

this time the world of Bemelmans was complete, and he has been traveling about in it, nibbling and scribbling, ever since. Fortunately for the bubblegum set, Bemelmans has continued turning out juveniles. The most recent, "Madeline's Rescue," is a perfect study of the story processes which operate in the world of Ludwig Bemelmans.

Madeline is one of twelve identical small girls who live in a home in Paris, one of the important industrial centers of Bemelmania. Madeline falls in the Seine and is rescued by a noble dog, Genevieve, who is taken to live in the home. Enter the villain, Lord Cucuface, who drives the dog into the streets. Sadly the children search through the city, giving the author the opportunity to do a completely enchanting set of drawings of the familiar scenes of this beloved city. One night Genevieve scratches at the door. Joy at her return is quickly swept away when the twelve children battle about which is to protect the dog. Suddenly—a miracle of nature and love!—twelve identical puppies are born, and in Bemelmans's words, "there is enough hound to go around."

This is first-chop Bemelmans, and I venture to state that anyone who does not adore this book would poison wells.

**I**N "Father, Dear Father," the latest Bemelmans Baedeker, veteran tourists will discern familiar landmarks. The small girl is Barbara, the author's own daughter and a baptised dog-lover. The pooch is Little Bit, a toy French poodle represented here as possessing tact, courage, discretion, and a combination of other virtues unglimped on this wicked planet since the Round Table became dust. There is a villain, too, a certain Mr. Haegeli, butcher of the S.S. America, who is so ferocious as to insist that the poodle pass the voyage in the ship's kennel officially provided for sea-going canines. The story of the foiling of Mr. Haegeli makes the opening chapter of "Father, Dear Father" a pleasant reminder that an accomplished storyteller is in business at the same old stand.

"Father, Dear Father" was originally composed as a series of travel pieces mailed back to American magazines. In pursuit of anecdota and data, Bemelmans went to the Tyrol and to Rome, to Capri and Ischia. He climbed the peak of Vesuvius, he descended to the Blue Grotto. He met Lucky Luciano and Donna Rachele Mussolini. Some of the chapters are charming little guidebook pieces about the food, the wine, the picturesque

esque characters. But here and there we find the bright, ironic stories which are the true, minted currency of Bemelmania.

There was Signor Patrizzi, for example, the rich man whose fiancée presented him with her childhood diaries so that he would know all about her—and who condemned himself to a life of loneliness because of an intolerable suspicion provoked by a single empty page. There was Wendelin, the Austrian cafe singer, who reported about a certain formerly rich official in the Russian Zone of Vienna who was stripped of his fortune but still kept his butler, because the butler had relatives in America and occasionally shared a CARE package with his employer.

**T**HE triumph of animals is not forgotten in "Father, Dear Father." At one point Bemelmans advances the thought that Pierre Laval might not have been as bad as he was painted, because he delivered his dog to the care of kind innkeepers in the Tyrol shortly before he was captured by the Allies and returned to France for trial. In another place, he relates with a straight face the magic children's story devised by the decrepit cafe singer: An old and nearsighted deer is hunted in his native mountains by a killer from the valley. As the killer is about to shoot, a friendly pine tree trips the hunter and casts him into an abyss, at the same time lifting a pair of binoculars from the hunter's shoulder and hanging them from a branch in such a position that the myopic deer can henceforth look down into the valley and detect the approach of deerslayers in plenty of time.

When Bemelmans has the right kind of story he manages a unique blend of gaiety and melancholy, of satire and love. There are other areas where his touch is not quite so sure. There is a tribute to Lady Mendl in this book which makes it hard to understand exactly what Bemelmans found attractive in the ancient lady, and there is a dolorous Christmas story about a rich man who found that Gracious Living was a lie, a story which seems rather odd in view of Bemelmans's own devotion to the creature comforts.

Such quibbles aside, there is nobody like this epicurean pixie, and it is a pleasure to walk once more in his own enchanted neighborhood where all waiters are intent, where all anecdotes have delightfully ironic endings, where all buildings lean sideways, and where the power of a small girl is more formidable than that of a hundred panzer divisions.



—Erich Kastan.

Frank Sullivan—"a kind of vigilante."

