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Book Reviews

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The Fault of Angels—Paul Horgan—Harper and Bros.—1933.

Awarded the Harper prize as the best novel submitted in the 1933 contest, *The Fault of Angels* is the first published novel of Paul Horgan, who is already widely known as a poet and short story writer. The announcement of the prize brings deserved recognition to a young writer of the Southwest, and it is a novel fully deserving the tribute its publishers pay in awarding it a prize that has become the most sought-after award in America, for it is a novel that the discriminating reader and the general reader alike will turn to for rich pleasure.

The setting of *The Fault of Angels* is one of the eastern American cities. Having chosen the Southwest for his home in recent years, Mr. Horgan treats the "east" with a calm detachment.

The Fault of Angels is rich in resources that save it from the general classification of "satire," although it is ironical in its treatment of American arts and their devotees. It is first of all a study of characters devoted to music and to the theatre who, with one or two exceptions submit to the patronage of their great benefactor, Mr. Ganson. And it is as well the study of an expatriated Russian aristocrat, Nina Arenkoff, who seeks to infuse some of her magnificent spirit into the spritual dullness of "cultured" life.

Having been identified with the theatre in many capacities, Mr. Horgan writes of it richly, but *The Fault of Angels* is much more than a novel about theatres. To try to outline the plot of the book is almost impossible in a short review, for there are characters of great variety and a great diversity of incidents. Principally it is the story of Nina Arenkoff, who is beautiful, wistful, and lovable, a character unique in American fiction. The hero of the story is John, a young man identified with Mr. Ganson's

theatre, who falls in love with Nina, but the story of their love is subordinated to Nina's attempt to win Mr. Ganson away from the utilitarian ideals which have guided him to business success.

Incidents in the novel are portrayed with a poet's or painter's care, and the style in which the book is written is one of its chief delights. There is, in *The Fault of Angels*, a zest for narrative which is rare in modern times: a full appreciation of the dramatic values of setting, an enthusiasm for the unusual detail, and a harmony of resources that are so lacking ordinarily in "realistic" fiction. The result is a far more convincing realism than can be portrayed by the journalistic story tellers who follow the thin threads of "psychology" and neglect the artistic fact that writing can be done.

The Fault of Angels assumes its place rightfully at the head of novels published this fall, not only on the Harper list but in all fiction. Its appearance places Mr. Horgan in the front rank of modern American writers.

ALFRED CARTER.

Intimate Memories—Mabel Dodge Luhan—Harcourt, Brace and Company—\$3.00.

In *Lorenzo in Taos*, published in 1932, Mabel Dodge Luhan intimated delicately that more really worth while revelations of her life would follow in her *Intimate Memories*. But the first volume of *Intimate Memories* deals only with incidents which impressed her up until she was eighteen. The average American reader of reminiscences is interested in those things which happen to a woman after she has passed this important birthday.

In *Intimate Memories* Mrs. Luhan stresses her struggle during childhood and girlhood to become an individual. She says, "So the houses I have lived in have shown the natural growth of a personality struggling to become individual, growing through the degrees of crudity to a greater sophistication and on to simplicity."

This struggle takes place before a Victorian background made up of Buffalo, Lenox, Newport, and New York. The various members of the family and the friends are carefully presented from the impressions of the child, who studies each with interest. Her first recollections are of her own home and her parents. Even there she felt the vague discontent that gradually shaped itself into a determination to seek the heights and depths of experience. She records from the shifting scenes of playmates, schools, and travel, incidents that concern the quaint fashions of the time—bustles, stiffly starched window curtains, sleigh rides, dancing classes, white picket fences—and from these incidents gradually evolves a picture of the town and country life of America during the closing era of the nineteenth century.

At times the author's attempt to enliven her reminiscences by disclosing minute experiences becomes a bit strained; her struggles to become an individual lapse into a struggle to become shocking. After all, though, there are two more books to come.

ELSIE RUTH DYKES CHANT.

Rio Grande—Harvey Fergusson—Alfred A. Knopf—1933—\$3.00

When a fictionist turns historian, the angels, familiars of the scholar and pedant, weep. So the devotees of research may find many things at which to cavil in this book, but for the general reader, its broad scope, its rapid narration, its sure sense of dramatic values, make it the most fascinating work that has yet been written about the Southwest. For Mr. Fergusson's novels I have a vastly higher regard than has been accorded him by the reading public, large though it is. But it may be, that when the valley of this great river becomes as standardized and as dull and uninteresting as Kansas or Minnesota, future generations will turn to this book rather than to his novels, except "Wolf Song," to recapture the glamor, the charm, the mystery, that this region has evoked in minds as dissimilar as those of Coronado and Kit Carson. Indeed, there are

still imaginations which find in this land satisfaction for that general longing which Tom, Tom, the Piper's Son, expressed in his single tune of "Over the Hills and Far Away."

"Rio Grande" is the story of the land and of the people who for centuries have clung with tenacity to its infertile valleys, walled in by its harsh and cruel mountains. Probably no other writer than this native son could have so effectively portrayed the allure of desert and canyon, mesa and mountain. To those who have come under the bondage of its spell, the fascination is comparable only to that of "old debbile sea" for the sailor.

