

Stories Lean, Astringent In Hazzard's 'Cliffs of Fall'

CLIFFS OF FALL and other stories by Shirley Hazzard Knopf, New York, N. Y., 1947; 192 pp.; \$2.95.

Reviewed by
MARIAN TRAINOR

A character in one of the short stories in this collection is described as "Lean and astringent." A more apt description for the 10 stories contained in the book would be difficult to find. They are brittle vignettes which concern themselves with domestic crisis in a highbrow manner. It is unfortunate that their desiccated quality leaves the reader unimpressed. He rather feels that he has had a close view of Rome, England,

Switzerland and New York but he wishes the company had been more engaging. The stories reveal craftsmanship and delicacy but are devoid of feeling.

ONE OF THE stories, "A Place in the Country," concerns itself with an affair between a young girl and her cousin's husband. The affair is narrated on unspoken assumptions and dies on the same plane. To suffer in silence may be noble but not very entertaining.

Miss Hazzard's understanding of the relations between men and women is based on the assumption of control and politeness. Her characters may think bitter thoughts ("Love can only win by cheating, and the skill is to cheat first"), but they are never given voice.

One of the better stories in the collection is "Vittorio," a story warmed by the sun of Italy and the gentle nature of Vittorio.

THE RESIGNATION which pervades the tale is aptly expressed in "the possibility of control and politeness." Her worldly success had never by then been entertained, they conjectured only as to the form which failure would take.

In "One's Own House," we see a young husband unable to raise himself out of his despair even long enough to say the reassuring words that will save his marriage. His situation merits sympathy but he, as a person, as his wife expresses it, "overdraws on our endurance".

"Villa Adriana" contains flashes of sensitivity which sums up the conflict.

"Once in Rome, they had seen an ancient inscription on a wall, and he had begun to translate it aloud

when she, brushing aside the syntax, rendered the sense of it in half dozen words, having temporarily deprived him of his reason for living."

"THE PICNIC" is a companion piece to "A Place in the Country." In it, the same two characters meet 10 years later and sit silently reassuring each other.

The hero comes to the conclusion that "Love is a displacement, not a habit, though that too—but of intelligence."

Basically, all the stories are woven around the theme of a sense of grievance. It is a difficult theme to project because of its nature

Feted in Alaska

Airman First Class Lance E. Haywood, son of Mr. and Mrs. Harold H. Haywood of 6025 Indianwood Trail, Birmingham, was a guest at the recent sixth annual Greater Anchorage Chamber of Commerce Fall Day Dinner in the nearby Alaska city. Airman Haywood is an Air Force dental laboratory specialist on duty with a unit of the Alaskan Air Command which helps guard the northern approaches to North America with radar warning systems and supersonic jets on constant alert.

Take longer and live longer. Don't wait until the last moment to start that auto trip. Always start in time to allow for moderate speeds and relaxed, unburied driving.

since people who wear the badge of injured innocence are themselves so unlikely to evoke sympathy. It must be strongly attacked. Miss Hazzard lacks the spirit.

B'ham Delegates Attend MEA Parley

Mrs. Mary Ann Gordon, 1685 Shipman, all from Birmingham, Bates, Harold Jones, 2851 Buck, have been named delegates to the Birmingham, and Grant Barber, 1251 43rd annual representative assembly of the Michigan Education Association. This year's assembly will be held at Lansing's Civic Center and close to 600 educators will be attending the policy-making session.

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Andrew J. Pappas, engineer and second class USN, son of Mr. and Mrs. John A. Pappas of 4050 Reduth Court, Birmingham, will depart Charleston, S.C. aboard the ocean minesweeper U.S.S. Nimble for a three-month training cruise in the Caribbean. Nimble will participate in sea assault exercises and patrol missions.

Her crewmembers will have an opportunity to visit Guantanamo Bay, Cuba; San Juan, Puerto Rico; and St. Croix and St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands before returning to Charleston in early July.

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