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Florida Forecast

MIAMI BEACH.

I ACKNOWLEDGE that B. Cerf makes the jokes here, but if he will permit me I would like to tell about the man who meets a friend at Penn Station on the way to catch the train to Miami. "Where you staying?" the man asks his friend when both are settled in the club car. "I'll be at the Saxony," the fellow says with some innocence, whereupon his interrogator puts hands to face and exclaims incredulously, "What? Last year's hotel?"

The vogue in hotels down here changes quicker than the French Cabinet. New buildings are going up so fast along Miami Beach that, indeed, a man of certain station caught staying at last year's hotel is threatened with social ostracism. Since the war, fifty-seven new hotels have gone up along the Beach and four have risen across the bay in Miami. This total of sixty-one quaint little rakish castles represents more first-class hotels than have been built all over the world since the war.

The Great Wall along Collins Avenue has all but shut out the view of the sea from the passerby. Tall hotels sit shoulder to shoulder for more than a mile along Chrome Canyon, and if you want to get sand in your shoes or even a long distance view of the water, you've got to walk through the lobbies, tiptoe past the swimming pool, climb over the sunning bodies, and voilà! there's the Atlantic.

The Hotel of the Year 1953 is the Algiers, which will be ready December 10. Next year it will be as déclassé as a Stutz Bearcat, but for now it's in its gleaming element. For instance, a whole wall of glass panels, three stories high, bowing out toward the avenue, encloses the night club. Dining terraces look out to the swimming pool and beyond to the sea. A glass rotunda suspended over the driveway is set aside as a card room. What with the boats sliding along the lagoon across the road, the Cadillacs zipping by underneath, and the thought of the daily rate, it will take a man of the concentrative powers of Samuel Reshevsky to keep his mind on his cards.

For its new magnificence the Algiers will extract a rate of \$37 a day single or double occupancy without food in an ocean front room during the high season, January 15 to March 15. Terrace and corner rooms are slightly more. However, from December 10 until the 19, and again from April 12 to April 30, the minimum rate in a minimum room will be as low as \$15 a day. Between \$15 and \$37 there is an involved sliding scale depending upon location and the time of the year.

Generally speaking, the top ocean front hotels, last year's and the year before's included, will get from \$20 to \$40 a day no food in the height of the season. No matter what's happened to a pound of butter, the rates have not gone up in Miami Beach beyond the astronomical scale they reached immediately after the war when the big money was around.

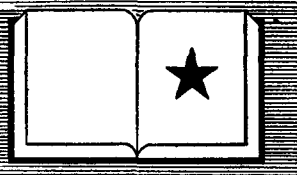
A new entity are the rows and rows of motels that have sprung up along the beach well north of the northernmost hotel. They are flamboyantly modern and sport names like Tahiti, Trinidad, Castaways, and other handles designed to inspire dreams of desert islands. Many are right on the ocean, most have swimming pools, and all are designed by architects who would rather be Frank Lloyd Wright than conventional.

Right now an air-conditioned motel room and bath on the edge of the sand rents for \$4, \$5, or \$6 a day. Once the temperature begins to drop in the North the rates begin to go up in the South, and the word is out that when the rush is on the motels will extract whatever the traveler can bear. It is safe to say, however, that the rates will always be somewhat less than what they are getting in the down beach hotels, and a man won't have to fuss with fancy tipping, nor a lady with fancy gowns.

There has been a trend away from the giant night clubs the likes of Copa City, now in bankruptcy, and the Beachcomber, which once vied with each other with three top-salary stars apiece on the bill. Perhaps it is because the fast money has disappeared, or maybe television has brought the stars so close even the big spenders will no longer drop \$50 for an evening of Milton Berle in person. Now the entertainment is rich but intimate, and you find it in the small, smart supper clubs of the Saxony, the Sans Souci, and the Lord Tarleton. The crowds and the rooms are smaller, but then so are the checks. As for that old carnival atmosphere, it seems to be blowing out to sea.

—H. S.

