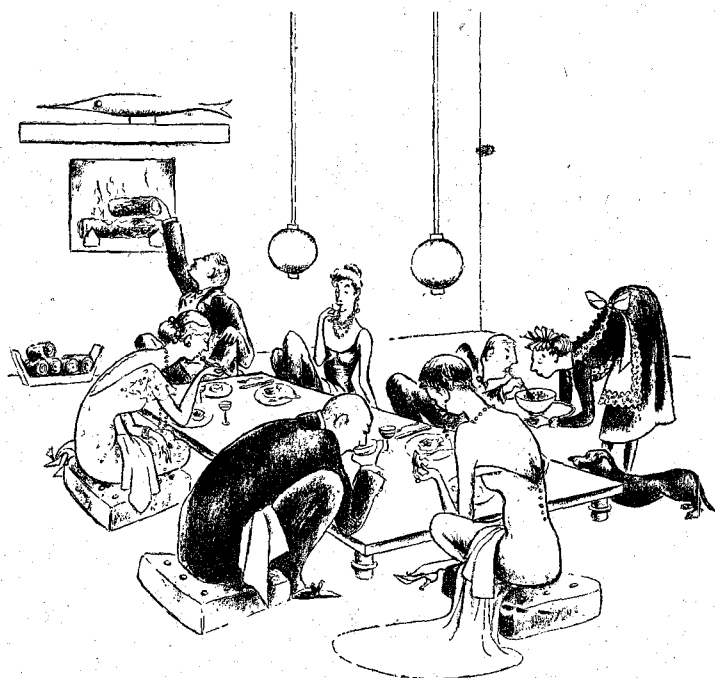


full-fledged art movement with a spirit of protest and an articulate leader, the achievement of twentieth-century British architecture, which is only now hitting its stride, might well have been different, and Mackintosh's work would not have to be resurrected at a time when at least one of his contemporaries, Wright, still has a future of building ahead of him.

The story begins with a rearing in

the Scottish outdoors, a love of growing things objectively observed, yet sensed in their larger significance; a classical architectural training and apprenticeship overthrown in favor of the functional vernacular of dour baronial castles and rugged Scottish farmhouses; the influence on Mackintosh and his fellow designer MacNair of the MacDonald sisters whom they were destined to marry, paralleled by

the marriage of their melancholy, if not morbid, graphic style, stemming from the Pre-Raphaelites, and akin to Art Nouveau and Beardsley. Upon all this are grafted the influence of Japanese art and architecture, especially the interiors, active on European-American culture since the 1860's; the Arts and Crafts Movement of Ruskin, William Morris, and the architect of simple domesticity, Voysey; the murky Celtic Revival in which the great Patrick Geddes took part; the late nineteenth-century search, so groping then, so simple-seeming now, for a non-historical style using non-historical ornament—before 1900 hardly anyone, and certainly not Mackintosh, would assert with Adolf Loos of Vienna that "ornament is a crime."



—By Mary Petty, for "Homes of the Brave."

AS YOU CAN TELL the second you stop staring at Mary Petty's pert illustrations, T. H. Robsjohn-Gibbings, the author of "*Homes of the Brave*" (Knopf, \$3.50), is a man of intense convictions. In chatting about this and that to do with the American house in 1954, he does not pretend to admire "tables and chairs so low they themselves are almost on the floor," and as for living between the glass walls favored by certain grim designers, he would much rather settle for an honest-to-goodness made-in-USA trailer. Furthermore, he is so impressed with Japanese architecture that he hints that many of the proudest monuments of Europe were simply a "fast-moving parade of styles," engineered, like as not, by "quick-change artists."

Since this reviewer shares many of Mr. Robsjohn-Gibbings's more violent prejudices, and would not like to admit that Greene and Greene, Frank Lloyd Wright, and other favorites of the author could be overpraised, he would be only too happy if he could say a good word about these random remarks on modern American architecture. The sad truth, however, is that the text of this book is bound to disappoint the fanciers of Miss Petty's drawings. Mr. Robsjohn-Gibbings, who turns out to be a serious fellow, insists that certain architects are on the wrong track, not because they lack what it takes, but because they are natives of that horrid old continent of Europe. He also feels that all our troubles will be over once we get rid of our delusions and sit in commonsense chairs in commonsense houses.

As you might suppose, history is rather a nuisance to a commentator who stands for no nonsense. So Mr. Robsjohn-Gibbings sticks the late Louis Comfort Tiffany into the ashbin with the practitioners of the "Art Nouveau." The chances are that those who have visited Tiffany's extraordinary country house at Oyster Bay may be much more sympathetic.—W. A.

ALL of these strands are fused in one man's quest for an architecture of which all the parts from the largest to the smallest would be inter-related, and from this quest there emerged three or four masterpieces: the Mackintoshes' own drawing room, entirely white, open in feeling, rectilinear in its masses, articulated in its play of horizontal and vertical planes, probably the most advanced interior in Europe in 1900; the wonderful controlled irregularity of the Glasgow School of Art (1897-1909), the street side mainly glass set almost flush with the studio walls and reminiscent, on the three other sides, of cliff, fortress, waterfall, the crow's nest and bridge of an ocean liner. These, together with a series of tea rooms for Miss Cranston and a couple of homes, constitute the core of his legacy.

