Book Review

By Saunders Redding

DAYS IN THE YELLOW LEAF, by William Hoffman. Doubleday and Company, 575 Madison Avenue, New York. 354 pp. $3.95.

There are those people — and in fiction as in life their names are legend — who are doomed to give their devotion to unworthy things and people. The hero of **Days In the Yellow Leaf** is one of these. Hypersensitized by a basic failure of understanding between himself and his rich and insensitive father, and revolted by his experiences in the war, Tod Young decided that "the only thing a man could do was to live without hurting."

Mr. Redding

He stated it negatively; he tried to live it positively.

He went among "the broken men he called them, the men life had chewed up and spat out."

He sang hymns to them with a Salvation Army troupe.

He carried comfort to them in prison. He took on all sorts of lame ducks — including a half-mad little man named Danny, for some of them were wild as well as lame.

* * *

THE WOMAN he took to wife was: He felt sorry for her. In a melancholy year at college she had "had to let boys do things to her to get to the places she wanted."

When Tod met her she knew what she wanted, but she was more sophisticated and drove harder bargains.

She wanted everything her parents had never had: a good house, security, money, friends. By marrying Tod she achieved them automatically.

She convinced herself that she was good for him.

His bleeding for the sins of the world slackened. He went into his father's bank. He gave up the life but not the spirit of martyrdom.

He rejoined the country club crowd into which he'd been born. He took Grace to dinner in the best places and dancing once a week. She was happy, and he was glad to make her so.

* * *

BUT HE had felt all along that the bank was not the place for him, and so it proved.

When one of his lame duck friends forged a check and Will Young refused to use his influence on the lame duck's behalf, Tod quit.

He gave up the house his father had built for a wedding present. He thought Grace would understand and know how he felt about it all. She didn't.

The only thing she understood was the desire to have what she wanted. He worked hard to satisfy her. He took a day job as a clerk and a night job as a laborer.

Grace would not be satisfied. He had no right to do what he had done, and she hated him for doing it. She took to drink. She took to running around.

She gave herself to one of Tod's lame duck friends and to Tod about it. One night Tod caught them at their sordid lust and killed them both. Against his will this act of murder saved him; for it was through this act that he found at last his father.

* * *

THE SEARCH for a father is an old, old theme, and the human miseries attendant upon such a search are among the most durable materials in all fiction.

As a technical accomplishment William Hoffman's handling of this theme and the stories that cling to it is expert, competent, and sometimes brilliant.

Everything is properly foreshadowed, everything falls into place, and everything seems dramatically inevitable.

Nevertheless **Days in the Yellow Leaf** falls short of success, and this reviewer thinks it falls short because Hoffman cared so much about his theme that he neglected to make his readers care about the people whose lives work it out.

Our Readers Write

If you have a problem, let us help. Make letters short. Address AFRO Magazine Section, 628 N. Eutaw St., Baltimore 1, Md.

EARRINGS

Baltimore, Md. — M. Allmond's question about the figures on her earrings interested me. From my reading I have learned about such a figure used in South America.

The sources is fiction but I believe the background is accurate. The book "Satan Has Six Fingers" by Vera Kelsey was published in Melbourne, Australia in 1943.

The little forearm, wrist and folded hand with the thumb between the first and second fingers is called a FIGA or Protecting Arm. It is used as a charm in parts of Brazil.

Many Brazilians feel that the FIGA will ward off the evil eye. Usually the charm is made of genuine wood.

P. BERRY

ELBOWS

Hurlock, Md. — From many years of resting my elbows on my desk, they have become rough and discolored. I have tried cold cream, vaseline, mercolized wax and other remedies but nothing has helped. I'm wondering if some of your readers could tell me how to correct this embarrassing condition.

MRS. ROSE E. HARMON

Our gal Friday, here at the salt mines, recommends using a lemon. Cut it in half and rub it on the afflicted parts daily. Maybe some of our readers have other solutions.

* * *

ROCK AND ROLL

Huntingtown, Md. — Please send me a list of the rock and roll records.

TILLIE V. STEPNEY

The AFRO Magazine does not publish lists of rock and roll records except for our R and R Hit Parade on the Youth Page.

