

prior to publication. It should make a fine movie.

The book jacket notes that Oliver Lange is the pseudonym of a man who used to work in New York City until he got fed up and moved his family to New Mexico, where they now live six miles from the nearest phone and without electricity or running water. That is just the way Gene Vandenberg wanted to live, but the world would not allow it. Let's hope no one disturbs Mr. Lange, so that he will write another novel.

William Decker, an editor and critic, is the author of a novel of the West, "To Be a Man."

IN A COLD COUNTRY

by Michael Rubin

McGraw-Hill, 367 pp., \$7.95

Reviewed by Gerald Walker

■ What a curious novel this is. The first two-thirds narrates with driving energy and Dreiserian bluntness the rise of Nick Polvere from the poverty of his wretched childhood in Canada's Gaspé region to prosperity as a liquor store owner. On virtually every page powerful incident crowds hard on powerful incident: young Nick beating off a flock of Hitchcock-like sea gulls as he lugs a sack of fish carcasses to



be used as fertilizer; his anal rape by older boys; his father's maiming in a freak accident and subsequent humiliating attempts to earn a living for himself and Nick. In addition, Michael Rubin peoples his pages with vivid personalities, most of whom are a good deal larger than life.

But then there's an abrupt switch: the last part of the story is told through the consciousness of Nick's daughter Nina, who does not understand this taciturn, brooding father of hers, and suddenly the prose goes all slack and effete. The section opens as Nina pours out her confusions to her psychoanalyst—confusions not only about her father but about her husband, toward whom she feels only lukewarm affection at best; about her responsibilities to her child; about her lost chance (she thinks) to be a concert pianist; about a lot of things, including whether or not to take a lover. The narrative loses all its bite and turns into a sort of verbal needlepoint. It's as if the two parts of the book had been written by different authors.

What is more, there is a deliberate gap of twenty-odd years in the story, the time it takes for Nina to be born and grow up. The intent, clearly, is to show us a grown child puzzled by the inner mysteries of a parent's character, and the consequences that flow from

this bewilderment, while the first part of the book is meant to depict what made the parent that way. It is surely a serious motif for a work of fiction. But somehow the two sections never jell; in fact, they pull in opposite directions and ultimately break apart.

Nevertheless, it is a daring attempt, and a stunningly effective one in a number of scenes. This is Mr. Rubin's third book, and eventually he is going to get it all together and write one that may achieve something like—dare I say it?—greatness.

Gerald Walker is the author of the novel "Cruising."

LASSITER'S FOLLY

by Nathaniel Benchley

Atheneum, 313 pp., \$6.95

Reviewed by Cronan Minton

■ In his twelfth novel Nathaniel Benchley zeroes in on a tiny overgrown island on the Inland Waterway, and does a superb job of bringing it alive. *Lassiter's Folly* is relatively slight in other respects, but it has a setting for what could have been and still could be a great book if Benchley ever returns to it again. What hampers the wonderful atmosphere is a cast of brainless characters with no more substance, no more real emotional or intellectual life, than the characters on *Mayberry RFD*.

The island is Mariposa, located, Benchley tells us, somewhere between Charleston, South Carolina, and Sea Island, Georgia. Geographically speaking, the location is of little concern, since one has been on islands exactly like this in Maine, Canada, the Puget Sound—any watery area remote enough from progress to retain an exciting, mysterious life of its own. Like so many of these places, Mariposa was once rich and civilized, then lost its wealth, and its inhabitants now consist mainly of fishermen, hog farmers, a large landowner or two, a moonshiner, a druggist, several tramps, and a number of stuffy, unimportant businessmen. One could probably cover the entire island on foot in half a day, wandering through woods thick with Spanish moss, stumbling on the ruins of an old

(Continued on page 88)

Your Literary I. Q.

Conducted by David M. Glixon

THE BLANK OF THE BLANK

"The *Something of the Other*" is a favorite pattern in literary titles—e.g., *The Revolt of the Angels*. Michael J. Thornton of Belmont, Calif., who has dissected fifteen such titles, asks you to reconstitute them and join each with its equally mixed-up author. The rehabilitation center is on page 73.

