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Book Reviews

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Desert Wife—Hilda Faunce—Little Brown and Co., Boston, 1934—
\$3.00.

Under the changing shadows and on the shifting sands of the Navajo Reservation, Hilda Faunce, after a thirteen hundred mile trip from Oregon in a covered wagon, put up a loom and there wove her own story beautifully, sympathetically and sincerely. The warp and woof are the Navajo legends, customs, songs, and superstition she learned during the four years she and her desert-loving husband struggled to make a living at Covered Wagon Trading Post.

With bright red threads she weaves countless delightful pictures. Small ones, such as the happiness of seeing To-Clazium dressed in a "gorgeous red velvet vest with five pockets, buttonholes for six silver buttons and a real buckle at the back." She painstakingly made it for him during odd moments and between cutting slices of plug tobacco, tearing calico, scooping sugar, and opening countless cans of tomatoes. Large pictures there are, such as the Christmas Eve party, which she and "Ken" gave for their two hundred neighbors and friends. Around the "Kismas" fires we see them all; eating, laughing, dancing, but especially do we see the Utcitys, White Hat, Mrs. White Hat, Little Bedoni and his three wives, the old Buzzard, and the Little Cranks.

Pictures of sorrow are woven with grey and black threads. Terrible was "the quick death" when, like a "grass fire" the influenza swept through the reservation. Saddest of all was the death of Hosteen Blue Goat's daughter from "the sickness with the sores" told in his lament to "The Desert Wife." "Oh my friend, her children will be hungry, her loom will be empty; she loved you; she called you her child."

Clearly and distinctly we see the design in Hilda Faunce's own pattern, traced courageously and resourcefully. An intricate one, dominated by a husband "old

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enough to be her father," a man given to "long silences" and a "blind fear of illness." But through every part of the design there pervades his devotion, her love and charm.

JULIA KELEHER.

*New York University,
New York City.*

Sunshine Preferred—Anne Ellis—Houghton Mifflin Co., 1934—\$2.00.

With a knowledge of her subject derived largely from observations while confined to her bed in an Albuquerque Sanitarium, Anne Ellis in *Sunshine Preferred*, combines human sympathy and understanding. In a personal narrative she tells what she felt, thought, and saw so vividly as to make the reader feel and see with her.

Brief one-page sketches of fellow patients, nurses, and doctors, poignant stories of hope deferred, of love, of gallant courage in the up-hill battle for health, are intermingled with her own philosophy of life. While not a Pollyanna, she finds but little of cynicism or bitterness in her own sufferings or the sufferings of those around her.

Interspersed throughout the book are photographic descriptions of New Mexico—Santa Fe, Albuquerque—seen partly through the eyes of others, and told somewhat from the tourist angle. The pages as they turn, however, disclose well drawn word pictures made in her wanderings over the Southwest in search of health—the Chili Line to Santa Fe, the Plaza in Santa Fe, the Fiesta, the Harvey House and Station in Albuquerque, Indians, Mexicans, Indian Pottery making, Indian Dances, the colorful things that interest everyone and make for charm in the Southwest.

The format of the book pleasingly suggests her title. She does not, however, stress the sunshine or the absorbing beauty of mesa and mountain.

There is but little plot. The author achieves her aim—to make her writing simple. It has charm and a quaint humor, a story sincerely and honestly told.

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In *Sunshine Preferred* many readers of THE NEW MEXICO QUARTERLY, locally and throughout the state, will find themselves on familiar ground. To all struggling writers it should prove an inspiration and a spur, for Anne Ellis, an invalid, not only finds pleasure and solace in her writing, but succeeds in finding a market and a public for it as well.

MINNIE MALONEY.

Albuquerque.

Beyond the Mexique Bay—Aldous Huxley—Harper and Brothers, New York, 1934—\$2.75.

The author of *Chrome Yellow*, *Point Counter Point*, *Antic Hay*, and *Jesting Pilate*, needs no introduction, nor will a recommendation to read his latest travel book be necessary to one acquainted with his works. Somewhat in the fashion of his *Jesting Pilate*, in which he made notes of his journey to India and the Malay countries, is his present account of a trip into old Mexico.

An Old World, New World, a Mexican-American flavor pervades the work. And while the author is jotting down his impression of his trip through Guatemala and up the Pacific Coast of Mexico into the very heart of this colorful country, he is reminded of many things far and near. Some strange situation will call to mind something that happened far away. He in no way limits himself to his present surroundings. Yet, in true tourist style he carried along a camera, thus being able to illustrate his book.

