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VOL. II

JUNE, 1936

NO. 5

ADVENTURES IN READING

NINTH SERIES

AGATHA BOYD ADAMS



CHAPEL HILL

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THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA PRESS

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1936

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	DICTATORS OLD AND NEW	8
	A Republic Bows to a Dictator: Freedom, Farewell!, by Phyllis Bentlev	
	Dictatorship of the Little Man: Millions of Dictators, by	
	Emil Lengyel	
II.	THE AMERICAN DREAM	8
	Middle of the Road Salvation: Land of the Free, by Herbert Agar	
	Middle Class Nostalgia: Paradise Lost, by Clifford Odets Life on the Installment Plan: If I have Four Apples, by Josephine Lawrence	
III.	AUTHENTIC AMERICANA	12
	Pioneer Oregon: Honey in the Horn, by H. L. Davis The Clippers Disappear from Maine: Time out of Mind, by Rachel Field	
IV.	MICROCOSMS OF MANHATTAN	16
	"Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life": Men and	
	Brethren, by James Gould Cozzens	
	"Let Fall Some Mercy with Thy Rain": Winterset, by Maxwell Anderson	
v.	CHILDREN'S CRUSADE	. 20
	Effective Anger: A Footnote to Folly, by Mary Heaton Vorse	
	The Lost Generation: Why Keep Them Alive? by Paul De Kruif	
VI.	Privilege Unfettered	. 24
	After Us the Deluge: Europa, by Robert Briffault	
	Wealth the Destroyer: The Thinking Reed, by Rebecca West	
VII.	SOVIET RUSSIA FROM WITHOUT AND FROM WITHIN	. 28
	A Modern Marco Polo: The Way of a Transgressor, by Negley Farson	
	Those Who Did Not Escape: We Soviet Women, by Tatiana Tchernavin	
VIII.	SWAMP FIRE AND SUNLIGHT	31
	Neo-Platonic Mysticism on an English Estate: Sparkenbroke, by Charles Morgan	
	Genuine Humanism: South Riding, by Winifred Holtby	

IX. A DOROTHY DIX OF THE SOPHISTICATES	34
Feminism in the Nineteenth Century: The School of Femininity, by Margaret Lawrence (Part I) Feminism since the World War: The School of Femi-	
ninity, by Margaret Lawrence (Part II)	
X. Matriarch, Helpmeet, Hetaera	38
From Canada to the Caucasus: Here Lies a Most Beau- tiful Lady, by Richard Blaker	
Japanese Idyll: The Wooden Pillow, by Carl Fallas	
"She Girdeth Her Loins with Strength": Faster! Faster! by E. M. Delafield	
XI. A PHILOSOPHER DISCOVERED BY THE MASSES	42
With a Silver Spoon: The Last Puritan, by George Santayana	
A Puritan Pilgrimage: The Last Puritan, by George Santayana	
XII. VARIATION ON A LUTE OF JADE	46
Chinese Humanistic Philosophy: My Country and My	
People, by Lin Yutang	
A Puritan in China: The Exile, by Pearl Buck	
Special Reference Bibliography	49
Addresses of Publishers	50
Additional Reference Bibliography	. 51
Schedule of Meetings	53

DICTATORS OLD AND NEW

De Quincy was thrilled in his dreams by the tread of massed legions that bore the S. P. Q. R. of republican Rome. In our own time the world has reverberated to the tread of Roman legions on the march again; Mussolini's defiant conquest of Ethiopia, followed by his proclamation of a new Roman Empire, is bound to suggest an analogy with the days of the Caesars. Miss Bentley's novel, Freedom Farewell!, a vivid reconstruction of the fall of the Republic and establishment of the Empire under Julius Caesar, has therefore unusual timeliness. For those of us who are old enough to recall without bitterness our classroom struggles with Caesar and Cicero, the book has a reminiscent flavor. But Miss Bentley's vigorous hands have shaken all the chalk dust off these familiar figures, and they, as well as Pompey and Brutus and Sulla, live with a reality far removed from text books and the exigencies of syntax. She has performed the almost incredible feat of weaving a lively and exciting novel out of the well known political events of the last forty years of the Roman Republic, without in any way violating the facts.

Freedom Farewell! has, however, a more profound timeliness than that of circumstance. In Miss Bentley's novel the dying Brutus, realizing the defeat of the Republic, asks himself "How have we let freedom slip?" It is a question being asked by many today, in this new era of dictatorships, fascism, and nazism. And Brutus' answer, accusing "the arrogance and stupidity of the patricians, the selfishness of the wealthy, the timidity, confusion and delay of the moderate well-meaning man, the greed and fickleness and stupidity of the people," is not without its modern application.

In Millions of Dictators Emil Lengyel brilliantly analyses the causes of the rise of dictatorships in the modern world. His view of history is directly opposed to that of Carlyle in Heroes and Hero Worship. He sees history made not by the few great leaders, but by the group thinking of masses of unknown men. Hence in order to answer "Why Hitler?" he analyses not der Führer himself, but the psychology of the average little man in Germany, of whom he feels Hitler to be the expression, the wish fulfillment. In a series of vignettes that are interesting as character studies as well as for the

stimulating ideas they contain, he presents the little man of the United States, France, Germany, Russia, Italy and England. Through conversations with these men we reach a fresh understanding of the Soviet régime, of nazism as a religion, of the radical-conservatism of the Frenchman, of the solidity of British democracy, and of why fascism does violence to the Italian soul. We may not always agree with Mr. Lengyel's conclusions, but he has, more than any other recent writer, given us a complete and assimilable study of the political mind of the modern world.

In studying these two books together, the development of Caesar's dictatorship may be used as a touchstone for comparing modern dictatorships. In many ways they are similar to it; in other ways quite dissimilar, if you agree with Mr. Lengyel that the modern dictator is the expression of mass thought.

Subjects for Study

I. A REPUBLIC BOWS TO A DICTATOR

Special Reference:

Freedom, Farewell! by Phyllis Bentley

- 1. Review the historical background.
- 2. Trace the fictional elements supplied by the author. Are they plausible?
- 3. Miss Bentley's technique is "that of the movies—flashes of fiction and summaries of history." How has it helped her in dealing with masses of material?
- 4. Does she succeed in bringing her historical characters to life?
- 5. Trace any analogies you may find between Rome in the last days of the Republic and the United States now, e.g. unemployment, relief, mass dissatisfaction, political corruption.
- 6. Comment on Elmer Davis's statement: "The Roman constitution, like our own, was supposed to protect the liberties of all citizens. Unfortunately, as interpreted by the conservatives in the last century of the Republic, it functioned chiefly as a protector of wealth. . . A constitution which works for one side only, and that for a party which is incapable of governing—the only answer to that, eventually, was the crossing of the Rubicon."
- Note the quotation from Mommsen at the beginning of Freedom Farewell! and show how it applies to the novel.

Additional References:

Caesar's Mantle, by Ferdinand Mainzer. (History, not fiction, which continues the story of Augustus where Miss Bentley leaves off.)

The Sound Wagon, by T. S. Stribling. (A satirical picture of United States politics, not without an edge of bitter truth.)

It Can't Happen Here, by Sinclair Lewis.

It Happened in Rome, by Elmer Davis. (Review of Freedom Farewell! in the Saturday Review of Literature, February 29, 1936.)

Land of the Free, by Herbert Agar.

Paradise Lost, by Clifford Odets.

Both of these last mentioned books are studied elsewhere in this bulletin; both present pictures of present day conditions in the United States.

II. DICTATORSHIP OF THE LITTLE MAN

Special Reference:

Millions of Dictators, by Emil Lengyel

- 1. Summarize the political credo of the average man from each country as presented by Mr. Lengyel.
- 2. Do you find his statement for the United States adequate?
- 3. He omits an average man from the South. Is the political attitude of this section covered by what the other spokesmen say?
- 4. Do you agree with him that "the average American is less politically minded than the average European?"
- 5. Why is he confident that France is not headed for fascism, or for communism?
- 6. Prove that in the case of Hitler "a dictator receives dictation from his own subjects."
- 7. The chapter describing the collective farm in Soviet Russia is an excellent bit of reporting: summarize it.
- 8. Comment on "Mussolini stands against all that the French and Russian revolutions sponsored."
- 9. Do you agree that "in England the little man is still the king?" What about unemployment and the dole? Contrast with this Herbert Agar's statement: "If England should learn to abolish unemployment tomorrow, there would still be millions of Englishmen who could never be restored to hope or to full life."

Additional References:

- The Way of a Transgressor, by Negley Farson. (Studied elsewhere in this bulletin. Compare Farson's descriptions of Russia with Lengyel's. Farson's approach is objective rather than psychological.)
- American Messiahs, by Unofficial Observer.
- See also references listed above, and those listed under the program entitled: The American Dream.

THE AMERICAN DREAM

"How have we let freedom slip?" Brutus asks in Freedom Farewell! Herbert Agar tries to answer the same query for the United States today in his Land of the Free. We have let our original freedom slip, he finds, by ceasing to be a nation of small property holders, that is, by letting more and more of the national wealth get into the hands of a few people. He seeks a solution for our present difficulties neither in fascism nor in communism, but in a return to what he calls the "American dream," a nation in which a great majority of the people own the means of production. He feels that political freedom is based not on the power to vote, but on the possession of real property; hence neither the share-cropper nor the factory worker has genuine freedom, though he may go to the polls. "Political freedom without economic freedom is a fake," he declares. In this connection it would be interesting to refer to what Emil Lengyel has to say about France, in Millions of Dictators (previously studied in this bulletin). France is a nation of small property holders, and therefore, according to Lengyel, will not go either fascist or communist.

