

The Times Book Page

THE FIRST READER . . . By Robert W. Minton
'Sam and the Superdroop'
Parodies 1948's Lusty Era
Of Comic Book Blood, Gore

"SAM AND THE SUPERDROOP." By Munro Leaf. New York, Viking, \$1.50.

IT IS UNFORTUNATE this column cannot be devoted more frequently to the discussion of children's books. Hundreds of volumes are published annually for juvenile readers and obviously many of them will not be good. But on the whole the quality of juvenile material is encouraging in the face of a steady deterioration in other mediums of enlightenment and entertainment available to youngsters.

Munro Leaf, author of Ferdinand, shows a special awareness of the problem of commercialized "culture"—the comics, the radio, the cinema. His latest book, "Sam and the Superdroop," is a welcome satire designed to wean children away from the ridiculous heroes who wallow in gore and delight in pain.

SAM MARTIN, a typical 10-year-old American boy, has an addiction to comic books and as a result is visited by Superdroop, an alligator-like creature with a jet engine on his tail. Superdroop likes to curl up on a pile of old comics. He also likes to take little comic friends like Sam to meet Rhett Racer, the R-man, Side-saddle Samson and Plutonium, secret scout of the interstellar patrol.

Enough to say that these impossible characters thoroughly discourage Sam from reading comic magazines and Superdroop moves on.

Mr. Leaf spares no one, including Walt Disney, whose Donald Duck comes in for a much needed critique. His wise conclusion is that either a boy should save his comic book money and buy good books or get a library card and use it.

A VERY PLEASANT book for children between 5 and 10 is Eleanor Estes' "The Sleeping Giant" (Harcourt, Brace, \$3). Parents will enjoy reading the story of the Sleeping Giant, a mountain in Mt. Carmel that moves itself to the international date line because some men annoyed it by drilling on a hill that is really the giant's head.

There are two other stories in the book written for girls. One tells of how Emma lost her shadow when it got packed accidentally in her mother's suitcase. The other concerns a giraffe visible only to a little girl and is the least appealing because of its familiar theme.

IF YOUR SON shows any interest in science you might give him "The Story of Sound" by James Geralton (Harcourt, Brace, \$2). Mr. Geralton teaches physics at Harvard and has done an excellent job in explaining a complex phenomenon. It is copiously illustrated and advises how experiments may be conducted to test the validity of the theories presented.

My only objection is that Mr. Geralton has been a bit relentless in his refusal to break the 72 pages into chapters. The subject, even simplified, is definitely too much to take in one sitting unless you are reading a young Edison.

Animal stories seem to have a universal appeal and if you are looking to get away from the classics this year I'd recommend Felix Salten's "Favorite Animal Stories" (Messner, \$3). Mr. Salten is the author of "Bambi" and you can rely on his taste for good animal tales.

THE STORY which struck me particularly was one I had read before called "Krambambuli" by Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, a German author.

Krambambuli is a dog whom Hopp the forester has bought from a young down-and-out poacher. A fierce loyalty grows up between Hopp and Krambambuli.

One day Hopp comes upon the young poacher hunting and tells Krambambuli to get him, but the dog, torn between the two loyalties, cannot act and is turned out. So affected is Krambambuli that he dies outside Hopp's door just as Hopp is about to take him back.

A VARIATION on the usual animal story has been imaginatively contrived by Fers Crowell. His "First Horseman" (Whitely House, \$2.50), describes how Vuldur, a boy in a prehistoric tribe, captures a stallion and trains him, to the utter amazement of the men, who can see no use in horses.

Mr. Crowell occasionally strains your credulity, but writes the kind of story that boys like to read. It is a novel idea and a welcome change from cowboy tales.

Another book any boy will devour is "Sport's Golden Age" (Harper, \$3.95). It's edited by Allison Danzig and Peter Brandwein.

Here is a panorama of the world's greatest sporting figures: Babe Ruth, Jack Dempsey, Big Bill Tilden, all the peerless athletes of the '20s. It is bound to make a growing lad feel he was born too late. Heck, he's stuck today with DiMaggio, Lujack and Joe Louis.

THE SPORTS WRITERS who contributed to the book are spe-

Etching by Local Artist on Display at Block's



"Adirondack Trail" is the title of this aquatint etching by Evelynne Mess, Indianapolis artist, included in the annual exhibition of the Indiana Society of Print Makers opening today in the Wm. H. Block Co. auditorium, to run until Dec. 17. "Adirondack Trail" is included also in the permanent collection of the Library of Congress in Washington as a purchase by the Society of American Etchers, New York.

Young Folks Trying to Leave Dreary England, Writer Says

"WHAT THE ENGLISH THINK OF US." By Fred Vanderschmidt. New York, McBride, \$3.