- A. *The Decline of the Native* by Eugene Carroll
- B. *The Hunting of the Guard* by Jack Cather
- C. *The Life of the Turtle* by Thomas Clark
- D. *The Moon of the Iguana* by Oswald Congreve
- E. *The Night of the Cat* by Henry Darwin
- F. *The Return of the Screw* by John Gilbert
- G. *The Son of the Beagle* by William Hardy
- H. *The Song of the Bee* by Tennessee James
- I. *The Spirit of the Lark* by Charles London
- J. *The Track of the Wolf* by Lewis Maeterlinck
- K. *The Turn of the World* by Maurice Montesquieu
- L. *The Voice of the Laws* by W. S. O'Neill
- M. *The Voyage of the Snark* by Charles Spengler
- N. *The Way of the Caribbees* by Walter van Tilburg Van Drueten
- O. *The Yeomen of the West* by Willa Williams

AFRICA '71

AFRICAN STUDIES, 4th consec. program. UNIV OF GHANA and UNIV OF IBADAN (Nigeria). July 2 — Aug. 5, 1971. AUTHENTIC PROGRAMS. Completely AFRICAN taught, 60-75 hours of lectures — African history, culture, lit, the arts. Extensive field study. 6 grad credits. UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS. Price: \$1290 Ghana; \$1340 Nigeria. Over 500 teachers have already participated. WRITE: AMERICAN FORUM FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDY, 86 Forsyth St. N.W., Atlanta, Georgia 30303. A non-profit educational organization. Dr. C. Eric Lincoln, President.

CAR OF THE YEAR.

Motor Trend magazine has named the Chevy Vega its 1971 Car of the Year.

Actually, Motor Trend magazine has named all four Chevy Vegas its 1971 Car of the Year. They say it's because of Vega's engineering excellence, timeliness, styling and overall value. Naturally, we're pretty happy about it. For lots of reasons.

One is the fact that the award came from Motor Trend. Because the people at Motor Trend know cars inside and out. And after testing 10 nominees, they chose our little Vega. Shucks.

Reason number two. This is obviously the year of the little car in the big automotive world. And while there are lots of little cars that could have been Car of the Year, only one is. Ours.

A third reason. We've been saying for months now that Vega is the little car that does everything well. Lucky for us, lots of you took our word for it and bought a Vega. Our thanks.

As for the rest of you, you not only have our word for it, you have Motor Trend's: "For the money, no other American car can deliver more."

Vega. It's a lot of little car.

- I'm interested. Please send me some literature on the Vega.
- I'm very interested. Please send me literature and contact me for a Vega test-drive.
- I'm so interested that I already bought a Vega. Please send me a Car of the Year sticker for my car window.

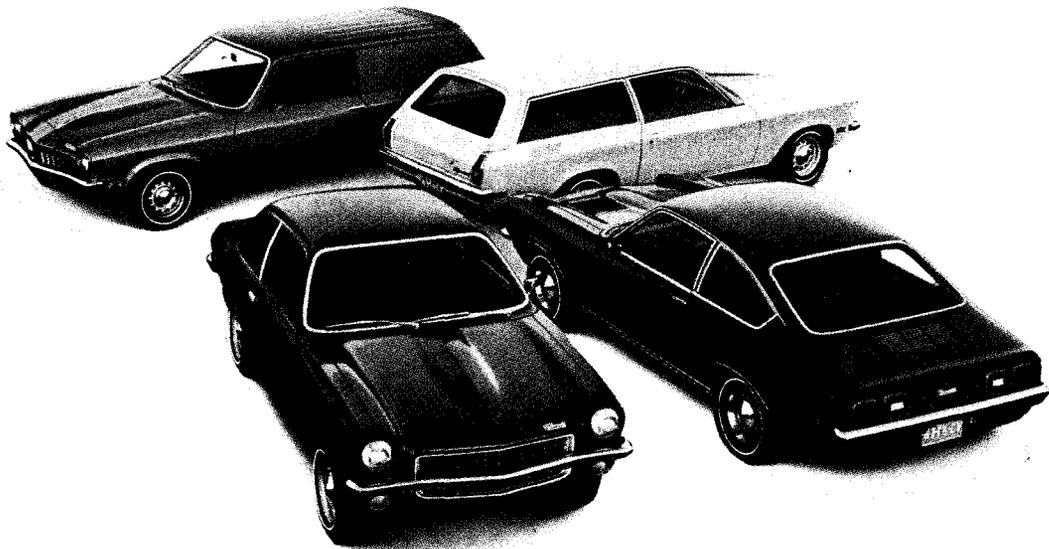
Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Send to: Chevrolet Motor Division, Dept. 7,
Box W, Detroit, Mi. 48202

(Licensed drivers only, please.)





