

land: a place of horrors and torments; a place where sadistic nuns delight in physical punishment and public humiliation of the unfortunate inmates. Far worse, the orphanage is presented to us as a place where evil predominates; and this evil is contrasted with the fresh innocence of the boys entrusted to the nuns' care and protection.

Mr. Moynahan is, one supposes, of Irish (possibly Catholic) background. If this is so, he betrays a surprising ignorance of the inner workings of Catholic Institutions. If this is not so, one would be interested in the sources from which he secured his information. His portraits of priests and nuns reveal an almost virulent anti-Catholic animus. One prefers the open and blatant indecencies of Mr. Brendan Behan, who does at least possess the virtue of being honest with himself and who adds to that the ability to be genuinely humorous on occasion.

Sisters and Brothers is beautifully written; Moynahan is a stylist of the first rank. One wishes, however, that his actual intentions in writing this novel were clearer. It is possible, of course, to be hypersensitive about these things; but one reader found the novel singularly offensive, and he wishes to register his protest here and now. It is possible to accept Mr. Moynahan's approach from a James Joyce; but Mr. Moynahan has not yet acquired Joyce's stature, and Joyce did know the Church and the beliefs he attacked. Moynahan gives little evidence of knowing very much about the institutions he attacks. Or does Mr. Moynahan consider the *Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk* a reliable primary source? If he does, he should be exposed to a repeat course on research and bibliography. Possibly one of his colleagues would be willing to tutor him privately.

Stephen P. Ryan,
University of Scranton

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Kolar, Jean *Return Fare*
Macmillan. Oct. 17, 1960. 239p. \$3.95. (IIa)

There is nothing very original about Jean Kolar's novel, *Return Fare*. It tells once more of the white European trader exiled in the black man's country with only liquor, sex and memories to keep him going.

Karel, a Slavic ex-luminary of the French Resistance movement, is a cocoa dealer in Africa, with an unhappy wife, Jacqueline, and a consuming hatred for his present situation. He yearns for Europe but financial progress is not enough for the transportation costs to civilization.

While on a trading mission among the natives, he accepts the physical attentions of the chief's daughter while his wife surrenders herself to a lecherous young shop manager named Bellien. Karel hears of his wife's indiscretion but lacks the courage to face her with an accusation probably because of his own affair, but mainly because he is afraid of losing her, though they are no longer in love. But he does muster up enough courage to bluff her seducer into returning ninety tons of cocoa which, sold to another customer, brings a substantial sum of money to Karel, and causes Bellien to get the sack.

in the height of enjoyment of his ill-gotten gain, Karel is deserted by Jacqueline and he becomes involved in a terrible accident, crashing his truck over a rickety

bridge. Scores of African ants sink into his lacerated arm, and between them and an effort to keep from drowning, his hair literally turns white with shock and his whole person collapses.

Due largely to the kind physical and spiritual care of Father Meister, the missionary priest, Karel is rescued from a rifle suicide, his mind returns, and he departs for Europe at last, leaving his sins (including a lengthy sojourn with Salome, his negro mistress) back with the squalor and hopelessness of the French Cameroons.

Jacqueline? She joins him on the next plane in the traditional last moment burst of remorse which, along with the other cliches of the plot, permits a deeper insight into the last statement on the book jacket: "*Return Fare* has been bought by Columbia Pictures."

Monsieur Kolar's novel, to put it mildly, is mediocre stuff. It emerges a sick recast of Greene's *The Heart of the Matter* and Maugham's South Sea narratives, with a touch of *White Cargo* thrown in. Much is made of the character of Karel, but there is much that is hazy about him too. We never are really clear on his former underground activities nor on why he came specifically to Africa. Motivation is not M. Kolar's strong point, as is also evidenced in the sudden return of Jacqueline to her spouse. Further, despite episodes of violent action, the narrative proper never seems to get anywhere. It is slowed up by constant introspective probings on Karel's part which do surprisingly little to reveal his character. It may be that some of the briskness has been lost in the translation by Humphrey Hare, but I have my doubts. *Return Fare* is routine fare and I cannot recommend it to the intelligent reader.

William J. Lynch,
Saint Joseph's College,
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

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Bates, H. E. *The Grapes of Paradise*
Atlantic-Little, Brown. Oct. 19, 1960. 239p. \$3.75. (IIb)

With this latest product of his skilled and prolific pen H. E. Bates returns to the form of the short novel, which he embellished in *The Nature of Love* and *Summer in Salander*. These four tales were previously published in England under the title of *An Aspidistra in Babylon*, a title taken from the first story in the American edition. It is followed by three others of unequal merit, *A Month by the Lake*, *A Prospect of Orchards*, and *The Grapes of Paradise*. The four spread over a large slice of territory, two being set in England, a third in the lake country of Italy and the fourth in Tahiti. But whether it be the coast or countryside of the tight little isle, the romantic lakes of Italy, or a reef isle in the southern seas, the theme remains the same, love and its complications among the children of Adam.

Celestine, naive and awkward at the age of eighteen, is the Aspidistra rooted in an English military post on the English channel, which her mother, who keeps a boarding house there, tartly refers to as Babylon. Celestine becomes infatuated with Archie Blaine, fortyish, captain of the guards, and a gay blade in modern Babylon, whom she encounters when he seeks lodgings for his elderly aunt. Archie has designs not only upon Celestine but upon the jewels of his esteemed aunt as

well. Just when the bedazzled Celestine is about to compound her follies, Ruby, the stellar chambermaid of warm heart and easy virtue, comes to the rescue in her own inimitable fashion.

