

straightforward style that serves admirably as a quiet frame for the exotic truth. The background material about the Maya culture is also interesting. Moreover, the illustrations are varied and excellent. A reading list and particularly good index are appended. Ages 12 up.

Season of the Briar. By Hesba Fay Brinsmead. Coward-McCann. 253 pp. \$3.95. Set in a remote area of Southwest Tasmania, this is the story of a quartet of young men on a summer job of weed-spraying—of their reactions to each other and to the various stresses they encounter: the dull, hard work, the quaint inhabitants of a self-sufficient family community, the danger and apprehension they all share when a young girl is lost on a mountain hike. Gisela is found, not by the team of organized and experienced climbers, but by the most engaging of the four boys, Fred, an amiable, gangling fellow whose deafness causes a severe speech impediment. The canvas is a bit crowded, but it's colorful and convincing. Ages 13-16.

Ismo. By John Verney. Holt, Rinehart & Winston. 256 pp. \$3.95. It is highly probable that John Verney has more fun writing than any author on the juvenile scene; his books abound in puns, double meanings, plots within plots, mistaken identities, paths crossing, and daft characters. Here the plots revolve, in erratic orbits, around the spread of a new movement, Ismo. Ismo is a force for good, but its practitioners somehow get into an unbelievable amount of trouble on two continents, chiefly due to a wildly contrived series of events and masquerades involving stolen art work. Arduous to unravel, the story is great fun. Sample puns: an American art collector is named Duffellow Bung, the stolen *Madonna and Child* belongs to Lord Bolting, so the chase for the picture is referred to as the hunt for the Bolting Madonna. Ages 13-16.

The Wishing Tree. By William Faulkner. Random House. 82 pp. \$3.95. Never before published, this fanciful story about a child's dream on the morning of her birthday is an odd mixture of childlike fantasy and adult overtones, of imaginative episodes and a recurrent dialogue between a married couple that seems inappropriate both for the story and for the young reader. Dulcie wakes to find a strange and magical boy in her room; joined by Alice, Dicky, and George, who live across the street, they set out on a weird journey. The boy produces ponies out of his satchel; they find a wishing tree and later meet Saint Francis, who gives each of them a bird. The fact that Alice is an adult emerges rather awkwardly when her husband appears; the fact that Alice's conversation is in dialect is jarring: "It's that husband I used to have. The one that run off and lef' me with a month houserent and not even a hunk of sidemeat in the house and me payin' a lawyer to fin' out what the gov'ment done with him. Him and his army! I'll war him, I will; he ain't never seen no war like what I can aggravoke. You come out from behime that tree." To the child who enjoys fairy tales and fantasy, some aspects should be appealing, but the book is really more interesting as a Faulkner curiosity than it is as a story.

Catfish Bend

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are told that rattlesnakes are coming. The application to national interests on today's scene has to be callous: the coyotes are the "Super Race" and their invasion is motivated by internal difficulties, natural conditions, and lust for the riches of the East. Mata succeeds—temporarily—by wile and hypnosis, and is overcome by ingenuity and bravery.

Within this simple framework readers can rampage at will for further implications. One of the joys of reading the Catfish Bend stories is the sudden discovery of latent meaning with visible application to today's foibles—what medievalists call "significations." Certain characters may cause difficulties for some readers, e.g., Ironskin, the Kentucky dog unjustly accused of murder, who plays a relatively major role.

Burman seems a bit careless in structure here and there, and one wonders if the writing of this latest addition to the series was not perhaps of less interest to him. Maybe the vein is panning out. But the wild bugle will call forth the faithful Burman adherents, and the narrative, told in Doc Raccoon's simple diction, makes a good child's story, with adventure, danger, and violence. The



—From "Blow a Wild Bugle for Catfish Bend."

line drawings by Alice Caddy are delightful.

That art, perhaps the greatest of all, of making it look easy belongs to Burman.

—ROLAND DICKISON.

Counter-Earth: In *Tarnsman of Gor* (Ballantine, paperback, 75¢) John Norman has accomplished a remarkable feat: he has taken the tarnished old Edgar Rice Burroughs formula and minted it into bright new coin.