Mr. Agar discusses ably the paradox of our potential wealth and our widespread poverty. As a cure for this he suggests a change from commercial farming, that is, the raising of cash crops, to what he terms agrarianism, or farming as a way of life, where the first concern is to provide abundant food for the farm family. In industry, he urges dividing the present giant industrial units into small ones on a more human scale, owned and operated by groups.

Land of the Free brims over with pithy and stimulating ideas, any of which will provide interesting foci for discussion. It is instinct with genuine patriotism, neither sentimental nor jingoistic, but based on a deep belief in the resources, both material and spiritual, of our country. For this reason it should be required reading for every one who has a stake in the future of the United States.

Paradise Lost by Clifford Odets and If I Have Four Apples by Josephine Lawrence furnish, the one poetically and the other with the clarity of a graph, a picture of just the type of Americans who according to Mr. Agar have lost their freedom. In Paradise Lost

we see them bewildered, insecure, frustrated, haunted by a nostalgia for the past; the paradise which they have lost, and to which they cannot return, is "the American dream," independence based on economic security. The third act states the case with poignant irony, when the dispossessed family is denied even the ultimate right of having their furniture on the sidewalk, lest it cast a gloom over a political pep meeting for prosperity.

If I Have Four Apples reveals with tenderness and humor and understanding the dilemma of the members of a lower middle class family who, lured by the ballyhoo of advertising, have strained toward a false standard of living, and have consequently lost their freedom in a prison of indebtedness. All of us will probably feel that we are more provident than the Bradleys, but an open-minded reading of the novel will send most of us scurrying to revise our budgets.

Subjects for Study

I. MIDDLE OF THE ROAD SALVATION

Special Reference:

Land of the Free, by Herbert Agar

- Define historically what Mr. Agar means by "the American dream."
- 2. He attaches very special definitions to the words culture and civilization. What are they?
- 3. Do you think he idealizes the American small town, as contrasted with the city?
- 4. Note his reference to Southern culture, on pages 134, 161, 165.

 Is he correct?
- 5. Compare his concept of agrarianism with Lengyel's description of a farm in High Savoy, in Millions of Dictators.
- 6. Read aloud his lively description of Hollywood (p. 150 ff.)
- 7. "We are a potentially rich nation; we have put up with increasing poverty for a hundred years, and we have come out with widespread destitution as a reward," Agar. Discuss this with reference to Paul De Kruif's Why Keep Them Alive? (studied elsewhere in this bulletin.)
- 8. Discuss Mr. Agar's apology for lynching. Do you find him reactionary?
- 9. Outline the steps which he thinks "those of us who have confidence in America" should take (pp. 263-270).
- 10. Discuss his final statement: "The American people are sick with a desire to honor their country; they will follow a man who offers them a country that is honorable."

II. MIDDLE CLASS NOSTALGIA

Special Reference:

Paradise Lost, by Clifford Odets

- Summarize the story of the first two acts, and read aloud the third one.
- 2. Harold Clurman's introduction will furnish an excellent basis for discussion. Mr. Clurman is stage director for the Group Theatre, which produced *Paradise Lost*. Notice what he says about the symbolism of the characters. Do they seem to you symbolic, or real, or a mingling of the two?
- 3. When Paradise Lost was produced in New York in the winter of 1935-36 most of the critics compared Odets to Chekhov. A comparison with The Cherry Orchard might be interesting.
- Relate Paradise Lost with the ideas expressed in Land of the Free.

III. LIFE ON THE INSTALLMENT PLAN

Special Reference:

If I Have Four Apples, by Josephine Lawrence

- 1. A brief outline of the story should be given first, as a basis of discussion.
- 2. What are the various factors which keep the Bradleys entangled in debt?
- 3. Discuss the rôle of old Mrs. Darbac. She represents a simpler and less pretentious way of life. Is it also intrinsically more independent?
- 4. Herbert Agar insists that independence is based on property ownership. But Josephine Lawrence shows us Mr. Bradley struggling futilely to pay for his house, deceived by the real estate dealer's slogan of "own your own home." Is there truth in both points of view?
- 5. Show in what ways the Bradleys are a little like all of us, which accounts for the warm humanity of the novel.

Additional References: (for all three of the above books)

Liberalism and Social Action, by John Dewey.

Insurgent America, by Alfred M. Bingham.

Partners in Plunder, by J. B. Matthews and R. E. Shallcross.

The Crisis of the Middle Class, by Lewis Corey.

Who Owns America? edited by Herbert Agar and Allen Tate. (This symposium amplifies the agrarian ideas of Land of the Free.)

Sweden, the Middle Way, by Marquis W. Childs. (The agrarianism of Sweden is similar to that advocated by Mr. Agar.)

Roots of America, by Charles Morrow Wilson.

Awake and Sing, by Clifford Odets.

Waiting for Lefty, by Clifford Odets.

Years Are So Long, by Josephine Lawrence.

Southern Regions of the United States, by H. W. Odum.

AUTHENTIC AMERICANA

One of the most conspicuous trends in recent American fiction has been a mounting interest in the regional novel; that is, the novel which draws richness of texture from portraying the life of a specific region. It would be interesting but impossible to compute how much this interest was stimulated by the Scribner contest of five years ago, in which prizes were offered for descriptions of some phase of the American scene actually observed by the writer. Marjorie Rawlings, author of South Moon Under and other regional novels of Florida, was one of the prize winners. Since that time both the number and the quality of such books has gone up. We have become more aware of the abundant variety of our national life, and from this increased awareness have sprung some distinguished works of art.

The two prize-winning novels of 1936 are both regional, although as disparate in mood as in the sections which they describe. It is a long way spiritually as well as in miles from the Maine coast of *Time Out of Mind*, which won the award of the American Booksellers' Association for the most distinguished novel of 1936, to the Oregon of *Honey in the Horn*, yet both are authentically American.

In Honey in the Horn H. L. Davis writes of a region never, so far as I know, described in fiction before, the Oregon of the early nineteen hundreds, which at that time was still a frontier state. It is hard to realize that Oregon at the turn of the century duplicated conditions which existed in Kentucky and the Ohio valley a hundred years earlier; there was always the prospect of more fertile land ahead, always the chance of getting rich quick. Some day everybody would be rich. E. H. Harriman and James J. Hill were about to build railroads here, there and everywhere; all one had to do was to stake out a homestead and wait till the railroad came that way. In the meantime there were plenty of exciting jobs for everybody-sheepherding, horse trading, fishing, hop-picking, town building. The prevailing mood of Honey in the Horn is the restlessness of a pioneer country which has not settled down, a mood which is caught up and summarized in the brave restlessness of the girl Luce.

But Honey in the Horn is not so much the story of Luce and Clay and their wanderings as of the land itself. The real protagonist is the Oregon country, fertile, abundant, cruel and variable. The vagabondage of Luce and Clay furnishes a thread on which to string a series of salty anecdotes, genuine backwoods humor, episodes with the flavor of the picaresque. Dominating all these is the feeling, pervasive yet never sentimentalized, of nature in a fresh new world. This gains in depth and reality, not only from the author's actual knowledge of trees and shrubs and flowers, but also from his acute sensitivity to their color and pattern and varying appearance in different lights. The reader of Honey in the Horn has ridden horseback over the mountains, slept in forest hide-outs, seen blue lupins in cold sunshine, and watched salmon tumble headlong up glittering rivers.

Beside the boisterous looseness of Honey in the Horn, Time out of Mind has the precision and clarity that we associate with the New England landscape. It is not enough to say that the first is essentially a man's book, the second a woman's; the elements which determine their difference are native to the soil in which each is rooted. Miss Field's novel is Maine crystallized with gem-like distinctness, very much as the green of the Maine woods is crystallized in those strangely lovely tourmalines that are found in the mountains of the state.

For any one who knows the rocky coast, the islands, the wild red raspberry patches, the salt air and clear light of Maine, the book will evoke remembered scenes, but its deeper significance lies in the character of Kate, who accepts life with the courage of generations who have lived by the sea and meet hardship without faltering. The finely balanced contrast between her vigorous personality, which is made for life, and the more delicately keyed Nat and Rissa, who are bewildered by life, has as its background the passing of all that the Fortunes stood for, and the staunch survival of the village itself. Kate is of the genuine stuff of New England, in the final analysis more important in the composition of the American scene than the transcendentalists of Cambridge or the social brahmins of Boston.

Time out of Mind represents the regional novel at a high point of achievement. Its theme, a changing social order giving way to new modes of life, is universal; but its setting and characters are vividly localized.

Subjects for Study

I. PIONEER OREGON

Special Reference:

Honey in the Horn, by H. L. Davis

- Outline the story of Clay's wanderings, which give the book its only unity.
- 2. Clay is a wanderer from necessity, but everybody else in the book is a wanderer too. Why is this?
- Recount some of the more picturesque anecdotes, which give it an especial flavor, such as the wagon ride with the sheriff, salvaging flour from the Pacific, the lynching of Wade Shively.
- 4. Do you think its looseness of structure becomes monotonous?
 5. Some reviewers have compared it with *Huckleberry Finn*; do
- you notice any similarity, in mood or manner?
- "Honey in the Horn has the Americanism of Walt Whitman." Do you agree?
- 7. Illustrate the objective feeling for nature which pervades Honey in the Horn.

