

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
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VOL. IV

JUNE, 1938

NO. 5

ADVENTURES IN READING

Eleventh Series

AGATHA BOYD ADAMS



CHAPEL HILL

MCMXXXVIII

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA PRESS

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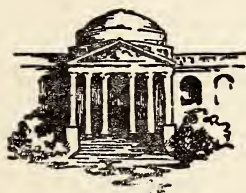
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*Published six times a year, October, January, April, May, June, and
July, by the University of North Carolina Press. Entered
as second-class matter February 5, 1926,
under the act of August 24, 1912.
Chapel Hill, N. C.*

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

REFLECTIONS ON REVIEWING.....	6
I. EDGE OF THE WILDERNESS.....	11
II. FIRST FRUITS OF A NEW CULTURE.....	15
III. WESTWARD TO THE ORIENT.....	19
IV. OUR DEATHLESS FOLK-EPIC.....	23
V. CIVIL WAR IN SPAIN.....	27
VI. UNCHARTED COUNTRIES OF THE MIND.....	31
VII. THE ROAD IS WESTWARD.....	34
VIII. COVERED WAGONS IN AFRICA.....	37
IX. EXILES LOOK BACK.....	40
X. ANOTHER LOST ATLANTIS.....	43
XI. VARIATIONS ON POPULAR THEMES.....	46
XII. WIVES OF HEROES.....	49
XIII. ARTISTS WITHOUT FAME.....	52
XIV. CONTRASTS IN PRIZE NOVELS.....	55
SPECIAL REFERENCE BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	58
ADDRESSES OF PUBLISHERS.....	59
ADDITIONAL REFERENCE BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	60
SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS.....	64

REFLECTIONS ON REVIEWING

In selecting from the mass of current books the two dozen or so which make up a bulletin, several standards have to be kept in mind. The first is perhaps interest. Would this book be interesting to a group of club women in Cullowhee or Red Springs or Fort Worth? Another standard is not to write down to the often-maligned club women, but to imagine them as open-minded and aspiring human beings, who will appreciate something out of the usual and above the average. Then it is important to consider whether the book is sufficiently full of plums to provide something to discuss. How well does it tie in with other books used in this bulletin? For an effort is made not only to give the individual programs unity, but to connect the separate programs one with another. On the negative side, our choice must avoid material too raw for the tender-minded, and too trivial to prompt discussion. There immediately comes to mind, as an example of the ideal book for such purposes, Phyllis Bentley's *Freedom Farewell!* The author performed the apparently incredible feat of weaving a lively novel out of the chalk-dusty politics of the last forty years of the Roman Republic, and furnished thereby a provocative commentary on our own times. Her Brutus, dying, voiced the most poignant question of the twentieth century: "How have we let freedom slip?" Combined with Emil Lengyel's *Millions of Dictators*, this offered a program made to order, which modulated nicely into the next one on Herbert Agar's *Land of the Free*. But not all authors are so obliging as Miss Bentley. Most of them, reckless creatures, write with no thought of club programs, so the bulletin compiler must read and reject and search again. Since other bulletins cover the fields of biography and travel, with occasional issues on more serious themes, *Adventures in Reading* concerns itself chiefly with current fiction, balancing this with such works of general interest as Bernard Jaffe's *Outposts of Science*, or Van Wyck Brooks's *The Flowering of New England*, and with poetry and plays which seem apposite.

In retrospect, the books read and reviewed in the past two years fall readily into categories. It is amusing to attempt some sort of rough and ready classification of two years of intensive reading. Bulletins based on current books are singularly sensitive to tides of public thought; they swing as lightly this way and that as the bow of a canoe, and unless you steer carefully, you will be washed along willy-nilly on a rush of propaganda, or mass opinion, or whatever you wish to call it. In 1936 it was difficult to avoid becoming a tract for social justice; that was the year of Mary Heaton Vorse's passionate outcry against the world's injustice in *A Footnote to Folly*; the year of Paul de Kruif's *Why Keep Them Alive?* of James Gould Cozens' *Men and Brethren*, of such plays as Clifford Odets' *Paradise*

Lost and Maxwell Anderson's *Winterset*. Exciting and vivid work, all of them; but our adventure is to be in literature, not in crusading. Fortunate then that to balance such works, difficult to evaluate because of their intense contemporaneousness, there should appear Santayana's *The Last Puritan*, with its beautifully spaced and cadenced emphasis on eternal values. After nearly two years the memory of it still has savor. Maybe it is not a novel, but it is pleasurable and stimulating reading at a high pitch.

The dominant current in 1937 seemed to be revolution. There was Vincent Sheean's *Sanfelice*, working out in terms of the Neapolitan revolution of 1799 the philosophy of revolution which had so deeply disturbed him in *Personal History*. There was Sylvia Townsend Warner couching an invitation to revolution in terms so suave and bubble-light that *Summer Will Show* slipped away from notice before the full impact of its meaning was caught. There was Ramón Sender, describing in *Seven Red Sundays*, with more emotional intensity than thoughtfulness, the early days of the Spanish Revolution from the anarcho-syndicalist point of view. There was Ralph Bates giving in *The Olive Field* a sympathetic and understanding account of the background of the Spanish proletarian revolt. One could enumerate many more; the conscientious reviewer in 1937 grew weary of drums and barricades and blood. Upon such hot suggestions came the welcome dew of Virginia Woolf's lovely long contemplations on life and time in *The Years*; like *The Last Puritan*, perhaps not strictly a novel, more akin to poetry in mood and read with similar delight.

If social justice and revolution were the dominant *motifs* in fiction for these two years, there are other strains which persist throughout, apparently inexhaustible. One is the record of personal international, preferably newspaper, adventure, of which *Personal History* still seems the high point, though Negley Farson's *The Way of the Transgressor* and Eugene Lyons' *Assignment in Utopia*, as well as several others, are not only full of lively and discussable reading matter, but probably will prove useful contributions to the history of our times. Nor is the vein yet completely mined; Lillian Mowrer's *Journalist's Wife* has just appeared, in the same tradition. There may be still others who have had a splendid picnic out of war and revolution and want to tell us about it. Genuine adventures in reading these, especially when, for instance, they provide an opportunity to observe the phenomena of a changing world through the eyes of so sensitive and so contemplative a reporter as Vincent Sheean.

Although as a nation we enjoy reading adventures with an international swing to them, we enjoy still more reading about ourselves. We have become more and more conscious of our own historic past. The Pulitzer prize novel of 1936, *Honey in the Horn*, dealt vigorously with carefree Oregon of the unvanishing frontier. A still better novel of the same year, Rachel Field's *Time out of Mind*, brought back Maine in the days of the clipper ships. Walter Edmonds' *Drums along the Mohawk*, Carl Carmer's *Listen for a Lonesome Drum*, and Michael Foster's *American Dream* all are concerned with our national heritage. It is perhaps significant that the best-

selling novel of 1936 was *Gone with the Wind* and that of 1937 *North-west Passage*, both of them American historical novels. Do we seek escape from a somewhat bleak future? Or have we just grown old enough to enjoy reading about our early youth?

The persistence of interest in the Civil War is a constant surprise, to this reviewer at any rate. Margaret Mitchell's phenomenal triumph obscured like a dust storm several lesser but by no means mediocre novels with the same background. Of these the most compact, the most vivid, and the most overlooked was Andrew Lytle's *The Long Night*, with its unforgettably tragic theme and bitterly logical ending. Caroline Gordon's *None Shall Look Back* had thoughtfulness and careful attention to historical detail, without sufficient emotional pitch. Clifford Dowdey's *Bugles Blow No More* gave a clear cut line by line etching of Richmond during the siege, without attaining reality in characterization. This is to mention only a few of the Civil War novels of the past two years. And the great one is yet to be written; the one that will play the muted drama of defeat and reconstruction.

A long bibliography could already be compiled of books inspired by the war in Spain. Most of them are too hastily scribbled, too partisan, too close to the front, to be considered as literature. They are smoke-stained, as if a man in the trenches, between loading and firing, should pause to shout back at us what he is fighting for. Out of all these, most of them ephemeral, I believe that Elliott Paul's *Life and Death of a Spanish Town* will last as a record of a unique experience, memorably and fittingly expressed. For the great books about Spain's tragedy we must wait many years; the current ones are interesting only as documents.

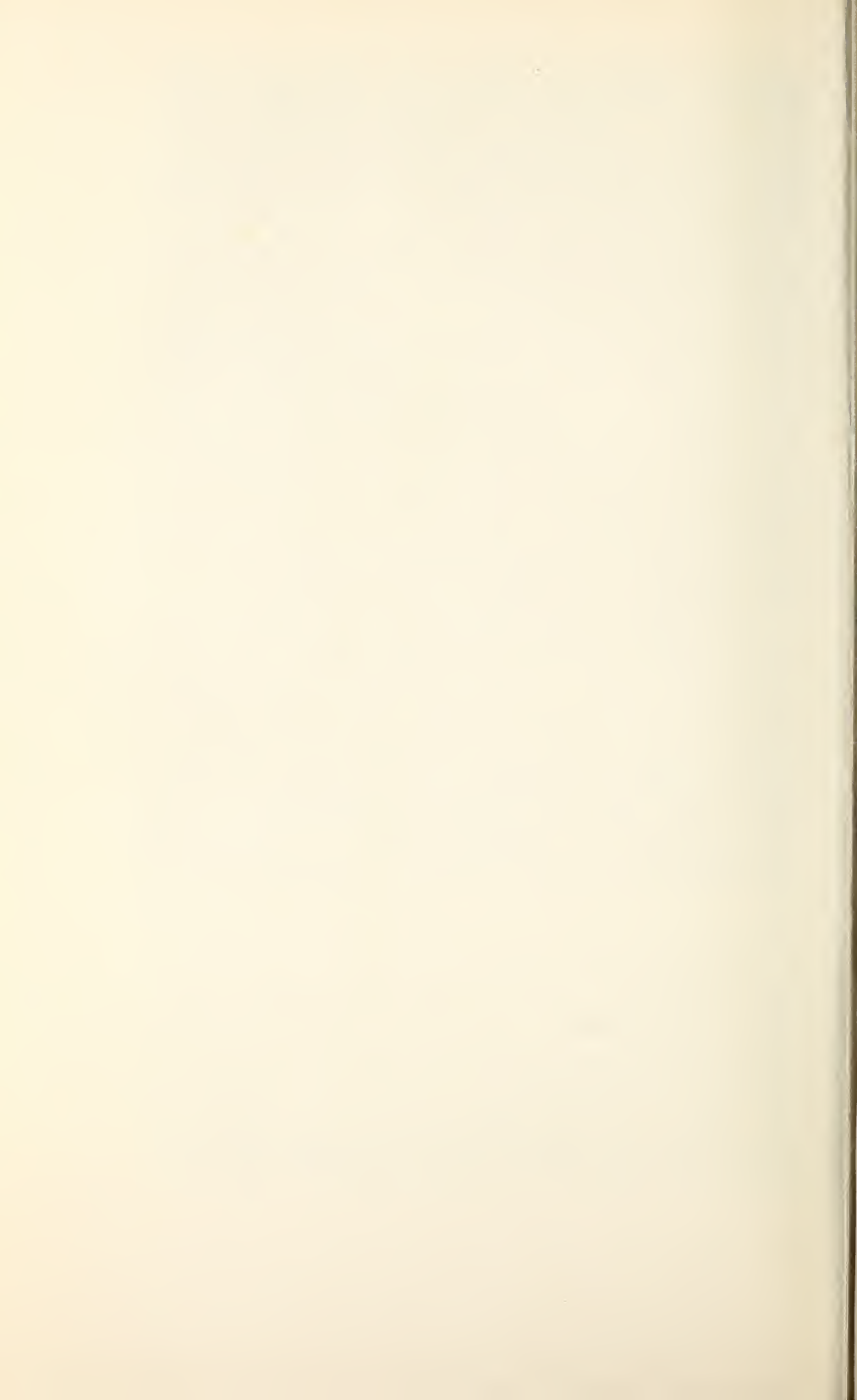
It is tempting to go on with this sort of cursory cataloging; but two more main classes of books must round it off. To my shame as a reviewer let me confess that I am sometimes tricked by books wrapped in glamor, like those enchanting Christmas presents in bright cellophane which when stripped prove to be the most revolting gadgets. To this group belong many prize novels. I grow slightly dizzy at the words "Twenty-five thousand dollar prize," and muse "surely this girl must have something"; and allot space in my bulletin to such vaporings as *I Am the Fox*. *Sparkenbroke* was beglamored, too, with tinsel of neo-platonism and English country life. For 1938 I resolve to tear off the cellophane and examine closely before using.

