

of the Summit Conference has reminded us that the relationships of statesmen are as much governed by passions and prejudices as are the relationships of private individuals. And the greater the power vested in an individual statesman, the greater is the effect of his personal inclinations for good or bad.

It isn't the responsibility of a novelist to offer political solutions, even in a political novel, and Mr. FitzGibbon's interpretation of the consequences of unilateral nuclear disarmament is as valid politically as anyone else's. But it is his duty to comment on human behavior and illustrate some of the forms it takes. Mr. FitzGibbon rightly shows how in the shadow of a nuclear war for which Britain presents the world's most concentrated target, there is inevitably a greed for life which expresses itself in violence, heightened sexuality, and a desperate dogmatism. The prurience which afflicts his characters, Lord Clonard and Nora, his mistress, chief among them, represents one social reaction to tomorrow's horror. But parallel with the erotic fever and the Teddy-Boy violence there is also a revival of faith, and an affirmation by the young, in particular, of their belief in life.

Mr. FitzGibbon barely touches on this aspect of human conduct which, as he himself has observed in the past, tends to manifest itself as a counterpart to the disasters of war or the threat of war. He is somewhat ungenerous to the liberal impulses of the heart, and when he tries to alkalize a certain illiberal acidity which has crept into his writing, he turns it to sentimentality. At one point, indeed, he introduces a lively miscegenative passage in which a Negro who is looking for a bed for his white girl friend is stabbed in a pub brawl. This theme has been too often treated in literature and film to arouse the emotion which it merits, and as presented by Mr. FitzGibbon it has that contrived quality which produces not tears but embarrassment.

Mr. FitzGibbon, an American by birth, has a sensitive understanding of many of the subtleties of British social relationships. But he ought by now to have rid himself of the myth that "every Englishman loves a lord." There was a time, it is true, when Mr. Millbank could say to Mr. Coningsby, "my father has often told me that in his early days the displeasure of a Peer of England was like a sentence of death to a man." These days are now happily over. In "When the Kissing Had to Stop" there are two occasions (thus proving that it's not an accident) in which a policeman, learning that Patrick is a real-life lord, changes his attitude from bullying to obsequiousness. Mr. FitzGibbon

ought to know that the peerage since the First Labour Government of 1945 is not what it was. Nor for that matter is the London bobby, who now rightly believes that he is every bit as good as his master.

Despite the fact that Mr. FitzGibbon has tackled a forbidding subject, "When the Kissing Had to Stop" is a stage in the revival of the political novel. I hope that Mr. FitzGibbon will at some future date return to the subject and explore a section of it more narrowly and in greater depth. He is an excellent observer of the British political scene. Let him then concentrate on Westminster and leave Novaya Zemlya to the Russians.

THE GRAND CAPER: It is pleasant to report that Terry Southern is a young American writer with an irreverent sense of humor, an uncluttered style, and a vivid, unconventional imagination. The principal figure in his second novel, "The Magic Christian" (Random House, \$3), is Guy Grand, a billionaire with a taste for colossal, outrageous, and frequently expensive practical jokes. Their object is to amuse and entertain their perpetrator; in addition, they are designed either to expose some aspect of human folly or vice, or to reveal the sanctimoniousness which surrounds a number of our popular attitudes and institutions. Guy Grand is notably successful with his Chicago stockyard and his Boston skywriting "capers"; his reign as a movie theatre proprietor, during which a "special" showing of "The Best Years of Our Lives" is offered to an unwary public, marks the high point of his unusual career.

One must add, with a note of reluctance, that "The Magic Christian" has its shortcomings. Several of the capers

fail to amuse: the Madison Square Garden episode because it has no real point, the deodorant episode because it deals with very familiar material. And the book does not rise to a climax; Guy Grand's renting of a cruise ship, the S.S. *Magic Christian*, should lead to great hilarity; instead, it seems to retrace ground already covered, reminding the reader that a number of Guy's previous exploits have been more amusing.

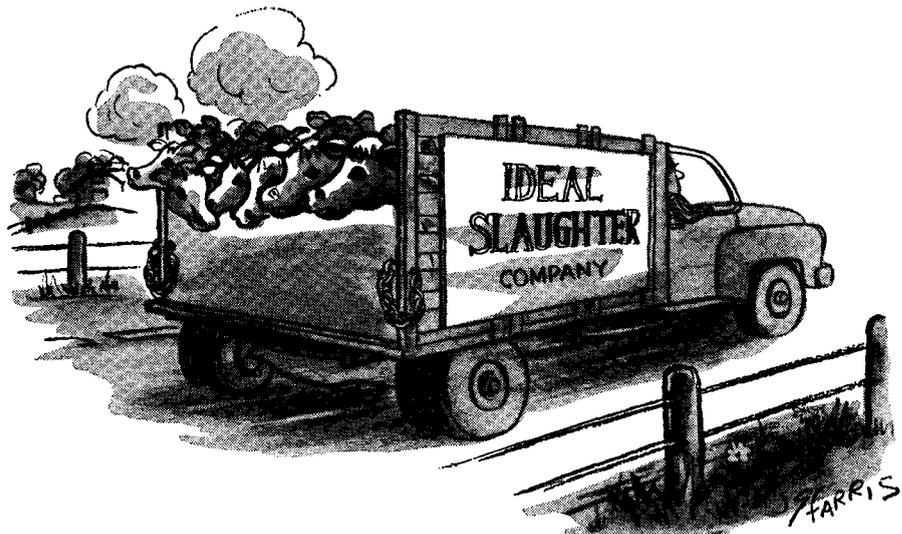
Despite these failings, Mr. Southern is to be congratulated for writing a clever, original story, and his publishers are to be congratulated for publishing, in a time of literary earnestness and solemnity, a book which is neither earnest, nor solemn, nor dull.

