

Herald and News Book Reviews

Picture Book Hails Comics

THE LAUGH MAKERS. By William Cahn. Coward-McCann. \$5.95. This pictorial chronology of the history of American comedy and comedians gives an intimate close-up of the individuals who made and make this nation laugh.

From the time actor Thomas Wignell entertained President Washington up to the present-day stage, movie and TV professionals, there is an interesting array of more than 200 photos of the funny-men in action.

Two of America's famous clowns who performed for Civil War troops were Dan Rice and George Fox. Billed as the first white-faced clowns, their routines were not too different from that of Emmett Kelly, the present-day hobo pantomime master.

One of the first comedienne on stage was May Irwin, known as 'Madame Laughter.' She had few rivals in the legitimate theater around 1880. However, her counterpart is seen today in the lively antics of Imogene Coca.

Cahn's book brings out Harold Lloyd as the only comedian to rival Charlie Chaplin as a film attraction. Pictures of this era extend from the humor of the Keystone Cops to Walt Disney's first Mickey Mouse.

Hundreds of names and photographs flow through the book—George M. Cohan, Weber and Fields, Eddie Foy. It is a thorough collection to bring back fond memories of those who remember the mirth makers of old. And for those whose memory doesn't precede Jack Benny's first radio days, this informative book means a few hours interestingly spent.

Literary Highlights

MY BROTHER'S KEEPER: JAMES JOYCE'S EARLY YEARS. By Stanislaus Joyce. Edited, with introduction and notes, by Richard Ellmann, preface by T. S. Eliot. Viking. \$5.

It may be highly useful to investigate the private life and background of a public figure, Eliot believes.

And in truth it is not possible to imagine a creative person who was not in fundamental ways shaped by family, friends and environment; and in a writer as personal as Joyce, whose specific subject was the Joycean experience, intimate information of this sort, however the relatives blush and squirm, is essential.

Stanislaus was in a lucky position—lucky at least for us—because he was the great literary explorer's junior by three years; because they were close for the formative first two decades in Dublin and Trieste; and because he is sympathetic. He may find fault with his big brother but he flies at you if you dare criticize.

"In our house one had always the impression of being in an open boat on a choppy sea," he says. It's something of an understatement. The Joyces had seen better days, and by the time there was a household of children, they were definitely on the way down. In about 11 years, for instance, they moved some nine times in Dublin, Stanislaus remembers, each time to a place a little shabbier, and with a slightly lighter load of goods.

There was a never-ending pull and haul. The mother lived in, by and for the church, did all the

priests told her, and thought all they required her to think. The father loved liquor. "For the most part women do not interest Irishmen except as streetwalkers or housekeepers," Stanislaus pronounces bluntly, and the old man was certainly angry most of his years with the old woman, whom once in a particularly besotted moment he apparently tried to strangle. There's another understatement: "It must not be imagined that he was not occasionally sober."

Stanislaus was a fervid anti-Catholic, but the best or worst he can call his learned brother is "unwilling unbeliever." James was terrified of lightning and thunder, and somewhere he would call God "a noise in the street." He was serious, studious, had no false modesty, was promiscuous and, after his mother's death, turned at least for a time, and despite the efforts of Stanislaus to balk him, into as determined a souse as his father had been.

As a student he was exemplary, setting all sorts of records in one school after another, and however much in later years he had his nose in a glass, in Dublin he had it in a book. Stanislaus recalls a picnic when he took along his notebooks and lists of foreign words and expected other picnicers to hear his lessons.

He never liked London. Oddly, at first he did not like Paris, where he would make his home many years, and where he and his family once congregated with their friends at the cafe Chez Francis—improbably on the Right Bank, too.

Out of this Dublin life and neighborhood came the figures who walk, and marvelously talk, through his books. It was brother Stanislaus who sang "Finnegan's Wake"—all Joyces had voices, and the best of them, according to Stanislaus, was George; his name, as Giorgio, was given to James' first son, born in Trieste, and this boy later embarked on a vocal career of his own. James was first interested in the subject of Ulysses when in school he read Lamb's "Adventures of Ulysses."

