

and REVIEWS

Recognition Comes To Local Reviewer

By ROBIN BAHR

In little over three years Donald Yates has hit the jackpot with his book reviewing. Around the first of December Yates received a telegram from the Saturday Review requesting him to write a 500 word review of a new book, "The Castle of Fratta".

Upon receipt of that review the magazine wired another new book "Silk Hats and No Breakfast" to be reviewed in 700 words.

And what did 28-year-old Yates think of that? "I'm delighted, naturally! It's about the nicest thing that could happen to one who is as interested in commenting on new books as I am."

INDEED, YATES deserves to be excited, for such a request represents rapid and definite success in the world of literary criticism. But Donald Yates has his fingers in many other pies with equally successful results.

While teaching Spanish at Michigan State University, Yates, who lives in Farmington and commutes to Lansing, is working for his Ph.D. and contributing frequent articles to scholarly magazines on the subject of Spanish American literature.

This fall in his spare time he managed to write his first play, "The Way is Green," which was produced by the Farmington Players. He is also mystery reviewer for the Detroit Times and a frequent contributor to The Eccentric as well as to the Michigan Daily.

The Castle Of Fratta

By Ippolito Nievo, 589 pp. Boston. Houghton Mifflin, \$5.50.

Lovett F. Edwards' translation of "The Castle of Fratta," an ambitious Italian novel first published in 1867, is remarkable for half a dozen good reasons, but two stand out principally among them. The first is the thoroughly intelligent job of translation and editing done by Mr. Edwards; the second is the fact that the original half-million word long novel titled "Confessions of an Frigancian" was written in the space of eight months by a 27-year-old Italian poet and soldier who was lost at sea at the age of 20.

The author, Ippolito Nievo, died in 1867 with his promising career scarcely begun. Yet he had already made himself a part of his time. During the latter years of his life, which had seen Italy, its old organ by Mr. Edwards; the second is the fact that the original half-million word long novel titled "Confessions of an Frigancian" was written in the space of eight months by a 27-year-old Italian poet and soldier who was lost at sea at the age of 20.

"THE CASTLE OF FRATTA" is



Reviewer Wins Acclaim

Donald Yates, reviewer for The Eccentric, has won national recognition as a reviewer. He teaches at Michigan State university, runs a Spanish American literary agency and translates, and in his spare time, wrote a play.

the author's story of the half century which led into this struggle, the risorgimento. Narrated in enlightened terms, the novel stands as a human and believable document of this turbulent period in Italian history. The work is characterized by many fine touches which display Nievo's considerable literary talent. The castle of Fratta, for example, which in the space of the novel disintegrates as does Italy's old order, is given especially vivid and poetic description in the early pages: "Another anomaly of this building was the multitude of chimneys, which from a distance gave it the appearance of a chess-board spread with a still unfinished game."

Also, in the then current fashion of the Latin costumbrista writers of the time (Lizardi in Mexico, Larra in Spain), Nievo gives numerous colorful sketches (effective almost without exception) of the social customs of the period, of the styles of dress, of the popular beliefs and superstitions of the common people, and of the personalities who surrounded the protagonist, Carlo Alteviti.

CARLO, who begins his life at the castle under humble circumstances, rises believably in the course of the novel and ultimately gains a political (and later military) role of some prominence. Taken as a whole, the novel is a rather uneven work. The early chapters, laying the scene at the castle and describing Carlo's youth, are graced with beautifully and sensitively-written evocations. The latter chapters, which take Carlo away from Fratta, generally lack color and oftentimes relevance as well. Carlo's enduring love affair with the intriguing Pisana also finds its most moving expressions

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in the childhood scenes. In short, as Mr. Edwards writes, it is doubtful that the latter part of the novel, "written at the height of the plume," was ever revised. "The Castle of Fratta" remains still a remarkable accomplishment, interesting in the reading, charming in its insights. It is the story of an impatient, talented young man who, posing as an octogenarian, attempted to master time as well as his times. There is considerable evidence in Lovett Edwards' critical yet sympathetic translation that Nievo succeeded notably well in both respects.

By Grace Metalious, 372 pp. New York. Julian Messner, Inc., \$3.95.

Peyton Place, Grace Metalious' first novel, has had a notable success, a fact most evident on the national bestseller lists. In a matter of three weeks, the young, married author's first major literary effort has jumped from fourteenth to fifth and now into ranking among the top three most popular fiction titles in this country. The uninformed may wonder why? How? The informed will realize that the wire press news stories about her town's irate reaction to the sensational novel, about her husband's loss of his teaching job in that small New England town—none of these things are exposed in "Peyton Place" itself. The surprise is that the author's refusal to be "ridden out of town" have not harmed the book's sale in any way.

If we discard the rather heavy suggestion that the town, Peyton Place, is the protagonist in this novel, we find that what we have is the story of a young girl with writing ambitions (probably not unlike Mrs. Metalious) who grows up in that small town (page 367), leaves it for the big city, returns, and comes to understand Peyton Place and love it—for all of its sordid aspects.

THE YOUNG GIRL, Allison Mackenzie, who was born out of wedlock, is the unifying element that gathers and refracts the incidents of two decades in Peyton Place. However, she shares the pages of the novel with a large cast of rather closely defined people who are the backbone of the town. The author's narrative technique is one that takes the reader from character to another with constantly shifting perspectives and stresses. For the most part, these people she sketches are quite engaging; that, consequently, the novel is quite thoroughly interesting reading.