—WILLIAM WISE.

BROADWAY ROULETTE: It is a well-known fact that theatre people are a race apart, driven like lemmings to their destruction, then revived only to go through it all again, time after time. Some achieve fame through this masochistic process, some achieve lesser degrees of success and slowly burn themselves out trying for more, and some few go into another line of business. But no matter what they do they are forever theatre people, which means that they are, to varying degrees, insane.

Two recent books concerning the birth pangs of a play, "The Seesaw Log" and "Act One," had in common the atypical fact that the play in question became a hit, so it can fairly be said that Al Morgan's novel "A Small Success" (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, \$3.95) is the first book in a long while to deal realistically with the theatre. It has all the ingredients of the others without the happy ending, and for that

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"Maybe we're being punished for our sins."

Highlights of Those Happy Days

"The Good Years," by **Walter Lord** (Harper, 369 pp. \$4.95), applies to the first fourteen years of the twentieth century the vivid narrative technique the author perfected in his accounts of the sinking of the *Titanic* and *Pearl Harbor*. Foster Rhea Dulles, chairman of Ohio State University's History Department, wrote, among other books, *"The United States Since 1865."*

By Foster Rhea Dulles

WALTER LORD has heretofore been intrigued by rather brief capsules of time as so brilliantly treated in "A Night to Remember" and "Day of Infamy." His new book is concerned with a series of dramatic and colorful episodes that cover a span of fourteen years—"the good years" that elapsed between the cheerful, optimistic opening of the twentieth century and the fateful assassination of an Austrian archduke at Sarajevo. But his approach and techniques have not changed at all. He treats the events that he has selected from these prewar days with the same fascinating detail, drawn largely from eyewitness impressions; the same verve, color, and pace, and the same slightly ironic flavor that es-

pecially characterized his vivid account of the sinking of the *Titanic*.

Here are both the heroism and the absurdities that marked the conduct of the beleaguered foreigners at the siege of Peking, the assassination of President McKinley through the horrified eyes of those who actually saw it, the patient Wright brothers conducting their epochal experiments on the beaches at Kitty Hawk. . . .

The panic of 1907, with J. Pierpont Morgan grimly sustaining Wall Street solvency against all odds, is an appropriate halfway mark in both chronology and pagination. Then Mr. Lord is off again. We avidly follow the Great White Fleet as it steams majestically around the world with even the Japanese school children happily applauding, are caught up in the excitement of Peary's heroic dash to the North Pole, march with the suffragists down Fifth Avenue, agonize over the prolonged Democratic battle which finally nominated Woodrow Wilson ("Big Man Off Campus") for the Presidency. . . .

The chapters are inevitably somewhat uneven. Mr. Lord is happiest in dealing with the more dramatic episodes, where he skilfully builds up suspense; he is least successful when his subjects involve politics or economics. Here he is not so certain of his ground. But always he remains master of the style that is suggested by such sentence

openings as "On the morning of April 1, 1900, six of the Americans to whom civilization was committed lay fog-bound on the China sea," "No sense of change stirred the air as J. Pierpont Morgan sat down to dine on the evening of February 19, 1902," "Society never glittered more brightly than at San Francisco's Grand Opera House on the evening of April 17, 1906," "'I'm a Bryan man,' chirped the dedicated suffragist Mrs. Mary Arkwright Sutton of Spokane, Washington."

The lively stories such sentences introduce are linked together in only the vaguest way and the background is sketched in for the most part with hurried generalizations. In only one instance does Mr. Lord depart from his pattern of the heroic, the colorful, or the amusing. As if to assure his readers that he really knows that there were blemishes in the colorful tapestry of "the good years," he gives one chapter to "Children at Work." There is little else in his lively pages to suggest the currents of protest and unrest that underlay the cheerful facade of progressivism, the growing rebellion against the old order, the deep-seated problems of immigration, or the turbulence of labor strife.

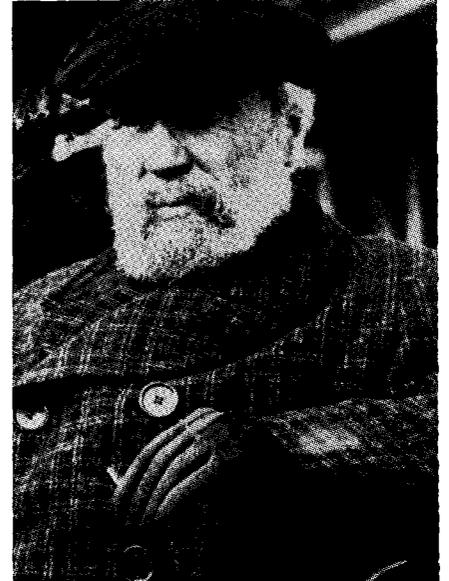
Mr. Lord is not, however, seeking to write anything like a full account of the progressive era. Indeed he might have been well advised to omit even the sketchy material with which he ties his chapters together, for it is all too often superficial and sometimes quite misleading. This has to be noted. "The Good Years" is lively, amusing; such good reading—but it does not give a rounded picture of the period it describes. Although it is fine entertainment, it is not good history.



Wilbur and Orville Wright wore their business suits for flying togs.



The child laborer's work week was sixty hours long.



James J. Hill, the tycoon of the Northern Pacific Railway.