Anything's possible in Tahiti.



Play in a world still fresh and uncrowded. Here the lagoons still teem with fish. The coconut tree still rules the beaches. And tipping is still unexpected.

Meet all the easiest-to-meet people in the world. They'll show you what *oa oa* is all about. (Hint: it's the feeling the French call *joie de vivre*, only ten times better.)

Live in a thatched hut on a beach. Or maybe in an air-conditioned hotel. Or in a bungalow over a lagoon. Or in a suite high atop a cliff. Shop native bazaars for coral, shells, shark's teeth.

Write for Tahiti vacation facts on all the possibilities of Tahiti, Moorea, Bora Bora, Raiatea, Huahine. Write: Tahiti Tourist Board, Box 3720, Hollywood, California 90028. Dept. K

TAHITI

What more could you want?

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Spring and the Traveler

A Special Section

IN SEARCH OF A ROMANTIC WORLD

With Scott in the Land of Brigadoon

by VIRGINIA WAITE

More than any other writer, Sir Walter Scott, whose 200th birthday is being remembered this year, presented a picture in words of the country he loved; surprisingly, it is a picture that is still, largely, accurate. The traveler who has read the books and who visits the Border Country that wedges south of Edinburgh and north of England will recognize the scenes immediately. But, as well, Scott's influence on the Scottish way of life was enormous. He gave back to the Scottish their pride, re-established traditions that had disappeared, and set the trend for nationalism.

They may be a part of Great Britain, but the Scots have clung tenaciously to their independence, and to a Sassenach like me from south of the border, their country is as foreign as is, say, New York to London. Its quality comes from its canny people with a faraway look in their eyes; from its climate, mysteriously misty or blowing hard; from its little towns, gray stone enclaves huddled beneath a hill or clustered by a riverside; and from its scenery, the most spacious and the wildest to be found anywhere in Britain.

As to the way of life, it simply pleases itself. Thus, rural stores may open at the convenience of the shopkeeper rather than the customer. Licensing hours might seem impossible, but with a wink and a nod there's

always the back parlor. A single-track lane with lay-bys for passing is often considered sufficient for motorcar traffic because, after all, sheep are more important. Mention the wrong clan in the wrong company and they freeze; take an interest in the right one and hospitality and warmth will be the result. Some of the most riotous impromptu parties I've ever attended have been in Scotland; so have some of the worst meals I've ever eaten. But none of this dims the magic of the place, a magic Scott certainly captured. There was, though, a good deal more to his life than writing, and in tracing his footsteps, you can follow the laird, the lawyer, the financier, and the collector, as well as the novelist.

Scott the man had a dual personality. His ballads, poems, and novels reveal him as an incurable romantic with a genius for making historical events and people come alive. But actually he insisted that being a statesman and a soldier was more important than writing. Above all, he wanted to become a great laird of the Border Country, an ambition helped by his connections with royalty and consolidated by two events that revived Scotland's heritage and traditions and made him a hero. The Scots have never forgotten the events, and whether they're conscious of it or not, the man provided them with a model for living that many follow today.

Edinburgh should be the visitor's starting point, not just because it is the

Scottish capital, but because Scott's life as a schoolboy and as a lawyer is woven into its streets and because it is the key to those two periods. The city is two towns, the "new" one built as an overspill during the eighteenth century and separated from the original town by the Mound, the hill formed by those excavations. The centuries slip back in the Old Town, where the dominant landmark is the castle. Here rest the Honours of Scotland—the scepter, sword, crown, and so on—which Scott himself was responsible for finding. They had been dumped in an old oak chest in the castle following the dissolution of the Scottish Parliament, and many people believed the treasure had been spirited away by the wicked English.

Sir Walter, by this time a baronet and a personal friend of George IV, persuaded the then Prince Regent to give him a royal warrant to unlock the Crown Room and, hopefully, find the jewels. Scott described the dramatic moment thus: "The joy was extreme when the ponderous lid of the chest being forced open . . . the regalia were discovered lying at the bottom covered with linen cloths exactly as they had been left in the year 1707." This, by the way, was more than a century later, and the regalia are on view to the public now.

It is not surprising that the discovery produced an upsurge of nationalism and pride, and, keeping the trend going, Sir Walter invited the King to