

Fiction

Continued from page 16

vaguely trying to have faith in their own civilization. They too are homesick for a country they have never known, where manners, skins, and languages fit peaceably together. Both races in Mr. Jacobson's novel are hunted and shamed in their own country, the one by pity, the other by guilt. The individuals of either race flush up with righteousness only in those intimate moments of urgent need for moral respect.

The racial themes in this novel may, thus, be only marginally acceptable in the sections of the United States where the book would be most keenly appreciated. But Mr. Jacobson hangs his racial themes on a taut story line, and his novel can be read on its own narrative merits outside either the Black Belt or the Abolition Plateaus. Indeed, the novel has the two prerequisites for success in contemporary literature: it tells of exciting events, and it provides the reader with an imagined wish-frustration.

Only two or three of the characters are drawn at full length. The rest appear in quick, grotesque sketches, done with a quality and uninhibited skill that often reminds one of Dauterive or Goya.

PALS THROUGH THE YEARS: Out beyond the California surf line one summer day in the mid-1930s two boys crouched on their surfboards, waiting for the big one. Every ninth wave was steeper than the others, and the ninth ninth was the biggest wave of all. That was the one they waited for.

In a big rough-and-tumble first novel appropriately entitled "**The Ninth Wave**" (Houghton Mifflin, \$3.95) Eugene Burdick follows the careers of these two boys as they watch for the main chance and prepare to ride it in. The novel takes them to Stanford, to war, and onto the crest of politics in expanding postwar California.

Both Mike Freesmith and Hank Moore were older than their years. Hank, the son of an itinerant Jewish salesman, had learned to play poker in hotel rooms, taking money away from men three times his age; and in a Los Angeles high school the cold and calculating Mike had concluded that everyone is scared. Mike soon

LITERARY I.Q. ANSWERS

Column Two should read: 4, 15, 1, 3, 8, 16, 5, 20, 7, 18, 14, 2, 11, 17, 6, 13, 10, 9, 19, 12.

also added his second principle: everyone hates. By playing on fear and hatred Mike figured that he could drive people as a work dog runs a flock of sheep.

It is the character of Mike Freesmith which carries the weight of this novel. He is a formidable character, drawn with knowledge and force. The same Mike who bullies his friends in high school bullies his history instructor at Stanford intellectually until that Medieval specialist is forced to resign. He outwits the Stanford psychologists, traps a girl into paying his way through college, wades through the violence of war, and heads for the arena of politics when the war is over.

The novel has a big scope—school and college, politics and medicine, war and peace—and always a lively sense of the hot, bright, hectic California scene. It also has considerable violence, some of it valid and some gratuitous—as in the suicide from the Golden Gate Bridge and the hoodlums on the beach at Santa Monica.

But there are times when this novel seems bent on providing shock rather than enlightenment. And the character of Mike Freesmith is drawn with too much consistency. The portrait fills out but it does not develop. Mike the shrewd and cynical campaign manager of his more adult years is credible, but the undergraduate Mike, baiting and confounding his betters, is less believable than the hungry Hank Moore who is cramming his stomach with food and his mind with comparative anatomy.

In the final action Hank Moore, fearful and despairing of his closest friend, brings to a decisive end the story of a man on the make. This action, like much else in the novel, breaks over a reader like the wave itself. But, unhappily, it loses its grip as quickly and the reader's conviction does not last.

—WALTER HAVIGHURST.

FRANCISCAN'S MEMORIES: Bruce Marshall's "**Girl in May**" (Houghton Mifflin, \$3) presents his readers with a bit of nostalgia, wherein a Catholic bishop harks back to his student days at St. Andrews. In 1917 Duncan Soutar was a candidate for orders in the Episcopal Church, and the swain of a girl named Bumpie. Against the persuasive dialectic of a golfing wizard who is known as the Frisky Franciscan neither Bumpie nor the Episcopalians have much of a chance of hanging on to Soutar. But the years—which had changed the bishop's heart and faith—have not dimmed the bittersweet memories which are the pretext for Mr. Marshall's sentimental excursion.

—MARTIN LEVIN.

Politics

Continued from page 20

central question of administrative power in our complex society has not been well solved by anyone, and that moralistic denunciations of one party or the other for crimes which both, by their very nature, are virtually compelled to commit do not get us very far.

