By Hall Hunter. New York: Doubleday & Co. 319 pp. \$3.50.

By JOSEPH G. HITREC

SON of a British baronet, and a remittance-man on the kind of lofty level where the term loses some of its odious meaning, Simon Peeltower chose India for his voluntary exile. That decision became necessary after an adolescent bit of exhibitionism at his father's home in Devon, which he had disgraced by dancing with the scullery maid in front of several distinguished guests. In India, Simon found he could live in reasonable style on his mother's inheritance. He shot big game, made love to eligible British virgins, and found time to dash off to Crimea for a spot of doing-one's-bit. By the time his father died and the inheritance dried up suddenly through a fumble in the mother's will, Simon had built up a colorful reputation for himself. It was the middle of the nineteenth century and the great Indian Mutiny—the so-called Sepoy Rebellion—was just about to break out.

In the mysterious ways of the East, everyone knew the Mutiny was coming long before D-Day and no one did anything specific about it. Simon Peeltower, reduced to having to earn a living, had himself hired by an upcountry village to stalk and shoot a man-eating tiger. The assignment completed, he was paid in kind—with the gift of Latah, "a lovely child of nature." Latah was not a virgin, as Simon's previous English girl friend had been, but she was ready to be awakened by Simon. In retrospect, that kind of

thing appears to have been Simon's one distinctive contribution to life and happiness in India. Unluckily for Simon, the rumored Rebellion did break out on schedule, and the romance came in for an interval of strain.

The insurgent Sepoys took Delhi and Allahabad, and put a Mogul descendant on the throne. The fort of Diwan-pani, commanded by Simon's friend, General Morrow, fell to the rebels and Simon left the jungle to help the party of surviving Britishers to escape to Calcutta. They were captured, however, and taken up to Delhi on a Ganges boat. A prize of war, General Morrow, was to be dragged in a cage through the streets of Delhi to emphasize some of the rebel's points; Simon and the others were earmarked for torture, rape, or killing. But as the boat slowly edged up the Ganges, it transpired that Simon was the only one of the Europeans who had made any real friends in India. Latah and Simon's huntsman, Puran, came to the rescue and the whole party made a run for it in the dark of night. Afterwards the group decided to hide out the rebellion in a deserted ruin in the hills. Here the personal sub-plots and unresolved relationships were finally sorted out.

"The Bengal Tiger" breathes an authentically sultry atmosphere, in which the army officers deport themselves as prototypes and their womenfolk reveal a convincing *amour propre*, while natives tread softly and face up to portentous events with grave proverbial utterances until aroused to hatred and murder. Indian flora and fauna make their charmed entrance on cue. And Hall Hunter, the pseudonymous author of it all, moves along at a nimble clip, with a zest that is as contagious as it is harmless.

## Southern Song

*THE FAMILY.* By Caroline Ivey. New York: William Sloane Assoc. 379 pp. \$3.50.

By CID RICKETTS SUMNER

THIS is a book full of people, small Alabama townspeople: folks and trash, Negroes and liquor-making farmers. The folks—that is to say the top layer—chatter, laugh "like dams breaking and floods rolling," running on in a delightful manner that to one who knows the South is at once recognizable as remarkably true to form. As the title indicates, this is the story of a family, the Olmsteads: of Allen, the father, who rarely put his foot down and asked but one thing of his family—that they be happy; of Emma, the mother, past mistress of what the Yankee called vicious politeness and who "never got out the best china except for high company or for people she didn't like very much" (and what a charmingly revealing phrase that is!); of Uncle Wick, reserved and elegant in threadbare coat, like a broken-down count; of Mary Sheridan the youngest, quick, elfin, explosive, not yet fitted into the family mold; of Wyatt, lean and sensitive with a twist of bitterness on his mouth; of Jewel his wife, petulant, cool, and cruel, a misfit, a Clopton among the mannerly Olmsteads. And most of all it is the story of Shelby who was what she was because of her folks, who could not escape them or be altogether herself because of them. She loved her Yankee husband Stewart but could not understand his reserve or the block of ice that was inside him any more than he could understand the Olmsteads. He and Jewel are the aliens in this warm, close-knit loyal family group and inevitably they are drawn together in their strangeness, for Jewel comes of a family that is even more foreign than any Yankee could be.

Here is a situation full of tensions and stresses often vividly handled by Mrs. Ivey who writes in a crisp, clear-cut style that at times is as trim and darting and efficient as the movements of a tufted titmouse. Certain scenes are especially good—as when Wyatt swims the swollen creek to rescue three cows, or when Jewel has her first clash with the family and brings on Uncle Wick's stroke. Kay-tee, the cook, is a real person who knows everything, and "never seed nothin but trash smoke standin up—it's all right if you set." And Miss Dolenska, Uncle Wick's old love who came for a birthday dinner twice a



—Bettmann Archive.

The Sepoy Rebellion—"torture, rape, or killing."