But there were specific forebears not only for the titles but also the characters, scenes and speeches. Mrs. Riordan, Mr. Casey, Mr. Tate and the dean of studies, all in "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man," and Simon Dedalus and others in "Ulysses" all once lived in Dublin and had the great good fortune to be immortalized, as we suppose, by rubbing elbows with a wide-eyed, perceptive, imaginative youngster.

Stanislaus could observe his elder brother from a unique position, and happily he was endowed with enough of the Joycean genius to merit his enviable opportunity and put it to splendid use.



CIRCUS AUTHORITY. Vivienne Mars, retired librarian, shows circus clowns Arthur Gallagher (left) and Jim Douglas part of the famous circus collection at the San Antonio Library.

Friends Of The Big Top Cheer Retired Circusana Custodian

By WILLIAM BURCH LEE

SAN ANTONIO, Tex. (AP)—Confidante of clowns and friend of scholars is Vivienne Mars, for 15 years ringmaster of the world's most famous collection of Circusana.

Recently retired, Mrs. Mars served as librarian of the renowned Harry Hertzberg Circus Collection in the San Antonio Public Library. She helped assemble the collection, and was its first and only librarian, taking personal pride in the thousands of items of circus lore and personal interest in the personalities of the big top.

Says she: "It's been just wonderful. I've met many of the great people of the circus."

"We've had a very limited bud-

et with which to buy articles for our collection. But the circus people have been wonderful to us. They've given us scores of items when they found out we couldn't pay for them.

"And I guess the biggest thrill was on opening day. Not the opening day for the public. But the opening day when Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey were in town. The way they wandered around the collection and the wonderful manner in which they spoke to Mr. Hertzberg—well I suppose that was the biggest day for me and the collection."

Now that she is devoting her time being a housewife and amateur artist, Mrs. Mars still receives many visitors of circus fame and discusses with them the good old days. She recalls the people who came from all over the world to see the collection, and the many letters received daily.

The collection was founded by Harry Hertzberg, a circus fan who spent his life assembling circus mementoes, and who willed his collection to the San Antonio Library on his death in 1940.

Two new wings were constructed to house the collection, which was opened to the public Nov. 12, 1942, with Mrs. Mars in charge. Dedication ceremonies were timed to coincide with the San Antonio appearance of Ringling Brothers-Barnum and Bailey Circus—and the entire personnel showed up for the big event.

Does she miss the excitement of her long service to circus lore? "Well, yes," says Mrs. Mars, "but not as much as I expected to, because I find my friends from the circus still remember me, and their letters and visits keep life always interesting."

Victorian Author's Biography Reveals A Remarkable Career

THE FINE AND THE WICKED: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF OUIDA. By Monica Stirling. Coward-McCann. \$4.

In Suffolk, in Bury St. Edmunds, on the first day of 1839, there was born a girl known to us as Ouida—her own babytalk for the second of her three names: Marie Louise Ramee.

Some people have forgotten what was once the irresistible magic of her reputation, but thanks to a couple of her stories, now surely classics, and to the dramatic contrasts in her remarkable career, she deserves the handsome memorial which this excellent biography constitutes.

Her father, evidently a secret agent for Napoleon III, would eventually disappear. To his daughter he was a man of mystery, and Miss Stirling says the child's eager speculations on his unpredictable comings and goings and his strange way of life sharpened her wits, set her lively imagination on its exotic flights, and served importantly to make a writer of her.

With her mother and grandmother—the elusive father as usual absent on some enigmatic task—she moved to London, and unlike almost all other authors, closed her mind resolutely upon the dull scene of her birth and used practically none of that background and experience in the 47 books she would write. By 20 she sold her first stories, and her first novel, "Held in Bondage," appeared in 1863.

Her father took her to the continent for the first visit. Later she and her mother settled in Florence, and Italy remained her home till her death in 1908, the luster of her fabulous successes all tarnished; her money gone, her luxurious finery bedraggled and tattered, her houseful of shaggy dogs kept alive, like herself, by charitable neighbors.