By HENRY BUTLER
ANY DISCUSSION of what Britons think of Americans is in part a discussion of the tragedy of present-day England.

Thus Fred Vanderschmidt, chief of Newweek's London bureau, starts one chapter of his informative book "What the English Think of Us" with this statement:

"All over England, which is very much like an old and leaky ship, perilously overcrowded by too many orderly, well-disciplined people who do not know where they are going, young men and women are trying to get out."

British young people want to get out because they see little future for them at home. Mr. Vanderschmidt is equally gloomy about what he sees of England's prospects. Production is off—a fact American commentators have pointed out in criticizing what they term England's socialist government. There's no indication that food will be more abundant for years to come, Mr. Vanderschmidt writes. Ambition, still a powerful drive in American youth, has its English expression in a desire for more and more leisure, he says.

A DISINTEGRATING EMPIRE and vanishing markets on top of the hideous expense of war, have left England in precarious shape. Naturally, the British attribute part of their trouble to having "stood off" Hitler for two years before the United States got into World War II. The role of England, as "unlikeable aircraft carrier" helped protect the United States from attack, but only at a great cost to England.

Proud and sensitive, the British resent the patronizing attitude of

many prosperous American tourists since the war. They resent our criticisms, our suggestions—even, or perhaps especially, our sympathy.

Mr. Vanderschmidt has gathered a variety of publicly and privately expressed opinions from newspapers and interviews. He finds less virulent anti-American feeling than some observers have believed to exist.

While Mr. Vanderschmidt writes popularly rather than profoundly, he makes clear his main point: Anglo-American misunderstandings are part of the huge and dreadful picture of world dislocation today.

When he is explaining he is not really a magnet for screwballs, Mr. Smith is screamingly funny.

Among his non-screwball friends is a man known as The Singer, who visits him every so often and sings the first line of the Indian Love Call and then announces: "And in few a dead duck."

THERE is the newspaperman who is afraid of slipping in the bathtub he has screwed 30 door knobs along the wall to seize.

Unfortunately, the laughs are altogether too far spaced.

HOLLYWOOD producer's secretary: "Terrible out, isn't it?" Hollywood producer: "What can you expect in weather like this?" Mr. Cerf is not meant to be taken at one sitting, but if glanced at briefly before retiring it should make your dreams pleasanter and more punful.

Everyone to his own taste, here are a couple of my favorites: A British destroyer zigzagging around an American battleship signaled by blinker: "What do you think of our camouflage?" The exasperated captain of the battleship signaled back: "It's magnificent. Where the hell are you?"

THE BOOK is divided into sections like a newspaper, beginning with the front page and running to society. Each section is full of anecdotes, true and imagined, told about or by famous people.

I can't think of anyone Mr. Cerf has overlooked, except George Gallup and Elmer Roper, who will and does appear in his next book. A glance at the index reveals among the T's: Tennyson, Thackeray, Thoreau, Toscanini, Trotsky and Truman.