Mr. Huxley's thought processes are always interesting, and in this present work too, it is what he thinks rather than what he sees that is of chief interest. His observations are apt, and entertaining. It is a discursive method—a delightful one. He had apparently determined in advance to look at the glamour of Old Mexico with a cold eye. Thus, for some he may shatter certain preconceived ideas of the picturesqueness of this land of wonder south of the Rio Grande.

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Opinions are expressed freely throughout the book. The author believes that "You cannot impart North American virtues and North American amenities into Mexico without causing the Mexicans to lose their Mexican virtues and to abandon what is best in their own way of life." While the author does not hold Mexican civilization as superior to that of other countries, he does "take his stand" that the primitive people are probably happier than the too-industrialized Americans.

ALBERT A. ROGERS.

University, Virginia.

Not I, But the Wind—Frieda Lawrence—The Viking Press, New York, 1934—\$2.75.

Sad is the fate of the genius who is not recognized until long after his death, but sadder still is the fate of the genius, recognized as such, while still living. Of the three women who definitely recognized Lawrence's genius and thereby hastened his demise, his wife, Frieda Lawrence, occupies a position somewhat analogous to Belgium, the buffer state of the Great Powers. Similar to Belgium, Frieda didn't buffer without being drawn into the thick of the fight, which is the principal theme of the books by Mabel Lujan¹ and the Honorable Dorothy Brett.²

"I would have liked to stay in Australia . . . but Lawrence wanted to go to America," says Frieda in her explanation of their American immigration. "Mabel Dodge had written us that Lawrence must come to Taos in New Mexico, that he must know the Pueblo Indians, that the Indians say that the heart of the world beats there in New Mexico." Mabel gives a different reason:

"Through the months while Lawrence and Frieda hesitated about coming to Taos, I willed him to come. Before I went to sleep at night, I drew myself all in to the core of my being where there is a live, plangent force lying passive, waiting for direction. Becoming entirely that, moving with

1. *Lorenzo in Taos.*

2. *Lawrence and Brett.*

it, speaking with it, I leaped through space, joining myself to the central core of Lawrence, where he was in India, in Australia. Not really speaking to him, but *being* my wish, I became that action that brought him across the sea."

"'Come, Lawrence! Come to Taos!' became, in me, Lawrence in Taos. This is not a prayer, but command. Only those who have exercised it know its danger."

It never seemed to occur to Mabel that a power capable of willing Lawrence from Italy to Taos, albeit by way of India and Australia, might be a bit too powerful to be confined in the intimate associations of tiny Taos.

There is no need to quote from Mabel's book, her resentment of Frieda for standing between her and Lawrence, nor to try to describe Mabel. Her book is a fluoroscopic self photograph, where every detail is revealed; even the "live, plangent force" in her core, is brutally outlined by the x-ray.

Frieda, however Mabel may rail at her as stupid, solid, and unspiritual, has much more horse sense. First, because she lets Lawrence write her book for her, with his letters to her, to her mother, her sister and others, with just enough words of her own to explain and connect them; and secondly, because she doesn't dwell at length on her fights with Mabel. She allows herself just one swift, devastating blow, then retires to the fortified stronghold of her now respectable married position. Her one thrust, however, loses none of its force, through being out of the mouth of the beloved Lawrence.

In a letter to Frieda's mother, translated from the German, Lawrence describes Mabel: "You have asked about Mabel Dodge: American, rich, only child, from Buffalo on Lake Erie, bankers, forty-two years old, has had three husbands—one Evans (dead), one Dodge (divorced), and one Maurice Sterne (a Jew, Russian, painter, young, also divorced). Now she has an Indian, Tony, a stout chap. She has lived much in Europe—Paris, Nice, Florence—is a

little famous in New York and little loved, very intelligent as a woman, another 'culture-carrier,' likes to play the patroness, hates the white world and loves the Indian out of hate, is very 'generous,' wants to be 'good' and is very wicked, has a terrible will-to-power, you know—she wants to be a witch, and at the same time a Mary of Bethany at Jesus's feet—a big white crow, a cooing raven of ill-omen, a little buffalo."

"The people in America all want power, but a small, personal base power: bullying. They are all bullies."

It is remarkable that Lawrence should know so much about America, having landed in San Francisco and after two days there, come direct to Taos. No doubt Lawrence confuses and identifies Mabel with America.