* * *

HOTELS

Union, S.C. — I would like to know the name of some Brooklyn, N.Y. hotel. The cheapest one, and how much it is per room. Also, do you have to make reservations or is a room always possible? I am going there soon.

W. W.

Suggest you send for the AFRO Travel Guide. It costs only 25 cents and will give you all sorts of valuable travelling information, including hotels. Write to AFRO Travel Guide, 628 N. Eutaw St., Baltimore, 628 N. Eutaw St., Baltimore 1, Md.

* * *

COVENANT

Washington, D.C. — In the restricted covenant signed by Vice President Nixon, when he purchased his former home, what nationalities are mentioned as being restricted?

M. E. PRICE

Orientals, Asiatics and Negroes. Mr. Nixon no longer lives in that house.

* * *

ADDRESS

Baltimore, Md. — Your Magazine Section is always giving helpful information, maybe you can help me. I would like to know how to get in touch with Rajah Raboid. If any of your readers can help me, I wish they would.

MRS. BEULAH JORDAN

* * *

WRITER

New York, N.Y. — You have said that if you have a problem, write a letter. I have in my possession numerous articles that I have written.

Just before I was recalled to active duty, two of them were published in a religious paper. Can you direct me to someone in New York City that can look at these articles?

SAMUEL G. PARKER

Not knowing the nature of the material, we cannot recommend where they could be placed, but pick up a copy of Writers Digest. This publication lists most of the possible sales markets.

* * *

PRIVATE EYES

Philadelphia, Pa. — I often read in detective stories that "red herrings" are drawn across the path of the detectives to mislead them.

How did the saying originate?

JOHN PICARD

It probably comes from the sport of hunting. It is said that a red herring — one that has been smoked and salted—when drawn across the path of a fox destroys the fox's scent and puts the hounds on the wrong track.

* * *

AFT

Wilmington, Del. — My husband and I are both school teachers, and he always laughs at me for use of the word "aft" in a Burns quotation which begins: "The best-laid plans of mice and men . . ."

He says "aft" means the stern of a ship.

If I am wrong, I'll give in, but I'll certainly never hear the last of it.

MRS. E. GIBBS

When Robert Burns wrote "To a Mouse," on which your quotation is based, these were his actual words:

"The best laid schemes o' mice an' men
Gang aft a-gley.
An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain.
For promis'd joy!"

Reckon it's a win for you on points, ma'am.

Your Prayers Are Asked

For a very sick woman who needs understanding . . . For a sick daughter whose mind may be healed. . . . For Marie Smith. . . . For Willis who is sick in the mind. . . . For Annie and Lottie. . . . For my daughter Ida that she will feel better from her leg trouble and kidneys. . . . For Olethe Edward. . . . For a Brother Robert that he may gain weight and be healed. . . . For Kenneth and Chris that they may be reunited for the sake of their daughter. . . . For Loretta and Puddin that they may prosper as entertainers in show business. . . . For a mother that she may be completely healed and be able to return home. . . . For the removal of evil influences. . . . For a son's life. . . .

And for all sick and suffering people wherever they may be, that it may please God to heal them. And that Peace may prevail in the world.

Looking For Someone

If you want to locate missing friends or relatives, enclose $1 in an envelope along with a description of the person, where and when he was last heard from. Send it to Missing Persons Editor, AFRO-AMERICAN Magazine, 628 N. Eutaw St., Baltimore 1, Md.

Persons with information concerning these missing people address all correspondence to Missing Persons, c/o AFRO-AMERICAN, 628 N. Eutaw St., Baltimore 1, Md.

Louella Whorthan of Baltimore, Maryland would like to know the whereabouts of Arthur Gilliam last heard of on Dallas Street in 1924. Originally from Union, S.C. Sister, Viola Jeter, from Weirton, W.Va.

* * *

WILLIE HARRIS of New York City is looking for his relatives, Mother, Rosa H. Awan; sisters and brothers, John L. Harris, Frank Harris, Walter Harris, Inez Harris, Nannie Harris, and James Harris.

Last known addresses were Stoney Creek, Va., Richmond, Va. and Amelia, Virginia.

