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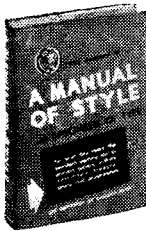
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Fiction

Continued from page 19

major and sometimes most obvious implications. He in turn is surrounded by a seraglio of middle-aged women, among whom he wanders like a forlorn eunuch. Most of them are ex-wives and former or aspiring mistresses of his immensely wealthy old father, who wishes he were the man he once was. Francis adds two younger ones to the picture in the persons of a Miss Meekmildness from the land of innocence (Iowa) and a brash, flamboyant sculptress from the land of psychoanalysis (Central Europe). The lives of these people impinge on each other at various watering-holes of the rich, and each time there is a little wearing-away, a grinding down of the personality from being used without the lubricant of love or the buffer of moral self-commitment.

The novel fails for various reasons. Many of the characters, though they are patchily described in seemingly acute psychological aperçus, are seen at the core to be too-familiar types—types that we have come to associate

with fictional representation rather than with life. Francis, who is almost a nonparticipant in terms of crucial action, embodies not one, but several half-suggested mythic themes, at least one of which should have been worked out fully in action. Finally, the richness of Mr. Merrill's symbolic imagination (i.e., his ability to visualize scenes or acts as symbolic commentaries upon one or another phase of his story) is spread before us in such disordered profusion that it obscures, rather than illuminates the underlying substance of what he is trying to say. There are brilliant scenes: Francis's ugly attempt to destroy that very part of himself which his father, in a hospital a few blocks away, would spend a fortune to preserve in his own worn-out carcass; the christening party at which the adults, in an embarrassingly self-conscious orgy, devour the candy babies which decorate the cake; a grotesque night at the opera. Such individual episodes dazzle us with their suggestive symbolic reverberations, but they are not sufficient to bring the whole work into sharp focus. Mr. Merrill's failure is that of an artist, not a hack. It is certainly not without its rewards.

—JEROME STONE.



Your Literary I. Q.

Conducted by John T. Winterich

FAMOUS CONFESSIONS

Etna M. Kelley of New York City offers capsule accounts of literary characters who made various admissions of guilt. She asks you to identify these characters, with the titles and authors of the works in which they appear. Answers on page 63.

1. Shortly before his death this churchman of high rank reflected that if he had served God with "half the zeal" he had shown his earthly ruler he would not be deserted at this critical time.
2. This feathered creature admitted having slain another with a man-made weapon.
3. A beautiful but selfish and spoiled woman, after a disappointing end to an extramarital love affair, wrote her husband that she had been a fool and a "bad child" and bade him bend his Olympian head and permit her to rejoice in him.
4. A youthful culprit claiming an incapacity to prevaricate admitted an act of vandalism on the family grounds.
5. Rendered mad with remorse for her crime this titled woman sought unsuccessfully to rid herself of her guilt by going through the motions of cleansing her hands.
6. A lovable giant with the mind of a child dimly realized that he had killed a young woman whom he meant only to caress, describing his actions with the words: "I done a bad thing."
7. Obeying a periodic compulsion, an old salt related the long and cruel retribution visited upon him for killing a bird of good omen.
8. A king heard with rising indignation a tale of wickedness and expressed the view that the transgressor should die, and then admitted his own guilt in having committed an equivalent crime.
9. At the altar and about to wed a young woman a proud and wealthy English gentleman is confronted with evidence of his previous marriage to a woman still living but insane; admitting his guilt, he induces the young woman to hear his story.
10. After noting her father's sorrowful reaction to a rebellious letter she wrote him this teenager characterized the letter as the worst thing she had ever done in her life.

Books For Young People



—“Fireworks for Windy Foot.”

EACH YEAR we look forward to the announcement of the Newbery and Caldecott awards. On March 4 in the office of Frederic Melcher, president of R. R. Bowker Co. and donor of the awards, Mrs. Charlemae Rollins, children's librarian of the Chicago Public Library and, as vice-president of the Children's Library Association, chairman of the Awards committee, announced this year's winners. The Newbery Medal was given to Virginia Sorensen for her “Miracles on Maple Hill,” illustrated by Beth and Joe Krush (Harcourt, Brace) and the Caldecott Medal to Marc Simont for his illustrations for “A Tree Is Nice,” by Janice Udry (Harper). Runners-up for the Newbery Medal were “Old Yeller,” by Fred Gipson (Harper), “House of Sixty Fathers,” by Meindert De Jong (Harper), “Mr. Justice Holmes,” by Clara Ingram Judson (Follett), “The Corn Grows Ripe,” by Dorothy Rhoads (Viking), and “Black Fox of Lorne,” by Marguerite De Angeli (Doubleday). Runners-up for the Caldecott Medal were “Mr. Penny's Race Horse,” by Marie Hall Ets (Viking), “1 is One,” by Tasha Tudor (Oxford), “Anatole,” illustrated by Paul Galdone, written by Eve Titus (Whittlesey House), “Gillespie and the Guards,” illustrated by James Daugherty, written by Benjamin Elkin (Viking), and “Lion,” by William Pene DuBois (Viking).