Additional References:

The Grandmothers, by Glenway Wescott. (Pioneer life in Wisconsin)

Lamb in His Bosom, by Caroline Miller. (The Georgia backwoods)

Free Forester, by Horatio Colony. (An excellent novel of pioneer life in the days of Daniel Boone)

II. THE CLIPPERS DISAPPEAR FROM MAINE

Special Reference:

Time Out of Mind, by Rachel Field

- 1. The interwoven stories of Kate and Nat and Rissa are full of interest; they should be told as a basis of discussion.
- 2. The passing of sailing vessels and the consequent economic and social changes in New England are familiar themes; how has Miss Field given them new life?
- Notice how the author has combined the theme of the passing of ships and forests with Nat Fortune's personal triumph and disaster. This is well summarized on page 319.
- Gladys Hasty Carroll says that Kate represents a certain distinctive quality of spirit in Maine women. What is it? Compare her with the heroines of other Maine novels listed below.
- 6. Comment on the symbolism of the old clock with its woodsmen sawing away at time.
- 7. Harry Hansen picked *Time out of Mind* as the Pulitzer prize winner. Do you agree with him, or with the committee which

made the award to *Honey in the Horn?* Which of the two novels is firmer in design, more distinguished in style? Which has more real vitality?

Additional References:

Silas Crockett, by Mary Ellen Chase.

Mary Peters, by Mary Ellen Chase.

As the Earth Turns, by Gladys Hasty Carroll.

A Few Foolish Ones, by Gladys Hasty Carroll.

Red Sky at Morning, by Robert P. T. Coffin.

The Islands, by Gerald Warner Brace.

All of the above are recent novels with a setting in Maine.

Vein of Iron, by Ellen Glasgow. (The heroine springs from frontier Virginians, but is in many ways of the same stuff as Kate Fernald.)

New England Sees It Through, by Gladys Hasty Carroll. (Article in the Saturday Review of Literature, November 9, 1935.)

MICROCOSMS OF MANHATTAN

New York City has been dubbed the forty-ninth state, so alien is it to the rest of America. No program which devotes much space to the other regions of the United States would be complete without at least a glance at New York. Its multitudinous variety and complexity, that "dissolving turmoil of an unlimited transition," have attracted and baffled scores of writers. John Dos Passos caught something of its chaotic hubbub in Manhattan Transfer. The two books studied below attempt no such panorama; choosing rather a limited section of the sprawling city, they etch it with fine clear strokes. Though neither the novel nor the play states its locale, both are as unmistakably New York as a ride on a rush hour subway; not the New York of the sleek and glittering avenues, but New York of the turbulent cross streets, the dead ends under great bridges, the hidden places, where poverty and depression play a sombre chorus to haphazard events.

James Gould Cozzens' story of a down town New York chapel is written with such economy and such packed thoughtfulness that on a first reading, carried along by interest, one is apt to miss its implications. Mr. Cozzens' stripped and rapid style is the exact antithesis of the unpruned verbiage of Thomas Wolfe; he has set himself a difficult task here by applying his compact method to such teeming material. He likes a controlling design for his novels. In The Last Adam the village telephone exchange held all the many characters together in its network, and in Men and Brethren the rubrics and ritual of the Episcopal Church furnish the pattern. But only the pattern; the uninitiated reader need not be deterred by this. Mr. Cozzens uses the church somewhat as a biologist uses a scoop to dip into the ocean and bring up for examination a small amount of water swarming with life. Ernest Cudlipp's Vicarage swarms with hurt and baffled and stupid and bewildered people who come to him for help. Their interwoven stories jostle each other with the close yet fortuitous contacts of a Manhattan crowd. Each of them, though presented briefly, has fourth dimensional reality. Ernest himself, whose broad sympathies draw all the other characters together, is unforgettably portrayed, with his incessant

smoking, his obsession for the telephone—which by the way is also the author's obsession—his continual lack of money, his pragmatic solutions for human problems. Through a hard hot summer weekend we watch him coping with the smugness of his youthful assistant, the childish vanity of Alice, the near tragedy of Geraldine, the absurdities of John Wade.

How may a clergyman reconcile the theological dogma he learned in the seminary with his actual experience of the needs and perplexities of human nature? That deep persistent conflict continues in Ernest's mind under the tumult of his many responsibilities, nor is it ever quite resolved. His only way out is to become a realist "who does the best he can with things as they are." He may not be positive about "the mystical washing away of sins," but he believes in the obligation of the church to help sinners.

In Winterset Maxwell Anderson takes us to an even lower limbo of Manhattan than the Vicarage of Holy Innocents. His dramatis personae truly belong to the lost generation. Garth Esdras might have been a great violinist, Miriamne's gift for love would have made her life significant, Mio's integrity and passion for justice might have served his generation; but they are caught in a tragic mesh of crime from which there is no escape except in death. These three potentially rich human lives are wasted—why? Mr. Anderson attempts no reply, but presents his case with such eloquence that the reader is forced to seek an answer. No Ernest Cudlipp, however reasonable his tolerance, could help here; the doom of Garth and Mio has sources too deep to be reached by charity or sympathy. The play however is not entirely one of gloom. Just as Men and Brethren is lighted up by humor, Winterset is relieved by the poetic beauty of the love scenes.

Winterset, after a successful run on Broadway during the season of 1935-36, received the award of the Drama Critics Circle as the most distinguished play of the year, and returned to Broadway in June. Maxwell Anderson is to have three new plays in verse presented next season.

Subjects for Study

I. "WHERE CROSS THE CROWDED WAYS OF LIFE"

Special Reference:

Men and Brethren, by James Gould Cozzens

- Describe the setting briefly, and outline the main events of Ernest Cudlipp's weekend.
- Select one or two of the more vivid stories, such as the tragedy of Lulu Merrick, or Lee Breens's flirtation with Catholicism, or Wilbur's seminary arguments.
- 3. Ernest's solution of Geraldine's problems is the most controversial point in the novel. Was he orthodox? Was he right?
- 4. Note that John Wade never actually appears. Do you nevertheless know a great deal about him?
- 5. Comment on Ernest's belief that there is a "legitimate difference between discretion and hypocrisy."
- 6. Does the general design of Men and Brethren remind you in any way of Grand Hotel? Show how the former is given unity more by the dominating character of Ernest than by the background of the vicarage.
- 7. Summarize Ernest's creed, or rather his working philosophy of life. Much of it will be found in his talk with Carl Willever, and in his final visit to Geraldine. Is he a Christian?

Additional References:

Manhattan Transfer, by John Dos Passos.

The Last Adam, by James Gould Cozzens.

The Inside of the Cup, by Winston Churchill. (This study of a clergy-man was considered very unorthodox when it appeared in 1913.)

The Book of Common Prayer. (If you need to look up any of the allusions to Episcopal practice. Most of them are clear.)

II. "LET FALL SOME MERCY WITH THY RAIN"

Special Reference:

Winterset, by Maxwell Anderson

- The basic plot of the play was probably suggested by the Sacco-Vanzetti trial. Look up the account of this in Mary Heaton Vorse's A Footnote to Folly.
- 2. Recount the circumstances that drew together Garth, Miriamne, Mio, and Judge Gaunt. Does coincidence seem stretched too far? Is this not a convention that we grant to the drama, such as the absence of the fourth wall?
- 3. Judge Gaunt is quite different from the judge in the famous trial. What is gained for the drama by presenting him sympa-

- thetically? Show how the problems of a conscientious judge are suggested in his conversation with Mio, (p. 73-80).
- 4. Comment: "It's the jury . . . that finds for guilt or innocence. The judge is powerless in that matter," (p. 76). How much influence does the judge exert through his charge?
- 5. Does Mio in any way suggest Hamlet? Note also the use of a ghost, Shadow. Because of these resemblances, does *Winterset* seem to you a reminiscent play, looking to the past, or is it modern?
- 6. A subsidiary theme of the drama is the balancing of youth against age, youth demanding absolutes, age accepting compromises. This is part of the theme of The Last Puritan by George Santayana.
- 7. In reference to the above, comment on Mio's speech (p. 70) "Will you tell me how a man's to live and face his life, if he can't believe that truth's like a fire?" Compare with this Esdras' speech (p. 71) "We ask a great deal of the world at first . . . then less . . . and then less."
- 8. Maxwell Anderson writes blank verse of swift sure beauty, in the great English tradition, and yet in modern tempo. Read aloud some of it, such as the conversation between Miriamne and Mio (pp. 47-50).
- 9. Is Winterset to be taken as an indictment of our legal system, or of society in general? Discuss its social implications.

Additional Reference:

A Footnote to Folly, by Mary Heaton Vorse. (For an account of the Sacco-Vanzetti trial.)

CHILDREN'S CRUSADE

It is comfortable to reflect smugly that at no other time in history has so much been done to make children happy and well; pleasant to consider the marvellous advances made by medicine in protecting the health of babies, by psychology in methods of child training, by education in liberating the minds of children. We forget that these advances are out of reach of millions of children. The two great disasters of our generation, war and depression, have taken their heaviest toll of children, if not in actual numbers certainly in ultimate results. In Russia, in Serbia, all over Central Europe after the war there were thousands of lost children wandering the roadways, children whose parents had died of war or famine or epidemic, children whose future was without security and without hope. In the United States since the depression there have been bands of boy and girl tramps, homeless and wasted; half-starved children in our mining and industrial towns ineradicably damaged by poverty.