But in her heyday she collected

extraordinary royalties and spent her wealth lavishly on all the social splendors—villa, servants, flowers, and magnificent entertainment from crowds for breakfast to more crowds for banquets. Though she would dub herself "de la Ramee," and indeed frequented noble circles, she was in fact, though never really in spirit, a commoner. That had something to do with the tragic frustration of her love for an Italian, Marchese della Stufa, "not the first man of estimable character," says the penetrating Miss Stirling, "whose anxiety to cause no pain has resulted in his hurting everyone concerned, including himself." Ouida believed for 10 years that he would marry her; finally disillusioned, she wrote a blistering novel, "Friendship," exposing him, his possessive mistress, and the latter's unpossessive husband.

Half a century ago all well brought up children read Ouida's "A Dog in Flanders" and "The Nurnberg Stove;" they are still on library shelves, as is the adult "Under Two Flags." Or perhaps you remember "In Maremma," "Moths," "A Village Commune," "The Massarenes," Henry James had but grudging praise for her, but Norman Douglas, Max Beer-bohm, Carl Van Vechten and no few others have resorted to extravagant terms, "miracle," for instance, and "genius."

Miss Stirling sets her firmly in her Victorian and post-Victorian era, and links her to ours. Furthermore, she valiantly defends the florid prose—if prose is not too flat a word for that ornate style—and convinces us of the worth of an author who, however flowery in her writing, could object to realism only when it is limited "to what is commonplace, tedious, and bald—to the habit, in a word, of insisting that the potato is real and that the passion flower is not."

Current Best Sellers

FICTION

BY LOVE POSSESSED, Cozzens.
RALLY ROUND THE FLAG, BOYS! Shulman.
BELOW THE SALT, Costain.
ATLAS SHRUGGED, Rand.
SOME CAME RUNNING, Jones.

NONFICTION

PLEASE DON'T EAT THE DAISIES, Kerr.
WHERE DID YOU GO? OUT, Smith.
BARUCH: MY OWN STORY.
KIDS SAY THE DARDEST THINGS, Linkletter.
PETER FREUCHEN'S BOOK OF THE SEVEN SEAS.

Khrushchev's Rise To Power

THE RISE OF KHRUSHCHEV. By Myron Rush. Public Affairs Press \$3.25.

This slim volume, little more than an oversized essay, argues that Nikita S. Khrushchev is attempting to succeed to Stalin's despotic powers over the Soviet Union's 200 million people.

Dr. Rush, a member of the Social Science Division of the Rand Corporation, cites bits and scraps of evidence to support a contention that Khrushchev, now the first secretary of the Soviet Communist party, seeks to legitimize his succession to the mantle of Lenin and Stalin.

There is little question now but that Khrushchev intends to be the boss of the Soviet Union. The big question—one on which Dr. Rush lamentably fails to elaborate—is whether Khrushchev wants or even

dares try to wield the autocratic power held by Stalin from 1938 until his death in 1953.

Dr. Rush's studies led him to the conclusion that the Soviet Communist boss has been trying to foster a "cult of Khrushchev," similar to the previous "cult of Stalin."

It is true, as Dr. Rush points out, that the Party Central Committee no longer can rely upon Khrushchev's support of its authority over the presidium. But in effect, the ruling party presidium is the central committee, since Khrushchev has peopled it with his own party secretaries. It is equally true that Khrushchev, like Stalin, first used the collective "core" of the party to help his rise, and then turned on it and destroyed it.

But the basic question remains:

Can there be another Stalin in today's Soviet Union? Dr. Rush claims to have found evidence that the political police already may have had some of their former Stalin era powers restored to them, and "may be more securely in Khrushchev's hands than has commonly been supposed." He is right in this, too.

But Khrushchev faces problems Stalin did not have to face. To invoke the power of a Stalin, Khrushchev would have to use the methods of a Stalin. He grew up under Stalin and knows no other way. A discussion by a scholar of Dr. Rush's caliber of Khrushchev's chances to be the new Stalin, in the light of recent Soviet social developments, would have been a valuable supplement to his thesis on Khrushchev's maneuvers.