A young Englishman named Tarl Cabot receives a mysterious message from his long-lost father, gets into a remote-controlled spaceship, and is transported to a Counter-Earth world—a planet orbiting in such a way that it is always hidden from us by the Sun. And away we go, out of our musty rooms into the wind and freedom of a superb

adventure tale. Cabot becomes a swordsman, learns to ride the fierce tarns (gigantic roc-like birds), kidnaps a princess (who turns out to be as treacherous as a tarn), steals a city's sacred Home Stone, is captured, spread-eagled on a raft, and sent down a river to die.

This is the Burroughs magic as you remember it, not as it was. Almost nothing specific has been copied, but the whole flavor of Burroughs is here—the soaring adventures on another planet, the strange beasts, the captures and escapes, the improbable coincidences—minus the repetitions, the flat-footed dialogue, the scientific howlers, and the unintentional humor that make it impossible to read *Tarzan* or *A Princess of Mars* after the age of thirty.

Norman has worked out his strange planet's fauna, customs, and history with great ingenuity, but has left intriguing blank spots to be filled out, one hopes, in many a sequel. —DAMON KNIGHT.



When Computer Meets Computer: If the Cold War goes on for another thirty years, D. F. Jones suggests in *Colossus* (Putnam, \$4.95), human reactions will be the slowest and weakest link in our security. The answer is obvious: turn over all nuclear weapons and delivery systems to a super-computer, buried impregnably under a mountain, impervious to tampering, linked to sensors and intelligence networks all over the world, and programmed to respond automatically to any attack.

The computer, named Colossus, has hardly been plugged in when it rattles off a message: FLASH THERE IS ANOTHER MECHANISM.

The Russians, as you might have guessed, have just turned on their own super-computer, called Guardian. When the two machines discover one another they begin communicating at a speed too fast for humans to follow. The oafish President of the United States of North America and his chief scientific adviser join forces via the hot line with their opposite numbers on the Soviet side, but it is already much too late. When they interrupt transmission between the two computers, a missile launched by each machine quickly reminds them who is the master now.

The rest is predictable, though no less horrifying, as human beings struggle vainly against the machines, which, after all, are swifter, more intelligent, and more logical than men.

U.S. readers will be a little jarred by the remarks the British author has put in the mouths of his American characters. The book has other minor faults, including some unexpected tedium; but many readers will cheerfully forgive them all, if only for the memorable one-word ending.

—D.K.

Fortress

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than one-third of his book to those two pseudo-anarchists (they were in reality would-be-dictatorial precursors of Lenin), the author has hardly more than a few lines for Prince Peter Kropotkin, one of the most famous inmates of the Peter and Paul Fortress for nearly three years. An outstanding anarchist philosopher and a generally respected scientist to boot, Kropotkin—granted his extreme naïveté and utopianism as a theoretician—was perhaps the most spotless and lovable character of all the nineteenth- and twentieth-century revolutionists.

In contrast to his unfriendly attitude toward Bakunin and Nechayev, the author shows a deep sympathy for the terrorists he deals with in the last third of the book: Andrei Zhelyabov and Sophia Perovskaya, who in 1881 organized the successful attempt on the life of Tsar Alexander II; and Yegor Sazonov and Ivan Kaliayev, who, two decades later, killed the two most ferocious representatives of tsarist despotism, Minister of the Interior V. K. Plehve and Grand Duke Sergey. All these terrorists called themselves Socialists, but in reality they were “liberals with a bomb”—a term applied to them without any derisive intention—whose ambitions did not go beyond the establishment of Western democracy. (It is worth noting that Kaliayev, a poet and a saint, flinched at throwing his bomb at the Grand Duke while two children were in his car, but gave no thought to the innocent coachman who was bound to perish and who did perish at the second attempt.)

The short interlude of Alexander Ulianov's bungled attempt on the life of Tsar Alexander III (1887) reads almost like a modern Children's Crusade. It was the acme of futility; but it is believed

that the execution of the leader of the conspiracy may have influenced the career of his younger brother, Vladimir Ulianov, who was later to become known as Lenin.

