

chiatrist, is some consolation; as Mart reflects, "We were just planted here like a couple of unwilling radishes, nobody ever asked if we wanted to come." But Duane, wise and companionable as he is, is five years younger than Mart, and the day comes when they look at the same event with different eyes.

Both see Mare Cleary arrive, and later watch the guards beat up the youth who is wildly seeking her. But to Duane they are merely an outnumbered, battered boy and a girl fighting as savagely as a newly prisoned tiger. To Mart the girl is every echo of rebellion in herself; the intruder every symbol of romance, of the love that must exist in the outside world. From this identification come action, Ionescoesque nightmare, pain, discovery, and the only response maturity can give to the institution of life.

Simultaneously an allegory and a straightforward story, *The Better Part* shimmers with the fascinating puzzlement of a superbly crafted optical illusion. A bitter book, perhaps, but honest and inevitable. Square, sad adults who still retain affection for the young, please note.

—MARGARET PARTON.



Titanic Orphan Becomes Tycoon:

Worse even than treating Jerome Weidman seriously as a novelist who has failed in his latest effort is watching him suddenly trying to take himself seriously.

Some writers are really no more than tailors who follow the patterns dictated to them by their customers. There is nothing shameful about this—in fact, if they do it well they can serve an admirable function as a respite from television and so many bad movies. But when these tailors begin to think that their clothes truly make the man, well . . .

And this is Mr. Weidman's problem in *Other People's Money* (Random House, \$6.95), his umpteenth book since *I Can Get It for You Wholesale* published thirty years ago. He manipulates his usual cardboard figures against an intricate tangle of plots, and, to give them a semblance of reality, he catalogues all sorts of trappings of the years from 1915 to the late Forties.

The result is a pretentious hodgepodge, not even entertaining, of the worst of the possible worlds of Horatio Alger, Theodore Dreiser, and Harold Robbins. It suffers from Alger's lack of depth, Dreiser's woodenness, and Robbins's attempt to conceal his shortcomings behind a game of musical beds. On top of this, Mr. Weidman even lacks Mr. Robbins's unashamed lustiness.

Other People's Money is a chronicle of a self-made tycoon's successes and failures in life, love, friendship, and Big Business. The plot, from the orphaning of

Victor Smith in the *Titanic* disaster until the melodramatic climax three decades later, when he is summoned to attempt to straighten out the mess his boyhood chum and lifelong rival has made of his life, doesn't deserve the space it would take to describe it. Suffice to say that the book reads like a novice's attempt to write a reverse-English Great American Novel with the help of one of those One Hundred Sure-Selling Plots manuals.

Conceded, this is an ambitious effort for Mr. Weidman, who can write an entertaining book when his reach does not exceed his grasp. Sadly, it is both too ambitious and not ambitious enough.

—JOSEPH HAAS.



Separately Created Wastelands: If no man is an island, entire of itself, each must share his patch of soil if he is not to wither alone within his own shriveled husk. This, surely, is the essence to be extracted from Helen Hudson's *Meyer Meyer* (Dutton, \$4.50), a novel inhabited by people living out lives of hollow inadequacy, craving the fellowship that forever eludes those with no humanity to give.

On the whole, they are an unattractive lot: the insecurely vain, middle-aged professor of history Meyer Benjamin Meyer, with his cooing older sisters and his Liebfraumilch, his procrastinating research and his conveniently disengaged, transient affairs; the gregarious, provocative Viennese Lena, a sculptor warned of an erratic heart but unreconciled to widowhood and loneliness; the neurotic Josie, her longing as empty as the bottles that loll against the couch after each despairingly intentional lost weekend. These are but three of those who scarcely touch as they pass by their separately created wastelands. The only one who can save another from bonded isolation is little Mendel Berg, shrunken little Mendel, the eternal missionary, with his catarrh and ever-dripping nose.