Out of each season's books there are always one or two with whose fate, for no reason at all except the unanalyzed chemistry of personal liking, one allies oneself intensely, to the extent of being disappointed when they fail. For it is true that good books sometimes fail to sell, for causes as inexplicable and as mysterious as those which whirl mediocre books to the top of the list. The best-seller lists are a gauge of public fancy, rather than a touchstone of good literature. It is like tracing unseen springs with a willow wand, this seeking popularity with the pliant sensitive antennae of writing. The most unjustly forgotten book in 1936 seemed to me Winifred Holtby's *South Riding*, which deserved the best for its robust and courageous

acceptance of reality, its pervading sense of beauty, and its subtle flexible style. And the riddle of 1937 is why so few people read *The African Witch* by Joyce Cary. That delicate juxtaposition of Oxford civilization against the jungle, of intellectualized woman against primitive woman, of Graeco-Christian ethics against Voodooism, combined to make a novel as fascinating as some parts of *The Golden Bough*, and one not without significance for our own country. Yet it is remembered only as one of the lost books.

One could follow such reflections endlessly, as if to the final broken shimmer of the birch leaf's tip in the depths of the lake. But to multiply categories beyond those which suggest themselves readily would only add to the intricacies of reviewing. The most interesting books are often those which refuse to be classified; *Eyeless in Gaza*, for all its tortuous labyrinth, for all its brutality, cicatrized an imprint on the mind more lasting than a dozen competently written smooth novels. It is fortunate for those who enjoy reading matter which challenges the mind that Mr. Huxley has gone on to develop the philosophy of the last part of *Eyeless in Gaza* in his recently published essays *Ends and Means*. He is probably more philosopher than novelist, but a recollection of the chapters about Antony Beavis' childhood would make one regret to see him turn from the novel completely. Another such unclassifiable book is the winner of the Harper Prize for 1937, Frederick Prokosch's *The Seven Who Fled*, exotic and poetic "escape reading" in a very unusual key.

Such a rapid survey can suggest only a few of the main trends of which one becomes aware in mass contemporary reading. Already they are shifting. In six months they will be different. The tragedy in Spain grows remote, to lie fallow and wait its true interpreter. There will probably be more books about the Orient, to meet contemporary interest. With luck, we in the United States may be able to forget our own Civil War, having purged ourselves of it, in good psychiatric fashion, by uninhibited words. The reviewer is not unlike an international telephone operator, with fingers on wires that bring in speech from far-off countries. Shanghai speaking Is that Knole Castle? Michoacan is calling No wonder the operator can not bear, even for a moment, to lay down the receiver.



CHAPTER I

EDGE OF THE WILDERNESS

History books of the past, and perhaps our own inclination to exalt the Puritan strain, have conspired to make us picture the settlers of the Massachusetts Bay colony as a very prim and austere folk. We imagine them either in terms of the idealism of Longfellow's Miles Standish, or of F. P. A.'s quatrain:

“The stern and rockbound coast
Felt very amateur,
When it saw how much more stern
The landing Pilgrims were.”

That there must have been other more robust qualities than fanatic idealism and sternness is proved by the survival of the New England spirit in our national life; such books as Van Wyck Brooks's *The Flowering of New England* bear witness to the complex and sturdy quality of the heirs of the Pilgrims. In *Paradise* Esther Forbes, who has studied her sources carefully, shows a richly colored pageant of one small village on the Massachusetts frontier; a picture not of inhibited religionists, but of lusty pioneers, tough of mind and body, living out a strange combination of English seventeenth century folkways and Indian customs. Her tale has the flavor of the Robin Hood ballads, with its zest for food and drink, and its intimacy with the forest. Only in two figures does she suggest the strain of fanaticism inherent in Puritanism.

It is this vein of fanaticism which Frances Winwar describes in *Gallows Hill*. Here we have the old and ever fascinating story of the Salem witch trials re-stated. The problem is a profound one, involving as it does the psychology of mass fear and mass hysteria. Miss Winwar makes us feel the terror of a remote people between a threatening sea and a forest full of savages and dark inexplicable dangers; a people turned in upon themselves by dread and loneliness meeting in madness. Cotton Mather in her presentation is a pathological case, the victim of delusions, as are the other accusers of the witches. Had all the settlers been of this strain, the colony could not have survived to such vigorous life. Some of them must have been more like the very unpuritanical puritans of *Paradise*, people made for living, adapted to survive hardships.

The trails of thought opened up by the two novels cross in the character of the half mad Hagar, whose adolescent religious fervor is that of the children who accused the witches in Salem. Forethought Fearing is also close kin to Cotton Mather; taken together they sum up the intense and tragic fanaticism of their day.

As a pendant to these two novels of the early settlement of New England, it will be interesting to read Paul Green's *The Lost Colony*. It should be kept in mind that this is essentially a pageant for acting, not for reading. From the point of view of this program its interest lies in the fact that the author has very beautifully crystallized a folk tradition. Instead of analyzing the early colonists, as our two novelists do, he has expressed in rounded and lovely poetry what we have always believed about them.

Subjects for Study

1. O BRAVE NEW WORLD!

Paradise, by Esther Forbes

1. Tell something of the establishment of Canaan.
2. Describe the household of Jude Parr and his own position in the community.
3. Jude still belongs to the 17th century Kentish country from which he came; Fenton is already of the new world; discuss this transformation. How is Fenton different and what has brought this about?
4. Trace the events which led up to the trial of Bathsheba and Fenton.
5. Discuss the asceticism of Forethought Fearing, and relate it to what you know of Cotton Mather and the fanaticism of the Puritans. Show how the personality of Forethought is given reality.
6. Describe Fenton's changing attitude toward the Indians, and recount the events that led up to King Phillip's War. Check this by reading an historical account of the war (for instance, Bassett, *A Short History of the United States*, p. 92-93).
7. Show how the rise of Gervase Blue foreshadows the changes inherent in a new society.
8. There is much of New England poetry in Johnny's remark "O let Wachusett and Monadnock stand headstone and footstone to un'." The scene of Forethought's burial has genuine majesty.

Additional Reading:

American Dream, by Michael Foster (Studied later in this bulletin. Refer to the earlier sections for a comment on Puritan ideology)

The Beginnings of New England, by John Fiske

The Founding of New England, by James Truslow Adams

See also books listed under "First Fruits of a New Culture."

2. A PEOPLE DELIVERED OVER TO FEAR

Gallows Hill, by Frances Winwar

1. Describe (a) the fear of the forest, with its incalculable dangers, (b) the hostility of the sea. If you recall Moby Dick, you will remember how the pursuit of the white whale symbolized man's long combat with the sea.
2. Discuss the part played in the heightening of these fears by the preaching and religious teaching of the times.
3. Trace the gradual reaction of the people of Salem to these fears. Show how the essentially healthy members of the community, such as Bridget, and Philip English and his family, were the ones who suffered most in the long run.
4. Discuss the psychological reasons for the fact that the accusers of the witches were often adolescent girls; how would such children be treated nowadays?
5. In spite of a somewhat turgid style, from which the story emerges slowly, it progresses to a real climax in Bridget's death; the story of Mary and Sterry is subsidiary to that of Bridget.
6. Show how the widening circles of thought suggested by these two novels intersect in the characters of Forethought Fearing and Cotton Mather, Hagar, and the suggested witchcraft of Bathsheba.
7. Does belief in witchcraft still exist? In this century women have been accused of witchcraft in remote sections of western Pennsylvania, and among the Negroes of Maryland and eastern Virginia. The whole subject of witchcraft is an enormously interesting one. Some of the books listed below will suggest further study.

Additional Reading:

Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, by George Lincoln Burr

Notes on Witchcraft, by George Lyman Kittredge

The Geography of Witchcraft, by Montague Summers

A Popular History of Witchcraft, by Montague Summers

A Mirror for Witches, by Esther Forbes

The African Witch, by Joyce Cary

3. "DREAMERS AND MAKERS"

The Lost Colony, by Paul Green

1. If possible, have some one who saw the impressive production at Manteo in the summer of 1937 describe it. The play needs the contributing effects of music, dancing, and setting.
2. Discuss the part played by Spain in the fate of the lost colony. The British film *Fire over England*, recently shown in this country, gives a vivid idea of the terror spread by the threat of the Armada.
3. Have some sections of the play read aloud; the conversation between Elizabeth and Raleigh, at the first of Act II, scene 4, or the last conversation between Eleanor Dare and Borden, Act II, scene 5.
4. Show how skilfully the author has here interwoven old music, tradition, history, the ritual of the *Book of Common Prayer*, which was part of the mental inheritance of the English settlers.
5. Compare this story with Robert Coffin's account of the disappearance of the Popham colony in *Kennebec* (studied elsewhere in this bulletin).

Additional Reading:

Kennebec, by Robert P. T. Coffin

CHAPTER II

FIRST FRUITS OF A NEW CULTURE

The soil of New England grows libraries as readily as it does sweet fern and blueberries, white pines and potatoes. Villages so small that you would never notice them as an entity, when you drive past a string of white elm-shadowed farms, have a neat and well-stocked library building, open and in use all the year. Tons of baked beans and brown bread must have been eaten at "library suppers," cooked by earnest perspiring women to contrive support for the books by which their spirits are fed. One of the finest examples of the village library which comes to mind, and it is a true one, is in a certain lovely town whose white houses are spread like newly washed linen on a hill-top that looks toward Mt. Washington. There the jail, for many years, has housed the library. A square and sturdy structure of yellowed stone, it protects the books which the village must have. There was no need for a jail; surely one of the minor triumphs of the New England spirit.

This is the spirit which Van Wyck Brooks makes clear for us in *The Flowering of New England*. It is a far cry from the text books of our high school days, which neatly tabulated the New England School, to this very model of how a history of literature should be written. In my childhood the Cambridge poets were a row of bearded old gentlemen who lived in a frame above the door of the English classroom. Mr. Brooks introduces them as four-dimensional human beings. He has absorbed not only the ideology of the writers, but the very landscape and atmosphere as well. He must have lived in New England, or spent a great deal of time there, so vividly does he conjure up for us that crystal air, the cloud shadows on the great mountains, the wash and surge of ocean around the rocky points, the immaculate villages, the birches, pointed firs, and arching elms. Reading his book is as pleasurable as driving through the New England countryside; a book of permanent value this, sturdy and substantial as a Maine Island, around which a changing sea of novels may shift and break.

Few novelists have been able to achieve Mr. Brooks's incandescent fusion of place, time, and people. Many recent novelists have, however, dealt with the New England scene, one of the more notable

being Santayana, in *The Last Puritan*. This was a richly complicated picture of Boston and Bostonians as seen by a European and a philosopher reared in the Catholic tradition; the two contrasting chords of Catholicism and Puritanism are subtly interwoven, and the resolution of that discord is left to the reader. In *The Late George Apley* we have an interpretation of a typical Bostonian by an insider, a combination that makes up a book of quiet humor and very keen penetration. George Apley is the latter-day heir of the New England renaissance which Van Wyck Brooks portrays.

Subjects for Study

1. RENAISSANCE IN A MINOR KEY

The Flowering of New England, by Van Wyck Brooks

1. The first three chapters give the background of peace, stability, and cultural interests, which made possible the flowering of literature; "a community that believed in itself, serenely sure of itself and sure of the future." Outline these chapters. Observe that the Boston herein described is much less pallid and flaccid than we are apt to think it. Discuss the elements of robustness in the New England character.
2. Notice how skilfully the author weaves in the threads of the travels and studies abroad of various prominent New Englanders, and thus shows how foreign influences were interwoven with the local culture.
3. The author is probably at his best in his interpretations of Hawthorne, Thoreau, and Emerson. Pick out one of these for special discussion.
4. Note the bonds between New England and England: the common literary heritage, and the humanitarianism of the nineteenth century.
5. Comment on the founding of the *Atlantic Monthly*, in 1857, which marked "the high tide of the Boston mind" (p. 483).
6. Discuss, in the chapter on *The Autocrat*, Dr. Holmes's belief in the therapy of talking things out, which is very close to the theory of psychoanalysis; "Expression was the greatest need of this unexpressed New England . . . Cold and taciturn ways, ways that concealed what tragic depths!"
7. Show how Lowell foreshadowed the beginning of the end of the old New England culture (pp. 514 ff.). Observe the vacillations and doubts in his critical estimates of Whitman, Poe, and others.

8. The Civil War brought to a head the New England renaissance. Was it renaissance, or—according to Santayana—Indian summer?
9. Part of the pleasure of reading this book derives from the skill with which the writer interprets the New England landscape as the many times refined senses of his poets must have perceived it. Note the accuracy of his observations of nature.
10. Is the word minor, as applied to the New England school, justifiable? In spite of Mr. Brooks's enthusiasm, did the group produce any writers of major world importance? Remember that the scope of this study does not permit him to include Melville, or Emily Dickinson.

