

Novel Examines Conditions Of Poor Whites in South

By FABER O'HAGAN

TRAGIC GROUND, Erskine Caldwell. Duell, Sloane and Pierce, \$2.50.

I try to hold up a mirror to nature in the south and to my own nature, to human nature. I don't say that lynching is evil or that cruelty is bad. But by showing people as they are, cruel, and by showing their victims, by showing people oppressed to hopelessness, perhaps I'll have some effect on many lives.

With these words Caldwell explains the purpose of his own novels. Unfortunately editors and book reviewers seem unable to accept his statement. With very

few exceptions they ignore the social implications of the books and say, scornfully, that there are no such people.

The result of this is that while the honesty of his social outlook and the power of his writing have made him one of the half dozen best writers in the land, Caldwell is not generally accorded the honor and position he has earned.

The Rural South

It is regrettable that people like Caldwell's character do exist. Anyone who has lived for more than three months in the rural districts of the deep South, among the poor whites, has seen many of them. "Tragic Ground" will probably be labeled pornographic and forgotten as quickly as possible.

It is filled with passion and pelagra. It is written by ignorant mountaineers who are drawn to the big cities to work, and then left hopelessly confused and dis-

couraged when the factories close and throw them out of work. The novel is rich with men who drink too much in order to find forgetfulness. It has many 13-year-old girls who already know how to get money from men. There is a great deal of informal and unsanctified love, and there's a murder, too, but the villain of the piece is not a man.

The villain is the hard, cold cruelty of a society which permits such regions as Poor Boy Town, where not even the downtrodden negroes will live.

Defects of Society

The story deals with the tribulations of one Spence Douthit, who finds himself stranded without a job in a war boom town when the powder factory closes. His erratic struggling and his pathetic reluctance to return to his native Beasley county throw the defects of our

social, industrial, and educational system into high relief.

Most of the unkind reviews come from the South, where local pride forces editors to say the novel is a lie. More of them come from shocked northerners who just know there can't be any such people and places. Those who know the rural sections of the South know that they do exist, that men are neither vicious nor perverted. They are bewildered by a society which lies to them, gives them no education, cheats them, exploits them, and finally throws them away, confidently that the next year will bring a new crop of hill-billies.

This book shows what ignorance has done to a quarter of our land. We should read these stories with open minds instead of holding our noses and sputtering that Caldwell is a liar.

Navy Needs More Men For Radar Technicians

There is a great need for young men with mathematics and science training to qualify as radar technicians, reports Chief Specialist W. E. Bell in charge of navy recruiting in Lane county.

Those who qualify for this program are eligible for training equivalent to two years of college in radio and electrical engineering. Specific information regarding this program may be obtained at the United States navy substation, room 6, in the Eugene post office.

KAILE'S APPAREL SHOP
Phone 976 1044 Willamette

All the clothes for a college girl's wardrobe and to fit her budget

Gladys Gilbert

"PORTLAND'S LEADING PHOTOGRAPHER"

Invites students to her modern studio at all times

708 S. W. Morrison St.
Portland, Oregon

READ THE NEW BOOKS IN OUR RENT LIBRARY

UNIVERSITY 'CO-OP'

CASH

FOR SECOND-HAND TEXTS THAT WILL BE USED HERE NEXT YEAR

SPRING!

TIME FOR OREGON DUCK "T" SHIRTS... WE HAVE THEM.

UNIVERSITY 'CO-OP'