The last chapter is entitled “Kerensky.” It deals with the two most momentous events of Russian history—the downfall of the tsarist régime as a result of the February Revolution of 1917, and the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks nine months later. The author, an admirer of Alexander Kerensky, head of the Provisional Government, chooses to ignore the ambiguous role played by his hero as either an accomplice or a dupe of the aspirant dictator General Kornilov, who might have re-established the old régime. Aside from that, Mr. Payne is perfectly correct in calling Lenin's triumph a coup d'état rather than a revolution. For, as he says, “there was no popular uprising.” Technically it was what Otto Ruehle, a German maverick Marxist, called a “pacifist *putsch*”—a mutiny of soldiers who were unwilling to go to the front and be butchered in a war whose issues were of no interest to them. But it never occurs to the author that had Kerensky acted in accordance with the feelings of most of the soldiers and concluded peace with the Central Powers, Lenin and Trotsky would never have won over to their side those regiments that helped them to seize power and to turn a new leaf in history's never-ending tragicomedy.

It is a pity that an otherwise readable book—readable in spite of its shortcomings—should end on a note of involuntary humor. Here is how the author sums up what happened on November 7, 1917: “In silence the conspirators had stolen into the Winter Palace and arrested the government, leaving a vacuum which Lenin and the Bolshevik party were only too eager to fill.”

Well, well!

Dante

Continued from page 45

done his homework on Dante, and long pondered the lacunae and mysteries that shroud the poet's life. Chubb remains convinced that more and more solutions could be gleaned from the texts of Dante's own Latin and Italian works. Dante, he feels, intended these primarily as accounts of his private and public experiences. Thus Chubb drains every line of the meaning it holds for him in his own competent translation. His study becomes an extended textual explication of the *Divine Comedy* and the minor works.

A second announced intention of the author was to “bring Dante out of the library.” If by this he means to suggest that he wishes to eschew tedious discussions of scholastic theology, he has indeed succeeded. He is not one of those who, in Borgese's words, view Dante as if the poet himself were a Dante scholar. He focuses on Dante's own works rather than on books about him. When Chubb does turn to the immense corpus of scholarship on Dante, it is to the traditional Dantists, starting with the *trecento* group itself headed by Boccaccio. Contemporary Dante scholarship is strangely missing; Auerbach, Hatzfeld, Curtius, Vossler pass unheeded, and Singleton is mentioned once, only to be contradicted over his identification of Beatrice as a Christ-figure. Nor does Chubb seem alert to some of the current issues of Dante scholarship, such as recent doubts over the authenticity of Dante's letter to his patron Can Grande della Scala concerning the quadruple meaning of the *Divine Comedy*.

ON the other hand, Chubb contributes several clarifications of value: his reconstruction of Dante's itinerary from Portovenere to Paris is convincing. His chapters on Dante as a political figure make the poet something more understandable than a stereotypical idolater of Henry VII of Luxembourg.

Chubb handles his precious materials with care. Before making a flat assertion about some event in the poet's life, Chubb will acknowledge and sift all the conflicting opinions, arriving at his own through eliminative logic. This method, reminiscent of a bedside manner, inspires confidence and acquaints the reader with the competing theories as well as the most likely one. Chubb may, like Dante, dislike syllogistic reasoning, but his Cartesian approach is managed very well. Personal in tone, as though the study of Dante should be a shared experience, *Dante and His World* will be an appealing initiation to the poet for those who can find the time to read its 831 pages.

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As Others See Us



LONDON:

Tribute to Humphrey

WE PAY TRIBUTE to Vice President Humphrey's dignity and good humor in face of the violent abuse he has been subjected to in many places. . . . as a humane liberal statesman, he is ready to justify American policy in Asia because he knows it is right. —*Daily Express*.

CONGRATULATIONS to Mr. Humphrey on the good humor with which he greeted the crudest of demonstrations by a mindless minority of European youth. The fact that he was bombarded with eggs so often has a certain irony, for if it had not been for the powdered eggs which America sent Europe at the end of the war, many of the young people who have so many eggs to spare today would have starved to death. —*Daily Mail*.