Frieda disposes equally briefly with Dorothy Brett, saying merely that she was becoming too much a part of their lives and would have to go. Although Lawrence raved, Brett went; showing clearly who stood first in Lawrence's affection. Notwithstanding her dismissal, Brett hovered in the background, dodging their footsteps like a misbehaved puppy, aware of its disfavor but searching eagerly for some signs of forgiveness, eager to come forward, wagging its tail, at the first friendly glance.

So much for America, Mabel and Brett. The greater part of Frieda's book is devoted to other places and other personalities, starting with her elopement with Lawrence, and giving, mostly through his letters, a description of their restless wanderings, and ending with his death.

This death was undoubtedly hastened by these same wanderings, and it is incomprehensible how as clever and practical a woman as Frieda could have been so abysmally ignorant of his tubercular condition for so long, and have allowed him so much physical and mental activity after having been told that he was practically dying. That Frieda loved him, there can be no question; only a heart, pure and simple in its adoration, could have written her description of his death and burial:

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"Then we buried him, very simply, like a bird we put him away, a few of us who loved him. We put flowers into his grave and all I said was: 'Good-bye Lorenzo,' as his friends and I put lots and lots of mimosa on his coffin: Then he was covered over with earth while the sun came out on to his small grave in the little cemetery of Venice which looks over the Mediterranean that he cared for so much."

GUSTAVE M. WEIL.

Albuquerque.

Ruth Visits Margot—Roy A. Keech—Albert Whitman and Co., Chicago, 1934—\$2.00.

This is a well-written, useful and interesting book for children between the ages of ten and thirteen. Mr. Keech, who has attended the University of New Mexico for the past four years, was in France during the World War, and he has drawn the material for descriptions and legends from this period of his life. The medium for presenting the material is through Margot, a little French girl, and her friend, an American soldier. The two walk about the country-side and observe the life of the people as well as points of historical interest. Later, Ruth, the daughter of the American soldier, visits Margot, and the three travel to Monte Carlo, Nice, Paris, and Versailles.

Mr. Keech is observing. Not only does he record historical facts and legends, but he also sees the French manner of living and understands their philosophy of life. There are touches of humor that enliven various episodes.

The book is beautifully printed and bound, and the illustrations by Helene Carter are unusually well done as well as being authentic. Of particular interest is the map in the front showing the routes of the journeys.

ELSIE RUTH DYKES CHANT.

Albuquerque.

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A Cowman's Wife—Mary Kidder Rak—Houghton Mifflin Company, 1934—\$2.75.

Humor was a necessary ingredient in frontier society to keep up the individual's morale. If a man or woman can laugh in a nerve-wracking situation, he or she will probably make the best of it. Mary Kidder Rak brought to ranch life in Rucker Canyon, Arizona, creative energy and a saving sense of humor. Through them she not only seized upon the routine of her household with capabilities manifold enough to renovate a cabin when the old Fort Rucker ranch house burned, but she also worked short cuts with the outdoor chores of a ranch wife and dramatized her whole life, the personalities of her chickens, cows, and steers, until she was able to accomplish a laborious and trying task with poise and (I'm sure of it!) charm.

Anyone who loves the West will share the joys and sorrows of Mary Rak and her husband when they heat water for the radiator of their car on cold mornings, dig the vehicle out of sandy trails to town, wait for arroyos to subside after rain or snow-thaws, endure the patronizing "ohs" and "ahs" of tourists, who express surprise to find the *Literary Digest* "out here in these woods." That the game is worth the candle, *A Cowman's Wife* fully persuades us. Played against the rugged canyons and wide mesas of this cattle country, the winning combinations are known only to the skilled player. Such a proficient rancher is Mrs. Rak, and she plays just as competent a hand at writing. No amateur at finding words for experience coins such effective phrases as "busy bread-and-onion lives," "playing second fiddle to a cow," warm days that are "weather breeders," little Foxy dog from the "melting pot of Dogdom." It's an unusual woman who will whitewash with buttermilk and wood ashes and who, having more important things to worry about than clothes, finds she is fortunate when parcel post garments from relatives produce "a blouse from the Atlantic," that "looks well with a skirt from

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the Pacific," and who knows, therefore, "how the old woman felt when she was asked, on Thanksgiving Day, what she had for which to be grateful.

"I have two teeth, and thank God, they hit!" she replied."

T. M. PEARCE.

Albuquerque..