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For Bedside Reading

If you aren't the type to browse around in book shops, you may as well turn the page and read "Duck Tracks" right now. This editorial is about a "find," a "pearl" which we ran across yesterday in the co-op book store. The book is old, copyright 1944, but we'd never seen it before and we are like a kid with a new Buck Rogers pistol (Zap, Zap).

It is "The American Mercury Reader," a collection of articles, poems, plays, and short stories from the American Mercury over a 20-year period. One of the most striking features about this volume is that it costs only a buck.

Many of the selections are from the "old" Mercury of the prohibition era, and reflect the choleric good humor of Henry L. Mencken, who edited the Mercury in its early years. There will be few students who will remember the Mercury of that age, and most of those who do will remember it only as the Atlantic-sized, four-bit magazine with the green cover that father sometimes brought home; it was the magazine he hid when maiden aunts came to visit.

When the Mercury went Digest-sized in the 30s, and dropped to a quarter, it became a little more respectable for the middle-class home, and while some of the old salt, bile, and vitriol was gone, it still made good reading. For that matter it still does.

A few other magazines, notably The New Yorker and the Readers Digest have put out "readers," but they have had their drawbacks. The New Yorker's books, which should have been good, were a little large for comfortable reading in bed, and the Readers Digest lacks that peculiar "character" that raises the New Yorker and the Mercury above the ordinary news-stand level.

The paper and type in this Mercury reader are the same that the magazine uses, and the articles are divided by Roman numerals, just like the Mercury itself. You know you are reading the Mercury when you read this book.

The book leads off with Sinclair Lewis' "The Man Who Knew Coolidge," which later became a book of its own, and includes such immortal bits as Mencken's sketch on William Jennings Bryan. Other good non-fiction will be found in of which appeared later in his "Holy Old Mackinaw," and Stewart H. Holbrook's "The Lumberjacks Go Sissy," much Herbert Asbury's "Hatrack." "Hatrack" was the story that got banned in Boston, and got the editor of the Mercury hailed into court. Unless our memory is failing us, we believe this "Hatrack" article was later incorporated into Asbury's lusty, and somewhat bitter "Up from Methodism." William Bradford Huie's "The South Kills Another Negro," which the Mercury published in November 1941, is also in the book. Admirers of the late and often great Raymond Clapper will be pleased to find his "Happy Days," an account of prohibition in the national capital, in the reader.

Such short stories as Sherwood Anderson's "Death in the Woods," William Faulkner's "That Evening Sun Go Down," and the Sinclair Lewis story mentioned above, are representative of the excellent fiction in our new little dollar volume.

Eugene O'Neill's "All God's Chillun Got Wings," a raft of poetry, and cartoons by Arthur Szyk, Steinberg, Eric Peters, and E. Schloss, round out the collection of the best from the Mercury.

The editors of this volume have done a fine job of preserving, in book form, some of that distinctively American literature that the Mercury, and often the Mercury alone, carried in the years of our childhood and adolescence.

If you are character enough to be a Mercury fan, and we pray that you are, we suggest you tear over to the co-op and get one of the few remaining copies. It belongs on your bedside table alongside the ash-tray.

Writing Without Looking, Columnist Views 'Years Between'

By BERT MOORE

The preliminary announcement of possibly internecine warfare was printed in yesterday's Emerald, but I'm going to ignore it and retire my forces after this one remark: It's my opinion, Bob, that what you class as today's cowboy movies are not horse operas in the dauntless tradition of Hollywood's Old West. They're musicals. And I will agree

that it's disheartening to see a cowpoke reach for an ocarina instead of a six-gun; to break into lyrics instead of shouting, "You go for help—I'll take the shortcut and head 'em off at the pass!"



Read a novel the other day and was intrigued by one of the hero's favorite tricks. He was a newspaperman turned theatrical agent, and in the

years that he had been a reporter he had developed the facility of being able to take notes in his pocket, wherein he kept a small pad and a pencil stub.

Taking notes while looking at something else? Just the kind of trick a motion picture reviewer should master, I thought, and so I tried it while seeing "The Years Between." I had anticipated some little trouble in reading the notes, but nothing so bad as what I actually had. Here're the notes; maybe you can make them out.

