

Fiction

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stance to the novel. In "Adam, Where Art Thou?" all the sufferings of Mr. Böll's characters, all their concerns and their dilemmas remain isolated episodes. But there can be little doubt but that one day Mr. Böll will write an extraordinary novel.

Notes

THE REVOLT OF ALTHEA SUTTON: Archly written, and archaic, "Midpoint," by Isabella Holt (Bobbs-Merrill, \$3.75), is a study of the coming of age of Althea Sutton, born to privilege in a small, snobbish Midwestern town and reduced to a pseudo middle-classness by the 1929 crash. Her life further curtailed by the dominance of assorted relatives who uphold an outmoded code of morality, she becomes the staid scapegoat of her bohemian sister, Frankie, who manages to run off with the boy who had doted on sister Althea. After a properly brief interval Frankie runs off again—this time to the sinful wilderness of Greenwich Village and the arms of a Communist lover. But ex-brothers-in-law are taboo as prospective husbands in the Sutton set, so Althea waits out her girlhood, finally becoming sufficiently emancipated by her sister and Communist consort to marry the boy of her dreams. "Midpoint" is "East Lynne" in modern dress.

—DACHINE RAINER.

THE CURRENT CROP: "Is this a proposal or a proposition?" asks nubile Faith Gordon of Dr. John Powers, in "Flight from Natchez" (Doubleday, \$3.75). The time is 1761, the locale a barkentine on the Mississippi. But the conversation in Frank G. Slaughter's latest is as up to date as your favorite comic strip. Powers, an unfrocked officer in the British Army, leads a band of Loyalists out of Natchez (threatened by the Spaniards) to safe haven in Georgia. Along the way he is bemused by two beautiful women, one of whom is encumbered by a husband. Not only does the doc keep both gals happy,

LITERARY I.Q. ANSWERS

Column Two should read: 10, 4, 6, 9, 3, 2, 5 or 8, 8 or 5, 7, 1. The novels are: 1. "Windy McPherson's Son." 2. "The Prodigal Son." 3. "Son of a Hundred Kings." 4. "Sorrell and Son." 5. "Dombey and Son." 6. "Father and Son." 7. "Her Son's Wife." 8. "Sons and Lovers." 9. "My Son and I." 10. "Fathers and Sons."



—Sam Angeloff.

Murray Morgan—"passion. accuracy."

but he also cures a smallpox epidemic with a do-it-yourself vaccine.

In "First Train to Babylon" (Harper, \$3.50) Max Ehrlich explores the reactions of Martha Radcliffe, a suburban matron, who has reason to suspect that her gray-flanneled spouse made his pile by doing in a paymaster. Mrs. Radcliffe's suspicions are stirred by a letter delivered after a ten-year hiatus, and things get pretty melodramatic before Mr. Ehrlich clears them up with a very sneaky denouement.

The football pool—England's answer to the \$64,000 Question—turns lucky for Philip Mason, a Brighton bookseller and dumps seventy-five thousand pounds into his threadbare lap. Philip's fortunes are detailed by Hugh Clevley in "The Turning Point" (Morrow, \$3), a cheerful tale, punctuated by a couple of corpses and uncomplicated by contact with reality.

"The White Foxes of Gorfenleth" (Morrow, \$3.50) is a rambling collection of semi-fictional pieces about hunting and shooting in the north of England, near the Scottish border. Henry Tegner's prose is not always inspired, but it savors pleasantly of tweedy pleasures.

"So Tiberius" (Putnam, \$2.50), by Ethel Mannin, contains an unusual triangle consisting of a man, his ex-wife, and a cat named Lucia. Perhaps it is more of a parallel than a triangle, since Miss Mannin keeps tabs on both females at various stages of their careers, until each comes to an extremely disagreeable end. The author's catnippy pages, larded with heartache and catfood, are likely to appeal neither to mice nor men.

—MARTIN LEVIN.

The American West

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fishing industries—could hardly illustrate better the theory that men take on the character of the land they occupy. In this case the character is wild, rugged, and highly interesting, and the facts that Mr. Morgan was born in Tacoma, graduated from the University of Washington, and has long resided in the Evergreen State do not detract from the passion or accuracy with which he writes in "The Last Wilderness."

Notes

POLYGAMY AT THE SILVERLODE: In "Papa Married a Mormon" (Prentice-Hall, \$3.95) John D. Fitzgerald writes of the early days in Utah. Papa had followed wild Uncle Will out to the mining camp of Silverlode in Mormon territory, but Uncle Will suspected (and rightly) that their dying mother had sent Papa to look after him. Will was glad to see Tom, helped him get started as proprietor of the *Silverlode Advocate*, and informed him that he wanted no brotherly interference or advice about his chosen profession as operator of a gambling hall. Papa stayed on these terms, fell in love with a Mormon girl, and married her. When the boom at Silverlode played out Papa, Mama, Uncle Will, and his consort, Queenie, all remained with the Mormon community of Adenville.