SOPHIA R. HIXSON of New ark, New Jersey is looking for his oldest sister whose maiden name is Lillian England. West Indian born. Last heard from, she was living in Plainfield, N.J., about 1935 or 1936.

Mrs. Joseph A. Nash of Lumberport W. Va., is looking for Eddie Ingram whose last known address was Savannah, Georgia.

* * *

Herbert Gaines of Philadelphia, Pa., is looking for an old buddy of his. His last known address was Baltimore, Maryland. He was discharged from the army in 1955. He is about 27 years old.

* * *

MRS. LOUISE McNAIR is looking for her sister-in-law, Areetha McNair, whose last known address was 1294 Park Avenue, N.Y.C., where she worked. Her brother is critically ill in Mercy-Douglass Hospital, Philadelphia.

Legal Advisor

By ROBERT WATTS
Baltimore Attorney

I have been living at this address for six weeks without heat or hot water due to a furnace that doesn't work. The landlord knows this and won't fix it.

My kids got sick due to lack of heat and I had to use the rent money on the kids. Do I still have to pay last week's rent or can I claim damage for the hazard of the furnace?

ANS: You should pay your rent and report the lack of heat and hot water to the police magistrate in your district. The question of damages should be discussed with an attorney.

* * *

HOW DO I go about getting a refund from a store in N.Y. on a dress I ordered and returned? I ordered from a catalogue saying money refunded if not satisfied.

ANS: If it's a National concern you can sue them in Maryland if they do business in Maryland. If not, I am afraid you would have to go to New York and bring suit which of course wouldn't be worth it. If the Chamber of Commerce has tried and failed this is about all you can do.

* * *

MY BROTHER was given six months for driving under the influence of alcohol a month ago and we have now found a missing witness who can prove he was not drunk. What can we do?

ANS: You cannot appeal for you must appear within 10 days. The magistrate who sentenced him cannot change his sentence. I suggest you see an attorney for if the State will consent, under certain circumstances the court will permit an appeal.

The TV-Radio Scene

In case you have been wondering who directs the excellent choreography on Patti Page's "Big Record" show, it's created by June Taylor. For her work on this show, Miss Taylor is faced with the task of fitting the stars into a routine.

Now-a-days, it isn't enough for singers to just stand up straight, holding on to a microphone, they have to be showcased.

According to Miss Taylor, the job is easy when you have such pros as Eartha Kitt, or Kay Thompson to work with.

Last week's stanza on the "Record" points up the lamentable showing rock and roll groups make. The Silhouettes ("Get A Job") appeared on the program and were a great disappointment to their fans who have boosted their record to the top.

They went through a few wooden figures, seemed scared to death, and nowise sounded as alive as they do on their waxing.

AFTER YEARS of being king of the heap, the Arthur Godfrey morning show bows off television March 31. It will be replaced by another quizzy "How Do You Rate." The Godfrey bash will continue on radio.

* * *

NAME OF that Afro-Cuban dancer who almost stopped the Steve Allen Show a couple of Sundays back is Tybee Afra.

* * *

JAZZ IS getting a break in the Boston area, with WBZ-TV scheduling two more jazz shows on a more or less trial basis. First one will be March 5 from 10:30-11 featuring Jonah Jones; second is March 19, with Sarah Vaughan.

* * *

NBC-TV HAS programmed three live jazz shows, to be beamed to Educational TV outlets. It's a part of the University of Michigan's Educational Television and Radio Center at Ann Arbor spring outing.

Starts March 26, titled "The Subject is Jazz," will be hosted by Gilbert Seldes, features jazz combos and discussion by critics Leonard Feather and Duke Ellington. The objective of the show, according to Seldes: "To analyze the music by which the U.S. has made its first artistic conquest of the world."

* * *

ONE OF THE country's first disc-jockey shows, "Make Believe Ballroom" (still going strong on WNEW, New York) handed out 58 prizes including a '58 car to winners in the station's "Ten Greatest Records of All Times" contest.

The winning list included: "Sing, Sing, Sing," Benny Goodman; "Begin the Beguine," Artie Shaw; "White Christmas," Bing Crosby; "In The Mood," Glenn Miller; "Tennessee Waltz," Patti Page; "Nature Boy," Nat Cole; "A Tisket A Tasket," Ella Fitzgerald; "I'll Never Smile Again," and Gene Austin's "My Blue Heaven."