... J. Arthur Rank . . . U-I . . . Prestige Pic release . . . the Years Between . . . Muir Matheson does music . . . sounds good so far . . . Michael Redgrave, Valerie Hobson Flora Robson she's probably good . . . pic opens June 40 . . . pastoral scene . . . awful dreary

funeral . . . "sturdy British" sermon . . . Hobson's half half smile sets mood? damn good gestures . . . uses bodytoonot onlyhands . . . memories of dedhusband Michael overdone . . . fine goodbye kiss . . . English trains . . . propaganda on sturdy, rugged Britishers here . . . son bum kid actor . . . doesn't look like either either . . . more propaganda . . . Robson wasted . . . good sets Carter? people don't act like people dammit. Hobson really good!!!

There were some more exclamation points after that, much bigger than mere type can indicate, but as I interpret the preceding mess Miss Hobson was great, Miss Robson was not up to par, Mr. Redgrave didn't particularly register, and there was a lot of propaganda in the picture. Come to think of it, that's just about right, as I remember.

Finally got around to seeing "The Yearling" and liked most of it very much. Jane Wyman was surprisingly good, but I could have stood a lot less of Gregory Peck being homespun. Somehow he doesn't make it come off completely. I didn't know whether it was sad or funny when he stood by the grave of the little boy who had loved animals and prayed, "Lord, I sure hope ya got some varmints up thar . . ."

Other good movies in town over the weekend, judging from campus comment; I was particularly sorry that I didn't make it to see "Body and Soul," which seems to have been especially well liked. As for cinema fare in the hinterlands, get Tom Hazzard to tell you the plot of "Charlie Chan and the Red Dragon," which infested Springfield for a few days. Must have been an interesting picture.

Items from Roundabout

By BOB REED

No matter how strict and tough father may be there's still a tug at the heartstrings when he sees his boy tilt his first pinball machine.

* * *

The fat lady says she isn't worried about a meat shortage yet. She hasn't even used up all the stuff she hoarded during the last one.

* * *



Since St. Louis seems in doubt as to whether to go ahead with a World's Fair, anyone desiring to meet Louie may have to make other arrangements.

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Criticism of the Long Island railroad's antiquated equipment by angry New York

commuters is disputed by one former rider who said he always rather admired the line's policy, that, if a door came off in a passenger's hand, he got to keep it.

* * *

A doctor says he can identify a man's occupation by the location of his calluses, and the veteran copyreader tells the doc to mind his own business.

* * *

The young hussy in the strapless gown, sniffs Aunt Prue, should have had a strap elsewhere and earlier.

* * *

England is to export a perfumed floor covering and Cousin Diillingwater plans to install it in his parlor so that when he falls on his face he can always explain he is merely inhaling the rug's rich bouquet.

Education -- Not 'Rights'

(From the Texas A&M Battalion)

The now familiar battle of words about the feasibility of a program of federal aid for education—a politics-ridden issue that has been pro and coned almost to death—is back in print again, or should we say still?

Senator George D. Aiken of Vermont has introduced a bill into congress calling for federal aid to schools. In addition to renewing the fight for the eventual approval of the program, the bill has brought forth a volume of words, oaths, threats and moans from a variety of individuals who would rather die with states rights at their side than see schools receive financial help from the government.

The arguments against federal aid for public schools are familiar; they have been aired over and over again: breeds socialism . . . infringes on states' rights . . . will mean beginning of the end of civil liberties . . . our children will be seduced by government propaganda if the latter takes over the schools.

To attempt to refute these arguments without consuming several reams of paper would be useless: suffice to say: Are the people of the United States going to stand indignantly and defiantly on "their constitutional rights" while their chil-

dren "learn in one-room shanties and are taught by underpaid, and in some cases, unqualified teachers?"

It seems to us that it is time the people of the United States stopped worrying about a possible loss of abstract "right" and began looking out for the welfare of their children.

As the alleged leading nation of the world the United States possesses a school system of which she can hardly be proud.

The percentage of failures in colleges show, among other things, the lack of preparation in high schools. The elementary and high schools of the United States in general, rural areas in particular and southern rural areas especially, are doing an undeniably poor job. The situation has existed a long time. The states concerned have done little to remedy the situation themselves.

It seems logical that these states, having failed, would be willing to turn the task of revitalizing American education over to the federal government.

The need is for education—not "rights." If America produces a literate, capable generation of college graduates in the next 20 years, the "rights" will take care of themselves.