

and—strangely—boredom. He is humming a passage from Beethoven's Seventh Symphony ("fine for ordinary marching speed and as good for the slow pace on patrol") when the Germans open up. In a desperate withdrawal two men are killed and Sheldon is seriously wounded. A full lifetime of twelve hours after they departed they stumble back to their lines.

Authentic throughout, "Patrol" benefits from Fred Majdalany's own combat experience. He was a member of a British brigade that participated in the November 1942 landing operations near Algiers. The author speaks from experience when he says of a brave soldier: "Can't they see that the whole point is not that he *didn't* know fear but that he *did*?" Or: "The first time you're shot at is the only time you feel brave. Because you don't know." But it has been ten years since the period of World War II that Fred Majdalany is describing. And ten years of war novels demand something more original than philosophizing on "how strangely impersonal to the soldier is that figure—the Enemy." They also demand something more original than the patently obvious closing sentence: "Nothing to report. Patrol activity."

Offspring of the Big-Ad Men

By Lee Rogow

Robert Alan Aurthur's "*The Glorification of Al Toolum*" (Rinehart, 244 pp. \$3) is a bright satire on American business civilization, featuring that most characteristic creature, the *Average Man in the United States*.

ON a morning in 1952, Al Toolum awoke in Fernvale, Long Island, an awakening not dissimilar from the rising of George Babbitt back in Zenith misty decades before. Like Babbitt, Toolum was settled in routine, firmly emplaced in home, suburb, marriage, family, job. Like Babbitt, he had lost the power to snap the silken chains of habit, but he was troubled by the vague feeling of having missed the boat, of being bored by his marriage, separated from his children, and unfulfilled by his work.

Toolum might have continued on this treadmill until doomsday, but he was touched by an ultramodern finger of fate—a bubblegum company

selected him as Mr. Yankee Doodle, the most average Average Man in the United States. His height, coloring, weight, age, taste in breakfast food all checked. He preferred Norman Rockwell to Grant Wood, Irving Berlin to Ferde Grofe. He was Mr. Yankee Doodle, and his troubles had just begun.

Robert Alan Aurthur records Al's difficulties in "The Glorification of Al Toolum." First came the presents. He had been avoiding a TV set, but they gave him a TV set. Then they put him on a television program, and he came across like an outstandingly stupid sweepstakes winner. Then, since his uniquely average tastes made him a one-man nationwide survey, he became the official taster for new cola drinks, the official guinea pig for potential hit songs.

TO the embarrassment of the advertising genius who had dreamed up the Yankee Doodle contest, it soon developed that Toolum was not a statistic, not a page out of the "World Almanac," but a man. He described the cola drink as "too fizzy," he hated the potential hit songs. Moreover, the average man's youngest kid was having personality problems because his two older brothers excluded him from their palship, and Yankee Doodle's son had to go to a child analyst.

To increase the discomfiture of the advertising brain and his hired hand in the button-down shirt, Toolum joined the possibly subversive League to Free the Pacific Peoples. His wife joined a Minute Maid organization and got arrested during a housewives' strike against high prices.

In the end, Al Toolum was fired from the position of Yankee Doodle, but sticking a feather in his cap had changed his life and brought him into closer harmony with his wife, his kids, and more importantly, with himself. Somewhere along the line, John Bell, the apprentice genius in the oxford shirt, had lost his ambition to be a huckster and had gained not only his own soul but the affections of an anti-advertising type girl named Barbie.

Robert Alan Aurthur has been enmeshed with television, notably with a show called "Mr. Peepers," and this makes it odd that his fun-poking at the new industry should be the least effective portion of the book. The madness of Madison Avenue has been done many times before, and many times more effectively. This part of

(Continued on page 43)



Your Literary I. Q.

Conducted by John T. Winterich

FOLIAGE IN FICTION



Fannie Gross of Asheville, North Carolina, asks you to identify the literary characters whose experiences with trees are briefly described below. Allow five points for each character named, and another five for either the work or the author. A score of seventy or better means you have climbed to the top, sixty shows you are up a tree, and fifty or less proves you are lost in the woods. Answers on page 48.

1. This impersonation of Death was trapped up an apple tree by a mildly profane old man and his adoring grandson.
2. An oak and an elm were important clues to this intrepid detective in deciphering a mysterious ritual which led to the unearthing of some Charles I coins and a mutilated Stuart crown.
3. This poetic character sang in the amfalula tree.
4. In the form of an old apple tree which yielded a bumper crop of rotten apples, this Englishwoman's ghost tormented her husband to death.
5. Having been marooned on a desert island, this gentleman and his family lived for about a year in a tree-house to which they gave the name of Falconhurst.
6. Feeling she was unwanted in her sister's home, this sixty-year-old spinster set up housekeeping in a tree where she was joined by four other escapists.
7. This South American child of Nature was ensnared in a tall tree and burned to ashes.
8. Incited by his wife's cousin, with whom he had fallen in love, he crashed the sled they were riding into an elm.
9. Pinioned side by side under a storm-split beech tree in the Carpathian mountains, these lifelong enemies made peace with each other.
10. Having no mailbox, this lovesick young man posted the verses he wrote to his sweetheart on trees in a French forest.