AFRO
MAGAZINE SECTION
Published every week by the AFRO-AMERICAN Newspapers (Copyrighted) Robert W. Matthews, Editor
The AFRO assumes no responsibility for the return of unsolicited manuscripts or photographs unless accompanied by stamped self-addressed envelope.
No pictures published will be returned.

HERE IS MILDRED

Bargaining With God

If you are one of those people who only pray when you can't do anything else, you'd better read and heed the words of our girl Mildred who has a few choice things to say about prayer.

By Alice Childress

Marg, don't you think it's a shame the way folks bandy God's name around? . . . No, I'm not talking about cuss-words, although that is an ugly way to behave also.

I'm speakin' of how we treat God like he's Santa Claus.

We can ask God some things that are just downright insultin.'

In fact, we ask for so much that I should think we'd get shamed sometime.

* * *

I HAVE seen fighters climb into the ring and say a prayer before they start fightin.'

I wonder what they're praying for?

Since fighting is a sport, I don't think a man would be small enough to ask God to see that he wins and take his part against the other fighter.

If both fighters are praying to win, what is God supposed to do?

* * *

MAYBE you're right. Perhaps they're prayin' not to get hurt, but since they're tryin' to knock each other out . . . that is a hard prayer to answer.

Yes, I guess it's all right to ask him to help you do your best but I don't think we should ask the Lord to take part in fights, tennis games, races and things such as that.

You see, when the contest is over, the men shake hands and act all sportsman-like; that's fine but they shouldn't be askin' the Lord to tip the scales in their favor.

* * *

I NEVER cease to wonder at the nerve of folks who are for segregation; they forever call on God to help them do all kinds of pure devilment and never dream of blushin'.

Some folks will up and pass a law sayin' that more than half of the townspeople can't vote or run for offices then they will pick two of their favorite segregation men . . . and both of 'em will ask the Lord to help him win!

Don't you think the Deity would be a little weary of 'em?

They have outlawed most of the competition and still they got the nerve to pray for special favors.

Askin' the Lord to help in a case like that is just the same as if a man built a lovely church and gave it to the people; next-thing, half the congregation sends him an invitation to come and help them tear the church down!

* * *

THE OTHER day my niece says to me, "Oh, I'm praying that I get a new dress for the dance!"

I says to her, "Are you prayin' to God or are you hintin' at me?"

She looks all surprised and flabbergasted, so I went on.

"Stop bandyin' God's name about. He's got more things to do than see to than anybody's dancin' dress.

You can just thank him that you have your health and strength to get outta here and do some baby-sittin' so you can buy yourself a gown."

* * *

MARGE, THE woman I work for had the nerve to tell me that she was prayin' that she'd be able to send her son to Europe this summer!

I told her that she'd better start savin' up her money to do it because our Heavenly Father was mighty busy lookin' after the hungry, the orphans and the afflicted!

I don't intend to bother the Lord about it but next week I'm gonna ask her for a raise in pay!

* * *

PEOPLE ARE entirely too familiar and sassy with God. Every prayer is give me, give me.

If the Lord gave us all we asked for the world would be so chock-full of things 'til there wouldn't be room to move!

The other day I was over at Geraldine's house and her little boy said he sure wanted a tool chest.

Don't you know Geraldine told him to ask God for it when he said his prayers?

I told her that she was startin' him off on the wrong road to prayer.

She should have explained to him hat he'd have to help 'round the house and pick up his toys and do such things as would help him earn the tool chest.

He should have been informed to thank the Lord that he and his folks were able to bring that tool chest about.

There's no need for that child to flop on his knees every evenin' with a long list of goodies he thinks up. She'd spank him if he worried a relative that way.

* * *

OH, THERE'S plenty of prayers that need to be prayed; we need a cure for cancer and other ills, we need more understandin' in our hearts, we need love, we need our daily bread, we need to forgive and seek forgiveness, we need to make this earth as it is in Heaven, we need to be delivered from evils!