Reviewers for this issue: Augusta Baker, Storytelling Specialist, Office of Children's Services, The New York Public Library; Ruth Gagliardo, Director, Traveling Exhibits, Kansas State Teachers Association; Elizabeth Nesbitt, Associate Dean, Library School, Carnegie Institute of Technology; Alice Lohrer, Assistant Professor, Library School, University of Illinois; and Elizabeth Williams, Supervisor, Library and Textbook Section, Los Angeles, Cal., Board of Education.—FRANCES LANDER SPAIN, Coordinator, Children's Services, The New York Public Library.

THE STORY OF THE “OLD COLONY” OF NEW PLYMOUTH. By Samuel Eliot Morison. Illustrated by Charles H. Overly. Knopf. \$3.50. With Mayflower II soon to sail again, “Old Colony of New Plymouth” by the distinguished historian Samuel Eliot Morison is most timely. Morison's style is so spirited, his presentation so refreshing that readers of twelve years and up will read his book with real enjoyment. Here are no “souped-up stories of fictionalized Pilgrims in plug hats.” Instead the author pictures them as the stanch and lovable people careful research has shown them to be and he carries them through to 1692 when the colony was absorbed by Massachusetts. More history like this and it would be no chore at all to “read one good serious book of history every year” as Dorothy Canfield Fisher urged upon her listeners at a college commencement years ago. “If you don't,” she added, “you won't be worth educating.” [EDITOR'S NOTE: This book was recently given the Thomas A. Edison award for the children's book of 1956 which best portrays America's past.] —RUTH GAGLIARDO.

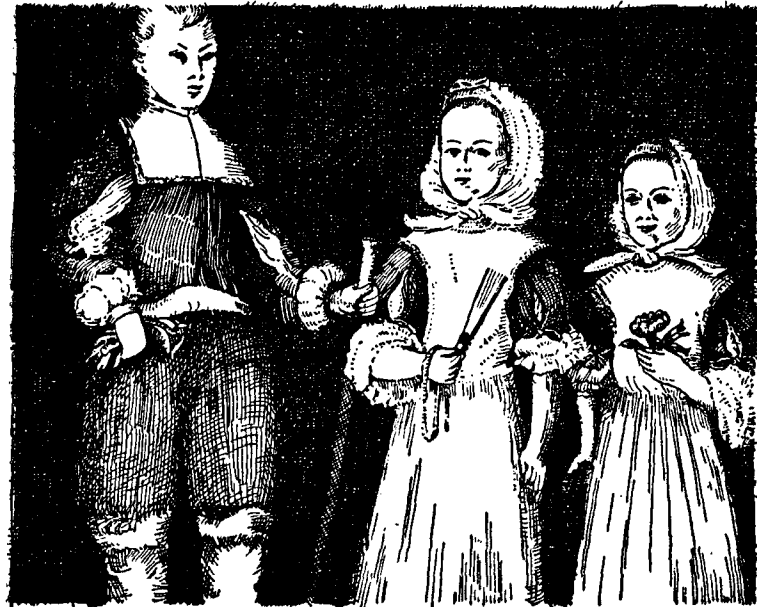
FAMOUS DANCERS. By Jane Muir. Illustrated with photographs. Dodd, Mead. \$3. The lives of eleven outstanding dancers are presented here in an in-

formal, chatty style enlivened by many anecdotes. The book opens with Stockholm-born Taglioni, the first ballet dancer to go up on her toes, and closes with Maria Tallchief, the greatest living American ballerina, daughter of Alexander Joseph Tall Chief of Fairfax, Oklahoma. All but two of the eleven are ballet dancers, the excep-

tions being Isadora Duncan and Martha Graham. Especially valuable are the discussions of the contributions made to the dance by Duncan, Graham, and DeMille. The book is very well written, and is good ballet appreciation for the junior and senior high school student of the dance and indeed for all who love the art. —R. G.

THE LITTLE ELEPHANT. By Arthur Gregor. Photographs by Ylla. Harper. \$2.50. On her ill-fated last trip to India in 1955, Ylla, one of the foremost photographers of animals in our time, made some remarkable studies of a baby elephant. These photographs have now been made into a charming sequence by Arthur Gregor, who tells the story of Japu the baby elephant. Japu dreamed he was asked to lead the King's parade. But Japu was little. Japu was not strong and great like his father who walked like a king in the King's parade. The photographs showing how Japu made his dream come true will enchant grown-ups as well as children, and animal lovers and photographers whatever their age. —R. G.

THE HAPPY LION ROARS. By Louise Fatio. Pictures by Roger Duvoisin. Whittlesey House. \$2. The Happy Lion was sad and lonesome because he lived alone. One day a small traveling circus stopped by and the Happy Lion saw for the first time the Beautiful Lioness. Each was at once delighted with the other, and late in the night the Beautiful Lioness slipped away into the Happy Lion's house at the zoo. Such a to-do there was looking for the Beautiful Lioness, what a roaring when the keeper tried to take her away, and finally what joy when



—From “The Story of the ‘Old Colony’ of New Plymouth.”

“No ‘souped-up stories of fictionalized Pilgrims in plug hats.’”