From start to finish the novel shifts fluently in incident, focus, and mood, which Miss Hudson communicates in unerringly precise prose. Her ear is sensitive to the colloquial cadence of unstudied speech, her eye alert to the witty in visual metaphor. The people—and the setting—may be contemporary and parochial. It is Miss Hudson's achievement to have quickened them with a quality of the timeless, the universal.

—FREDA MORRISON.

LITERARY I. Q. ANSWERS

1. Aquinas. 2. à Becket. 3. Bowdler. 4. Browne. 5. De Quincey. 6. Eliot. 7. Gray. 8. Jefferson. 9. à Kempis. 10. Malory. 11. Mann. 12. Moore. 13. More. 14. Paine. 15. Wolfe.

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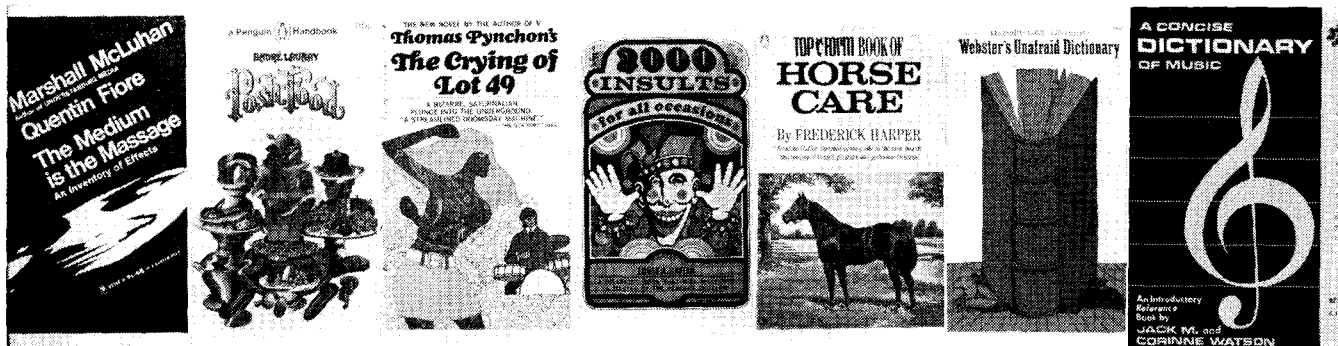
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PICK OF THE PAPERBACKS

The writing of reference books is strictly for experts, or at least it should be, according to Joe Hyams, well-known columnist and now author with Major A. Riddle of *The Weekend Gambler's Handbook* (Signet, 75¢), a careful guide to the great casino games from baccarat and faro to poker and roulette. "I don't play cards. I never gamble," says Hyams. On the other hand, Riddle, a professional gambler and president of Las Vegas's Dunes, knows all about it. "It seemed an interesting challenge for a nongambler," Hyams remarked of the collaboration. "I didn't realize it would be agony. Not knowing even the basic terms, I had to begin by drawing up a glossary. Then each of the Major's theories had to be tested. At poker I lost \$2. Then I put thirty nickels in the slot machine and lost them. That was the end of my gambling, which probably confirms the Major's contention that if you can't afford to lose, don't play."