Mary Heaton Vorse, newspaper woman and mother of three children herself, could never forget the other children of the world. She reversed the emotional development of the average woman; instead of becoming more absorbed in her own family, her sympathies grew and extended to children everywhere. She describes herself as "a woman who in early life got angry because many children lived miserably and died needlessly." This might be used as a subtitle to her reminiscences A Footnote to Folly, for her concern for children gives the book a unity which few autobiographies ever have. It is an angry book, but also an extraordinarily brave and vital one; the record of a woman's life centered completely outside of self, extraverted by her profound interest in the welfare of others. Repeatedly she says such things as "My own private life had ceased to exist," or "The huge strike had wiped out my personal life." Surely there is more than an echo here of "he that loseth his life shall find it."

A Footnote to Folly recounts, with only a brief flash back to her serene childhood in Amherst, her experiences as newspaper reporter, foreign correspondent, and labor sympathizer during the significant and crowded years from 1912 to 1922. As a picture of the news dramas of that decade it ranks with Lincoln Steffens' Autobiography or Vincent Sheean's Personal History. Always, because of her passionate sympathies, more than a witness, she participated in some of the most exciting events of her era. She reported the Lawrence strike, represented the Red Cross in Switzerland, watched the Vienna Putsch, was in Hungary under Bela Kun, went into the Balkans with the American Relief Administration, saw the famine in Russia in 1921, returned to report the great steel strike; a strangely adventurous life for a middle class American woman brought up in a college town. Through all this there is no note of egotism; she is zestfully and enormously interested in people and events.

Because the author is a woman, the book has a different angle of observation from that of the various autobiographies of newsmen which cover the same epoch; her story deals not with abstract movements and organizations, but always with personalities. "No one knows anything about a strike until he has seen it break down into its component parts of human beings," she says, and applies the same method to her accounts of wars and revolutions. Her attitude is realistic and maternal; the main thing is to feed the starving, help the lost, save the children—away with the delays and expediencies of statesmen, unmindful of human needs. It is an attitude the world could use just now.

As a corollary to A Footnote to Folly, Paul De Kruif's Why Keep Them Alive? needs little commentary. Angrily, almost stridently, he shouts at us about the needless suffering of children, not in war-destroyed Europe, but in the United States here and now. He writhes with impatience, just as Mrs. Vorse does, at the delays of government, and sees only the clear-cut issue of children malnourished while milk is thrown away, children dying in the shadow of hospitals which have the science to save them. His impatience at the follies of our financial system has brought on him the scorn of economists. The riddle of starvation in the midst of abundance perhaps can not be solved so simply as he thinks, but his vigorous statement of its fundamental absurdity can not fail to arouse reflections on our own responsibility for these conditions.

Subjects for Study

I. EFFECTIVE ANGER

Special Reference:

A Footnote to Folly, by Mary Heaton Vorse

- An outline of her adventures may be obtained from the very full chapter headings.
- 2. The book gains vitality from its thumbnail sketches of personalities; some of these should be read aloud, for instance, the portrait of Mrs. O'Brien (pp. 274-275), or the children's New Year's party (pp. 349-352).
- 3. The story of Milorad Bachanin might be taken as the very heart of the book; comment on it.
- 4. What is characteristic about her refusal to interview Marie of Rumania?
- 5. Discuss her remarks on women in war time (pp. 124-125). Do you agree?
- 6. If you have seen the H. G. Wells film Things to Come, compare the desolation there depicted with Mrs. Vorse's description of Serbia after the war. Does Wells seem too far-fetched?
- 7. The last two pages summarize the book, and should be read aloud.
- 8. Why did she change the title from A Footnote to History? Is the book an anti-war plea as well as a plea for social justice?

Additional References:

Men and Steel; Strike, by Mary Heaton Vorse.

I Write as I Please, by Walter Duranty.

The Way of a Transgressor, by Negley Farson. (Note the difference in reaction of these two newspaper men who observed much the same events as Mrs. Vorse.)

Jane Addams: A Biography, by James Weber Linn. (Another record of social responsibility.)

II. THE LOST GENERATION

Special Reference:

Why Keep Them Alive? by Paul De Kruif

- Comment on the quotation from Ruskin on the fly leaf, "There is no wealth but life."
- 2. Outline the various medical discoveries which De Kruif feels should be within the reach of all children.
- 3. Why are not these scientific resources universally available? Study the chapter headed "Who Owns Our Science?"
- 4. The chapter "Drouth is a Blessing" is a terrifyingly vivid piece of reporting, which should be outlined and parts of it read.

- 5. A survey such as that of the slums of Cincinnati might be undertaken in any town. What could be gained by it?
- 6. Discuss the quotation from General Gorgas (p. 208).
- 7. Discuss the Emergency Nutrition suggested on page 241.
- 8. Comment on Mr. De Kruif's knowledge of economics. Do you sympathize with his point of view? Is it essentially similar to that of Mary Heaton Vorse?

Additional References:

The Lost Generation, by Maxine Davis. (A survey of youth in the depression.)

Outposts of Science, by Bernard Jaffe.

The Unfinished Business of Science, by C. C. Furnas. (Mr. De Kruif's conclusions should be tested by these more scientific works.)

CHAPTER VI

PRIVILEGE UNFETTERED

Many of the books studied in this bulletin are instinct with social consciousness. In giving them space the editor is reflecting the spirit of the day, since many more books with such a trend are being published. If it were not already in the air, Mr. Roosevelt would have made us conscious of the forgotten man; in so doing he is the spokesman rather than the seer for his generation. To turn from such angry books as Why Keep Them Alive? and A Footnote to Folly, or such analyses of our social conditions as Land of the Free, to Europa and The Thinking Reed is to see the reverse of the medal; to learn how the very small minority who control the most of the world's wealth enjoy their prerogatives.

One reviewer said that after reading Europa one could never again have any respect for a Grand Duke. Briffault's realistic picture of Russian Grand Dukes is revolting enough to be a thorough justification of the Russian revolution, though this justification is implicit throughout the novel rather than directly expressed. On the other hand, his description of Italian culture at its best suggests the good use of wealth and privilege. The scale of the novel is panoramic; he paints on a tremendous canvas the complex, intricately interwoven society of pre-war Europe, aimlessly and blindly drifting toward annihilation. The sub-title, "The Days of Ignorance," probably indicates the author's own interpretation of his task.

The theme is summarized in the spiritual progress—or retrogression—of Philip Bern, whose story holds together the mass of other episodes. Philip, endowed with an able mind and a background of international culture, drifts from his early eagerness to find a meaning in life toward the paganism of Zena. She "healed his disease of thought," and in this escape he abandoned his philosophical aspirations. Thus in a sense Zena symbolizes the amoral sensuality of pre-war Europe, and Philip the breakdown of intellectual integrity. But to say that is to over-simplify the novel. Philip and Zena are individuals before they are symbols; Philip is defeated by forces within himself as well as by the kind of society in which he lives. And Zena is the finest florescence of privi-

lege without responsibility. The vast scale of Europa defies reduction to a formula. Uneven, at times dull, it nevertheless rewards the reader with exciting episodes, an exotic blend of romance and realism, and stimulating ideas cogently expressed. Its primary appeal is perhaps to that element in all of us which enjoys the pictures of rich people in the Sunday rotogravure sections, but its implications and overtones arouse much more startling reflections than could be touched off by a romanticized Almanach de Gotha.

In The Thinking Reed Rebecca West deals with the same sort of people, the sleek Europeans who appear at Le Touquet or St. Moritz for the correct season; except that here the setting is postwar instead of pre-war. The sobering fact, however, is that the cataclysm has made very little change. True, the Grand Dukes are no longer in power, and Russia is represented only by a pathetic lost princess; and Marc's factory is at least in part under government supervision, but such differences are external. The essential life attitude of these highly privileged people remains the same.

Both these books may be read from two widely divergent points of view. You may enjoy them as you enjoy turning the pages of the more expensive fashion magazines for the glimpses they give of a glamorous and luxurious world, all the more fascinating because out of reach. Or you may interpret both of them as terrific indictments of a class completely unaware of responsibility and unworthy of privilege.

The Thinking Reed instead of attempting a panorama centers in the character of Isabel; all the events and other people of the novel are seen through her eyes. This gives it not only unity, but an especial interest, since Miss West penetrates very subtly into this sensitive and complex personality, and has some wise and witty things to say about her relations to her world. Especially delicate in understanding is her portrayal of Isabel's developing love for Marc.

Subjects for Study

I. AFTER US THE DELUGE

Europa, by Robert Briffault

1. While it would be difficult to give a summary of a book of such scope, the life story of Julian may be outlined; his Italian boyhood, his British schooling, his romance, his work in biology, his defeat.

- 2. The background of Catholic tradition was important for Julian, as it was for all Europe. Note the expression of it in the Cardinal's conversation (pp. 53-55).
- 3. What did Julian want from life? "No longer was he able to give himself up to the beauty only of the world. He had to seek a path through it, to find the direction of his journey." The result of his quest is summarized on pages 408-409.

4. Some of the more picturesque incidents may be selected and recounted; as, for instance, the flogging of Baroness Rubinstein.

5. It would be unfair, however, to stress the sensationalism of the book without stressing also its philosophic and social implications; the first in the mind of Julian, the second in the picture of a mad society.

6. Comment on the economic implications of the novel.

7. The New York Herald Tribune of May 17, 1936, announced that Max Gordon will launch his new season, the fall of 1936, with Robert Buckner's dramatization of Europa. It will be interesting to compare this with the novel.

Additional References:

Breakdown, by Robert Briffault.