Mr. Howarth tellingly interprets the moods and atmospheres with which this poetic architect imbued each of his interiors. The photographs alone, excellent as they are, cannot convey Mackintosh's range of feeling: from the restful sobriety (though even this is mixed with mystery) of the School Library to the "exotic apartment" of the Willow Tea Room (1903-1904), white-painted, gray-carpeted, upholstered in rich purple with accents of rose pink and mauve enamel, surrounded by a frieze of leaded mirror glass symbolic of the willow grove, and lit by a crystal chandelier, "an intricate cluster of glass balls, spheroids, and globe shapes among which the lamps were hidden."

The scope of this book transcends the man Mackintosh. With his two-chapter survey of the European development, his cross-references to recent decades, his fine chronological table and bibliography, Mr. Howarth gives us a valuable tool for appreciating the modern movement as a whole. The outlines of this movement, thanks

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Youth and Terror



"The Night of the Hunter," by Davis Grubb (Harper. 279 pp. \$3), is a story of two children with a horrible secret, trying to find their way through an adult's world that they cannot comprehend. Harriette Arnow, who reviews it here, is the author of "Hunter's Horn" and other novels.

By Harriette Arnow

AT FIRST glance, Davis Grubb's short and highly coherent novel, "The Night of the Hunter," seems only one more portrayal of an old and universally known situation: cruel and greedy stepfather, foolish but good young mother, and past these a heartless, disbelieving world through which a hunted young one flees in terror. However, the skill of the author, both to create and to choose what must be created, makes for a fresh and tensely moving tale.

Much of it is told from the viewpoint of John, nine-year-old son of Ben Harper, a good enough father, but a weak and luckless sinner. He bungled the one crime of his life—the theft of \$10,000 from a bank—and so brought the men in blue, the gallows, the Oath, and the Secret into his son's life. The child's battle to keep the secret of the hidden money and take care of his five-year-old sister, Pearl, in a world completely taken in by his insane, psalm-singing stepfather rises above the purely physical, and becomes instead the struggle of the mind and heart against the crushing weight of fear.

Skilfully, the author blends the actual world of West Virginia farm lands and river towns in the Great Depression with the still more terrible world of fear in the boy's mind. Shadows in the moonlight, the barking of a dog, sound of a hymn across the field, silence . . . all these, like most other descriptions, situations, and even characterizations, further the story and heighten the tension.

Still, for all its merits as a readable, conscientiously done piece of work, "The Night of the Hunter" is most impressive for its refreshingly unorthodox treatment. First, the author has dared give a serious work a happy ending. Secondly, he is not objective; in the person of Old Rachel, in particular, he has created a strong

and far-reaching feeling of compassion, untouched by pathos and seeming uncontrived.

The reader, in his flight with the children, encounters greed, poverty, drunkenness, weakness, stupidity, brutality, and hypocrisy; but in the end, stronger than any repulsion or even horror, is the pity—pity not just for the helpless terror that is at times the lot of all children and even men, but compassion also for many of those who cannot or will not help a child in danger: the weak, the greedy, or the simply foolish like Icey and the young virgin who gave away the only thing she had worth keeping. The reader looks through Rachel's eyes and sees, "the lost sheep crying in the wind."

However, the most astounding thing, perhaps, about Mr. Grubb's work is the scant space given to the "real things." There are, in the course of the narrative, a hanging, a lynch-

ing, a loss of virginity, and a bloody murder. Each is mentioned only enough to let the reader know it happened. Mr. Grubb stuck to his story which concerned a child's flight and struggle with fear. It would appear that he asked himself the question too seldom asked, "What is reality? A minute description of the bloody, the sexy, the violent scene, or the exposition of the effects of such scenes on the mind of the one who acted or observed?" Mr. Grubb seems also to have asked, "Which is more real, more terror inspiring to a child—a hanging or a child's sketch of a gallows on a wall? Which is more truly fearful—a man seen or the imagined shadow of a man?"

Mr. Grubb's answer is, of course, not the only one, but it is certainly different from the old answers, and has proven so creditable in this story that we hope he will come up with another application.

Worm of the World

By Edith Stuurman

I.

GRIPPING the planet with his tail,
the earthworm draws through his enormous gut
only what once had viable shape and size,
only what once was taught to decorate the world:
by him creation's exclusive stuff is put
at the disposal of the future's rose.

The paths of morning on the earth are burled
with little mounds he leaves along his trail,
a Potters Field of atoms which never struggled to be free
of matter's dirty sleep. The worm
mines formlessness to segregate the form;
almost anonymous, he serves identity.

II.

A million earthworms weigh two thousand pounds:
a monster ton, blind, umbilical,
he lives in our acre and has his business there
beneath the surface of what concerns us most.
With the force of fable through the burial grounds
of sleep, he tunnels his archetypal way
between the priest and maiden, the camellia and the gull.
Slow and hidden as the primal cause,
even in our dreams he moves among the lost:
it is his function to disturb decay,
in a city of roots to circumvent the pause
in whatever was green or beautiful.