

Press-Enterprise, Riverside

Books in brief

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Story for armchair sailors

STAR OF INDIA by Jerry McMullen. Howell - North, 133 pages, \$3.75.

Back in 1927 an unruly, mad aquarium committee of the good and hard-pressed San Diego Zoo went completely crazy and acquired, at bargain basement prices, one of the decommissioned vessels of the Alaska Packers' sailing fleet.

The fleet that annually goes north to Bristol Bay had converted to steam, partly because it was too hard to find or shanghai a sailing crew—captain or AB.

The ship was the *Star of India*, so named by the Alaska Packers in 1906. Her keel had been laid down on the Isle of Man in 1863 when she was christened *Euterpe*. She had a long and commonplace, if typical, career as a freighter between England and India, Australia and New Zealand, with a couple of calls at San Francisco.

There were storms, deaths, a couple of dis-mastings, and one memorable day of good wind when she averaged 12 knots over 24 hours cruising.

She rusted as a museum ship at San Diego, hardly paying her keep. The Navy took off her masts during World War II as a hazard to air navigation. Quite recently the friends of *Star of India* managed to hornswoggle Congress, by a wonderfully perfect technicality, into providing restoration money. She now has a new lease on antiquarian life, under guidance of those who love the sailing days, from armchairs, with scholarly regard for period and detail.

Jerry McMullen is curator of the Serra Museum and president of the San Diego Maritime Museum Association. From the ship's logs and other sources he has compiled this year-by-year, voyage-by-voyage account.

though it's easy to read, you are getting the straight goods. McM. might even convert a few of us into part-time armchair sailors, second class.

TOM PATTERSON
Press-Enterprise Book Editor

Branching out

THE WHOLE CREATION, by Theodore Morrison. Viking. 405 pages \$4.95.

A new Theodore Morrison novel is always an event. *The Whole Creation* is no exception. Although this book does not quite come up to fine *The Stones of the House*, it is very definitely worth reading once it reaches proper pace.

Mr. Morrison branches in "*The Whole Creation*" to encompass the town of Rowley as well as his family. The novel is a study in character. Arthur Scheuer, a geneticist, Malcolm Islay, a writer in residence at Rowley, and Kent Warner, an industrial engineer in a Fullington chemical company.

At first glance the three seem incompatible types, but they have one factor in common. Each is creative in his own way and each is, ironically and tragically thwarted. The novel does not end on a soaring note of hope. Each man struggles and loses and each makes his final compromise — Islay realizing that he is close to written-out, Scheuer with research and his academic conscience, and Warner, the destroyed man of action, in death.

Theodore Morrison writes wonderfully well. As he writes of each man, the man comes to full life using the proper words and thinking the proper thoughts. Even the former football player, Kent Warner, becomes believable in the skilled hands of the talented Morrison. For this author writes as well of a meeting of the Board of Directors as he does of a faculty committee session.

PATRICIA BEATTY
Press-Enterprise Book Staff

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While he manfully writes a good clear prose, readable by landlubbers, he lets himself go in a footnote about the movies' lack of integrity in a sailing yarn of the 1840s, viz: "They shamelessly used *Star of Finland*, ex-Kaiulani, of 1898, which was obviously a steel vessel with a modern spike bowsprit, double tops'ls and, to compound the felony, double topgallants, which began to show up around 1885." Horrors.

So you know that even

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