The Decline of the West, by Oswald Spengler. (These works will furnish a historical background for Europa.)

Of Human Bondage, by Somerset Maugham. (The character of Julian has been compared to that of Philip.)

II. WEALTH THE DESTROYER

Special Reference:

The Thinking Reed, by Rebecca West

- Trace the three interwoven themes: (a) the story of a sensitive woman slowly falling in love with a good man; (b) of an American woman slowly growing to understand the Gallic way of life; (c) of a wealthy woman slowly revolted by the vulgarity of wealth.
- Comment on Miss West's understanding of a woman's emotions as shown in Isabel's attitude toward Marc, and toward the loss of her child.
- 3. Compare Miss West's descriptions of European society (pp. 89-100, 147-149, etc.) with Briffault's. Is the implicit indictment similar?
- 4. The picture of an English family is one of the most devastating. It would be interesting to read aloud.
- 5. Discuss: "The great difference between the two books is that Briffault's implications are largely economic and Miss West's are largely ethical."

6. Show how both Julian and Isabel are shaped by environment. In what sense does wealth destroy them both?

Additional References:

Here Lies a Most Beautiful Lady, by Richard Blaker.

The School of Femininity, by Margaret Lawrence. (Both of these books, reviewed in this bulletin, are studies of women with a point of view very different from Miss West's.)

SOVIET RUSSIA FROM WITHOUT AND FROM WITHIN

Of the making of books about Russia there is no end. That sprawling multiple inchoate giant, with one foot in Europe and the other firmly planted in Asia, has always tantalized Occidental curiosity, and the experiment of Sovietism challenges the understanding of the Western world. We may regard that experiment with consternation, with fear, with scientific interest, or with enthusiastic approval, but regardless of our personal attitude, we are bound to realize that it is as poignantly significant for our age as the French Revolution was for the eighteenth century. In the social and economic laboratories of Moscow and Leningrad formulas are being worked out which may affect the future ideology of the world. We may vituperate the methods of communism, but as intelligent beings we can not disregard Soviet Russia.

Negley Farson took both Tsarist and revolutionary Russia in his stride; the seven league boots of his curiosity and lust for adventure carried him over most of the world, always managing to land him in the thick of excitement. He is a traveler in the right vein of Marco Polo, with a tremendous zest for enjoying the world, and an unquenchable desire to "take the lid off a situation and look inside it." He reports objectively, without sympathy or partisanship or any attempt at making deductions. Mary Heaton Vorse saw Russia in terms of starving children; Vincent Sheean saw it as an experiment in social philosophy; but Farson sees it as a varied and engrossing spectacle. He has, however, the story teller's gift to an uncanny degree, and this makes up for his lack of profound thought or sensitive penetration of the inwardness of events.

The Way of a Transgressor dares comparison with a large group of similar books which have appeared recently. Some of them are listed below; all are records of first hand experience of world events. Their vogue is comparable to that for war books of a few years back. I believe it is also symptomatic of an increasing interest in international affairs.

Tatiana Tchernavin's series of vignettes of Russian women is as partisan as Farson's accounts of Russia are dispassionate. It could

not be otherwise, for it is torn from the personal experience of a Russian intellectual who under the Soviet lost everything that had given life dignity and security. All the more remarkable that she can write without rancor and bitterness; something of the genuine aristocratic attitude inheres in her serenely courageous acceptance of a changed world. Few novels can furnish more dramatic human situations than these fifteen real life sketches of women under Soviet rule. By no means to be taken as a complete picture, We Soviet Women has extraordinary value as a human document. The swift changes which occur in Soviet Russia should be kept in mind in studying this book; statements and observations may become out of date very rapidly. For instance, on May 30, 1936, the job discriminations formerly levied against the so-called privileged classes were wiped out by the All-Union Soviet Control Committee. Thus the Vera of Mme Tchernavin's first and painful story would today be able to get a job.

Subjects for Study

I. A MODERN MARCO POLO

Special Reference:

The Way of a Transgressor, by Negley Farson

- 1. Comment on the title. What did Mr. Farson really transgress? Isn't he a bit hard on himself?
- 2. What was the motivating force of his life? Outline briefly the circumstances which thrust him into so adventurous a life.
- Is he as objective in dealing with himself as in describing events? Comment on the physical handicaps under which he labored.
- 4. Recount some of his experiences in Tsarist Russia and contrast them with what he found later under the Soviet.
- 5. The idyll called "Beachcombing in British Columbia" is well worth re-telling. Does this way of life seem to you an escape?
- 6. The voyage across Europe in *Flame* should be outlined, using a map, if possible.
- 7. Discuss: "I met some great men such as Roosevelt and Gandhi. And I met some good men, such as Lord Irwin, Viceroy of India, and George Lansbury."
- 8. Compare his description of Irish farms (pp. 505-506) with Herbert Agar's idea of subsistence farming as set forth in Land of the Free (used elsewhere in this bulletin).
- 9. Has Mr. Farson the power of synthesis, i.e., of drawing conclusions from the events which he observes?

10. A comparison of The Way of a Transgressor with Personal History would make an interesting study.

Additional References:

I Write as I Please, by Walter Duranty.

Personal History, by Vincent Sheean.

British Agent, by Bruce Lockhart.

Travels in Two Democracies, by Edmund Wilson.

John Reed, by Granville Hicks. (Farson knew John Reed personally, and refers to him several times.)

II. THOSE WHO DID NOT ESCAPE

Special Reference:

We Soviet Women, by Tatiana Tchernavin

1. An outline of Mme Tchernavin's circumstances and her career under the Soviet should be given; i.e., the imprisonment of her husband, her work in the museums, her own imprisonment.

2. The stories have a rich variety; select a few of them which would prove interesting to your group; some of the more vivid are "Vera," "A Girl Student," "Sonya,"

3. Comment on the Chapter "A Political Prisoner," which criticises the Soviet from a novel point of view, that of a former revolutionary.

4. Compare Mme Tchernavin's description of famine (p. 160 ff) with that of Mary Heaton Vorse, in A Footnote to Folly.

5. Refer to Europa (studied elsewhere in this bulletin), for an idea of Russian aristocracy in Tsarist days. Bad as the new régime is, can it be worse than the old? Do the Grand Dukes of Europa justify the revolution?

6. Granted that the revolution was justifiable, is the methodology of the Soviet necessary? Millions of people have suffered under it. Is this essential in the architecture of a new world?

Additional References:

Escape from the Soviets, by Tatiana Tchernavin. Soviet Communism, by Sidney and Beatrice Webb. I Worked for the Soviet, by Alexandra Tolstoy. This Soviet World, by Anna Louise Strong. We, the Living, by Ayn Rand.

SWAMP FIRE AND SUNLIGHT

Sparkenbroke, by Charles Morgan, and South Riding, by Winifred Holtby, both portray the English scene, and are in the English tradition. They are bracketed here, however, not for this obvious similarity, but because of the contrast in their attitude toward the riddle of death. Both novels are deeply concerned with death, but one is defeatist, the other affirmative; one denies life, the other accepts it in all its fullness.

Few recent novels have been received with more widely divergent critical opinions than Sparkenbroke. In the same issue of the Saturday Review of Literature (April 18, 1936) Wilson Follett devoted a serious critical study to it, and Christopher Morley uttered whoops of devastating mirth over its absurdities. Clifton Fadiman in the New Yorker (April 18, 1936) joined in the guffaws of Mr. Morley, but most of the other critics accorded it rather solemn consideration. Some of this was due, no doubt, to the popularity of his previous novel, The Fountain, which dealt ably with the fundamental human need of finding some inner source of spiritual serenity. Sparkenbroke approaches even more fundamental human problems of love and death, but because of a certain spurious glamour, it never seems to touch reality. Mr. Morgan has attempted, of course, a very difficult task in creating a superlative character; we are asked to believe in the overwhelming magnetism and beauty of Sparkenbroke, and in his genius, none of which qualities ever become convincing. Sparkenbroke's world weariness and self pity are in themselves a denial of genius. The samples of his poetry lack the magic accents of the great poets. His love affair with Mary is as unreal as his genius. He and Mary have neither the courage to accept their love nor to deny it; they play with the idea through six hundred pages of fine-spun talk.

Sparkenbroke may be enjoyed for the incidental beauty of its setting, the idyllic life in the rectory, for instance, and for its occasional penetrating and delicate sidelights on the problems of love. In this it reminds one of the troubadour romances of Provence. But when its basic ideas are stripped of the glamour with which Mr. Morgan's really beautiful style invests them, they are revealed as artificial.

This artificiality becomes apparent when the novel is contrasted with South Riding, which is full of a genuine understanding of humanity. The light that gives poetic beauty to South Riding is as different from the glamour of Sparkenbroke as sunlight is different from the phosphorescence of decay which we call swamp fire. Sparkenbroke is definitely rococo in both style and design; South Riding has the human warmth and reality of a Rembrandt portrait. Highly original in pattern, it nevertheless is in the tradition of the great novelists, the vein of Dickens and Cervantes. Its essential pattern springs from the multiple activities of a county council in the fictitious South Riding of Yorkshire; through this the reader comes to know and understand all the human beings whose lives are touched by the council. Each one of the many characters lives unforgettably; and the interplay of their lives gives rise to authentic drama, which ends in serene and hopeful beauty. Here is the real stuff of life, instead of thinly spun cobwebs of theories about it.