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RADIO PROGRAMS THIS EVENING

| WFBM 1260 CBS | WIBC 1070 Mutual | WIRE 1430 NBC | WISN 1310 ABC | WTLW 1590 P.M. After 6:00 P.M. |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| 4:00 Make Mine Music 4:15 Santa Claus 4:30 Million \$ Party 4:45 | 4:00 Easy Does It 4:15 4:30 4:45 | 4:00 Platter Chatter 4:15 Jordan Music 4:30 Lasso 4:45 | 4:00 Santa Claus 4:15 Saturday Session 4:30 4:45 | 4:00 Fun With Dora 4:15 Dominant Rhythm 4:30 4:45 |
| 5:00 Home from Lake Success 5:15 Teen Cantata 5:30 Football Scoreboard 5:45 | 5:00 True or False 5:15 5:30 5:45 | 5:00 Alton Jeffries 5:15 U. S. Marines 5:30 Football Scores 5:45 News & Sports | 5:00 Speaking of Songs 5:15 Football Scores 5:30 Saturday Date 5:45 Maria Brothers | 5:00 Music Hall 5:15 5:30 5:45 |
| 6:00 Gilbert Forbes 6:15 Music for Moderns 6:30 Vaughn Monroe 6:45 | 6:00 Football Scores 6:15 Gene Kelly 6:30 Santa Claus 6:45 Mel Allen | 6:00 Ozzie & Harriet 6:15 Music Box 6:30 Alton Jeffries 6:45 | 6:00 Luke Walton 6:15 Frank Edwards 6:30 Famous Jury Trials 6:45 | 6:00 Music for Dining 6:15 News 6:30 Music You Like 6:45 |
| 7:00 County Fair 7:15 Stars Over Hollywood 7:30 7:45 | 7:00 Twenty Questions 7:15 Campfire Songs 7:30 7:45 | 7:00 Hollywood Star Theater 7:15 Truth or Consequences 7:30 7:45 | 7:00 Tommy Dorsey Orchestra 7:15 Dick Jurgens 7:30 Chiropractic 7:45 | 7:00 Music from Hollywood 7:15 20th Century Sonnets 7:30 7:45 |
| 8:00 Footlight Echoes 8:15 If Pays to Be Ignorant 8:30 8:45 | 8:00 Gabriel Heatter 8:15 Monster Hit Parade 8:30 Meet The Boss 8:45 | 8:00 Hit Parade 8:15 Judy Canova 8:30 8:45 | 8:00 Gang Busters 8:15 What's My Name 8:30 8:45 | 8:00 Proudly We Rejoice 8:15 Home-Tech 8:30 8:45 |
| 9:00 Homelowne Roundup 9:15 National Guard Ball 9:30 9:45 | 9:00 Guy Lombardo 9:15 Farm Hit Parade 9:30 9:45 | 9:00 Donald Day 9:15 Grand Old Opry 9:30 9:45 | 9:00 Walt Quiz 9:15 Hayfield Newsboys 9:30 9:45 | 9:00 News-Music 9:15 Good Music Hour 9:30 9:45 |
| 10:00 Gilbert Forbes 10:15 Bandstand 10:30 Football Roundup 10:45 | 10:00 Gene Kelly 10:15 Easy on Record 10:30 Barclay Allen Orchestra 10:45 | 10:00 Alton Jeffries 10:15 Marion Downey 10:30 Deciding Party 10:45 | 10:00 News-Music 10:15 Dance Band 10:30 10:45 | 10:00 Sign Off 10:15 10:30 10:45 |
| 11:00 Million \$ Party 11:15 11:30 11:45 | 11:00 Dance Hour 11:15 11:30 11:45 | 11:00 News-Sportsman 11:15 NBC Orchestra 11:30 Rollin' Trio 11:45 The Smoothies-News | 11:00 Variety Hour 11:15 11:30 11:45 | 11:00 Sign Off 11:15 11:30 11:45 |

'Bet a Million' Ex-Radical Tells Her Story

HER OWN radicalism was limited to living an unconventional life, traveling all over America, throwing herself into causes such as the fight to free Eugene Debs or the exonerated of Tom Mooney.

She ended up a Republican and a staunch supporter of the conservative element in American labor. Mrs. Lang has little use for either the New Deal or the CIO.

Mrs. Lang's life has been a romantic one. It spans the rise and fall of both anarchism and communism in America. She has no great gifts as an author, but she has been a woman of accomplishment.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Baritone

HORIZONTAL

1. 4 Pictured singer
8. He performs on the
13. Native metal
14. Girl's name
15. Sends forth
16. Winglike part
17. Sells
19. Nights before events
20. Soft
22. Classes
24. Elites
25. Road (ab.)
26. Public storehouse
29. Flower
33. Negative word
34. Fish
35. Fear
38. Stepped
40. Palm lily
41. Any
42. Subdue
46. Ascended
50. Against
51. Papal cape
52. Steps
55. Sleeping noise
57. Foretold
58. Corded fabric
59. Candle
60. Hurl
61. Before

VERTICAL

1. Watercraft
2. Shield bearing
3. Vegetable

4. Venerate
5. German river
6. Hostelry
7. Father
8. Musical note
9. Rectifier
10. Submerge
11. Brain passage
12. Bones
13. Solicitor
14. general (ab.)
15. Diamond-cutter's cup
16. Age
17. Conclusion
18. Pinnacle
19. Consumed
20. Twitching

31. Dutch city
32. Scarlet language
36. Dress
37. Expiate
38. Mother
39. Blackbird of cuckoo family
42. Spar
43. Indian coin
44. Cease

45. International language
46. Malt drinks
47. Painful
48. At all times
49. Back of neck
52. Snibad's bird
53. Wine vessel
55. Symbol for erbium

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Poet Given Niche In Novel History

"MEREDITH." A biography. By Siegfried Sassoon. New York, Viking, \$3.50.

Siegfried Sassoon's excellent biography of George Meredith, draws a fine portrait of the Victorian novelist and poet against a broad background of late 19th Century literary resurgence. His book is "Meredith."

The author glides rapidly over Meredith's work as a poet and places him securely with the group who gave permanent form to the novel. He points out that it was because the novel became more popular and profitable than poetry that Meredith turned to prose.

In a light style, tempered with poetic feeling, Mr. Sassoon discusses at length Meredith's major works, especially the famous "The Ordeal of Richard Feverel," his first novel.

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Augustus (right) and his sister and little brother are back in a new addition to the Augustus series: "Augustus and the Desert," by Le Grand. With illustrations by the author, this 11th volume in the adventure series designed for children 8 to 12 is a recent Bobbs-Merrill publication (\$2).