NEW EDITIONS



FRANZ KAFKA, who not so long ago was one of the cherished private possessions of *avant-garde* readers and critics, has now come into the market place, dressed in the neat, popular binding of the Modern Library. What the populace will make of him remains to be seen, but "Selected Stories of Franz Kafka" (\$1.25), edited and introduced by Philip Rahv, will give new readers of this extraordinary writer a chance to experience his peculiar qualities. And Mr. Rahv's introduction, fruit of long study, will help them to find their bearings in an unfamiliar world. This collection is a good one. It contains the best of the short stories—"In the Penal Colony," "The Metamorphosis," "The Great Wall of China," "A Report to an Academy"—and ten other finished and unfinished tales that only Kafka could have written. In them all, as in the novels, we find a unique blend of Defoesque factuality, symbolical imagination, and myth-making power. Thanks to the first element, Kafka is the easiest writer in the world to read, so long as one is content to understand his words and sentences and paragraphs, without understanding his meaning.

Every single reader will penetrate that, as far as he can, by his own route. And most of us, like Mr. Rahv, will find ourselves returning from successive penetrations with various and even contradictory findings, as we re-read Kafka through a period of years. Gourmont has said that every great writer is always in the process of becoming, even after his death, and especially after his death. We are never done with him; his fate develops through generations. Perhaps Kafka will, as time passes, prove himself worthy of that description.

Three volumes have recently furnished me with entertaining reading. They are "Twenty-eight Science Fiction Stories of H. G. Wells" (Dover, \$3.95); "Beyond Human Ken" (Random House, \$2.95), edited by Judith Merrill; and "Intrigue" (Knopf, \$3.95) by Eric Ambler. The first reminds us, if we need reminding, that Wells was

a pioneer with amazing gifts and an amazing range in the field of what is now called science fiction. He anticipated his successors with a full bag of tricks. Every one of his fantastic stories has begotten scores of offspring; and the best of these tales—including the novel, "Men Like Gods," and the novelette, "Star Begotten"—are in this collection. Miss Merrill's anthology of "Twenty-one Startling Stories of Science Fiction and Fantasy" contains specimens of the work of some of Wells's most ingenious followers. Their powers of invention are sometimes startling, sometimes amusing; and dullness is the one deadly sin that does not exist in their world. Lewis Padgett's "A Gnome There Was," like many of the old master's yarns, is crammed with "social significance" as well as fantasy. Robert A. Heinlein's "Our Fair City" tells with remarkable charm the story of the most attractive little whirlwind I have ever met. Arthur Porges, in "The Fly," jolts the reader with a last-line punch. And Anthony Boucher turns in a star performance with one of the most entertaining werewolves in the annals of lycanthropy. The Ambler omnibus contains "Background to Danger," "Cause for Alarm," "A Coffin for Demetrios," and "Journey into Fear." These are the spy novels that made their author's reputation. They will take a lot of beating and have raised up many imitators. Ambler has a great gift of playing variations on sinister themes. Some readers may find the Leftist eloquence of some of his characters less appealing than they found it in the Thirties, but if they let it spoil the stories for them they will be four-time losers.

Marjorie Kinnan Rawling's best seller, "The Yearling," with its plethora of short affirmative sentences, is back in print (Scribner's, \$3.50). So is Margery Sharp's "The Flowering Thorn" (Little, Brown, \$3). Part I of "1000 years of Irish Prose" (Devin-Adair, \$6), edited by Vivian Mercier and David H. Greene, is a rich anthology of writings that made the "Irish Renaissance." Random House's "William Shakespeare: The Complete Works" (\$3.75), edited by Prof. Peter Alexander, does not compare in readability with the G. B. Harrison "Shakespeare"—but neither does it cost ten dollars.

—BEN RAY REDMAN.



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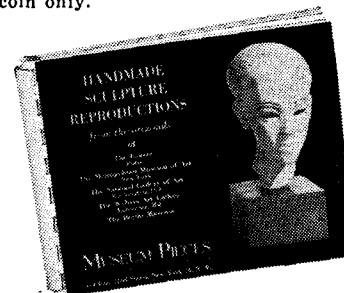
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