Not to be missed is Vera Brittain's tribute to her friend, with which the book closes. From this we learn how it could be said of Miss Holtby herself, as of one of her own characters, that "comforted by death, she faced the future." Perhaps the unusual strength and serenity of her novel derives from her own acceptance of death. Whatever its derivation, her book is full of a courage which makes cowards of Sparkenbroke and Mary.

Subjects for Study

I. Neo-Platonic Mysticism on an English Estate

Special Reference:

Sparkenbroke, by Charles Morgan

- Outline the plot; when shorn of incidental trappings, does it seem plausible?
- 2. Which of the characters seem real to you? Comment on Lady Sparkenbroke; on George.
- 3. What does Sparkenbroke believe is the ultimate achievement of life?
- 4. Is there anything in Mary's character as previously shown which would point logically to her attempted suicide?
- 5. Has Mr. Morgan a sense of humor? Is humor a quality essential to a great novel?
- 6. Discuss the statement that Sparkenbroke is the "reductio ad absurdum of the modern's concern with death."

7. Wilson Follett says: "Some of Mr. Morgan's incidental qualities encourage the hope that he may yet escape the charnel house in which the modern temper is at home." Comment on these qualities.

Additional References:

The Fountain, by Charles Morgan.

The Edwardians, by Victoria Sackville West. (A more realistic picture of a great English estate.)

Ode to a Nightingale, by John Keats. ("I have been half in love with easeful death" is exactly in the key of Sparkenbroke.)

Charles Morgan and the Modern Temper, by Wilson Follett, (Saturday Review of Literature, April 18, 1936).

II. GENUINE HUMANISM

Special Reference:

South Riding, by Winifred Holtby

- Sketch the essential pattern of the novel, which depends on the County Council.
- Describe some of the more prominent characters—all of them are richly alive—such as Mrs. Beddows, Carne of Maythorpe, Sarah Burton.
- 3. Note the wealth of incident throughout; how many human stories are interwoven here?
- 4. South Riding has humor and poetry and tragedy; choose selections that illustrate each.
- The English title was Take What You Want and Pay for It, Sarah Burton's youthful philosophy; show how she changed.
- Contrast Miss Holtby's attitude toward death with Charles Morgan's.
- 7. Be sure to read and comment on the article by Vera Brittain in the back of the book. Can you relate Miss Holtby's own experience to the calm strength of her last novel?

Additional References:

Mandoa, Mandoa! by Winifred Holtby.

The Last Adam, by James Gould Cozzens. (Similar in that it is a cross-section of life in a Connecticut town, built around civic activities and concerns.)

A DOROTHY DIX OF THE SOPHISTICATES

Virginia Woolf has said that no woman can become a good writer without a room of her own and five thousand dollars a year. Thus she attributes squarely to economic causes the failure of women to match the greatest literary attainments of masculine writers. It is a comfortable alibi for those of us who would write but don't—but, alas! all too readily refuted by concrete example. Alice Meynell, for instance, could write such exquisite poetry as

"She walks, the lady of my delight, A shepherdess of sheep"

with several small children tumbling around her desk. The economic reason pleases feminist psychology, because there inheres in it a practical possibility of reformation, but the solution is perhaps a shade too facile. The reason we have no feminine Shakespeare, or Cervantes, or Goethe, must be more profoundly involved with the substance of the human spirit than the figures of a budget.

Margaret Lawrence has put her finger on this reason with the clear-eyed unerring common sense of a Dorothy Dix. In fact, her book, The School of Femininity, reminds one of Dorothy Dix's column in its chatty, brisk, and practical discussion of the problems that assail women; but instead of dealing with mediocre women in commonplace circumstances, she examines clinically the case histories of the brilliant and exceptional who have achieved literary fame. The result is an engrossing and entertaining piece of feminist research, in which she denies all the more cherished tenets of feminism. Back in the bright kind days before the war, one learned in college that women could do everything that men did; maybe they hadn't yet, but soon they would. More specifically, we, our generation, would. All our handicaps were removed, the shackles that bound our grandmothers had been struck off in the fine frenzy of the suffragist movement.

Margaret Lawrence belongs to the disillusioned younger generation which discovered that the ultimate handicap had never even been touched, much less removed. In the phrase which she applies to Olive Schreiner, she has listened to "the beat of the biological

drum." She knows that neither college degrees nor the vote loosened the clutch of the biological handicap, and that its hold is as profoundly inescapable in the twentieth century as when Mary Wollstonecraft was writing at the end of the eighteenth. In all that long span from Mary Wollstonecraft to Virginia Woolf no one has solved the fundamental problem of the woman born with the desire to create and fettered by her own biological make-up. "Can she, in one short life, create both with her mind and with her body?" Miss Lawrence sees too clearly to attempt an answer; instead, she holds the question up to the light and turns it around and around that we may see its many facets. Women have created beauty and written wisely and profoundly; but at what price? Is it "possible for a woman who is fulfilled in a normal woman's life to be also a good writer?"

The question, in one way or another, has at some time been faced by every normal woman with intellectual aspirations, hence the tremendous appeal of Miss Lawrence's book. We may be slightly annoyed by her youthful sureness; some of her remarks have the confidence in absolutes that we associate with collegiate discussions of life and love. She has divided women writers into neat little packages, labelled and pigeon-holed, or impaled them on pins, like iridescent beetles in an entomological museum. They of course escape such neat classification, but that fact makes the book all the more provocative. We want to shout "Wait a minute, Miss Lawrence. If Rose Macaulay is the bored type of go-getter, what are you going to do with Rebecca West?" And then we are apt to go on with our own arguments, which proves that our lazy minds have been prodded into thought.

The book begins with five brilliant essays on nineteenth century women writers, each of them interesting enough to make us dust off our Adam Bede, or rediscover Wuthering Heights. The latter half seems less studied, more scattering, but it is of course difficult to view with perspective writers who are still actively producing. Miss Lawrence's biological conclusions may seem discouraging—she concludes with "The baby. And the book." But the perfect proof that the handicap can be surmounted is to be found in the array of women writers whom she lists, impressive both in number and in quality.

Subjects for Study

I. Feminism in the Nineteenth Century

Special Reference:

The School of Femininity, by Margaret Lawrence (Part I)

- The first chapter is important for an understanding of the whole book, and should be outlined carefully.
- "When a young woman takes to writing it is because something
 has hurt her biologically, and she tries to escape the fate of
 womanhood." Compare this with the anecdote of Margaret
 More (p. 3-4).
- 3. The essay on Mary Wollstonecraft is significant. How does it illustrate the theme stated above?
- 4. Show how Jane Austen "rode a flirtatious merry-go-round."
- Comment: "Charlotte Brontë's three good books—Jane Eyre, Shirley, and Villette—were documents in the feminist movement" (p. 86).
- 5. George Eliot is the only writer in this group who knew love in its fulness. How then does she fit into Miss Lawrence's theme?
- 6. Olive Schreiner is the creative woman to whom suffering has taught sympathy. Compare her with Mary Heaton Vorse (A Footnote to Folly, studied in this bulletin).
- 7. Does it seem to you that Miss Lawrence has deduced a thesis from a study of these writers, or has chosen writers to prove her thesis?
- 8. Can you suggest other women writers who would disprove her thesis, i. e., that only the unfulfilled or biologically hurt woman becomes a writer?

II. FEMINISM SINCE THE WORLD WAR

Special Reference:

The School of Femininity, by Margaret Lawrence (Part II)

- Do you gasp a little at the leap from Olive Schreiner to Anita Loos? Notice that later Miss Lawrence bridges this gap by taking up such older writers as Edith Wharton.
- 2. Perhaps Mrs. Humphry Ward, or Margaret Deland, should come in here. Can you think of others?
- 3. The general essay at the beginning of each section is worth study. Here Miss Lawrence gives her reasons for such labels as "Little Girl Pals," "Matriarchs," or "Sophisticated Ladies." Give a brief outline of her labels.
- 4. Do you agree with all her classifications? Can you suggest others?

- 5. Discuss the "gentlewoman helpmeet type of woman" (p. 249ff).
- Comment: "The Roman Catholic Church is the supreme matriarchy."
- 7. Discuss: "The modern version of womanhood demands of the normal woman much more than she can give."
- 8. Select for discussion the section which would have most interest for your group, or pick out stimulating bits from several.
- 9. Do you agree that Willa Cather "has no peer among the women writers of her time"? Show reasons for this estimate.
- 10. The essay on Virginia Woolf provides an adequate climax to a study which began with Mary Wollstonecraft. It should be reviewed as a summary of the book.

Ann Vickers, by Sinclair Lewis. ("The most powerfully honest book concerning women that has been written in our time.")

Vindication of the Rights of Women, by Mary Wollstonecraft.

Story of an African Farm, by Olive Schreiner. A Room of One's Own, by Virginia Woolf.

MATRIARCH, HELPMEET, HETAERA

Margaret Lawrence says in *The School of Femininity* that "the modern version of womanhood demands of the normal woman more than she can give." Most women at one time or another, bewildered by the versatility expected of them, have wished that they could be two or three different personalities at once. Here are three clear cut and widely divergent portraits of women, each of which falls into one of Miss Lawrence's classifications of feminine types.