Additional Reading:

Being Little in Cambridge, an autobiography, by Eleanor Hallowell Abbott

Pedlar's Progress; The Life of Bronson Alcott, by Odell Shepard
Concord River, by William Brewster

A Land and a People, by Shirley Barker (Poem in the *Saturday Review of Literature*, April 3, 1937)

Poems, by Emily Dickinson (A crystallization of the New England spirit)

2. HEIR OF THE TRANSCENDENTALISTS

The Late George Apley, by J. P. Marquand

1. Explain the frame in which George Apley's life moved, and show how he was conditioned by this frame.
2. Discuss the plausibility of the memoir form in which this novel is cast, a plausibility that has actually deceived readers; trace the method by which it is brought about. The fictitious biographer, Mr. Willing, never steps out of character.
3. Connect the contributions of Great-Uncle William to museums, with the New England cultural tradition described in *The Flowering of New England*. Notice the references on page 32 to Charles Eliot Norton, Celia Thaxter, and Mrs. Julia Ward Howe.
4. Describe George as the typical Harvard man (Chapter VII). What keeps him interesting, although he is always a type?
5. Tell of George's brief escapes from the pattern; his adventure with Mary Monahan, his trip to Europe, his occasional visits to New York. The pattern is always stronger than his desire to escape.
6. George's trip to Europe, Chapter IX, will furnish an interesting comparison with Van Wyck Brooks's account of

some earlier New Englanders' voyages of discovery in the Old World; see, for instance, George Ticknor's *Wanderjahre*, Chapter IV. With what prejudices did George Apley see Europe?

7. Describe the literary clubs of Boston, and show how essentially they are a part of the Boston way of life, and of the New England tradition.
8. Trace the gradual steps by which the security of Apley's life was shaken; troubles in the mills, the World War, the changed attitude of his own children. Observe that his experience here is not peculiar to Boston, but is common to most Americans of his class and generation.
9. A comparison with Santayana's *The Last Puritan* is almost inevitable. A brief study of this may be found in *Adventures in Reading*, Series 10. The Catholic and European point of view in this case highlights the puritan temperament. Comment on the title; does not George Apley suggest that there can be no "last Puritan"?
10. Evaluate the fine and enduring human qualities in the way of life which Apley represents; does it seem to you a way that has gone forever? Point out the qualities which are peculiar to Boston, and those which are common to other conservative cities, such as Richmond and Charleston.

Additional Reading:

The Last Puritan, by George Santayana

Haven's End, by J. P. Marquand

Java Head, by Joseph Hergesheimer

A Footnote to Folly, by Mary Heaton Vorse (See chapters on the Lowell strike, which show the seamy side of the Apley security)

The American Santayana, by Henry S. Canby (*Saturday Review of Literature*, April 17, 1937)

CHAPTER III

WESTWARD TO THE ORIENT

In the dark curtain of forest that hung between the edge of the North American continent and the unexplored back country, the rivers were shining slits that beckoned to adventure. The entire Atlantic seaboard is cut to fringe by them, flowing quick-silver from the Appalachians to the sea. And up the rivers, from the beginning of exploration, went uncounted restless daring men, in canoes, in bateaus, lost often and beaten back by the wilderness, but never quite defeated.

It was an old dream and it died hard; that hope of finding an open slice of water through the continent to the jewelled cities of the East. Around the next bend, just beyond the bow of any canoe, might appear the gleam of Asiatic palaces. Much of the early history of our country could be written in the history of her rivers; much of it has slipped irrevocably away in the unread hieroglyphics of the ripples. And the story of the quest for the Northwest passage is to a large degree our own story; perhaps only within the recent years of economic depression have we relinquished that wild vision of a short cut to wealth, that unextinguished hope that around the next bend of any American life might lie sudden treasure.

Kennebec is the first volume of a series to be called "Rivers of America." The editors were happy in their choice of a poet who is also a native of the Kennebec as historian of this most easterly of our great rivers. With the poet's gift for the right phrase and the illuminating word, Mr. Coffin makes the Kennebec sing its own song for us, a song of wind in white pines, of blue and white water, of hardy explorers and of Indian wars. At times it becomes a dirge for the passing of the tall pines and the wooden ships. You may be annoyed by the authors turn for hyperbole; he writes with the backwoods exaggeration of the Paul Bunyan tales, and after all, the Hudson and the James have some claims to fame. But granted his local patriotism, his delight in his river is contagious. Anne Lindbergh told of letting the bright ribbons of rivers slip through her fingers as the plane followed the course of a stream; in similar fashion our imagination follows the Kennebec, not only through space, but through time.

The Kennebec was one of the first rivers to be explored as a possible opening to the legendary Northwest passage. In his most recent novel, Kenneth Roberts carries the story of that impassioned search from Maine to the headwaters of the Missouri. A tale of such excellence as his *Northwest Passage* needs slight comment, for it carries the reader along as swiftly as a river carries a birch-bark canoe. It is a historical novel in the right tradition of Scott and Cooper, but one which moves with modern swiftness and verve and gusto for realistic detail. The author makes eighteenth-century London as vivid as Kittery or Portsmouth; and he is aware, as Dickens would have been, that Hogarth's London existed alongside the London of Sir Joshua Reynolds.

Subjects for Study

1. MR. COFFIN HAS A SONG TO SING, OH!

Kennebec, by Robert P. T. Coffin

1. Locate the Kennebec on a map, and give some general geographic description of the region.
2. Note what Mr. Coffin has to say about the lost Popham colony (pp. 44-45) and discuss the claims for the priority of an English settlement in Maine.
3. Show why Maine was a battleground during the French and Indian Wars.
4. Enumerate and comment on the things we learned from the Indians; see the chapter on "Gifts of the Red Gods."
5. Explain why the French Canadians pouring back into Maine were not really foreigners (page 193) though they are still so regarded by the natives.
6. Read aloud the first two paragraphs of Chapter Four, for a taste of the author's poetic style.
7. Comment on "A Kennebec farm is an amphibious affair" (page 221).
8. Mr. Coffin's picture of Maine farm life is idyllic with all the hardships left out; compare it with the more realistic novels of Gladys Hasty Carroll.
9. What reflections are aroused by the destruction of thousands of white pines to make pulp for newspapers?
10. Tell, as Mr. Coffin does, the story of Arnold's march on Quebec, and compare it with a similar account in Kenneth Roberts' novel *Arundel*.

Additional Reading:

On Gilbert Head, by Elizabeth Etnier (The story of a modern adventure in homesteading on the site of the lost Popham colony)

As the Earth Turns, by Gladys Hasty Carroll

A Few Foolish Ones, by Gladys Hasty Carroll (The farming country described in these two novels of Maine is slightly to the south of the Kennebec region)

Time out of Mind, by Rachel Field (A novel of the passing of the wooden ships)

Monhegan, The Cradle of New England, by Ida S. Proper

2. ARTIST INTO RANGER

Northwest Passage, by Kenneth Roberts

1. The map of the march on St. Francis, and Major Rogers' map of the Northwest, which are used as end papers, will be found useful in following the story.
2. The story falls naturally into three divisions, which will be helpful in presenting it to a group: a) The march to St. Francis and back; b) Towne's success in London; c) The search for the Northwest passage, and Rogers' defeat.
3. The first part of the novel appeared, in somewhat abbreviated form, in the *Saturday Evening Post*; in reviewing the entire book, Bernard De Voto expressed a decided preference for the latter part; do you agree?
4. Comment on the symbolism inherent in the quest for the Northwest passage: ". . . and who shall say they are not happier in their vain but hopeful quest . . ."
5. Rogers, or at least Mr. Roberts' version of him, represents the exploring pioneer spirit, trapped and defeated by greed, treachery, shortsightedness, but inextinguishable. Walter Lippmann, in an editorial reply to Amelia Earhart's detractors, found the same spirit in her.
6. Does Langdon Towne's interest in art seem to you in any way anachronistic, granted his age and environment? Was the spiritual climate of colonial New England favorable to artists?
7. Discuss the advantage gained by the author in seeing things through an artist's eyes; to this we owe such vivid phrases as "flames turned to men." Note also the unity given the novel by this device; we see nothing that Langdon Towne did not see.
8. There is implicit here a tragic theme: the maturing man's gradual loss of faith in the heroes of his youth. But the enduring quality of Rogers' personality makes it end on a triumphant note.

Additional Reading:

Arundel, by Kenneth Roberts

Rabble in Arms, by Kenneth Roberts

Roberts Ranges, by Bernard De Voto (Review in *Saturday Review of Literature*, July 3, 1937)

Revolutionary New England, 1691-1776, by James Truslow Adams

New France and New England, by John Fiske

(The last two books mentioned may be consulted for reference on the historical background)

CHAPTER IV

OUR DEATHLESS FOLK-EPIC

In May 1937 a great many people drove long distances over fairly torrid Virginia roads to Petersburg to see the cadets from Virginia Military Institute and the United States Marine Corps fight the Battle of the Crater all over again. No one got hurt; hundreds of fried chickens and dozens of hams were consumed, and a splendid time was had by all. A few years ago they re-fought the Battle of the Wilderness near Fredericksburg. All of which goes to prove our undying interest in that war of ours. People will try solemnly to persuade you that these reënactments teach youngsters the horrors of war. Of course they do not. It is simply good fun and a grand spectacle, though I understand the Marines are getting a little weary of being licked by the V. M. I. boys.

Gone with the Wind was not by any means the only Civil War novel of 1936, though it obscured all the others, nor is the season of 1937 complete without some homage due this Phoenix subject, rising ever new from the embers of its own camp fires.

In a recent essay, Bernard De Voto described the development of the historical novel from the masses of unassimilated history found in nineteenth century novels. "Such passages," he said, "are outside, not inside the fiction, and they are inert, not dynamic." Later on Mary Johnston attempted to dramatize her historical material in the form of behavior and emotion, but she still felt that she must get in all the skirmishes and all the maneuvers; as for instance in *The Long Roll*. In both the novels studied in this program, the material of history is completely fused with the story; it has become dynamic and integral. We see events as actors within them, without superhuman omniscience.

Bugles Blow No More, by Clifford Dowdey, describes the ordeal of Richmond from April 1861 to April 1865. The city itself dominates the characters in the story, a city enduring the shocks of siege and of a changing social pattern. There are few descriptions of battles; but we experience what took place behind the lines: disease, hunger, cold, waiting, nursing the wounded, profiteering, food riots, spies, trickery, and unexhausted courage. The personalities of the Kirby family are especially well realized. They derive from a social group

often overlooked in southern fiction, the in-between class of professional men and independent merchants, a class always highly significant and important in Virginia, and particularly in Richmond. As brought to life by Mr. Kirby they should help to dispel the notion that all Virginians either sipped juleps on the terraces of James River mansions or spit tobacco from the doorways of mountain cabins. Virginius Kirby and St. George Paxton are representative of the best in Virginia ante-bellum life.

In *Boy in Blue*, by Royce Brier, we follow the Army of the Cumberland through the tragic days of the fighting around Chickamauga. Here the same device is employed to give unity that Kenneth Roberts uses in *Northwest Passage*; the war is presented entirely as seen by Private Robert Thane from Indiana. One of the few recent novels about the war from the Union point of view, it gains added interest from the fact that it covers a section of the country not often described in fiction.

Subjects for Study

1. A CITY UNDER SIEGE

Bugles Blow No More, by Clifford Dowdey

1. Give a preliminary sketch of the Kirby and the Wade families, and show how each is affected by and meets the ordeal of the siege.
2. Comment on the character of Mildred; does she ring true to her generation and her background? She escapes from the fold, as Scarlett did, but is she under sufficient stress to make this credible? It seems probable that the social changes which Mr. Dowdey makes immediate were much slower in coming; not until twenty or thirty years after, or even later, could the Wades of Richmond meet and marry the Broses.
3. The movement of the novel is slow, lagging with the wearisome retardation of the siege. A very strong emotional drive, such as Margaret Mitchell found in *Scarlett*, is necessary to counteract the inevitable retardation of such a theme. Note also how the intensity of the theme of vengeance, in Andrew Lytle's *The Long Night*, served to accelerate the slow pace of war.
4. The description of the food riots, beginning on page 464, is well worth recounting.
5. Discuss the point of view expressed on page 456, "It wasn't the armies of the United States that finally

humbled this city"; an opinion not often expressed, but very like Richmond.

6. Describe and comment on Virginius Kirby's will, page 474; here is summed up the idealism of a passing generation.
7. Discuss the attitude of these Richmonders toward Jefferson Davis; toward J. E. B. Stuart and Lee.
8. Compare *Bugles Blow No More* with one of Ellen Glasgow's novels of Richmond. Although she writes of a later period, the people are essentially the same, and she understands the Wades rather better.

