

Not All Fun and Games

By Father John S. Kennedy

It is probably a blind spot in me, but I have never been much interested in the type of "nature" book which rehearses its author's excitement at observing a double-breasted marshmallow light on a fickleberry bush and start pouring out its song. It seems that this happens only on the last morning of February in leap year, provided a light rain is falling. Well, I just don't want to hear about it.

I can't say that I woked up much enthusiasm about Edwin Way Teale's "Springtime in Britain" (Dodd, Mead, \$7.50), but it is more agreeable than annoying, and illustrated by quite a few good-to-excellent photographs taken by the author.

He and his wife set out for Britain in March, and spent the next four months in an 11,000-mile journey which took them from Land's End to John o' Groat's, crisscrossing the island from end to end.

They avoided cities, put up with many inconveniences, endured some vile weather, in their pursuit of the flora and fauna of England, Scotland, and Wales. Experienced amateur naturalists, they came well prepared for their searching journey, were not disappointed in what they found.

In recounting their travels and discoveries, Mr. Teale writes unpretentiously and in a low key. He delights, for example, in the spectacle and singing of the skylarks found all over England, but he does not gush over it.

It is a good many years since we have had a book from Jean Kerr, author of the extremely popular "Please Don't Eat the Daisies" and the somewhat less popular "The Snake Has All the Lines." Now there is a collection of her more recent magazine pieces, "Penny Candy" (Doubleday, \$4.95).

It is the mixture much as before. Mrs. Kerr writes about her family, her own ineptitudes and embarrassments, the series of crises which constitute the life of at least one American housewife. She does this sort of thing wryly and well. But repetition of its ploys wears them exceedingly thin. It is when Mrs. Kerr gets away from her by now standard turns that she is most effective.

"The Poet and the Peasants" is the least hokey item in the batch, and undoubtedly the best. It describes the Kerrs' attempt to familiarize their children with the riches of poetry in English, an attempt remarkably successful. There is more (not a bit soppy) here than elsewhere, and less antic exertion. The result is true and moving.

I mentioned to a young friend whom I consider more than ordinarily conversant with American writers, that I was reading a biography of Dorothy Parker, and was asked, "Who is she?" She isn't anybody any more, it seems. She died in 1967, and had done little writing for a long time before that. But many people had assumed that her verse and short stories insured a modest but lasting place in the catalogue of American writers.

The biography in question is by John Keats, and its title, "You Might As Well Live" (Simon and Schuster, \$7.50) is taken from a Parker poem. The book is a clumsy rehearsal of a sad story.

Born Dorothy Rothschild in 1893, the subject became Dorothy Parker by her first, short-lived marriage. Her childhood and youth were bitterly unhappy. In her late teens she began to work on magazines in

New York, along with other clever youngsters like Robert Benchley and Robert E. Sherwood. In the 1920s they formed the nucleus of a smart set which attained parochial fame for their wit. Dorothy Parker was reputed to be the quickest and deadliest in her skewering comments on people.

With a reputation for sophistication and worldly wisdom, she was actually a perpetually unhappy and, in many essentials, an appallingly foolish woman. Of her many love affairs, most had a touch of the ludicrous about them, and an air of sordidness. And the same could be said of her leftist political entanglements.

From being considered brilliantly amusing, she became a bore and a grief to almost all who knew her.

Nazareth Professor Authors 'Lively Debate'

A member of the Nazareth College faculty has attempted to answer the question: "Why did Pope Paul VI's encyclical on birth control provoke a response unprecedented in sweep and in fury" in a newly-published book which examines all aspects of the controversy.

The Rt. Rev. Msgr. William H. Shannon, chaplain and chairman of the Department of Religious Studies at Nazareth, is the author of the book entitled "The Lively Debate—Response to Humanae Vitae."

The book takes no sides in the debate, but attempts to put the question in its historical context and offers a presentation of opinions presented from without and within the Catholic Church before and after the contents of the encyclical were announced. A report of the recommendations of the Papal Commission on Birth Control and the world-wide reaction of

bishops, theologians and laity are summarized.

Among the important questions discussed are:

... Why did the Pope ignore the majority report of the Papal Commission?

... What is the significance of the wide divergence even among the national bodies of bishops?

... What implications for the life of the Church are to be found in the discussion which continues to divide Catholics?

Father Shannon, a native of Rochester, studied for the priesthood at St. Bernard's Seminary and was ordained in 1943. He obtained his M.A. from Canisius College in Buffalo, and in 1954 was awarded a Ph.D. from the University of Ottawa. He has been associated with Nazareth College since 1945.

Fisher Adds Second Course in Black Literature

St. John Fisher College has added a second course in Black Literature which will be on an advanced level and offered for Spring 1971.

The course, designed for English majors, will carry a prerequisite of either the Black Writers Survey course or 12 hours of previous English courses.

It will be taught by Asst. Prof. Clarence Amann and will be called "Advanced Black Writing."

"The course will meet the request of students, both black and white, for a Black Literature course at a more intensive level. In such a course we will be able to limit the number of works studied in order to do more profound analysis."



You've got a lot to live

Pepsi's got a lot to give

What we mean is this: living isn't always easy, but it never has to be dull. There's too much to see, to do, to enjoy. Put yourself behind a Pepsi-Cola and get started. You've got a lot to live.



Bottled by Pepsi-Cola Companies of Elmira and Rochester under appointment from PepsiCo., Inc., New York, N. Y.

Wednesday, December 9, 1970

Page 11-B