The leading facts in New Mexico history have been told so often as to be hackneyed; its outstanding personages have become shop-worn. But it is here the writer has shown his genius for selection. It is not Fray Marcos who engages his attention, but the royal progress of the slave, Esteban. The early explorations are given a fresh interest by retelling the story of the almost incredible entrada of De Sosa with women and children in his train, fumblingly finding his way up the Pecos and through the Pueblos, accepting the homage of the bewildered natives for God and the King, and at length being joyfully arrested at Isleta by the Viceroy's soldiers for making an unauthorized expedition. On the comic opera stage this terrible journey would be condemned as beyond probability. Yet the dry-as-dust reports of its movements still slumber in the archives. Where in all fiction can anything be found so fascinating as the true history of the Rio Grande Valley?

Again, in the great revolt of 1680, it is not Otermin's heroic but conventional defense, on which emphasis is placed, but on the machinations of Pope, one of the less than half dozen Indians who since the Discovery showed a genius for political organization. He deserves a place with Pontiac. Great as was his success, as great was his fall. He tried to build a despotism on the democratic-socialistic system of the Pueblos. As in all despotisms, from a Caesar

Augustus and a Haroun-al-Raschid, it carried within itself the seeds of its own destruction. Universal history seems to have been reenacted in little in this isolated advanced post of civilization.

Space does not permit comment on the stories of the mountain men, of Gregg, the prairie man; of that most engaging rebel and heretic, Padre Martinez; nor on the two most brilliant chapters devoted to the rico and to the forgotten man, to a society that has left only vestiges since the Gringo came.

It is difficult not to be too laudatory of this grand book. For I believe that the collector of 2033 will seek it then as I hunt now for tomes of 1833, to give them the essence, the feel, the very aroma of a magic land, a glamorous past, and an heroic day.

HOWARD ROOSA.

Beyond the Rainbow—Clyde Kluckhohn—The Christopher Publishing House, 1933—\$3.00.

To the writing of a book of travel and exploration a number of motives contribute, and to the reading of such a book. The purely personal thrills of adventure, the mystery of treasure trove—in this case archaeological finds in pictographs, cliff dwellings, artifacts—are shared by the author with his listener, and in different but mutually satisfactory ways, each has his pleasure. But as such a book is written, or perhaps before, and as such a book is read, certain headings or themes emerge from the personal narrative which make the book significant or insignificant. Clyde Kluckhohn's second book about the Navajo country has a number of such themes, themes which will make the purchaser value the book as a permanent addition to his Americana.

The place of the Frontier in American life and in American thought is treated with fresh imagination and viewpoint.

If we Americans are restless, unanchored in our ideas as in our habitations, if also we may boast a certain freedom, a flexibility in our thinking and a vigor and independence in action, it is in some degree traceable to the constant flux of American life, always away from old and permanent things.

And of the Indian culture with which the book is so constantly concerned, Mr. Kluckhohn writes, first of the Pueblan:

Probably no people, save the Greek, has had so large a proportion of individuals with creative ability. In San Ildefonso, for instance, with its population of around a hundred, there are twenty painters and potters whom we may well call artists. In Pueblo life one finds, I think, that long lost harmony. Every act, every ceremony, from the intense drama of the Snake Dance, to the sheer poetry of the Flute Dance, is only an episode in a life which has one order, one rhythm.

Then characterizing the Navajo in the phrase "the unforward looking gambler, superstitious yet generous, sensitive, an artist ever seeking the trail of beauty," Mr. Kluckhohn develops his final phrase:

In every Navajo song and ceremony hosjoi, beauty, comes in almost every line. Every chant is begun with an invocation to beauty, and the great Night Chant closes with: "In beauty it is finished. In beauty it is finished."

The chapters "Hopi and Navajo" and "The First Americans," the former given to the lines of cleavage between these culturally and in time to be politically important Indian groups, and the latter given to the anthropology of the Indians of the two Americas, rank with the best essays the reviewer knows on these topics. Anyone seriously

interested in the anthropology of this area and of the larger whole of which it is a part will be appreciative of their worth and will want to possess them.

T. M. PEARCE.

Indian Tribes of the Southwest—Mrs. White Mountain Smith—Stanford University Press—\$1.50.

The uninitiated traveller through New Mexico and Arizona, if he be at all curious concerning the numerous pueblos and Indian reservations, will welcome the latest addition to the ever widening Southwest bookshelf—“*Indian Tribes of the Southwest*” by Mrs. White Mountain Smith. Mrs. Smith is no stranger to this section since she has already successfully authored two books dealing with the Southwest, “*I Married a Ranger*” and “*Hopi Girl*.”

The germ of *Indian Tribes of the Southwest* had its being in a summer's trip taken by the writer as guide to a party of college girls who visited the many Indian centers in the two states from the Taos pueblo in Northern New Mexico to the Papago Indians in Southwest Arizona. The book relates in chatty, tea table fashion the manner of life, the customs, appearance, etc., of the various Indian tribes. It gives their location, the nearest hotel accommodations, and much helpful information to those who are making their initial trip to the homes of the Indians. The end papers furnish a very adequate road map of the two states. Those versed in ethnological lore may deem certain parts of the book a bit sketchy. But many who are desirous of obtaining an introductory handbook and guide to the Indians hereabouts will find it helpful and informative.

JAMES P. THRELKELD.