Additional Reading:

The Romantic Comedians, by Ellen Glasgow

The Sheltered Life, by Ellen Glasgow

Invasion, by Maxence van der Meersch (An excellent portrayal of civilians during the World War)

The Civil War and Reconstruction, by J. G. Randall (A recently published and very useful survey)

2. A PRIVATE IN THE ARMY OF THE CUMBERLAND

Boy in Blue, by Royce Brier

1. A map of the region around Chickamauga would furnish an interesting preliminary for this almost biographical novel.
2. Trace the events which led up to Robert's enlistment; the background of a divided family from which he came.
3. "None more than faintly could imagine miles of battle lines, and there was a marked predisposition in every one to consider his ground pivotal." This gives the angle of observation throughout.
4. Does the author make Robert's rather easy conquests of women seem plausible? Characterize Robert; what qualities sustain our interest in him? His efforts at self-education, and Maury Coldiron's literary ambitions, lend the book a slightly unusual flavor.
5. Discuss the attitude toward war described on page 202, beginning "Their incessant croaking . . ."; does this seem typical of the common soldier in any war?
6. Do books such as this glorify war, or inspire a distaste for it? Note that Robert is never heroic.
7. Do the two novels here studied together seem to you to attempt to revive old bitternesses, or do they view the past dispassionately?
8. In reference to the quotation from Bernard De Voto, given above, compare the use of historical material here with that in some of the novels listed below.

Additional Reading:

The Long Roll, by Mary Johnston

Long Remember, by MacKinlay Kantor (Gettysburg through the eyes of a pacifist)

The Romance of Rosy Ridge, by MacKinlay Kantor

None Shall Look Back, by Caroline Gordon

The Long Night, by Andrew Lytle

Dixie After the War, by Myrta Lockett Avary

CHAPTER V

CIVIL WAR IN SPAIN

It is too early to expect any finished literary comment on the tragic affairs of modern Spain; such a tragedy has to be brooded over for a long time, held in suspension in the minds and hearts of many people, before it can be crystallized as literature. Perhaps fifty or a hundred years from now the great books about the doom of Spain will be written. Those that are appearing now, thick and fast, have the interest of immediacy. We cannot look to them for perspective, or for any large view of issues or of the conflict as a whole. Many of them bear the marks of hasty workmanship, of having been rushed to the Press while Spain, for the first time since the Armada, is front page news. They are smoke-stained, battle-smearred, fragmentary, passionately partisan, and therefore not to be accepted too gullibly. But the inescapable fact remains that the war in Spain has at several different times come close to involving all Europe; the fall of Santander was celebrated in Rome, and it behooves the intelligent American to follow closely what is happening. It is just possible that these books bring us closer to real understanding than censored and propaganda-distorted dispatches.

El Greco's nightmare picture of Toledo overhung with storm clouds has been many times reproduced in the past year, as prophetic of the suffering of that ancient town. As far back as 1922 a sense of foreboding hung over Spain. In the cold and ugly magnificence of the Pantheon in the Escorial, the burial place of Spanish kings, there was only one more space left for a coffin, already marked for Alfonso XIII. "He will be our last king," said our melancholy guide. And in the beautiful shady *paseos* of Madrid, marching men carried huge banners demanding to know who was responsible for the continuation of the cruel and wasteful Moroccan war. One could have seen it coming on, even that far back.

Such a sense of foreboding permeates Jenny Ballou's *Spanish Prelude*; through all its episodes we catch the increasing drumbeats of the revolution. A traveler's notebook, fragmentary in form, it nevertheless paints a very real picture of Madrid; not by any means all of Madrid, but Madrid of the cafes and clubs, of the *literati*, of endless desultory conversation. The author conveys well the feeling

of a foreigner, always on the outside, who sees people not quite whole, as through a not completely transparent veil beyond which they move in inexplicably dissolving changes.

The Life and Death of a Spanish Town is so harmoniously integrated that one hesitates to dissect it. Written under the spell of a powerful emotion, its mood is too close to grief to be elegiac. It could not have been written by any one else about any other place, at any other time, and thus it escapes classification; or perhaps it belongs with such unique records of experience as Anne Lindbergh's *North to the Orient*. Reading it is a genuine experience; we enter more intimately into the life of a small Balearic town than most travelers are ever privileged to do; and for a long time after reading it the smell of rosemary smoke is in our nostrils, we see the row of fishing boats at dawn, hear the surf on the rocks, and remember the courageous men and women whose lives ended with that of the little white town.

Subjects for Study

1. A SUR-REALISTIC MADRID

Spanish Prelude, by Jenny Ballou

1. Comment on the author's sometimes maddening preoccupation with Surrealism, shown in her interest in dreams, and in her fragmentary characters who drift around unrelatedly, like the objects in surrealist paintings.
2. The book may perhaps best be studied as a series of vignettes, mostly of women. Select some of these to recount, such as the story of Mathilde (page 216) or that of Teresa.
3. The author evidently knew well literary Spain of pre-revolutionary days. Many of the characters she mentions are real, such as Valle Inclán, Ortego y Gasset, Cossío, Victoria Kent, Gómez de la Serna, and others.
4. Comment on her description of Cossío. If possible, get a print of El Greco's painting, the "Burial of the Conde de Orgaz," which has a beautiful series of Spanish faces of the type which she describes.
5. Discuss the following statement "Spain's real problem has been and remains economic poverty" (page 170).
6. The Ateneo is frequently referred to here; it was a literary and social club where Spanish liberals used to meet, and which exerted a unique influence on the intellectual life of Madrid.

7. Note Mathilde's prophetic remark, in the Ateneo, "There stands Spain's youth condemned." Show how this has proved true.
8. Discuss the last glimpses of Alfonso XIII (page 230).
9. Miss Ballou brings out the fact that "the kind and honest intellectuals . . . became the heralds of the Republic," a fact which is apt to be forgotten in the heat of battle. Connect this with Elliot Paul's statement to the same effect.

2. DIRGE FOR SANTA EULALIA

The Life and Death of a Spanish Town, by Elliot Paul

The title of the book tells its story. It falls into two parts: (1) Life, 4000 B.C. to 1936 A.D.; (2) Death, July 14-Sept. 15, 1936.

1. A map of the Mediterranean, which will help you locate Ibiza, should be used in reviewing the book. Comment on the strategic importance of the Balearic Islands.
2. Mr. Paul does for Santa Eulalia, with more emotion, and more poetry, what the Lynds did for Middletown, U. S. A. A comparison of the two books would be interesting.
3. Describe the general aspect and character of the town; its industries; the sources of its food supply.
4. Sketch some of the main characters; i. e., Cosmi, the hotel-keeper and his family, Guarapinada, the storekeeper, Eulalia Noguera.
5. Note the picture of the rich landowner, Don Ignacio (chapter 7), and contrast it with the poor farm of Pere des Puig.
6. Show how the author had identified himself with the life of the town, by means of his orchestra and his school.
7. Note the elegiac quality of the chapter headed "Les jeunes filles en fleur," the girls who lost everything and were not allowed to die.
8. When the priest was killed in San Carlos, Pep said "Now it will never be over." Comment on this in the light of the way the war has developed. "It will be two hundred years before people here will be friendly again."
9. Comment on the relationship between Spanish workers and men of culture, as described on pages 372-373.
10. Describe the first impact of war on the life of the town, pages 380-383, "August 8th and 9th of 1936 had landed Ibiza in the swiftest current of modernity."
11. In the first bombing of Ibiza, nothing of military importance was destroyed. This was equally true almost a year later, when Guernica was destroyed in the attack on Bilbao.

12. Comment on the poignancy of the final news dispatch, "Four hundred were shot, including most of the male characters of this book."
13. Do you share the author's pessimistic conviction that Santa Eulalia is dead, or do you feel that after so many centuries of life the town is bound to continue? What qualities of permanent value in human life were destroyed there?

Additional Reading (for both books):

The Spanish Tragedy, by Allison Peers (A dispassionate account of the causes of the War)

The Siege of Alcazar, by Geoffrey MacNeill-Moss

Counter-Attack in Spain, by Ramón J. Sender

Two Wars and More to Come, by Herbert Matthews

CHAPTER VI

UNCHARTED COUNTRIES OF THE MIND

In *Man the Unknown*, Dr. Alexis Carrel, like a fatherly philosopher, berated the human race for having learned so little about ourselves. We make marvellous machines, we cover the earth with intricate cities, but we do not know how to heal our own bodies, or our troubled minds. In mapping the great regions still to be explored, Dr. Carrel cited as a hopeful sign the experiments of Dr. J. B. Rhine at Duke University; these mathematically exact tests of telepathy point the way to the discovery of unrealized and unused sources of power within ourselves. When Yeats-Brown, author of *The Lives of a Bengal Lancer*, returned to India, he went on a similar voyage of discovery. He felt that the Hindu mystics had something to teach him; his explorations are on the plane of metaphysics rather than of geography. He has so much objectivity and humor, and such diversified interests, that he is able to present in a matter-of-fact manner a subject which has often been wrapped in foggy sentiment; most readers too will be grateful to him for saucing large dishes of Hindu philosophy with sprightly observations on modern India.

All the great mystics, as well as the *gurus* whom Yeats-Brown interviewed, recognize the human need for periods of withdrawal from the world, for seasons of quiet contemplation. No matter by what diverse means man has met this necessity, by what Lenten fasts, what hermit loneliness, what monastic quietude, the necessity itself has not changed. The modern world alone fails to make provision for this need; or perhaps our sanitariums are modern monasteries, with a psycho-analyst in the chair of the father confessor. The goal of the mystic and of the analyst is the same, a more complete self-knowledge; "Before you can understand anything you must understand the self."

In *The Outward Room* Millen Brand relates with some of the simplicity of real poetry how one woman found herself, not through mysticism, but through a gradual acceptance of the realities of daily life. Although Harriet's experience is a very individual one, it touches at least the edges of the experience of most of us. Her reactions to her brother, her parents, and to the shock of death, are the normal individual's reactions heightened and intensified. Her recovery from mental illness is very like recovery from a long physical illness; there is the same renewed awareness of a fresh world. Her surroundings

appear to Harriet, and to the reader, like the morning after a hard rain, when everything looks spick and span; or like entering the Simplon tunnel in Italy on a dark blurred day, and emerging in Switzerland in almost unbearably brilliant sunshine, so brilliant that every pine needle stands out alone, and the small threads of distant waterfalls are visible. That is the way Harriet sees the streets of New York.

Subjects for Study

1. ESCAPE TO REALITY

The Outward Room, by Millen Brand

1. Tell the story of Harriet's escape from the sanitarium; could she have managed it? Did Dr. Revlin have the door left open on purpose?
2. Is the story of her recovery psychologically sound? Why does scrubbing the kitchen and cooking for John help her more than the "Occupational Therapy" of the hospital?
3. Trace the steps in Harriet's gradual acceptance of her brother's death. Is the ending too pat, the death of John's brother on her own brother's birthday? Could she have recovered without that final touch? Does it give the ending a slight theatricality which none of the rest of the book has?
4. Note that Harriet's intrinsic problem is to learn to accept reality. This is a universal problem. She accepts love, friends, work, and finally death. Discuss her relationship to her parents.
5. By means of a comparison with some of the books about New York listed below, show how well the author conveys the feeling, the smells and the sounds, of New York.

Additional Reading:

Manhattan Transfer, by John Dos Passos

Winterset, by Maxwell Anderson

Men and Brethren, by James Gould Cozzens

A Fugitive Crosses His Tracks, by Aksel Sandemose

Asylum, by William Seabrook

A Mind Restored, by Elsa Krauch

A Mind Mislaid, by Henry Collins Brown

2. TOWARD THE TEMPLE OF THE UNDISTRACTED MIND

Lancer at Large, by Francis Yeats-Brown

This book may be studied on two different planes: (1) as a vivid picture of modern India, or (2) as a suggestive approach to Hindu mysticism. The first questions here deal with actualities, the latter ones with the philosophical side. Either may be omitted.

1. Sum up the Indian achievements given on pages 160-161.
2. Comment on ". . . We are still savages . . . compared to the Indians . . . We have been educating ourselves since the Renaissance. Their culture was at its height 2400 years ago."
3. Explain how the Taj Mahal is a "bridge between East and West" (page 150). Show some pictures of it.
4. Discuss "Climate is the key to many things about India" (page 207).
5. How does Yeats-Brown answer the question: Can India manage her own affairs? (pages 306-311)
6. Discuss the Doon School (page 258) in relation to the India of tomorrow.
7. Describe the author's interview with Gandhi; with Tagore.
8. Note the references to Emerson, who had read the Hindu mystics. Look up the New England Transcendentalists, in *The Flowering of New England*; all of them were influenced by Hindu philosophy.
9. Use as a basis for discussion: "India is not a country, but a continent, an epitomized world, the cradle of human civilization" . . . "Our fight for freedom is the world's fight, and we can teach the world this great lesson, that it can be fought with spiritual weapons alone."
10. Note "the existence of obviously related mystical methods"; "The East has preserved a cooler head and a more scientific attitude than the West as regards mystical experience." If you are interested in a comparison, look up some of the Spanish mystics, St. John of the Cross, or Saint Theresa.
11. Discuss in relation to the modern world "a civilization that has lost its Faith, cannot keep faith in anything" (page 150).
12. Discuss "the deepest powers of cognition latent in every individual." "Experiments recently made in the United States prove beyond reasonable doubt that thought transference can occur between individuals separated in space."