[MR. HUMPHREY] has been abused fairly frequently, though given a genuinely warm welcome by most people in most places. Discussing the abuse there is no single easy explanation why this pattern of behavior should be so widespread. The sort of feelings which have been using Mr. Humphrey as a target existed before the Vietnam war, and will go on after it has stopped.

When all explanations have been given there still remains the unpleasant fact that there is a core of anti-Americanism, as bitter and irrational as anti-Semitism. Perhaps the saddest thing about the demonstrations Mr. Humphrey has had to put up with is their apparent pointlessness. When all allowances have been made for youth, idealism, hatred of a horrible war, and the satisfaction that is always to be got from making rude noises at the headmaster, there is still a residue of ignorance and aimlessness in the recent demonstrations which ought to be a greater source of worry for Europe than for America.

—*The Times*.

LUEBECK, Germany:

"Partnership"

[VICE PRESIDENT] Humphrey referred to Kennedy's grand design of an Atlantic partnership. . . . What is still alive in this? There remains the tiresome bargaining at Geneva on the customs

scheme which indeed carries the name of the assassinated President but which has scarcely anything to do with his ideas. What must we think of the partnership when President Johnson crossed the Pacific three times within a few months but . . . did not cross the Atlantic even once [until the funeral of Konrad Adenauer]? —*Luebecker Nachrichten*.

BOGOTA:

Vitality

RITA HAYWORTH told a reporter during an interview in Mexico that she loves to drink martinis and dance through the night, and has no after-effects whatever. . . . Rita Hayworth is, then, another

model of the enviable vitality characteristic of the majority of *gringos* of both sexes to whom age doesn't count when it comes to sports and diversion. In the United States it is not strange to see a couple of octogenarians dressed as children going to a party and having a ball until dawn, as lively and excited as a couple of unleashed go-go youngsters. "Playing the bear," the inhibition of people over forty in our society that keeps them from unblushingly throwing themselves into untrammelled activity, is completely unknown there.

—*Alfonso Castillo Gomez in El Espectador*.

MONTREAL:

Vietnam in Retrospect

. . . IN HIS LAST BOOK, *Hell Is a Very Small Place*, [Bernard] Fall wryly demonstrated that one thing could have saved the French at Dienbienphu: American help. Such aid was strongly favored by [John Foster] Dulles and the American joint chiefs, and 584 American planes were designated for an attack force. The plan was killed when eight

Dollar-Trading: Every so often, a sensational story breaks out—a forger has been apprehended. . . . In the West, the forging of money is a sensational event—newspapers write at length about the forger and his laboratory, the hidden workshop often employs the latest techniques, the artist-artisan making money at home is described as a genius. In Poland, a forger must be content with a short note in the "Events in Courts" column.

I must make it clear right here that this is not a purposeful discrimination against home-grown talent in the field of forgery. It must be admitted with shame that, in Poland, forgery is attempted by slackers, by people devoid of professional pride who let loose on the world shoddy goods rather than self-respecting forgeries. In recent years, I attended a couple of forgery trials and I saw the product. Extremely shabby, ladies and gentlemen.

In Poland, only U.S. dollars are being forged. Home currency is never forged. I do not know whether this is due to patriotism or to a healthy commercial approach. The fact remains that no one rushes in to forge the zloty. British pounds, Swiss francs, West German marks, or Swedish crowns are clearly discriminated against. Perhaps the discrimination is prompted by the fact that there is little demand for those currencies?

Citizens know that trading in dollars is illegal. One can keep dollars in a sock; one must not deal in them. A dollar in a sock poses no threat to its owner; the buying and selling of dollars causes a thrill of danger. In a café, under the table, dollars pass from hand to hand. The owner of the sock has no time or opportunity to inspect the goods. The average buyer may not even discover the forgery during inspection at home. He has never seen dollars before. The man from whom he bought them is a serious dealer—after all, he had been recommended by a friend. Besides, he is seen daily in the café. . . .

At the end of the year, it is widely known, a demand for dollars grows. The so-called silent partners take their share of the spoils, and it is not always politic to put one's earnings in a state savings account. . . . Dollars, anyone?

P.S. I swear that I was inspired to write the above column by a recent forgery trial and not by the State Savings Bank.

—*Danuta Kaczynska, in Zycie Warszawy, Warsaw*.