

*Cleveland Uses
His Home Town
As Background*

Life In the City Shown in Stories Of Herbert Gold

LOVE & LIKE by Herbert Gold.
Dial Press, 1960. Pp. 307, \$3.95.



HERBERT GOLD was born in Cleveland and graduated from Lakewood High School. He studied at Columbia University and at the Sorbonne. For a while he taught at Western Reserve University. At present he is a member of the faculty of Wayne University in Detroit. Meridian Books, paperback subsidiary of World Publishing Co. of Cleveland, lists *Love & Like* on its publishing program for 1961.

REVIEWED by Charles Duffy, Pierce Professor of English and Head of the Department at the University of Akron. He has published books in the field of American literature and is the co-author (with Henry Pettit) of *A Dictionary of Literary Terms*.

The fourteen stories making up this book first appeared in such scattered places as *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Commentary*, *The Hudson Review*, *The New Yorker*, *Vogue*, and in other equally reputable magazines. The author has also written a number of highly praised novels: *Birth of a Hero*, *The Prospect Before Us*, *The Man Who Was Not With It*, *The Optimist*, and *Therefore Be Bold*. All this indicates that Herbert Gold has been a pretty busy fellow during the first thirty-five years of his life.

It is somewhat surprising that there are really not many stories written by American authors about American cities. Oh, yes, we do have abundant stories about New York; a fair number about Chicago, New Orleans, and Boston; fewer about St. Louis, Baltimore, Atlanta, and Minneapolis. But where are our yarns about Dallas, Omaha, Des Moines, Albany, Wilmington, and Kansas City? Now, however, Cleveland can be added to the list of cities which serve as a setting, for Herbert Gold makes use of that city for a number of his stories. It is not that the city as a city is used; it is merely that the action takes place in Cleveland. Still there is a shock of recognition in the mention of Euclid Avenue, Chesterton, Rocky River, Lake Erie, Western Reserve University, *The Plain Dealer*, The Art Museum, University Circle, etc. Although Gold is hardly a local colorist, he does make an Ohio reader feel at home in such stories as "What's Become of Your Creature?", "The Heart of the Artichoke", and "The Burglar and the Boy" as well as in a few others.

He makes us feel at home as Americans by his references to advertising lingo (sometimes deliberately mixed up). We

have allusions to Johnson's Baby Powder, a sky-blue Kalifornia Kravat, a Hicock Kowboy-type belt, Libby's Whole Sliced Pineapple, Hinz-zuzz Pork and Beans, and Liverwurst on Rye with Mustard or Mayonnaise.

Conversation

Another matter. Gold can record conversation with the fidelity of tape. Here is a bit from "Paris and Cleveland Are Voyages":

"What's up?"

"There's a measles epidemic going around. I think he's getting it."

"Any spots?"

"No."

"Does he have a fever?"

"Not yet."

"Then what's the matter?"

"I don't know, he's been so irritable. I wanted to get him off his feet. Spock says the complication—"

"Daddy! Daddy! Mommy says I'm sick! I had softboiled eggs! Come play with me!"

Still another matter. Gold's characters feel emotions common to those we all feel, whether we own or disown them. They fall in love, fall in hate, are in turn trusting, jealous, envious, mean, generous, courageous, cowardly, indifferent. Few of them are enduringly noble; they are mostly the common variety of spotted or striped biped familiar to all of us.

All this is to say that *Love & Like* gives us a cross section of urban humanity in our time. But his purpose is best expressed by himself in his "Postface":

These stories all aim to be true and full of joy, or true and full of sorrow, which amount to the same thing for the storyteller, though very different to him as a man before the story is written. First he is concerned with his personal joys and sorrows; then he hopes to tell a public story, freely guessing, playing, lying, until that best reader of whom he dreams cries out, 'Stop! Now I see what you see!'