WATERS OF BAYOU TECHE
BRING JOY AND SORROW

THERE'S BOTH A BLESSING AND A CURSE upon Louisiana's historic, romantic Bayou Teche, writes J. S. Badon of Breaux Bridge, La. Once you drink of those "muddy, mysterious waters" of the Teche, as Mr. Badon describes them, you must return to the Teche country, he says; though if you're in the heart-tumoil of a love affair, they're poison to romance. Recalling the numerous families of eight, 10 or more children born down the Teche, this last part is hard to understand, though Mr. Badon says it springs from the Evangeline-Gabriel legend. A Yankee named Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, who never saw the Teche, did so much to father a poem school children once had to learn.

Breaux Bridge [14 miles north of St. Martinville, La., where Evangeline is enshrined in bronze and memories] is also known as the Gabriel City of the Teche, says Mr. Badon, "because legend recalls it as the site where he paused to rest on his way down the Teche in a pirogue, searching for Evangeline." Continues Mr. Badon: "And because he never found her, the Bayou Teche has ever since been considered a curse to lovers who believe in its muddy, mysterious waters."

Mr. Badon quotes a song, words and music written by Valeska Brighten, a one-time school teacher of Breaux Bridge, to prove the magnetism of the Teche country.

"There's a saying, A true old saying: Once you taste the waters of the Teche You shall return To its flowing Rhythm. Glowing Memb'ries of its beauties Ever in your heart will burn."

The song ballad continues, he writes:

"Where the bluebird reaps the branches that enmesh, Where the weeping willows weep on Bayou Teche, I am going—going— Back to the land where the willows weep for me."

Modernity, the crawfish bisque industry, great oil fields, Bayou Teche takes in its stride, says Mr. Badon. He insists:

"Once you taste the waters of the Teche you shall return."

They didn't recommend it, on a recent visit to Franklin. Signs over water taps warned against drinking the waters of the Teche. Maybe that section felt overpopulated and didn't want any immigrants settling down.