Additional Reading:

Man the Unknown, by Alexis Carrel

Outposts of Science, by Bernard Jaffe (Read the chapter on Dr. Adolf Meyer)

The Lives of a Bengal Lancer, by Francis Yeats-Brown

Mother India, by Katherine Mayo

The Ten Principal Upanishads, translated by William Butler Yeats

The Fountain, by Charles Morgan (The theme of this novel is the quest for inner serenity)

India in Revolution, by E. E. & E. E. Ericson

New Frontiers of the Mind, by J. B. Rhine

CHAPTER VII

THE ROAD IS WESTWARD

The weary dead are nameless:

but these they have left to us: the ploughs and pestles,
the wilderness north and south, the bright blade stained,
the windy leaves, the hostile Indian neighbor
bronze and uncovered, hiding death in his hand,
earth's tang, and the sweat of agony and labor.
Inheritors of hunger, we hunt the sun.

—Frances Frost

In the three-hundred-year-old pageant of American life is it possible to trace through the shifting scenes a recurrent theme? Looking back we see unemployment in England, poverty in London, famine in Ireland. A young tenant farmer bashes his landlord on the head, crosses the Atlantic in a twenty-five ton boat—and one-fourth of all who so crossed were lost—pauses in Pennsylvania, builds a cabin, then a big house, then a town in western Virginia. A young mother goes from Virginia out to Kentucky, sees her husband and her children killed by Indians, survives to raise another family and see a Civil War. A Jesuit settlement in North Carolina is wiped out, an English settlement at the mouth of the Kennebec lost forever. Then gradually the tiny fortified villages grow to towns, from them spreading fanwise streams of covered wagons, barges down the rivers, across the continent to new lands, new towns. Through it all is there a recognizable design that we may name American?

Ex-Ambassador Dodd defined it as the dream of democracy, of a man's right to worship, to live, to think as he chooses. Herbert Agar defined it more strictly as a man's right to a job which will enable him to take care of his family. Was this what the Pilgrims, the Jesuits, Quakers, Scotch and Irish and Huguenots sought in the New World? What is the American dream? A democracy of freeholders, of small proprietors? Freedom from oppression, or freedom to work?

To these and similar queries, which must occur to the thoughtful with every issue of a current newspaper, the two books here studied will suggest some provocative answers. They might almost have been planned together, so neatly do they complement each other. *Famine* goes back to the very roots of the settlement of North America, and *American Dream* continues the chronicle up to the present.

Subjects for Study

1. INHERITORS OF HUNGER

Famine, by Liam O'Flaherty

1. Describe living conditions in the Black Valley in 1845 as a modern social case worker might state them. What saves the novel from being a mere case record? Comment on the reality of the characters.
2. Observe the dispassionate way in which the author presents almost incredibly bad conditions; he accepts them as the peasants themselves do, as a matter of course.
3. Trace Mary's story throughout, beginning with her prayer, "Take Martin and me away from here . . ." and show how the somewhat diffuse action gradually focuses toward this goal.
4. Describe the riots in the village which led up to Chadwick's death. Does Chadwick's sadism seem to you psychologically sound?
5. Read Brian's speech (p. 271) "to be master of your own plot of ground and of your own hearth . . ." and connect this with the ideas suggested above about the American dream.
6. Discuss the ethics of Mary's escape, leaving the old people to their doom. Show how Mary is the stuff of which America is made; how her story modulates into the story of the Thralls in *American Dream*.
7. Compare *Famine* with Pearl Buck's *The Good Earth*; you will find a similar attachment to the land, a similar dependence on the land, and consequent helplessness before flood and blight.
8. Note the difference in motivation of pioneering in *Famine* and Frances Brett Young's *They Seek a Country*.
9. Comment on "Under a tyranny, the only active forces of government are those of coercion." Relate this to the Italy of *Bread and Wine* (studied in another chapter of this bulletin).

2. TOWARD THE PROMISED LAND

American Dream, by Michael Foster

1. Describe the device by which the novel is held together. It is not a very original one; does it work here?
2. Sketch the novel by episodes, e. g., Immigrants to a New World, Jean Francis Thrall in Boston, Thrall and Joanna in South America, etc. It would be well to observe carefully the dates of each episode.

3. Show how the previously studied novel *Famine* leads up to the chapter called Western Ocean.
4. Of what New England poet does Joanna Wells remind you? Is she more like Emily Dickinson? Or Margaret Fuller?
5. Comment on the story of the Mexicans in the section called "Waste." In what did the waste consist?
6. Show how the section "St. Fleur of the Andes" rounds off the story of Joanna.
7. Pick out the different strains that had gone into the making of Shelby Thrall, and show how they influenced his final decision. What is Shelby seeking?
8. What is meant by the "American dream?" How has Mr. Roosevelt defined it?
9. In connection with these two novels, comment on Frances Frost's lines quoted above, and these in addition:
 "We have inherited peace and difficult wisdom;
 let it be these by which we know our country."

Additional Reading (for both books):

The Land of the Free, by Herbert Agar

The Good Society, by Walter Lippmann

The Good Earth, by Pearl Buck

The Grandmothers, by Glenway Wescott

The Able McLaughlins, by Margaret Wilson

Drums along the Mohawk, by Walter D. Edmonds

You Have Seen Their Faces, by Erskine Caldwell and Margaret Bourke-White (Which may suggest an ironic answer to some of the questions above)

CHAPTER VIII

COVERED WAGONS IN AFRICA

The Irish, escaping from black valleys toward a land of promise, were driven by the most elemental of human needs, stark hunger. We have followed their career from the famine of the great potato blight through to their inheritance of the American dream, and we have paused a while to ponder on the evanescence of that dream. The story of pioneering in the United States has an enlightening counterpart in the migration of the Boers from South Africa to the Transvaal, after the Boer War. Here we find pioneers not from necessity, but from principle. They left no plague-ridden, blight-smitten valleys; no absentee landlords had sucked their blood. They set out from fat farms, rich acres, comfortably rooted homes, forced not by starvation but by their profound need for freedom. They found unendurable any compromise with British domination. Their trek has been called mankind's greatest mass sporting gesture.

The story of their trek is oddly familiar and unfamiliar to American ears. Substitute Indians for Kaffirs, buffaloes for hippopotami, arrows for assegais, and we recognize the well-worn covered wagon theme. Yet the African version has not appeared as often in fiction as the American one. Two very different novelists have told it this year, and their novels, each excellent in its own way, offer an interesting comparison in technique. Francis Brett Young belongs to the older tradition of English novelists; at his opening sentence we settle back, knowing that the fire is lit, the curtains drawn, the port at hand. His novel has dignity, solidity, form, and idealism. Stuart Cloete pitches us headlong into the pace of a trek that is half a tribal migration, half a guerrilla skirmish. The rhythm is of the cinema rather than of the novel; which is by no means disparagement. Some readers will prefer the slower tempo, the more formal pattern, of *They Seek a Country*; others will find a more vivid spectacle in *The Turning Wheels*. You may feel that Mr. Young's decorous pioneers would never have had the stuff to endure the hardships of the veldt, or you may find unpalatable the robustness of Mr. Cloete's Boers.

Subjects for Study

1. WHAT PRICE A NEW NATION?

They Seek a Country, by Francis Brett Young

1. Look up the history of the Boer War, and the subsequent acts of the British Government in regard to the Boers.
2. The end papers in *The Turning Wheels* will help in both books. A larger map of Africa should be used to trace the trek from Capetown across the mountains.
3. John Oakley's story before his arrival in Africa should be told briefly, with reference to conditions in England which made pioneering an escape. There is a good opportunity here to tie this up with the previous study of *Famine*.
4. Describe the Prinsloo household before the trek, and the motives which led to their decision.
5. The story of the trek occupies the last third of the novel. Describe the course they followed; note the superb description of both mountain and veldt.
6. Show how the emotional reactions of John, Lisbet, and Jan are intensified by the conditions of the trek. Does any character seem to you especially arresting, or are you more concerned with the group?
7. Do you agree with Christopher Morley that if Francis Brett Young had written no other novel, his fame as a writer would be assured by this one alone?

2. THE OUT TRAIL

The Turning Wheels, by Stuart Cloete

1. The previous study of *They Seek a Country* will provide a background for this, which plunges the reader into action without preliminaries; the trek is already well under way.
2. The darkly tangled story of Sannie and Herman and Hendrik may be sketched; show how their behavior was determined, at least in part, by the extraordinary conditions under which they were living.
3. Several memorable characterizations emerge here; Hendrik, Pietie du Plessis and his tomboy sister Sara, and especially Tante Anna de Jong. The latter dominates the book; show how her rich personality helps to unify it.
4. Explain why the settlement at the foot of the berg, which seemed a veritable Land of Canaan, was foredoomed to failure.

5. Why was it that Sannie hurt every one who loved her? Does she remind you in any way of Scarlett O'Hara?
6. Contrast the different techniques of the two novels. Which gives you a better understanding of the trek? Which a more vivid picture of the country and of the cost of pioneering?
7. Note that both books end in massacres. The tiny groups who have endured so much are smeared out on the veldt, just as the buffalo made a scarlet splotch of Sara's horse. The impression left by each is similar: the high price, the incalculable human waste, involved in building a new country.

Additional Reading:

The books referred to in the preceding chapter will afford a contrast with American pioneering. In addition the following will give a picture of a later South Africa:

God's Stepchildren, by Sarah Gertrude Millin

Mary Glenn, by Sarah Gertrude Millin

An Artist in the Family, by Sarah Gertrude Millin

The South African Question, by Olive Schreiner

London to Ladysmith via Pretoria, by Winston Churchill

CHAPTER IX

EXILES LOOK BACK

A young American painter recently exhibited a picture called the *Eternal City*, in which he depicted, with some of the detail of the Surrealists but with more coherence, his idea of contemporary Rome. A giant mask of Mussolini, popping like a Jack-in-the-Box from the ruins of the Forum, leers across the foreground, in which crumbled grandeur, beggars, and a tarnished altar-piece all suggest decadence. But in the background there are lovely vistas of the real, the unalterable Italy: hills and sunny towns and fertile valleys. It is in some such way as this that Ignazione Silone sees the Italy to which he looks back from exile; beyond the meretricious ferocity of the present dictatorship he remembers simplicity and beauty and tenderness. In *Bread and Wine* he gives us perhaps the best available description of present day Italy; rather more than a novel, it is a moving human document, warm and intricate and real as a living crowd. Here is a novelist who refuses to be glib, who is not content with surfaces; we feel that the people he writes of are his own friends, whose lives he has understood with penetrating affection.

The Italy of *Enchanter's Nightshade* is a Never Never land, of incredible security and peace. The author, Ann Bridge, presents charmingly a way of life which has vanished completely; for the sake of contrast alone it is to be studied here.

Another exile from another totalitarian state, Bruno Frank, tells in *Lost Heritage* the story of some of the dispossessed of Germany. His point of view is not a popular one today; we lean toward defenders of the proletariat rather than of the disinherited aristocracy. Robert Briffault has accustomed us to Grand Dukes as Ogres; the aristocrats of his *Europa* are all rotters, escapists from responsibility. Bruno Frank speaks in a very quiet voice in behalf of certain everlasting values temporarily obscured in the whirlwind. Although his hero is the heir of a princely family, he is more vitally concerned with the aristocracy of art and learning than that of birth; all aristocracy of the human spirit is forfeit today in Nazidom. The career of Ludwig of Camberg reminds us of those many men of great wealth who have been custodians as well as patrons of art. One remembers that the Liria Palace, destroyed in Madrid in 1936, contained one of

the finest private libraries in Europe. The minted austere loveliness of the coin of Syracuse, which plays a part in Ludwig's story, symbolizes the enduring quality of created beauty in a world that has gone ugly.

Subjects for Study

1. THE STILL SMALL VOICE

Bread and Wine, by Ignazio Silone

1. Locate in an atlas the Abruzzi region, where most of the story takes place.
2. It is impossible to follow all the ramifications of so complex a novel. Emphasize rather the two characters who give it unity: Don Benedetto the priest and teacher, Pietro Spina the idealist and exile.
3. Describe the first gathering of Don Benedetto's former pupils in his garden, and the last. He feels that he has failed with them all. Has he?
4. Discuss the motives of Spina's work; is his idealism kin to that of St. Francis of Assisi?
5. What does Silone mean by "The Land of Propaganda"? Describe the broadcast of Mussolini's declaration of war against Ethiopia (pp. 201-204).
6. Don Benedetto's words (pp. 243-244) contain the gist of Silone's beliefs. Read them aloud and then discuss them.