A Month by the Lake switches the scene to Italy, where Miss Bentley, forty-seven, and Major Wilshaw, fifty-one, both unattached, are enjoying the golden haze of summer's ending at a lake resort. Miss Bentley consciously, and the Major unconsciously, have managed in their reticent British way to conceal their attraction for one another. Since their vacations are ending, time is of the essence. Added complications arise when Miss Bentley in a fit of pique flirts with a handsome young Italian and the Major's eye is caught by a slip of a young governess, Miss Beaumont. However, rather late in the season to be sure, the Major comes to his senses and Miss Bentley's superior character and conformation win the day.

A bit of heavy English mist seems to hang over *A Prospect of Orchards*. Arthur Templeton, baldish and bulging, is a vague, harmless sort of character, bent on developing an apple that will taste like a pear. His wife, Valerie, indulges in music, muffled giggles and contempt for Arthur. At her birthday party the lonely Arthur serves a nineteen-year-old, mindless miss, Anthea Barlow. Off with the old and on with the new. It seems as though Arthur, who means no harm to anyone, may be swapping the frying pan for the fire.

In *The Grapes of Paradise* a Vancouver bank clerk, Rackley by name, on three months' leave, hits the beach at Papeete. After a few weeks' boredom he moves in with a native family, mother, young son, and Theresa. The Tahitian maid is a massive young Amazonian with the strength of ten and the face of an ugly wooden idol. She fastens her affections upon Rackley, who strives somewhat weakly to avoid an entanglement. When Therese discovers Rackley has been dallying with a beautiful half-caste Chinese, the grapes of paradise suddenly run red with blood in a violent and tragic ending.

The four stories are recounted with the lucid ease, economy and lyrical touch, which have earned Mr. Bates distinction. Each story has its appropriate setting, mood and movement, in which the characters talk and act and go their ways like plausible human beings, whatever their age or condition. All in all this quartet of stories solves no social problems, eschews abnormal psychology, and offers a pleasant couple of hours of adult entertainment.

E. G. Jacklin, S.J.,
Georgetown University,
Washington, D. C.

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Clune, Henry W. *Six O'clock Casual*
Macmillan. Oct. 17, 1960. 346p. \$4.50. (III)

It was once said: in a work of art the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Of this novel, the opposite is true. It has all of the ingredients of a Hollywood "B" movie: hackneyed plot, unbelievable situations, contrived characters.

The central figure is just that: a gorgeous widow from the wrong side of the tracks. The novel is about how she maneuvers in and out of scrape after scrape with men bent on sexual exaltation. Along the way she

garners a diamond watch and an expensive wardrobe, five hundred dollars, several jobs which she cannot fill because of ineptitude, and a proposal from the only decent man in the work (which she turns down because it just wouldn't work out).

Along that same way, she is, by sheer fate or chance, responsible for arousing a latent insanity in one man (at least, Blainesville gossip has it so); she is involved in a smash-up involving a college boy, a minister's son, who gets drunk in a jealous rage over her; she is believed responsible (or thinks she is) for the suicide of a "friend's wife"—which she isn't, of course!

The miracle of it all is that she emerges from all of this with her virtue intact—except once, that is. Oh, she has a couple of dresses ripped from her gorgeous frame; she tears a perfectly beautiful skirt when leaving an automobile hurriedly; and her desires do reach the melting point on more than one occasion. Yet she manages to extricate herself, while taking along the loot she has garnered. On the one occasion when there is no reward, she succumbs. Fate? In the end, she is back at her chore—a six o'clock casual.

How can one recommend a book like this to anyone!

Oscar A. Bouise, Litt.D.,
Xavier University,
New Orleans, Louisiana

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Winton, John *We Saw the Sea*
St. Martin's Press. Oct. 17, 1960. 206p. \$3.95. (III)

The author dedicated his first effort to every man who has ever put to sea (even in a canoe) and to every woman who has watched, waited or joined in the fracas, and then has no dedication in his second volume, but tells us it will be welcomed by all readers of the first novel. The author is on active duty in the Royal Navy and to this reader, at least, has stretched the British sense of humor beyond its breaking point.

It was not our fortune, good or bad, to read "We Joined the Navy," the first novel of John Winton, described as delightful and irresistible but the present effort is a severe strain on American-British understanding of satirical humor. Presumably the story is one of the Royal Navy and assignments therein, for the benefit of world diplomacy, especially the Far East, and such commissions take place on a tongue-in-cheek cruiser, to which are assigned all officers, weary of sea duty or officers beginning sea duty.

The story concerns several young officers who leave their newly-found female counterparts in England and go to the China Seas on a mystical ship, which couldn't possibly exist. But, in the true spirit of make-believe, the ship takes the crew up a narrow winding river to a fantastic country where imaginary receptions take place and old friends show special places to visit, which ordinary folks do not see. After the special cementing of diplomatic relations, which results from the unforeseen actions of the natives and the crew, the future assignments made by the Navy Department are anti-climatic. The wedding of one officer with typically British show puts a weak conclusion to a weak story. Various attempts to strengthen the story by using profanity and violating the Second Commandment do not help.

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