I do not know how the future historian will regard the Truman Administration. But the appearance of these books is strong evidence for the proposition that he will give it a major role in his account of our times.

MISTER BIG: Not all of the vast power that attaches to being President of the United States (and that accounts, incidentally, for the enthusiasm engendered by his quadrennial selection) was actually written into the job description in the Constitution. Much of it developed later in response to pressures of unusual circumstances or unusual personalities.

In "**The Presidency Today**" (New York University Press, \$3) Edward S. Corwin and Louis W. Koenig have sketched this continuing evolution in the character of the nation's number-one job, and end up with several current recommendations: reorganizing the Cabinet to include legislative leaders; authorizing this new Cabinet (on the constitutional issue posed by Mr. Eisenhower's heart attack) to determine when a President is "disabled"; and, for what strikes this reviewer as highly cogent if not too widely circulated reasons, opposing the clamor for a major overhaul of our Electoral College machinery.

—SAMUEL S. STRATTON.

Campaign Bookshelf

THE 1956 Presidential year is still young, but already there has been a shower of political books—the passionate defenses, the violent denunciations, and those which try to keep everyone happy by hitting along the middle of the road. Here are notes on a dozen that have already been reviewed in these pages.

In a year like this the office of the President commands a new look and in "**The American Presidency**" (cloth-bound, Harcourt, Brace, \$2.95; paper-bound, Signet, 35¢) Clinton Rossiter gives a scholarly explanation of the office and a survey of the duties of the man who holds this rather loosely defined position.

Past elections have provided a num-

ber of authors with grist for their own particular mills. Samuel Lubbell in "The Revolt of the Moderates" (Harper, \$3.75) undertakes to set forth the strong trends in America today as evidenced by the votes cast in the 1952 elections. In his book "Through These Men" (Harper, \$4) John Mason Brown, with the liberal's eye to both parties, has also discussed the election campaign, the political conventions, as well as many participants in the political circus four years ago. A new force in American politics, the public-relations specialist, is analyzed by Stanley Kelley in "Professional Public Relations and Political Power" (Johns Hopkins, \$4.50), which surveys the growing importance of mass media influences upon the voter.

Of the Eisenhower books published this year Richard H. Rovere's "Affairs of State: The Eisenhower Years" (Farrar, Straus & Cudahy, \$4.50) is a provocative review of the Washington scene with perceptive glimpses into the life of the President and the men who surround him. Merlo J. Pusey's "Eisenhower the President" (Macmillan, \$3.75) is also an appraisal of Eisenhower as Chief Executive as well as an informative history of the present Administration, this in highly friendly fashion. *The New York Herald Tribune's* White House correspondent, Robert J. Donovan, has given an inside report of the events on Capitol Hill during this present Administration in "Eisenhower: the Inside Story" (Harper, \$4.50).

The second-in-command, Richard M. Nixon, has his own share of complimentary biographies. Ralph de Toledano in "Nixon" (Holt, \$3) traces the Vice President's career from California boyhood to a high seat on Capitol Hill. "This Is Nixon," by James Keogh (Putnam, \$2.75), offers a generous helping of Nixon's speeches as well as an assessment of the man.

More speeches and articles by Adlai Stevenson have been collected into a book called "What I Think" (Harper, \$3). In a special introduction Mr. Stevenson defends responsible political criticism in a democratic society. Adlai is also the subject of a book of reminiscences by his sister, Elizabeth Stevenson Ives, who has collaborated with Hildegard Dolson on "My Brother Adlai" (Morrow, \$4) described on the dust jacket as "an affectionate portrait of a distinguished American."

And, finally as the political pot approaches the boiling point, there are many things to tickle the ribs in "I'd Rather Be President" by Charles Ellis, Jr. and Frank Weit, (Simon & Schuster, \$2.95), a book about the more harrowing moments of campaigning amusingly illustrated by cartoonist Walt Kelly.—ROLLENE WATERMAN.



The Book-of-the-Month Club selection for July

"Should arouse a thunderstorm which will, it is to be hoped, leave the air a good deal clearer."—*Basil Davenport, Book-of-the-Month Club News*

GOODBYE TO UNCLE TOM

J. C. FURNAS

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