2. PRE-WAR ITALY

Enchanter's Nightshade, by Ann Bridge

1. The plot, that of the incredibly innocent governess, is at least as old as the English novel. Do you think a modern Almina would be better able to cope with the situation?
2. Note the qualities which give the novel readability and interest: for women especially the attention to details of clothing, coiffure, food, service, etc.; for readers in general the contrasted and very alive characterizations.
3. Compare this novel with V. Sackville West's *The Edwardians*, which was also a picture of a serene and secure way of life that has completely vanished.
4. Discuss the contrast between the English, which is also the American, way of looking at marriage, and the continental way (pp. 125-127). Compare this with the attitude toward marriage of Brynhild, in H. G. Wells's novel of that name, or of Nathalie in Sigrid Undset's *The Faithful Wife* (reviewed in this bulletin).
5. Compare the character of La Vecchia Contessa with the matriarch of *Whiteoaks of Jalna*, who similarly dominates a restless and turbulent family.

3. LOST COINS OF SYRACUSE

Lost Heritage, by Bruno Frank

1. Comment on the fairy tale quality of the story, i. e., the young prince, the faithful tutor, the priceless ancestral gems, played against a grim background.
2. Note the realistic details: the massacre at Potempa, Hitler's telegram, etc., all of which are authentic.
3. Why does England seem a haven? Note the description of the lying-in-state of George V. Discuss the stable qualities in the English monarchy.
4. Contrast with *Bread and Wine*. Which is more diffuse? More readable? Which gives a more complete picture of a nation?
5. As described in these two books, which nation seems to you to fare worse under present dictatorships?
6. Contrast the protagonists of the two novels, Ludwig and Spina. One is concerned with the preservation of art and learning, the other with the preservation of human liberty and decency. You have here fruitful material for a debate. Without carrying it further, note that both sides are submerged in the totalitarian state.

Additional Reading:

Wotan, by C. G. Jung (*Saturday Review of Literature*, Oct. 16, 1937) (For a discussion of Nazi ideology)

Inside Europe, by John Gunther

Journalist's Wife, by Lillian T. Mowrer

Millions of Dictators, by Emil Lengyel

Europa in Limbo, by Robert Briffault

ANOTHER LOST ATLANTIS

As the year 1938 begins, Moscow is again absorbed in the spectacle of another blood purge. Is such violence necessary to make freedom secure? Are freedom and the good life for the many the real purposes of the present Soviet rulers? Have the hopes of the revolution been betrayed, as Trotsky claims? With such questions we might well occupy ourselves.

Of all the Utopias man has sought, both real and fabulous, Soviet Russia perhaps held out the richest promises. Underwritten by extraordinary natural wealth, the experiment of planning a good life for the largest possible number of people seemed to have every possibility of ultimate success. Hence idealists all over the world have watched the experiment with eagerness. Even those who differed with the directors of the Soviet both in their definition of the good life and their means of attaining it have been hopeful in following the progress of their adventure. Several years ago Sidney and Beatrice Webb, idealists as well as thoughtful and conscientious observers, turned in a most optimistic report after their visit to Russia. A dissenting note has begun to be audible in the reports of more recent observers. The most clamorous criticism of the present Soviet regime has come from Leon Trotsky, one of the leaders of the original revolution. What has happened? It is of course too early to evaluate events of which our knowledge is so limited, but Eugene Lyons has at least one very thoughtful answer for us.

Assignment in Utopia is a record of gradual disillusionment; not of one who went to Russia prepared to be disillusioned, but of an enthusiastic and sincere believer in the Soviet regime who tried very hard to like what he found. Nor is it the claptrap judgment of a foreigner who has spent a few months in Russia, going on carefully planned and supervised trips of inspection. Eugene Lyons spent five years there, living as a native. He writes of what he knows. If his findings seem discouraging to the idealists among us, we have to remind ourselves that human progress may be measured only in terms of the slow march of centuries.

One Life, One Kopeck, by Walter Duranty, is an angle shot at the same scene, slightly earlier in the Revolutionary process. The

factual parts of the novel are top-notch reporting; from them one gains a clear picture of the Russian Revolution, a picture ugly enough to be a warning, though by no means intended as such. The brutality of civil war, the inherent cruelty of human beings toward each other, would make this story of Ivan almost unbearable unless it is viewed as we view the disasters and hair-breadth escapes of Popeye. Ivan is a Russian Jack the Giant Killer; he strides across the revolution in magic boots, missing nothing. His killing, drinking, lovemaking, are all on a larger-than-life scale. As a pendant to *Assignment in Utopia*, *One Life One Kopeck* is almost a caricature, worthy of consideration only because of its flashes of vivid reporting.

Subjects for Study

1. NO ROAD TO SHANGRI-LA

Assignment in Utopia, by Eugene Lyons

1. Outline the first part of the book, which gives Lyons' background, and the reasons for his belief in Communism. There is a poignant picture here of an emigrant boyhood. It might be contrasted with that in the first part of *The Americanization of Edward Bok*, which reflects the optimism of a day when opportunities were more abundant.
2. Show why Lyons was ready to expect much of Russia.
3. "The larger justice of Historical Necessity was being served"; i. e., in the demonstration trials; in what sense is "historical necessity" here used?
4. Comment "During the Five Year Plan Russia was brutally transformed into a crucible in which men and metals were melted down and reshaped in a cruel heat, with small regard for the human slag."
5. How does he answer the question "Was the Five Year Plan a success?"
6. Discuss "The socialist dream had been emptied of human meaning . . ."
7. What does Lyons mean by the latter part of his book "Rededication"? Discuss the final chapter, "Adventure in Idealism." "I left Russia convinced that man's greatest task is to defend the basic concepts of freedom and respect for life." Does this seem a restatement of what we have elsewhere called the American dream?
8. Dorothy Thompson says of this book: "Of all the books on Russia written by Americans this seems to me the most important and the most moving." Discuss the two parts of her comment.

2. PLAYING ON DEATH'S DOORSTEP

One Life, One Kopeck, by Walter Duranty

1. Tell Ivan's incredible adventures, and show how the author has used the old picaresque pattern of the rogue hero to guide him through a cross section of life.
2. Discuss "the way he had acted tonight was the way his life made him act, the way he was. As Marx said, you were what life made you." (p. 67)
3. Show how first Lenin, then Stalin fits into this description of "the Russian mentality, which, however iconoclastic it claims to be, is forever seeking a fresh god to worship" (p. 91).
4. Do you feel that there is an essential romanticism underlying the author's apparently hard-boiled attitude? Is this not seen in the heightening of his characters to fairy tale proportions?

Additional Reading:

British Agent, by R. H. Bruce Lockhart

Personal History, by Vincent Sheean

The Way of a Transgressor, by Negley Farson

I Write as I Please, by Walter Duranty

The above books will be useful in gaining a picture of the Russian Revolution.

Seven Red Sundays, by Ramón J. Sender (A picture of revolutionary Madrid written in a mood similar to that of *One Life, One Kopeck*)

Oh, Say, Can You See! by Lewis Browne (In which the tables are turned and a Russian observes the United States)

CHAPTER XI

VARIATIONS ON POPULAR THEMES

In the publishing trade it is axiomatic that books about doctors always sell. Perhaps, though we would be unwilling to admit it consciously, the doctor's white aseptic garb still has for us something of the ancient magic of the medicine man. He has power of life and death; he juggles with mysterious quantities and qualities; he is necessary to us; we may be a little afraid of him, but he fascinates us. From Mary Roberts Rinehart to Victor Heiser, thousands of readers have proved that they enjoy reading either fact or fiction about the medical profession. Was not the old patent medicine show a similar cunning appeal to man's need to be cured of his ills and to be amused?

Group medicine is an intruder into the fold, whose looks the profession does not altogether like. No one has yet replaced the old family doctor, who was a complete clinic, diagnostician, surgeon, and psychiatrist, all in one. We seem to be in a transition from the family doctor through clinics and specialists to group medicine. The latter is already much more widely adopted in England, where the action of Dr. Cronin's novel takes place, than here; while he is concerned with most of the inter-relating problems of a doctor, he has some very interesting things to say about group medicine in actual practice.

Another subject of unflinching interest to readers is the marriage relationship with its apparently infinite variety of complexities. Dorothy Dix's sage and salty column of domestic advice has daily followers, although the gist of her wisdom could be boiled down to a paragraph or two. We may like to hear the problems of others in order to hug ourselves in smugness at having escaped them, or so that our own may seem less acute. When a writer as mature and intelligent and sensitive as Sigrid Undset has something to say about marriage, we may be sure it is far above the level of the gossip column. Her most recent novel, with its disarmingly naïve title, expresses in the story of Nathalie the conflict of a great many modern women. It is a very long way from Kristin Lavransdatter to Nathalie, but Sigrid Undset understands them equally well. Few writers have her gift for combining the universal and the local. Nathalie's problem

and her solution of it could occur in New York or Chicago as well as Oslo; but the incidentals, the salt fiords, the birches, the fir woods with their damp smell of mushrooms and deep pine needles, are so deliciously Norwegian that one feels after exploring them as refreshed as if by a trip.

Subjects for Study

1. A BRITISH ARROWSMITH

The Citadel, by A. J. Cronin

1. Comment on the advantages and disadvantages of group medicine as shown in the small towns in which Andrew first practises.
2. Does it seem to you that Andrew's experiences cover too much ground? Is it too apparent that the author is trying to show every phase of medical practice in England?
3. Discuss his descriptions of London hospitals and nursing-homes. Do they seem to you accurate?
4. Compare the English medical system with ours; note the distinction between doctors and surgeons.
5. Discuss Christine; what did she stand for in Andrew's life? Comment on her accidental death; does it remind you of the death of Catherine in Hemingway's *Farewell to Arms*?
6. This is definitely a novel with a purpose. Does that detract from its interest? from its artistic value? Discuss the meaning of the title.
7. A more or less detailed comparison with Sinclair Lewis' *Arrowsmith* should be very fruitful. Note that the essential problem has a more universal application in *Arrowsmith*. How can a sincere scientist—or artist—make enough money to live and yet be faithful to his science—or art? How may he resist the temptations of easy wealth, all the manifold enticements of expediency? *The Citadel* is less concerned with the abstract problem, more with accidental circumstances.

Additional Reading:

Arrowsmith, by Sinclair Lewis

Man the Unknown, by Alexis Carrel

American Doctor's Odyssey, by Victor Heiser

Outposts of Science, by Bernard Jaffe (Especially the chapter on Dr. Adolph Meyer)

Review of *The Citadel*, by Hans Zinnser (*Saturday Review of Literature*, Oct. 9, 1937)

2. COURT OF DOMESTIC RELATIONS

The Faithful Wife, by Sigrid Undset

1. The story is simply told; the intrinsic charm lies in the manner of presentation; comment on both.
2. The marriage of Nathalie and Sigurd seemed practically ideal. What elements do you find lacking in it? Had Nathalie failed Sigurd in any way?
3. Discuss the author's possible reasons for choosing as her hero and heroine too very unexceptional and unimportant people. Twenty years ago Nathalie's business might have seemed exceptional, but does it now?
4. The story is told from Nathalie's point of view throughout. Do you think the author understands Sigurd as well?
5. Comment on the title; is it justifiable, in view of Nathalie's affair with Sverre? What were Nathalie's emotions in that case?
6. Discuss Nathalie's solution. What else might she have done? Do you think the author over-simplified the outcome by two deaths?
7. How might a different author handle the same story? Notice that emotion is muted here throughout. Maxence van der Meersch's novel *Hath Not the Potter*, the Goncourt prize novel for 1937, deals with exactly the same situation, but in a much more emotional, intensified way. In both novels the wife's solution is the same; in both death lends a helping hand.
8. Do not overlook the opportunity to share Sigrid Undset's delight in being outdoors. Notice what a refuge both walking and swimming are for Nathalie.

Additional Reading:

Hath Not the Potter, by Maxence van der Meersch

Ida Elisabeth, by Sigrid Undset

The Longest Years, by Sigrid Undset (Reminiscences of the author's childhood)

CHAPTER XII

WIVES OF HEROES

The present writer would not wish to follow Mr. Melville Dewey's classification of women biographers along with cranks, eccentrics, and insane. Even the least feministic among us is moved by such a grouping to inquire, why after all a special classification for women? Why, for the matter of that, a special page for them in the newspaper? Would not a special page for men, with articles on golf, poker, and the influence of Surrealism on neckties, be just as logical? But one must admit every now and then that certain books do have a special interest for women, over and above their general interest. The year 1937 has been peculiarly rich in lives of famous women, with Mme Curie, Mme Alda and Mrs. Roosevelt leading the field. Lillian Mowrer's book, *Journalist's Wife*, does not belong with these, but falls into a very individual category, for she writes not as a woman of established fame, but as a wife who has followed her husband's career into the thick of world events. Edgar Ansel Mowrer is the real subject of his wife's so-called autobiography. Her observations are consistently from a feminine point of view, and therein lies their unusual charm, since she combines with femininity something of Mme de Staël's wit, and a great deal of her grasp of affairs. Most women will envy not only her adventurous life, but her ability to relate it in clear and lively fashion, and every reader may find food for thought in her comments on contemporary Europe.