## Zany, Inc.

**Frank Sullivan's "The Night the Old Nostalgia Burned Down"** (Little, Brown, 248 pp. \$3) is a new collection of humorous pieces by a veteran masseur of funny-bones.

By Bernard Kalb

**N**EXT to climbing Mt. Everest in a pair of shoes one size too small, one of the toughest, most tortuous jobs around these days is writing humor. (Check, if you feel that that is an overstatement, with a humorist like, say, S. J. Perelman, who, the last I heard about him, was 29,001 feet up old Everest, struggling to make the last twelve inches to the summit.) The fact is, the mortality rate in the field of humor writing isn't just high, it is astronomical. Only a few have ever managed to locate the nation's funnybone, and of those a gent who hasn't stopped being humorous for decades is Frank Sullivan.

Frank Sullivan, who is to Saratoga Springs what *pêche* is to *melba*, has always been reconnoitering the American scene in pursuit of fads, nonsense, and just plain old stupidity. Armed with satire, parody, burlesque, and jokes, he has constantly been on the lookout, searching, his antennae sensitive. Like a kind of vigilante, he, along with other sharpshooters like James Thurber, E. B. White, and Perelman, to list only a few of them, has been standing guard over our common-sense. Maybe, after all the laughter, that's what humor is—a kind of weapon to keep idiocy away.

Anyway, Sullivan is back with his latest catch—"The Night the Old Nostalgia Burned Down—an anthol-

or which originally appeared in magazines like *The New Yorker*, *Holiday*, *House & Garden*, *Good Housekeeping*, and *Cosmopolitan*. Many of these are exuberant reminiscences about Saratoga—Sullivan's days as a pump boy at the track, his regret over the disappearing front porch, his sorrow that children nowadays don't know anything about haunted houses, his affection for a street in his town. Interspersed are a number of Q.'s and A.'s with Mr. Arbuthnot, the cliché expert, on baseball, the tabloids, and drama. Excellent and invigorating as these pieces are, they don't add up to my own favorite Sullivan—Sullivan of Zany & Uproarious, Inc.

(Sullivan has always been marvelously wild. Back in February 1925 he delivered a little speech over the radio—his first—in which he advocated "a higher tariff on apple sauce," according to the old *World*. While he was at it, he defended "the right of a man in society to soak up his gravy with a piece of bread.")

**O**F ALL the pieces in his new collection possibly the best is "The Night the Old Nostalgia Burned Down." It, if Mr. Arbuthnot will let me get away with the phrase, is a gem, *le dernier cri* among spoofs at syrupy recollections. It begins:

When I was a boy Fourteenth Street was where Twenty-third Street is now, and Samuel J. Tilden and I used to play marbles on the lot where the Grand Opera House still stood. Governor Love-lace brought the first marble from England to this country on August 17, 1668, and gave it to my Great-Aunt Amelia van Santvoort, of whom he was enamored. She had several copies made, and Sam Tilden and I used to amuse ourselves with them.

Included, too, are a number of other wonderful pieces, particularly "The Forgotten Bach," about a Bach who was, of all things, tone-deaf. Anyway, it is only because this collection is mostly first rate that the question of whether it will still be around in a couple of decades is worth considering, and on that subject it's interesting to quote Sullivan himself. "I shudder to think of what readers fifteen to twenty years from now will think if they ever are trapped into reading the pieces we think funny now," he said back in 1933, when his "In One Ear" was published. "A humorist, unless he is very, very good, has a life only a little longer than that of a moth." Sullivan needn't move a muscle; he is good—very, very.

## When the Boll Was Big

**Frederick Law Olmsted's "The Cotton Kingdom,"** a classic account of a Northerner's observations on cotton and slavery in the Old South, is now available in a new edition, edited and with an introduction by Arthur M. Schlesinger. (Alfred A. Knopf. 626 pp. \$6.75). Here Professor Francis B. Simkins of Longwood College, author of "A History of the South," reappraises the work and its author.

By Francis B. Simkins

**H**UNDREDS of travelers in the last four hundred years have left accounts of their wanderings within the great crescent between the Potomac and the Rio Grande. The first of these wanderers was the Gentleman of Elvas, the chronicler of De Soto's explorations; the last significant one was Jonathan Daniels, the North Carolina journalist.