Small towns, author Metalious seems to tell us, are full of malicious gossip, like so many villages patrolling the area for something foul to settle onto and bungle over. A good part of the drama of the novel comes from the setting down into Peyton Place of Allison's mother who has a deathly fear of gossip and of its effect should the truth about her daughter's illegitimacy slip out.

ON THE MATTER of sensational description to be found in the novel there will doubtless be much written and said. There appear to be few words the author does not have at her command. Likewise, there are many love-making scenes with which she seems to stay longer than most novelists. To this reviewer, the "sex" description in the book seemed to be on two levels: one, a natural level, the other, criminal. Credit must be given here

the same feeling of conclusive inconclusiveness; young Allison, through her sensitivity and innate human sensibility has come to understand her own small town and, therefore, understands more about herself. Now she is ready for bigger and better things—the thing is, come. Perhaps they will come in the second Metalious novel.

Peyton Place, this reviewer feels is the author's attempt to paint with bright colors, the picture of a small society. Her canvas is a vivid one, and therein lies the positive value of her first book.

It would seem unfair to give heed to those who term this book an expose. This does not at all do justice to the author. For the fact that small town people, like big town people, have their vices and their dark secrets, too, is something we've all known for some time now.

Detective Books

THE BRASS HALO, by Jack Webb, Knickerbocker, 246 pp., \$2.95.

Jack Webb's detective team composed of Father Shanley and Sammy Golden goes into action again in this story of the murder of a private eye named Martin Payne and the subsequent disappearance of a blues singer named Domino. The blues background is nicely done, giving the book its major charm. The interest inspired by Webb's improbable pair (a Roman Catholic priest and a homicide squad detective) and the general handling of the story are less worthy of comment.

BACK TO THE WALL, by Robert F. Hansen, Morrow, 255 pp., \$2.95.

The Vermont countryside is the setting for Robert F. Hansen's new mystery novel. A local figure named Miss Mindwell is murdered in this story of the murder of a private eye named Martin Payne and the subsequent disappearance of a blues singer named Domino. The blues background is nicely done, giving the book its major charm. The interest inspired by Webb's improbable pair (a Roman Catholic priest and a homicide squad detective) and the general handling of the story are less worthy of comment.

Smile-A-Minute

Pitsoch — "You look sore, old egg. What's wrong?" Plumb — "I am sore. You know I was in the mile run. Well, when I got to the finish line some bum leaped out of the stand and yelled: 'Step on it, buddy, they want that way!'"

"Why do you call your house a bungalow?" "Well, if it isn't a bungalow, what is it?"

Pullman Porter—Begg your pardon, sir, but the dollar you gave me last night had a hole in it. Traveler — So did the blanket you gave me last night.

Judge — I'm tired of seeing you here so often. Hobo — All right, I'll use my influence to have you transferred somewhere else.

Suburban Sentiment

CONTRVERSIAL SUBJECTS

I venture opinions,
My wife's how it ends—
Here make decisions,
I make amends.

—Lynn Carter

LEGAL NOTICES

ELECTION NOTICE
PRIMARY ELECTION
CITY OF TROY

To the qualified electors of the City of Troy, County of Oakland, State of Michigan: Notice is hereby given that a Primary Election will be held in the City of Troy, Michigan on Monday, February 17, 1958, at 2:00 p.m. in the afternoon, Eastern Standard Time for the purpose of nominating candidates for the following offices:

1. City Commissioners, 3 year term each.
J. LAWSON LOCKHART,
City Clerk (48, 49)

Miller, Canfield, Paddock & Stone, Attys.,
Produce Bldg., Detroit 26, 76783

STATE OF MICHIGAN: The Probate Court for the County of Oakland.

In the Matter of the Estate of ROBERT FORREST TILLOTSON, Deceased.
At a session of said court, held at the Probate Court in the City of Pontiac, in said County, on the 27th day of January, A.D. 1958.

Present: Honorable Arthur E. Moore, Judge of Probate.

Order appointing time for hearing claims.

Notice is hereby given and it is hereby ordered that the time and place for hearing on claims against the above estate shall be the 11th day of April, 1958, at nine o'clock in the forenoon at the Probate Court in the County of Pontiac, Michigan.

All creditors or claimants against the above estate are further notified and ordered to prove their claims at said hearing and prior to said hearing to file written claim therewith, with this Court and with the fiduciary of this estate, under oath, containing sufficient detail reasonably to inform the fiduciary of the nature and amount of the claim.

ARTHUR E. MOORE,
Judge of Probate
(48) (49) (50)

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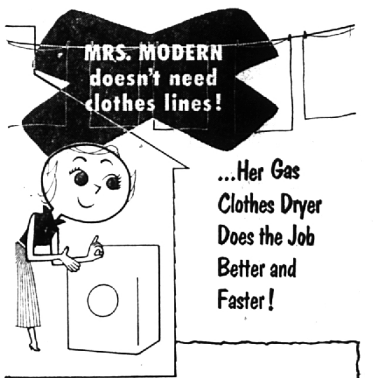
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SECURITY

begins with money in the bank

Security is a huge word in our modern vocabulary. We ask it from our government. We try to gift-wrap it for our families. Our children seek it in their first jobs right out of school. We pursue it all of our working lives. But this fact is certain:

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