In a small museum in the enchanting city of Arles one may see the comb, the mirror, the coral trinkets, that were found in the tomb of a young Greek girl. From them the imagination summons a poignant impression of charm that as it fled left immemorial tokens. Some such impression of charm aureoles the story of Hester, "who skimmed the bumpy surface in the wake of John Billiter." Here Lies a Most Beautiful Lady has the reticence and the carven loveliness of a quatrain from the Greek anthology, or of one of those anonymous Greek heads that stray into provincial museums. Beside its artistry and finish ordinary run-of-the-mine fiction seems crude of texture. The gem-like clarity of Hester's personality is projected against the back-drop of John's insatiable search-for furs and steel in Canada, cobalt, timber, gold in the Yukon, oil in Mexico and the Carpathians. Hester goes with him when he wants her, or waits for him when he buys a sleeping bag and a pack of dogs and dashes off into the Canadian wilderness. She, who would have liked the serenity of a deeply rooted home, was constantly moving to strange outlandish places. Her philosophy of life became one of acceptance, of taking the rough with the smooth and smiling, but she is no door mat; in fact her personality survives the more boisterous character of John, as a bit of exquisite ivory may outlast the bluster of a machine.

O Kaya San of *The Wooden Pillow* is the hetaera transported from ancient Greece to early twentieth century Japan. Without personal ambition or desire to dominate, she finds fulfillment in giving pleasure and does not question the inevitability of man's departure. She has many points of contact with Hester Billiter; if they could meet and converse they would understand each other.

The theme of *The Wooden Pillow* is as familiar as Madame Butterfly, but the pleasure of reading the novel derives from its sensitive recording of the response of a young Englishman to a strange land, whose exotic loveliness is symbolized by O Kaya San. This is escape reading, of a kind sorely needed nowadays. Mr. Fallas takes us on a vacation to a magic land that perhaps never was—a land free from any note of economic stress or tragedy.

Claudia, of Faster! Faster!, could only have lived in post-war England or the United States, but her type is universal and age-old. We can imagine her in an earlier age dominating a large South Carolina plantation, or holding a frontier stockade against the Indians, or ruling a medieval town while her husband crusades in Palestine. She needs men only to promote her own conscious superiority; she showers riches on her children only to secure her dominance over them. Perhaps her most ancient counterpart is to be found in the last chapter of the Book of Proverbs, except that Claudia's children did not rise up and call her blessed. E. M. Delafield analyses this modern matriarch with a scalpel that never falters, but with a spontaneous wit that dispels any atmosphere of clinical austerity.

Subjects for Study

I. FROM CANADA TO THE CAUCASUS

Additional References:

Here Lies a Most Beautiful Lady, by Richard Blaker

- The author has an intricate way of unfolding his tale. The most exciting episode is the first. Does it lose interest on this account?
- 2. Wherein does the real interest of the novel lie? In adventure, or in characterization?
- 3. Outline the career of John Billiter; of Hester.
- 4. Describe the personality of Hester; note her bad memory, her housekeeping methods, her daintiness, etc.
- 5. Is it in keeping with her character that she should refuse Donaldson?
- 6. Is Hester wise in her handling of the Brenda affair?
- 7. Discuss Hester's attitude toward her children.
- 8. Comment: "There was steel in the framework of all of them." How does this apply to Hester?
- 9. Does Hester seem to you a real woman, or a man's idea of what he would like a woman to be?

The Great Meadow, by Elizabeth Madox Roberts.

The Exile, by Pearl Buck. (In both these books the heroine is similar to the character of Hester.)

II. JAPANESE IDYLL

Special Reference:

The Wooden Pillow, by Carl Fallas

- 1. Sketch briefly the high points of Grier's stay in Japan.
- 2. Does the book need a date, or is it as timeless as a lyric poem?
- 3. In what sense is this "escape literature"?
- 4. In spite of its slightness, what qualities give it charm?
- 5. Comment on the method of telling; it is a series of pictures— a travelogue with a light story to hold it together.
- 6. Does Grier's treatment of O Kaya San seem cruel, or merely natural and inevitable? How does she accept it?
- Beware of taking this book seriously; do not brush the bloom off the butterfly's wings.

Additional References:

Madame Butterfly. (Story in the Book of the Opera)

Madame Chrysanthème, by Pierre Loti.

The Tale of Genji, by Lady Murasaki.

The Thinking Reed, by Rebecca West. (Hetaera, European version)

To the Mountain, by Bradford Smith.

III. "SHE GIRDETH HER LOINS WITH STRENGTH"

Special Reference:

Faster! Faster! by E. M. Delafield.

- 1. Outline the situation in which Claudia Winsloe found herself.
- Describe the business which she had built up. Is it typically a woman's business?
- 3. How far is Copper's helplessness due to himself, to the depression, to Claudia?
- 4. Is Claudia wise in wishing to do so much for her children? Is her standard for them too high?
- 5. Is Claudia as honest in facing facts as she believes herself to be?
- 6. Does the final tragedy spring logically from forces inherent in the story?
- 7. Evaluate, if you can, the good and the harm that Claudia did her family; does it seem to you that the good was largely material, the harm spiritual?
- 8. How else might Claudia have solved her dilemma?
- 9. The title is of course a quotation from the Red Queen, in Through the Looking Glass; comment on its appositeness.

Book of Proverbs, Chapter 31, verses 10-31. (Compare Claudia with this description of a matriarch.)

The Matriarch, by G. B. Stern.

The Provincial Lady, by E. M. Delafield.

A Footnote to Folly, by Mary Heaton Vorse. (A matriarch who took the whole world for her family.)

The School of Femininity, by Margaret Lawrence. (This should be used as a reference for the three novels studied here. Look up her definitions of the various types of women.)

A PHILOSOPHER DISCOVERED BY THE MASSES

"Sir, whom poets and philosophers revere Through the gloom of international morasses, Shines a beacon of this sector of the sphere; Santayana's been discovered by the masses!"

Thus, in a "Ballade of a Persistent Best Seller" did F. P. A.'s Conning Tower in the New York Herald Tribune hail the success of George Santayana's first novel, written at the age of seventy. For many years Mr. Santayana's works have been a stimulating resource for the esoteric few who enjoy reading philosophy; and the miracle of his rhythmic prose, a miracle comparable only to that of Conrad, has delighted a small group of aesthetes. An inquiry as to why a Pole and a Spaniard have written the best English prose of our generation would lead us into a tempting but endless divagation. Suddenly Mr. Santayana emerged from the cloistered porch of philosophy with a novel that in March 1936 led the best seller list all over the United States. Whether that popularity was due to a sort of intellectual social climbing, or to a genuine and widespread interest in philosophy, is an elaborate question worthy of a doctoral dissertation. Any premature optimism that the country was becoming philosophy-conscious, however, was rudely dispelled by the fact that in June Sparkenbroke had replaced The Last Puritan at the top of the list. We were relaxing. Elmer Davis, in a letter to the Saturday Review of Literature propounded the question whether it was "morally worse to read The Last Puritan from a combination of the sense of duty and intellectual snobbery . . . or to read Sparkenbroke because they like it". . . and suggested that only Santayana himself is equipped to delve into the ethical and aesthetic riddles involved in an answer.

Perhaps a tentative and partial answer might be found in the historical fact that Puritanism is deeply and inextricably interwoven in the fabric of the American spirit. Our high school history books taught us that it was pigeon-holed in New England, but even the most rudimentary knowledge of American history will show how much more widespread was its diffusion—the Quakers and Presbyterians of Pennsylvania, the Calvinists of the Shenandoah

Valley, the traditional low church Episcopalianism of Virginia in general, the Huguenots of South Carolina, are but a few examples of Puritan influence that come instantly to mind. Maryland is probably the only one of the original colonies untouched by that influence. Thus it may be that many Americans, feeling deeply in their own spirits the compulsions, the pricks and spurs of Puritanism, have enjoyed reading so urbane and mellow an analysis of it as Mr. Santayana has given us.

The Last Puritan is written definitely from the point of view of an old man, who views people and philosophies in the diffused clarity of a sunset light that flows out from under passing clouds. For him the emotion and the excitement of love have become pallid and remote; the one thing of enduring importance is man's spiritual quest for validity, for meaning, in life. It is the eternal story of the youth who "hot for certainties" finds within his grasp only dissolving ambiguities. It is the quest of Philip in Of Human Bondage, of Philip Bern in Europa, of Walter Lippmann in A Preface to Morals. It is the quest which Thomas Wolfe describes as "the deepest search in life . . . man's search to find a father . . . not merely the lost father of his youth, but the image of a strength and wisdom external to his need and superior to his hunger." But, more specifically, it is the spiritual pilgrimage of a young man conditioned in childhood by the rigid and materialistic Puritanism of Boston in the eighteen nineties. The Unitarian Puritanism of Oliver's mother, which dominates and finally defeats him, is stripped of all emotion, sterile, without the inspiration of faith, dedicated to material responsibility. It cripples irrevocably the tender soul of young Oliver, just as surely as if his muscles had been early bound in some cramped and unnatural position. With all the freedom of wealth and physical well-being, he never found himself, nor could he ever have been at home in the universe.

Santayana is far too sophisticated a philosopher to condemn Puritanism utterly. He respects its aristocracy of the spirit, its integrity, courage, scorn of pleasure, the power it grants one of being "self-directed and inflexibility himself." He recognizes it as one of the deeper answers that man has found to the riddle "What was there in the very nature of things that condemned nature?" but he himself is philosophically inclined toward "a certain sanity of heart that should modulate desire to the key of possible

achievement." Such a sanity would have saved Oliver from tragedy. Perhaps it is to be found in the Catholic tradition—but those who expect of Santayana dogma or finalities will be disappointed. The reader himself must supply the meaning of the fable of Oliver Alden's pilgrimage.