Brynhild, the heroine of H. G. Wells's latest novel, is also the wife of a famous man. No Jane Welsh Carlyle, bitterly rebellious to the tantrums of genius, but a willing if at times bewildered follower, her fictitious role is not dissimilar to Lillian Mowrer's actual one.

In the course of Brynhild's story the author suggests some profound themes, which he illuminates with Mozartian lightness and dexterity. The master is himself again, the Wells of *Tono-Bungay*, provocative, sparkling, humorous, and human. His novel is refreshing after the solemn proletarian tracts, or weighty dishes of history so recently the fashion. As Wells has mellowed he has become humane in the Renaissance sense, and his reflections on the private life of a novelist are highly civilized.

Subjects for Study

1. RINGSIDE SEATS

Journalist's Wife, by Lillian Mowrer

1. Prologue: the romantic story of the Mowrers' first encounter and marriage, which reads like good fiction.
2. Assignment in Rome: describe Mussolini's rise to power, and the consequent changes apparent in Italy. Compare with *Bread and Wine*.
3. Assignment in Germany: discuss the Weimar republic, Hitler's campaign for election, the burning of the Reichstag, the psychology of Nazism. Compare with *Lost Heritage*.
4. Assignment in Paris: contrast France with Germany. Note the portrait of Léon Blum (pp. 367-369) and the account of the French suffrage movement (pp 354-358).
5. Return to Moscow: what changes had occurred? Compare with *Assignment in Utopia*.
6. Comment on the clear statement of the issues involved in the Spanish War (pp. 375). Discuss in relation to the most recent news.
7. Coda: what sort of a world have we made?
 - a. Discuss D. J.'s equipment for the future; "She will have been taught to do something with her hands, something so simple, so close to the roots of human life, that even a broken-down society will find her useful."
 - b. Discuss the author's opinion of the role of the United States: "Without permanent co-operation on the part of the United States international organization will remain a shadow."

*Additional Reading:**Inside Europe*, by John Gunther*A Footnote to Folly*, by Mary Heaton Vorse*Assignment in Utopia*, by Eugene Lyons*Bread and Wine*, by Ignazio Silone*Lost Heritage*, by Bruno Frank

2. FAÇADE

Brynhild; or the Show of Things, by H. G. Wells

1. The author describes this as a "novel in the Maori style, a presentation of imaginative indications . . . the decorations on a (Maori) beam or pillar may be expanded by an understanding imagination into the most complete and interesting of patterns." What are the imaginative indications?

- a. The relation of a writer to his public; the contrast between one writer who craves publicity and one who is forced to shun it.
 - b. The relation of Brynhild and Rowland; show how their early candor changed.
 - c. Can a man be born again? Can Bunte escape his past? Must the adult always carry his past about with him? These are some of the imaginative indications; you may find more.
2. Does Brynhild seem to you a type or an individual, or a little of both? Is her problem in essence that of every woman?
 3. Describe the weekend at Valliant Chevrell. It would be interesting to compare this with another picture of an English weekend in *The Edwardians*.
 4. Discuss the meaning which the author attaches throughout to the world *façade*. Show how from necessity Brynhild develops a *façade*.

Additional Reading:

Theatre, by Somerset Maugham (Another study of the artist and his public)

The Edwardians, by Victoria Sackville-West

Here Lies a Most Beautiful Lady, by Richard Blaker (Hester was also, as Brynhild called herself, "a quiet lovely")

The Faithful Wife, by Sigrid Undset

An Experiment in Autobiography, by H. G. Wells

The Croquet Player, by H. G. Wells

CHAPTER XIII

ARTISTS WITHOUT FAME

Under dusky laurel leaf,
Scarlet leaf of rose,
I lie prone who have known
All a woman knows.

Jewel-laden are my hands,
Tall my stone above
Do not weep that I sleep,
Who was wise in love.

—Margaret Widdemer

Margaret Lawrence, in *The School of Femininity*, defined the dilemma of the woman of genius who would create both with her body and with her mind. We cannot know whether Emily Dickinson's exquisite luminous poems were as children to her, or if the poems ever would have found life had she been surrounded by children. It is a riddle whose solution no psychologist, no writer on women, has approached. Even the untalented woman feels the urge to make something beautiful, complete, which she can touch and behold, saying "This is good, this is mine": a sort of persistent mud-pie *motif*, this desire to bring coherence out of shapelessness.

Famie, in Lyle Saxon's *Children of Strangers*, centered all her forces of creation on her son. He was to be her monument—if not more enduring than brass, at least more enduring than the frail and troubled span of her own life. She was lost, but he must be saved; almost literally she made of her body a stepping-stone to lift him above that dark current from which they could not both escape. The universality of Famie's devotion carries her story beyond the limits of the regional novel for which we are prepared by Mr. Saxon's previous work. And yet seldom has the regional novel in the United States had a more suavely beautiful presentation. So suave, so limpid is Mr. Saxon's prose that we are apt to overlook the deeper implications of his novel. Very subtly, he has set Famie's tragedy remote in time and place, and told it in terms of quiet loveliness. But if we stop to reflect, we realize that it is a tragedy appallingly close to our own backdoors, reënacted daily.

Dorothy Popenoe, in *The House in Antigua*, found one of the most

satisfactory possible solutions to her urge to create beauty. Not gifted beyond the ordinary woman except perhaps in energy and an instinct for orderliness, she made her own lasting memorial in the painstaking restoration of a three-hundred-year-old house. She found a jumbled mess of ruins, and left sunny patios, clear arcades, and rooms filled with peace. You may not go all the way with Louis Adamic in his enthusiasm over the social implications of the restoration of the house in Antigua, but you will enjoy meeting Dorothy Popenoe, and you will want to go to Guatemala.

Subjects for Study

1. FAMIE'S SON

Children of Strangers, by Lyle Saxon

1. Sketch the complex background of life on Yucca Plantation in 1905, with the three distinct castes who made up that life.
2. Describe the elements which gave an idyllic quality to Famie's early surroundings: the heritage of self-respect and decency, the independently owned home which smelled of "honeysuckle . . . of freshly ironed linen, and of woodsmoke."
3. Show how Famie betrayed her clan, and trace the shaping of her resolve to help her son escape her own anomalous position.
4. Tell the story of Mr. Paul and Henry Tyler. Does it seem to you integral to the story of Famie? Why does the author bring it in?
5. Discuss the relationship of the Randolphs to the people who worked for them. Do the Smiths seem to you authentic?
6. The character of Numa is worth discussion; note the author's respect for human dignity.
7. Comment on the quietude and remoteness of the setting and show how beauty is here imparted to a story which in other hands might have become sensational.

Additional Reading:

- The House of Connelly*, by Paul Green
Light in August, by William Faulkner
These Low Grounds, by Walter Turpin
Fabulous New Orleans, by Lyle Saxon

2. AN ADVENTURE IN BEAUTY

The House in Antigua, by Louis Adamic

1. Tell something of the history of the settlement of Guatemala. Contrast this with *Paradise* and *Gallows Hill*, also studied in this bulletin. Notice how the Spaniards in Guatemala, like the Puritans in Massachusetts, were dominated by fear of a hostile land.
2. Some very dramatic events shadowed the beginnings of the Casa del Oidor. Recount some of them. The early part of the book suggests a fascinating field for exploratory reading about the early Spanish settlements on this continent and to the south of us.
3. Characterize Dorothy Popenoe as revealed in the excerpts from her diaries.
4. Describe from the pictures and the text the house as it is today.
5. Discuss Mr. Adamic's use of the house as a symbol of a world in ruins.
6. The Williamsburg restoration might be touched upon as a parallel enterprise, undertaken by a group rather than an individual.

Additional Reading:

Conquistador, by Archibald MacLeish

Native's Return, by Louis Adamic

CONTRASTS IN PRIZE NOVELS

The Harper Prize novel for 1937, *The Seven Who Fled*, by Fred-eric Prokosch, is in a double sense escape literature. The readers as well as the seven find escape in the utter strangeness of a journey through one of the oldest yet least known parts of the earth's surface; far more intricate and mysterious than the tangled jungles of Africa, because the millions who have passed over it have left the indescribable patina of human contact. The author lifts that mystery for a second to our gaze, disturbs the veiling layers of the centuries, and from beneath them float archaic shapes.

His style and mood are kin to those of Poe in the more elaborate and baroque tales, such as "Ligeia." His rhetoric weaves a spell like the gleam of water over buried grasses in a marsh; lift them with your paddle to the revealing light and they are dull lumps of weed, but shimmering under water they seem magic plumes. It is better to yield to the enchantment of the author's style, and not attempt to lift too far toward common sense his symbols or his characters. It is the book of a poet who is obsessed with a passion for travel in the strange places of the earth, Tashkent, Aqsu, and Sinkiang. His theme is the individual search for death as the ultimate escape. As a subsidiary theme there might be suggested the impact of the ageless and defeatist East, preoccupied with Death, upon a group of Europeans, each sensitized to a different degree by extraordinary circumstances.

The Little Brown prize novelette, *Remembering Laughter*, by Wallace Stegner, contrasts in both manner and mood with *The Seven Who Fled*. Without rhetoric, but also without loss of overtones, a simple story is presented in the clear bright detail of a Flemish painting; simple, although the three protagonists are caught in as tragic a tangle as any of the seven who fled from Kasgar. The inheritance of Calvinism that Margaret brought from Scotland to her new home in Iowa made escape and compromise equally impossible for her. Perhaps no moral lesson has been intended here, but it would be difficult to find a more convincing picture of the power of hate to shrivel and distort the personality which harbors it. Euripides' admonition "to hold a hand uplifted over hate" is annotated and amplified by this farmhouse drama.

Subjects for Study

1. ON THE EDGE OF FLIGHT

The Seven Who Fled, by Frederic Prokosch

1. Comment on the intriguing quality of the opening sentence.
2. Characterize each of the seven briefly, and select one or two whose story you wish to tell more fully; perhaps the austerity of Layeville's end, or Joachim's lovely youth.
3. Note the author's extreme sensitivity to color, as in the descriptions of the Gobi desert, or of the river near Shanghai.
4. Comment on the flash-backs descriptive of the youth of each character, and show how in each different nationality typical features, even scents and sounds, are captured.
5. Read aloud some of the more poetic passages, such as those describing the snow.
6. "Caught at a critical motionless instant . . . between flight out of one world and flight into another . . . poised on the edge of a flight into his own particular and fateful kind of refuge; some impelled by terror and some by love . . ." Show how this is true of each of the seven; each one carries his own fate within.
7. Each goes through the same winter; De la Scaze alone meets the summer in Aqsu. Note the gradual progression toward the epilog in Shanghai.
8. Comment: "It is in the deepest despair, quite unexpectedly, that we suddenly experience the lovely and familiar touch, the sweet security."
9. Show how subtly a sense of the present is maintained throughout the exotic scenes, through references to Japan in Manchuria, bloodshed in Ethiopia, China threatened.
10. Compare with *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, which has a similar beauty of style, and a similar handling of a group of people brought together fortuitously.

*Additional Reading:**Ode to a Nightingale*, by John Keats ("I have been half in love with easeful death")*The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, by Thornton Wilder*Lost Horizon*, by James Hilton

2. "TO HOLD A HAND UPLIFTED OVER HATE"

Remembering Laughter, by Wallace Stegner

1. The story may be briefly told. Note the richness of the country background, in spite of the economy with which it is presented.

2. Discuss the effect of hate on three people who had to live together. Was any other solution possible?
3. Compare with Edith Wharton's *Ethan Frome*. Though the setting is different, the drama is the same. Which seems to you more movingly told?

Additional Reading:

Ethan Frome, by Edith Wharton

SPECIAL REFERENCE BIBLIOGRAPHY

(Numerals refer to chapters in which the books are used.)

