

Bookman's Notebook

by William Hogan

Edna Ferber speaking: "There is in the United States a cult or a stratum of book readers whose mental insecurity or whose lack of faith in their own taste and judgment has led them to this touchingly unadulterated standard: if a book is dull it must be good. If it is unreadable it's great."

This is an unusually defensive attitude in such an acknowledged success as Miss Ferber, who, in "Roast Beef

Medium" (1913), established a pattern of literary popularity that has few equals in this century. In the 1920s there were "So Big," "Show Boat," "Cimarron," later came "Come and Get It," "Saratoga Trunk," "Giant," and others. For half a century the lady has been a hard-grinding story machine, a disciplined spinner of highly commercial dreams.

At 75 Miss Ferber con-

tinues a gabby autobiography that began some years ago in "A Peculiar Treasure." This one is titled "A Kind of Magic" (the joy of living, she finds, is "a kind of magic").

The book projects a heady nostalgia as she talks about prowling old American rivers during her "Show Boat" research; or her collaboration with George S. Kauffman on the dramas, "Dinner at Eight" and "Stage Door," or how she has always sought to record the American scene in her own fashion. Her fashion, in "Saratoga Trunk," was a look at high society and the railroad wars of the 1880s. In "Ice Palace" it concerned the

tough factions warring for Alaska's riches.

Most of her work were tales of protest, she asserts—"loving protest, but protest nevertheless . . . written in the idiom of their day, clearly and purposefully." Her books were never dull, unreadable, nor were they great.

Most of this autobiography is marked by forthright statements, on the craft of writing or the joy of living, delivered with the no-nonsense authority of an old empress. I found most of this material hard going. Miss Ferber is not writing for me, of course, and there must remain across this romantic land a vast audience for this book.

These would be readers she has beguiled for more than two generations with American dramas about a woman truck farmer who found beauty in cabbages; pioneers in old Oklahoma; lumberjacks in Wisconsin's north woods; the trials of the Texas rich, good life. Or about a lovable, courageous traveling saleswoman named Emma McChesney, which sparked Edna Ferber's literary reputation back in America's innocent years.

Here, as usual, Miss Ferber remains the intense, assured, perceptive woman she has always been as a writer. She is also an opinionated, frequently tiresome person who tends

Local Cancer Society Holds Awards Event

The Centinela Valley-South Bay District of the American Cancer Society honored local residents and industries at the annual recognition luncheon for volunteers at the Polynesian Restaurant.

Mrs. P. B. Marsh, volunteer general chairman, welcomed guests and thanked them for their efforts in making this year's American Cancer Society Crusade one of the most successful in history.

Individual plaques of service were presented by John K. Findly, executive director of county branch, to the area residents: Mrs. H. Gernon of Hawthorne, office volunteer; Dr. Richard J. Lesco, Torrance, district education chairman; and Ronald Cr. district public information chairman.

Dr. Lescoe, master of ceremonies, spoke to the 100 volunteers attending, about some of the quackery attempts being made in the field of cancer treatment. He also quoted statistics concerning the relationship between smoking and lung cancer.

Mrs. Kenneth Noels, Angeles County resident, cru-

sade chairman, presented blue ribbon certificates to 22 local volunteers, honoring their efforts on behalf of the society during the April fund-raising and educational crusade.

Space Technological Laboratory employees of Redondo Beach, through their charity organization ECHO, were honored for outstanding contributions during the year by Mrs. Robert E. Ringle, Los Angeles County chairman of awards for the society.

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... Council

(Continued from Page 1) in the top three will "get my full support."

KEN MILLER remarked, "There are seven people here who are after the best man." Vico, who is a member of the council which recommended the ordinance, told the council "I'll grant you that it came about at a poor time. We made a mistake (about the timing), but we are not running anybody down. I think we are doing the right thing."

On the roll call vote, J. A. Beasley, who has opposed the change from the beginning, said he would vote no because there are capable people in the fire department, "and we are not concerned with the police department now."

FOLLOWING the vote, Mayor Albert Isen referred to Sciarrotta, whose change of mind defeated the ordinance, as "little Caesar." A hot reply from Sciarrotta drew Vico into the squabble. "Try doing something right — make up your mind for once," Vico told Sciarrotta. Isen again reminded Sciarrotta that he had voted yes in the informal sessions.

During the oral communications, Sciarrotta told the council it had lost contact with its commissions in the past three months. "These people are dedicated and they are dissatisfied," said Sciarrotta. Again the tempers flared up, as Isen remarked, "Let any dissatisfied commissioner resign."

After several minutes of shouting, order was restored long enough for the council to extend the lease on airport property used by the Pacific Coast Little League for another year.

Man is properly self-governed only when he is guided rightly and governed by his Maker, divine truth and love. —Mary Baker Eddy.



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