That fable is as richly and elaborately embroidered in the telling as some medieval tapestry. Aside from the profound philosophical questions which it arouses, it may be enjoyed for the sheer beauty of its prose, for its subtle rhythms, for its lovely and haunting evocations.

Subjects for Study

I. WITH A SILVER SPOON

Special Reference:

The Last Puritan, by George Santayana

- 1. Give a brief biography of Santayana.
- Outline the material background and circumstances of Oliver Alden.
- 3. Describe his early education, his environment, his travels.
- 4. What was his equipment for life?
- 5. How was Oliver taught to regard wealth? Contrast this with his aunt Caroline's statement (p. 459) "The use of wealth isn't to disperse riches, but to cultivate the art of living."
- 6. Discuss the difficulties in the way of the contemplative life in an American college—Oliver at Harvard, (pp. 445-447).
- 7. Comment on Oliver's attitude toward sports; later on toward war. Was it intrinsically the same?
- Compare Peter Alden's fear of being annihilated by money (p. 246) with that of Isabel in The Thinking Reed (studied elsewhere in this bulletin).
- 9. Was Mrs. Alden essentially right in saying that Mario and the Darnleys loved Oliver for his wealth?
- 10. Why do you think Santayana chose a millionaire for his hero?

II. A PURITAN PILGRIMAGE

Special Reference:

The Last Puritan, by George Santayana

- Why does Santayana devote such analytical attention to Uncle Nathaniel? Later on Oliver describes himself as like Uncle Nathaniel. In what way is this true?
- Analyse the important influences on Oliver's life:
 a. His mother; sterile and materialistic Puritanism.

- b. Irma; the natural philosophy of Goethe, vague and sentimentalized, but beckoning to a rich and crowded life.
- c. Lord Jim; l'homme moyen sensuel, realistic rationalism.
- d. Mario; the pagan, at home with life.
- Study carefully Oliver's first talk with Lord Jim (pp. 166-173).
 Here is a significant contrast to the influences which had hitherto been dominant with him.
- 4. Compare Uncle Caleb's statement of the Catholic tradition (pp. 188ff) with that of the Cardinal in *Europa*. Do you find any significance in the fact that Santayana makes his exponent of Catholicism a physical cripple?
- 5. Discuss the strain of madness inherent in Puritanism. "All natural feelings must be bottled up" How is this symbolized in the novel?
- 6. Show how in his first vital decision Oliver "lacks the spiritual courage and clearness to be himself."
- Did Oliver consistently choose the duller, the safer, the meaner course? p. 227.
- 8. Oliver wished to do right, to make himself and the world better. How was he forestalled?
- 9. Is it true that his soul had been crippled? Was he like Caleb Wetherbee turned inside out?
- 10. Compare Oliver's quest with the quotation from Thomas Wolfe above (*The Story of a Novel*, p. 39). In what ways did Oliver's father liberate and fail him?
- Comment: "America is the worst of influences, because it imposes vices which regard themselves as virtues—optimism, worldliness, mediocrity."

Little Essays Drawn from the Works of George Santayana, by Logan Pearsall Smith. (For a background of his philosophy.)

Preface to Morals, by Walter Lippmann.

The Dance of Life, by Havelock Ellis. (The philosophy is similar to Santayana's.)

My Country and My People, by Lin Yutang. (Contrast Chinese philosophy as set forth here with Puritanism.)

Of Human Bondage, by Somerset Maugham.

Europa, by Robert Briffault.

The Story of a Novel, by Thomas Wolfe.

VARIATIONS ON A LUTE OF JADE

Some years ago, Dr. Hu Shih, in a thoughtful essay comparing the civilization of East and West, expressed his envy of the scientific technology of the West which by mastering tools has given western civilization freedom to cultivate the things of the spirit. Contrary to the usual belief, he considered western civilization more spiritual than eastern, because the latter was submerged and dominated by physical needs. He probably reflected the diffuse optimism of the pre-depression era, when we still felt that machines could make us free. Some of that glad confidence is gone, now that we realize that machines cause the bitterness of unemployment as well as the delight of leisure. Because of that shaken confidence, we may be all the more ready to listen to another Chinese philosopher, Lin Yutang, who shows us a China from which the Occident has much to learn.

My Country and My People is comparable in brilliance and penetration to such a profound racial study as Madariaga's Englishmen, Frenchmen, and Spaniards. It makes an equivalent contribution to international understanding, bridging of course an even wider chasm. Mr. Lin Yutang writes with suave and urbane distinction. More interested in fundamental spiritual issues than in immediate economic stress, he analyzes the Chinese soul as Santayana has the American in The Last Puritan. Nothing, however, could be more remote from Puritanism than the Chinese attitude toward life, rooted in the belief that "the greatest achievement of man's spirit is to attain a measure of harmony and happiness in this earthly life." After reading My Country and My People we have gained some understanding of Chinese pacifism, which is born of common sense and tolerance, and we learn a new respect for Chinese culture, which has the mellow patina of three thousand years. But Mr. Lin Yutang's philosophical serenity is slightly misleading. He writes in an ivory tower, from which he sees clearly the larger issues of life and art and culture, but from which he cannot see the millions who suffer and starve and die in the vast plains of China. Only in a final chapter, appended to the main body of his work like an afterthought, does he touch on the complex economic problems which make painful reading of almost every news dispatch from contemporary China.

It is these tortured millions of whom Pearl Buck has made us conscious. Any one who has read The Good Earth will take the idealization of My Country and My People with several grains of salt. Perhaps Pearl Buck's Occidental eyes took suffering less for granted, for she writes from no ivory tower. In The Exile we know China through the sensitive reactions of an American woman. The portrait is perhaps slightly sentimentalized and over feminine in detail, but it provides nevertheless an interesting silhouette of a typical American against the background of seething and tumultuous and only half-understood Chinese life.

Subjects for Study

I. CHINESE HUMANISTIC PHILOSOPHY

Special Reference:

My Country and My People, by Lin Yutang

- The book has the neat divisions of a text book, and may therefore be readily outlined. Analize his discussions of:
 - a. Chinese character.
 - b. Chinese intelligence.
 - c. Chinese ideals of life.
- 2. Comment on Bertrand Russell's statement, "In art they (the Chinese) aim at being exquisite, and in life at being reasonable."
- 3. Compare Confucianism and Taoism, as explained by the author.
- 4. Comment: "Buddhism is the only important foreign influence that has become part and parcel of Chinese life."
- Describe the importance of family life in China. See Nora Waln's The House of Exile for a detailed and fascinating picture of a Chinese family.
- Compare this description of Chinese matriarchs (pp. 144-148)
 with Margaret Lawrence's discussion of literary matriarchs in
 The School of Femininity.
- 7. Discuss the contrast between Japanese and Chinese psychology (p. 85).
- 8. "China is the one country in which the old man is made to feel at ease this is a thousand times better than all the old age pensions in the world." Do you agree?
- 9. "There are no established social classes in China, but only different families, which go up and down according to the vicis-

- situdes of fortune." This is the theme of Pearl Buck's The Good Earth.
- 10. Compare the Chinese attitude toward life, as set forth in Chapter V, with the Puritan ideal set forth in *The Last Puritan*.

The Problem of China, by Bertrand Russell.

China, the Collapse of a Civilization, by Nathaniel Peffer.

Orient and Occident, by Hans Kohn.

On a Chinese Screen, by Somerset Maugham.

All Men Are Brothers, translated by Pearl Buck.

Personal History, by Vincent Sheean. (For an excellent report of the Chinese revolution.)

Whither Mankind, edited by Charles Beard. (For Hu Shih's essay The Civilization of East and West, referred to above.)

II. A PURITAN IN CHINA

Special Reference:

The Exile, by Pearl Buck

- 1. Show in what ways Carie's heritage is typically American.
- 2. In what sense was she fundamentally and inescapably a Puritan? Trace the conflict that ran all through her life. Compare her Puritanism with that of Oliver Alden in The Last Puritan.
- 3. Outline the main events of Carie's life in China.
- 4. How does the China that Carie saw compare with that described by Lin Yutang? Note the difference in their angles of observation; the one an aloof Chinese philosopher, the other a practical, sympathetic, but foreign woman.
- 5. Comment on the character of Andrew; is he unsympathetically presented? He is mystic in his approach to human problems, Carie is realistic. The problem is well stated in J. G. Cozzens' Men and Brethren.
- 6. What did Carie's experience of life in China teach her? What of America did she bring to China?
- 7. In the cause of international understanding, who made the greater contribution, Carie or Andrew?

Additional References:

The House of Earth, (a trilogy) by Pearl Buck.

The House of Exile, by Nora Waln.

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Farson, Negley	The Way of a Transgressor. 1936. (7)	Harcourt	3.00
Field, Rachel	Time Out of Mind. 1935. (3)	Macmillan	2.50
Holtby, Winifred	South Riding. 1936. (8)	Macmillan	2.50
Lawrence, Josephine	If I Have Four Apples. 1935. (2)	Stokes	2.50
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PUBLISHERS WHOSE BOOKS ARE USED AS SPECIAL REFERENCES

The following publishers have books listed in this outline, and opportunity is here taken to thank those who have generously given us review copies of the books used and recommended.

Numerals indicate chapters in which the books are used.

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Macmillan Co., 60 Fifth Ave., New York. (1, 3, 8)

Random House, Inc., 20 East 57th St., New York. (2)

Reynal & Hitchcock, 386 Fourth Ave., New York. (12)

Scribner's (Charles) Sons, 597 Fifth Ave., New York. (6, 11)

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