Mr. Fitzgerald has a number of stories to tell and points to make—all with a rather roseate glow around them. This is the story of Papa and Mama and their many children, and of growing up in a small town in Utah. This is the story of Papa's Catholicism and Mama's Mormonism and of how they respected each other's religion. This is the story of how Uncle Will after a wild and unruly—but well-intentioned—life, returned to the faith of his fathers. And this is also the story of the growth of the West as the roaring days of Silverlode became history and Adenville settled down to become an orderly, prosperous town.

Mr. Fitzgerald tells his pleasant story well, freely admitting that he takes a little license to show what life was like in those times, who the people were, and what they did.

—SETH AGNEW.

SHIRT-TAILS, STALLIONS, AND FOLKSONGS The Texas Folklore Society is lucky to have a state with such rich and varied folklore. The four racial strata (Indian, Mexican, white, and Negro) and the variegated geography and

natural resources (with many occupations) all contribute to it. From the twenty-five annual volumes so far issued by the society a fine representative selection is now published as "Texas Folk and Folklore," edited by Mody C. Boatright, Wilson M. Hudson, Allen Maxwell (SMU Press, \$5). It contains tales of Indian, Mexican, and Negro origin, children's stories and games, legends and ghost stories, ballads, songs and games, proverbs, superstitions, and curses, and finally the folklore of plants, animals, and oil.

The reader accustomed to sophisticated professional writing may find some selections flat and unpointed, as indeed some are; for the folklorist wants his material in its most natural form. (The tape-recorder has been a great help.) When a folklore theme has an intrinsic spark it lights up in a plain recital. The Mexican tale "Keeping the Shirt-Tail In," the legend of "The Deathless Pacing White Stallion" (related by J. Frank Dobie), and several of the Negro tales and jokes are especially memorable. The lore, as distinct from the tales, makes less interesting reading; but the whole collection at least reminds us that an authentic, indigenous folklore still exists in the Lone Star State.

—ROBERT HALSBAND.

NOSTALGIA FOR THE COW COUNTRY: In "Dog Days" (Scribner's, \$3.95) Ross Santee recalls his own boyhood in a little Iowa farm town of the 1890s. Mr. Santee has written several books before about the cow country, about his life there, about the people and horses and cows. With the same eye for detail, the same skill in limning character and episode, he fondly tells of the small-town kid, of his friends, his dogs, their pranks and antics, their sorrows and excitements.

Nothing much really happened to young Ross. He went to school and he went swimming; he played baseball and he went hunting; he knew some pretty nice people—including a real cowhand who wintered at the farm next door—and he knew some pranks and town characters. But Mr. Santee has a way of telling about "nothing much" that brings back the knowledge that to the young it can be exciting and adventuresome. He has a way of illustrating it, too, for the book contains a number of his black-and-white drawings of the kids and their friends and all the busy, ineventful happenings of the town.

As with most recollections, there is nostalgia here; but not much sentimentalizing. This is a book about the rites, rituals, and mysteries of boyhood. Customs and externals may have changed in the past sixty years, but it is both true and readable. —S. A.

Fine Arts

Continued from page 19

ing to do with the representation of nature. He does not fight formalism with a rallying cry to the realists. Since what repels him in abstraction is its emotional sterility and isolation from human values he finds the antidote in "expressive content" (by which he means "an artist's human or spiritual commitments") and his "attachment to values outside art itself" (such as the values of religion or humanitarianism). "Expressive content" at its best he describes as a "vision of spiritual truth." With this concept in mind he offers an illuminating short history of painting from Giotto to the present with stress on the painters who stand out for "expressive content" which is fused with appropriate form. Rembrandt rises above them all, but in his company are Michaelangelo and Greco, Daumier and Orozco, "and in their great moments . . . Van Gogh, Rouault, Shahn, Levine, and Bloom." Many of these men we know to have been profoundly religious, and all to have been deeply moved by human suffering. All exemplify Mr. Rodman's conception of the artist as a man with the capacity "to feel within himself the most painful experiences of the human race and to personalize them in image and paint."

Mr. Rodman's choice of great names from the past would surely be acceptable to most art lovers, though many would have names to add. About the second group of those with flashes of greatness there would be more dispute. It is curious that neither list includes any painter who excels in landscape or still life; all are known best for their paintings of human beings. Is this a limitation in the author's sympathy or does he hold that only images from human life can communicate one's feeling for the human predicament? Admirers of Cézanne and Chardin will take issue with him here.

Mr. Rodman would be the first to agree that his position is not new. He stands with Longinus, who described greatness in a poem as "an echo of magnificence of mind"; with Matthew Arnold and his insistence on "high seriousness" and on art as a "criticism of life." In fact, the writers who have anticipated this point of view are so many and of such weight that perhaps the most remarkable thing about this book is that it needs to be written. Is Mr. Rodman not right that there is in fact the need for an upsurge of life in the present Waste Land of painting?

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