The Softer, Ominous Element

By Merle Miller

*The invention of the aqua-lung has made it possible for adventurous men of modest means to indulge in underwater exploration and for non-adventurous men with only library cards to experience it vicariously through books. Mr. Miller, one of the latter, here discusses the recent seasons' literary haul. **The Silent World.** By Captain J.-Y. Cousteau. New York: Harper & Bros. 266 pp. \$4. **The Undersea Adventure.** By Philippe Diolè. Translated by Alan Ross. New York: Julian Messner. 236 pp. \$4.50. **Manta.** By Hans Hass. Chicago: Rand McNally Co. 276 pp. \$4.50. **Diving To Adventure: The Daredevil Story of Hunters Under the Sea.** By Hans Hass. New York: Doubleday & Co. 280 pp. \$3.75.*

CAPTAIN J.-Y. COUSTEAU, a gunnery officer in the French Navy and a man who seems to have an almost equal respect for science and for adventure, first developed the aqua-lung, a device which has meant that almost anybody with a little spare cash and a curiosity for what goes on under water, can operate while submerged without casque, hose, weights, or lines, and frequently get around almost as well as some of the more awkward fish.

What's more, with the help of a French colleague and an unnamed but highly literate American ghost, the Captain put together "The Silent World," a fine book that has been riding the best-seller lists for some weeks. Cousteau, however, is not responsible for the current curiosity about almost everything that goes on in, on, or even near the world's oceans. Rachel Carson and Herman Wouk were dominating the lists long before the Captain's book was even in galleys.

Just the same, he's started something, and it now seems that almost anybody who's even tried on an aqua-lung at Abercrombie and Fitch has written or very soon will write a book about it. Several publishers have at least one diving book listed in their fall and winter catalogues, and I understand two or three others are

scheduled for the early spring of 1954.

Captain Cousteau's is the first and best to appear so far. "We have tried," he declares in "The Silent World," "to find the entrance to the great hydrosphere because we feel that the sea age is soon to come." He makes an excellent case for his belief. What's more, he gives his readers a rare and wonderful sense of participation in his experiences, particularly when he is describing an almost unbearably real encounter with a shark, the exploration of a sunken Roman galley with its wine jars still intact, a herd of porpoises going through the straits of Gibraltar, and what he appropriately calls "the rapture of the depths," that exhilarating, half-drunken feeling a diver gets when he is 200 feet or more under water. His book is illustrated with a series of magnificent photographs, some in black-and-white, twenty in vivid color.

Excellent as Captain Cousteau's book is, there is a lot to be said for Philippe Diolè's "The Undersea Adventure," particularly for those readers who, like Billie Dawn in "Born Yesterday," want to read *about* rather than *by* the explorers of the ocean floor.

"The Undersea Adventure" begins with an account of the author's first look at life in the sea. After that, he writes with real enthusiasm about the love life of the whale, the history of diving, the sophistication of the more intelligent fish, and the reasons poetry—the kind Herman Melville wrote—is the most suitable medium for describing the sea.

HANS HASS's "Manta," the latest of the underwater books, is the least interesting. The black-and-white pictures are its best feature, and the text itself seems to have come as an afterthought. Dr. Hass made the trip to the Red Sea on which his book is based in 1949; why "Manta" is just now being published I can't imagine. Whatever the reason, it is a mistake.

Very little seems to have happened to Hass on his expedition, so little, in fact, that most of his text deals with his flight by a Swedish airline to Port Sudan (a dull trip), the kind of drinks he was served and how many (alcoholic and quite a few), the appearance and manners of the Sudanese (dark-skinned and polite), and

what the Europeans he met said (nothing worth repeating). Much of the material is familiar to any subscriber to *The National Geographic*, and Dr. Hass has nothing very new or interesting to add. He is much more at home and far more entertaining when he discusses his diving descents, but he is understandably handicapped by the fact that, even under water, his adventures were limited. There is a good deal about the shark, but none of it is half so enthralling as the few pages Captain Cousteau devotes to the subject.

WHAT's more, except for the fact that it sounds like one of those low-budget adventure films which periodically turn up for a few days at the Rialto Theatre in New York and nowhere else, there seems to be no real reason for having called the book "Manta." Besides, the giant manta, or what is colloquially known as the "devil" ray, is harmless.

Dr. Hass's book ends somewhat hastily as he is on his way back to Vienna to prepare for a return to the Red Sea and to marry his secretary, an adventurous young lady who is something of a diver herself. He writes with modesty and considerable charm. When something interesting happens to him, he ought to be able to write quite a book; in fact, he already has. It is called "Diving to Adventure" (1951). Happily it, as well as "The Silent World" and "The Undersea Adventure," are still available.



—From "Manta."

Hans Hass—"quite a book."