Yes, we need to stop treatin' God like a fetch-and-carry lackey. When we pray, it should mean something.

"You just get down on your knees to pray when you want something."

WHAT MAKES HIM TICK?

Paul Robeson

This article is reprinted from the AFRO on March 1, 1950, at the time he was traveling around the country in support of Henry Wallace's campaign for President on the Progressive Party ticket.

By CARL MURPHY

Paul Robeson is next to Henry Wallace, the top leader of the Progressive Party.

Just being seen at his meetings or talking with him can cause the loyalty of Government workers to be called into question. Then they are in danger of losing their jobs.

The Progressives polled a million votes in the last election. There was not the slightest chance of electing their candidates to national office.

So why was the Progressive campaign pressed so zealously?

Why were Robeson and Wallace able to tour the country and draw crowds everywhere nearly as large as those attracted to the Dewey and Truman meetings?

* * *

PHYSICALLY AND mentally, Paul Robeson is one of the nation's first citizens.

He reminds me of Boss Kelly and Sonny Mahon. He is such good company, it doesn't make any difference what he talks about. You enjoy listening, whether he talks or sings.

And you recall that the people in show business average a higher IQ than any other group.

At Rutgers College, Mr. Robeson was All-American in football and Phi Beta Kappa in his classes.

He was among the top four concert singers who regularly commanded $3,000 for a single performance.

* * *

AS AN ACTOR, he starred in Shakespeare's "Othello" and the show grossed a million dollars on Broadway and another million dollars on the road.

In Europe he is the same big attraction he is here. The reason is that he is a good natured giant, an intellectual with an attractive personality, and he possesses one of the truly great singing and speaking voices of this generation.

Critics are agreed that Paul Robeson has the ability, personality, and the will to succeed in any career he puts his mind to.

How does it happen that political parties like the Democrats and Republicans have nothing to offer him?

Why is Robeson willing to desert one of the best money-making jobs in America and devote his life to the Progressive cause?

* * *

HERE IS A singer more colorful than Marian Anderson or Roland Hayes—more versatile, more intelligent, a tremendous human being.

He can be as silent on politics and the question of racial equality as they. Why isn't he?

That's what I asked Paul Robeson, Saturday.

What makes you tick?

What gives the Progressive party its zeal, its stubbornness, its unbending demands for an end to segregation now, not next week or next year; its absolute contempt for the Uncle Toms, who counsel "patience," and for the gradualists, who say "let's go slowly?"

* * *

THE CONVERSION of Paul Robeson to the Progressive cause was as dramatic as that of St. Paul to Christianity.

Here he was in 1947 ranking among the first four as a singer or as an actor, with 86 concerts scheduled which would average between $2,600 and $3,000 per concert.

Then he came to himself.

He was being exploited as a symbol of a racial equality in the United States which doesn't actually exist.

That's exactly what's being done to Jackie Robinson and Joe Louis today.

"See," white Americans say, "we treat the colored people right. Look at Paul, Jackie and Joe — full equality — no jim crow."

* * *

SO PAUL ROBESON said he must quit kidding himself.

He wouldn't sing before segregated audiences.

He would say at every opportunity that American democracy does not exist for the common people who happen to be colored.

He would advocate racial equality for all the little people, not just for Paul and Jackie and Joe.

He would be a crusader for the kind of human dignity that would enable black people to be men, too.

* * *

ROBESON'S manager howled. His friends pleaded; but he wouldn't recant. Of 86 concerts booked, 86 were canceled.

Money isn't everything.

Says Mr. Robeson:

"I am willing to make a sacrifice for my people, because I cannot be happy otherwise.

"I feel that I have to speak out against injustice as I see it.

"The zest, the earnestness, the persistent crusading spirit of the Progressive Party is as American as the Abolitionist Party of 1850.

"We know we are in the minority.

"But we also know that on the question of human dignity and human equality, we are right."

Coming Next Week

Beginning next week, the AFRO Magazine Section will print a series of four articles from Paul Robeson's new book "Here I Stand."

A revealing insight into what has happened to Mr. Robeson after eight years. Little known facts about the man who became one of America's most controversial figures.

Don't miss a single chapter.