If when you say "reference books" you think of the *Thesaurus* or *The Reader's Guide*, then take a look at these. *Posh Food* (Penguin, 95¢), André Launay's encyclopedic history of rare and rich menus, includes nothing so crass as recipes, but rather such useful information as the season for larks (October only), how to serve haggis (with bagpipes and Scotch whisky), and when a beluga is not a mallasol. Where does it all lead? To gout. In French, remember, *goûter* means "to taste." . . . Louis A. Safian's *2000 Insults for All Occasions* (Pocket Books, 50¢) is a collection of barbs, retorts, and bright and bold Oscar Wildian repartee arranged according to potential targets. (Bores: "He has a wide circle of nodding acquaintances.") This is probably the last thing you ought to look at before going off to a cocktail party . . . At this time of year big business is recruiting young people for jobs. Extremely useful is *The Macmillan Job Guide to American Corporations* (\$3.95), in which 260 major U.S. companies are sorted out in terms of opportunities available, requirements and benefits, and how to start out on the long ladder to that room at the top . . . For youngsters eager to have a worthwhile holiday, *Summer Employment Guide 1967* (Doubleday, \$2.95) seems a good thing to know about. Among hundreds of listings of both work and play activities: volunteer duty in Ghana work camps, bellboy jobs in Panamá, work in ranger camps in Switzerland, scenery painting in Maine summer stock, ranch-hand jobs in Wyoming. The information is here; now all you do is apply . . . *Down Under Without Blunder* (Tuttle, \$1), a guide to English spoken in Australia, was compiled by Harvey E. Ward, an ex-GI who went to teach school in Tasmania and found himself befuddled by the language barrier. Did you know that a rat bag is a scoundrel, a shivoo is a party, and a homely sheila is a home-loving girl, a domestic waltzing Matilda?

—ROLLENE W. SAAL.

Reference Shelf

Among the imposing reference books that this year have made their way into paperback, our choice for academic laurels goes straightway to the *Harvard Guide to American History* (Atheneum, \$4.95). Any reader who wants to delve into the U.S. past, from the smallest tariff to the grossest territorial expansion, will find here all areas of scholarship, all sources cited, all bibliographies listed. The scholars who constructed this intellectual behemoth are Oscar Handlin, Arthur Meier Schlesinger (both Sr.

and Jr.), Samuel Eliot Morison, Frederick Merk, and Paul Herman Buck.

A brief look at those new paperbacks that classify themselves as dictionaries: John Russell Taylor's *The Penguin Dictionary of the Theatre* (\$1.45) goes from A for Abbey Theatre to Z for Carl Zuckmayer (he's the German dramatist who wrote *The Captain from Koenigstein*). Another fingertip guide, with no nonsense about it, is Jack M. and Corinne Watson's *A Concise Dictionary of Music* (Apollo, \$2.25). It's fine for students who want a straightforward answer to what is dodecaphonic music and who's

Puccini (poo-CHEE-nee). Also for students—who else wants to read précis of fiction?—is *Plot Outlines of 100 Famous Novels* (Dolphin, \$1.45), edited by Lewy Olfson. The synopses are lengthy, author biographies ample, and one can wander quickly through literary time and space, from *The Tale of Genji* to *Babbitt*.

A wordbook that's just for fun is *Webster's Unafraid Dictionary* (Collier, 95¢), an anthology of puns, bon mots, old-fashioned wisecracks, all collected—and some written—by humorist Leonard Louis Levinson, who contributed to American merriment with the "invention" of Fibber McGee's crammed closet during his days as a radio writer.

Nearly every hobbyist can find his sport catalogued and categorized in reference guides. John Laffin's *Codes and Ciphers* (Signet, 50¢), for instance, makes order out of the chaos of dots and zigzags that comprise such famed cryptographs as the Pig-Pen and the Saint-Cyr. *Top Form Book of Horse Care* (Popular, 85¢), by Frederick Harper, gently leads the way through a maze of equine problems—curing colic, feeding a show horse—and names all the salient anatomy, from muzzle to tail. Robert Scharff's *U.S. Coast Guard Recreational Boating Guide* (Grosset, \$1) supplements the government's regulations with its own rules on telling a nun from a buoy, a pointer from a bailing hook, and a warning blast from a welcoming toot.

Fiction

A new anthology, *12 from the Sixties* (Dell, 75¢), selected by Richard Kostelanetz, aims to present "the most distinguished American writers who have dissected the uncertainties of the 1960s." Well, if it doesn't always succeed, this collection does a valid job of showing off some of the decade's literary pets. Bernard Malamud and Isaac B. Singer, with an assist from Saul Bellow, hold up the candles of Jewish expressionism, which in its own way really isn't so different from the mystical absurdities of