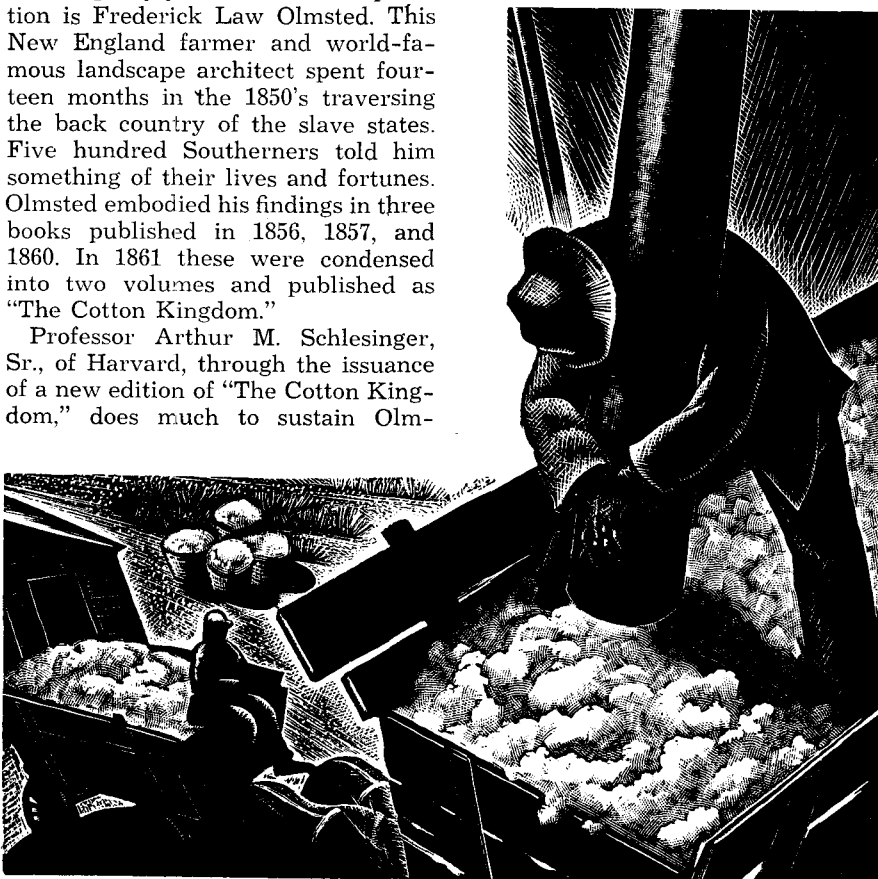
The traveler through the South who has long enjoyed the widest reputation is Frederick Law Olmsted. This New England farmer and world-famous landscape architect spent fourteen months in the 1850's traversing the back country of the slave states. Five hundred Southerners told him something of their lives and fortunes. Olmsted embodied his findings in three books published in 1856, 1857, and 1860. In 1861 these were condensed into two volumes and published as "The Cotton Kingdom."

Professor Arthur M. Schlesinger, Sr., of Harvard, through the issuance of a new edition of "The Cotton Kingdom," does much to sustain Olm-

sted's high reputation. His introduction is an illuminating appraisal of both the traveler and his writings. He shows that most scholars concerned with the Old South draw heavily on Olmsted; he might have added that this is also true of realistic novelists who capture best the Southern past.

Professor Schlesinger declares of Olmsted, "It is difficult to conceive of a more objective critic of Southern life." He buttresses this assertion by demonstrating that the famous traveler possessed the New England virtues: energy, wealth, curiosity, expert knowledge, moral earnestness, faith in democracy, and idealism.

The irony of the situation is that these tight virtues did not leave room for the creation of standards by which so dissentient a community as the Old South could be fairly judged. Olmsted did not possess the virtues of tolerance and imagination. He could not appreciate the Legend of the South: those aristocratic conditions which do not in fact exist but



—By Clare Leighton from "Southern Harvest."

"... Olmsted's Old South was not glamorous."