Adamic, Louis	<i>House in Antigua.</i> 1937. (13)	Harper	\$3.00
Ballou, Jenny	<i>Spanish Prelude.</i> 1937. (5)	Houghton	2.50
Brand, Millen	<i>The Outward Room.</i> 1937 (6)	Simon	1.25
Bridge, Ann	<i>Enchanter's Nightshade.</i> 1937.	Little	2.50
	(9)		
Brier, Royce	<i>Boy in Blue.</i> 1937. (4)	Appleton	2.50
Brooks, Van Wyck	<i>Flowering of New England.</i> Dutton		4.00
	1936. (2)		
Cloete, Stuart	<i>Turning Wheels.</i> 1937. (8)	Houghton	2.50
Coffin, R. P. T.	<i>Kennebec.</i> 1937. (3)	Farrar	2.50
Cronin, A. J.	<i>The Citadel.</i> 1937. (11)	Little	2.50
Dowdey, Clifford	<i>Bugles Blow No More.</i> 1937.	Little	2.50
	(4)		
Duranty, Walter	<i>One Life, One Kopeck.</i> 1937.	Simon	2.50
	(10)		
Forbes, Esther	<i>Paradise.</i> 1937. (1)	Harcourt	2.50
Foster, Michael	<i>American Dream.</i> 1937. (7)	Morrow	3.00
Frank, Bruno	<i>Lost Heritage.</i> 1937. (9)	Viking	2.50
Green, Paul	<i>Lost Colony.</i> 1937. (1)	U.N.C. Press	2.00
Lyons, Eugene	<i>Assignment in Utopia.</i> 1937.	Harcourt	3.50
	(10)		
Marquand, J. P.	<i>The Late George Apley.</i> 1937.	Little	2.50
	(2)		
Mowrer, Lillian	<i>Journalist's Wife.</i> 1937. (12)	Morrow	3.50
O'Flaherty, Liam	<i>Famine.</i> 1937. (7)	Random	2.50
Paul, Elliot	<i>The Life and Death of a</i> <i>Spanish Town.</i> 1937. (5)	Random	2.50
Prokosch, Frederic	<i>The Seven Who Fled.</i> 1937.	Harper	2.50
	(14)		
Roberts, Kenneth	<i>Northwest Passage.</i> 1937. (3)	Doubleday	2.50
Saxon, Lyle	<i>Children of Strangers.</i> 1937.	Houghton	2.50
	(13)		
Silone, Ignazio	<i>Bread and Wine.</i> 1937. (9)	Harper	2.50
Stegner, Wallace	<i>Remembering Laughter.</i> 1937.	Little	1.25
	(14)		
Undset, Sigrid	<i>The Faithful Wife.</i> 1937. (11)	Knopf	2.50
Wells, H. G.	<i>Brynhild.</i> 1937. (12)	Scribner	2.50
Winwar, Frances	<i>Gallows Hill.</i> 1937. (1)	Holt	2.50
Yeats-Brown, F.	<i>Lancer at Large.</i> 1937. (6)	Viking	2.75
Young, F. B.	<i>They Seek a Country.</i> 1937.	Reynal	2.75
	(8)		

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- Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., 232 Madison Ave., New York.
- Harcourt, Brace & Co., 383 Madison Ave., New York.
- Harper and Bros., 49 E. 33rd St., New York.
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- Reynal & Hitchcock, Inc., 386 Fourth Ave., New York.
- Scribner's (Charles) Sons, 597 Fifth Ave., New York.
- Simon & Schuster, Inc., 386 Fourth Ave., New York.
- University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, N. C.
- Viking Press, 18 E. 58th St., New York.

ADDITIONAL READING

The books in the list below are suggested additional reading for those who wish to know more about the subjects discussed in the preceding pages. They will not be sent unless specially requested and some of them are not in the Extension Library collection. The date is that of first publication, but publisher and price give cheapest edition now in print.

Abbott, E. H.	<i>Being Little in Cambridge.</i>	Appleton	\$2.50
	1936. (2)		
Adamic, Louis	<i>Native's Return.</i> 1934. (13)	Harper	1.00
Adams, J. T.	<i>The Founding of New Eng-</i>	Little	5.00
	<i>land.</i> 1921. (1)		
Adams, J. T.	<i>Revolutionary New England.</i>	Little	5.00
	1923. (3)		
Agar, Herbert	<i>The Land of the Free.</i> 1935.	Houghton	3.50
	(7)		
Anderson, Maxwell	<i>Winterset.</i> 1936. (6)	Anderson	2.50
Avary, M. L.	<i>Dixie after the War.</i> 1937.	Houghton	3.00
	(4)		
Blaker, Richard	<i>Here Lies a Most Beautiful</i>	Grosset	1.00
	<i>Lady.</i> 1936. (12)		
Brewster, William	<i>Concord River.</i> 1937. (2)	Harvard	3.50
Briffault, Robert	<i>Europa in Limbo.</i> 1937. (9)	Scribner	2.75
Brown, H. C.	<i>A Mind Mislaid.</i> 1937. (6)	Dutton	2.00
Browne, Lewis	<i>Oh, Say, Can You See!</i> 1937.	Macmillan	2.50
	(10)		
Buck, Pearl	<i>The Good Earth.</i> 1931. (7)	Grosset	1.00
		Mod. Lib.	.95
Burr, G. L.	<i>Narratives of the Witchcraft</i>	Scribner	o.p.
	<i>Cases.</i> 1914. (1)		
Caldwell, E. and Bourke-White, M.	<i>You Have Seen Their Faces.</i>	Mod. Age	.75
	1937. (7)		
Carrel, Alexis	<i>Man the Unknown.</i> 1935.	Harper	3.50
	(6, 11)		
Carroll, G. H.	<i>As the Earth Turns.</i> 1933.	Grosset	1.00
	(3)		
Carroll, G. H.	<i>A Few Foolish Ones.</i> 1935.	Macmillan	2.50
	(3)		
Cary, Joyce	<i>The African Witch.</i> 1936. (1)	Morrow	2.50
Churchill, Winston	<i>London to Ladysmith via Pre-</i>	Longmans	o.p.
	<i>toria.</i> 1900. (8)		
Coffin, R. P. T.	<i>Kennebec.</i> 1937. (1)	Farrar	2.50
Cozzens, J. G.	<i>Men and Brethren.</i> 1936. (6)	Grosset	.75
Dickinson, Emily	<i>Poems.</i> 1937. (2)	Little	3.50
Dos Passos, John	<i>Manhattan Transfer.</i> 1925.	Grosset	1.00
	(6)		

Duranty, Walter	<i>I Write as I Please.</i> 1935. (10)	Blue Ribbon	1.34
Edmonds, W. D.	<i>Drums Along the Mohawk.</i> 1937. (7)	Little	2.50
Ericson, E. E. & E. E.	<i>India in Revolution.</i> 1937. (6)	U.N.C. Press	.50
Etnier, Elizabeth	<i>On Gilbert Head.</i> 1937. (3)	Little	2.50
Farson, Negley	<i>Way of a Transgressor.</i> 1936. (10)	Harcourt	3.00
Faulkner, William	<i>Light in August.</i> 1932. (13)	Smith & Haas	2.50
Field, Rachel	<i>Time Out of Mind.</i> 1935. (3)	Macmillan	1.00
Fiske, John	<i>Beginnings of New England.</i> 1889. (1)	Houghton	3.00
Fiske, John	<i>New France and New England.</i> 1902. (3)	Houghton	3.00
Forbes, Esther	<i>A Mirror for Witches.</i> 1928. (1)	Houghton	2.50
Foster, Michael	<i>American Dream.</i> 1937. (1)	Morrow	3.00
Frank, Bruno	<i>Lost Heritage.</i> 1937. (12)	Viking	2.50
Glasgow, Ellen	<i>Romantic Comedians.</i> 1926. (4)	Blue Ribbon	.75
Glasgow, Ellen	<i>The Sheltered Life.</i> 1932. (4)	Sun Dial	.89
Gordon, Caroline	<i>None Shall Look Back.</i> 1937. (4)	Scribner	2.75
Green, Paul	<i>The House of Connelly.</i> 1931. (13)	French	2.50
Gunther, John	<i>Inside Europe.</i> 1938. (9, 12)	Harper	3.00
Heiser, Victor	<i>American Doctor's Odyssey.</i> 1936. (11)	Norton	3.00
Hergesheimer, J.	<i>Java Head.</i> 1919. (2)	Knopf	2.50
Hilton, James	<i>Lost Horizon.</i> 1933. (14)	Grosset	.75
Jaffe, Bernard	<i>Outposts of Science.</i> 1935. (6,11)	Simon	3.75
Johnston, Mary	<i>The Long Roll.</i> 1911. (4)	Houghton	2.50
Kantor, MacKinlay	<i>Long Remember.</i> 1936. (4)	Grosset	1.00
Kantor, MacKinlay	<i>Romance of Rosy Ridge.</i> 1937. (4)	Coward	1.25
Kittredge, G. L.	<i>Notes on Witchcraft.</i> 1907. (1)	Davis	o.p.
Krauch, Elsa	<i>A Mind Restored.</i> 1937. (6)	Putnam	2.50
Lengyel, Emil	<i>Millions of Dictators.</i> 1936. (9)	Funk	2.00
Lewis, Sinclair	<i>Arrowsmith.</i> 1925. (11)	Grosset	1.00
Lippmann, Walter	<i>The Good Society.</i> 1937. (7)	Little	3.00
Lockhart, R. H. B	<i>British Agent.</i> 1933. (10)	Garden City	1.00
Lyons, Eugene	<i>Assignment in Utopia.</i> 1937. (12)	Harcourt	3.50

Lytle, Andrew	<i>The Long Night.</i> 1936. (4)	Bobbs	2.50
MacLeish, Archibald	<i>Conquistador.</i> 1932. (13)	Houghton	2.50
MacNeill-Moss, Geoffrey	<i>The Siege of Alcazar.</i> 1937. (5)	Knopf	3.50
Marquand, J. P.	<i>Haven's End.</i> 1933. (2)	Little	2.50
Matthews, Herbert	<i>Two Wars and More to Come.</i> 1938. (5)	Carrick	2.50
Maugham, Somerset	<i>Theatre.</i> 1937. (12)	Doubleday	2.50
Mayo, Katherine	<i>Mother India.</i> 1927. (6)	Harcourt	3.75
Meersch, M. van der	<i>Hath Not the Potter.</i> 1937. (11)	Viking	2.50
Meersch, M. van der	<i>Invasion.</i> 1937. (4)	Viking	3.00
Millin, S. G.	<i>An Artist in the Family.</i> 1928. (8)	Boni	2.50
Millin, S. G.	<i>God's Stepchildren.</i> 1924. (8)	Boni	2.00
Millin, S. G.	<i>Mary Glenn.</i> 1925. (8)	Boni	o.p.
Morgan, Charles	<i>The Fountain.</i> 1932. (6)	Grosset	.75
Mowrer, L. T.	<i>Journalist's Wife.</i> 1937. (9)	Morrow	3.50
Peers, Allison	<i>The Spanish Tragedy.</i> 1937. (6)	Oxford	2.50
Proper, I. S.	<i>Monhegan, The Cradle of New England.</i> 1930. (3)	Southworth Press	4.00
Randall, J. G.	<i>The Civil War and Recon- struction.</i> 1937. (4)	Heath	5.00
Roberts, Kenneth	<i>Arundel.</i> 1930. (3)	Doubleday	2.50
Roberts, Kenneth	<i>Rabble in Arms.</i> 1933. (3)	Doubleday	2.50
Sackville-West, V.	<i>The Edwardians.</i> 1930. (12)	Grosset	1.00
Sandemose, Aksel	<i>A Fugitive Crosses His Tracks.</i> 1936. (6)	Knopf	2.50
Santayana, George	<i>The Last Puritan.</i> 1936. (2)	Scribner	2.75
Saxon, Lyle	<i>Fabulous New Orleans.</i> 1928. (13)	Appleton	5.00
Schreiner, Olive	<i>The South African Question.</i> 1899. (8)	Sergel	o.p.
Seabrook, William	<i>Asylum.</i> 1935. (6)	Harcourt	1.29
Sender, R. J.	<i>Counter-Attack in Spain.</i> 1937. (5)	Houghton	3.00
Sender, R. J.	<i>Seven Red Sundays.</i> 1936. (10)	Liveright	2.50
Shean, Vincent	<i>Personal History.</i> 1936. (10)	Garden City	1.00
Shepard, Odell	<i>Pedlar's Progress.</i> 1937. (2)	Little	3.75
Silone, Ignazio	<i>Bread and Wine.</i> 1937. (12)	Harper	2.50
Summers, Montague	<i>Geography of Witchcraft.</i> 1927. (1)	Knopf	7.50
Summers, Montague	<i>A Popular History of Witch- craft.</i> 1937. (1)	Dutton	2.75
Turpin, Walter	<i>These Low Grounds.</i> 1937. (13)	Harper	2.50

Undset, Sigrid	<i>The Faithful Wife.</i> 1937. (12)	Knopf	2.50
Undset, Sigrid	<i>Ida Elisabeth.</i> 1933. (11)	Grosset	1.00
Undset, Sigrid	<i>The Longest Years.</i> 1935. (11)	Knopf	2.50
Vorse, M. H.	<i>Footnote to Folly.</i> 1935. (2, 12)	Farrar	3.00
Wells, H. G.	<i>The Croquet Player.</i> 1937. (12)	Viking	1.25
Wells, H. G.	<i>Experiment in Autobiography.</i> 1934. (12)	Macmillan	1.39
Wescott, Glenway	<i>The Grandmothers.</i> 1927. (7)	Grosset	.75
Wharton, Edith	<i>Ethan Frome.</i> 1911. (14)	Scribner	1.00
Wilder, Thornton	<i>The Bridge of San Luis Rey.</i> 1928. (14)	Grosset	1.00
Wilson, Margaret	<i>The Able McLaughlins.</i> 1923. (7)	Grosset	1.00
Yeats-Brown, F.	<i>Lives of a Bengal Lancer.</i> 1930. (6)	Blue Ribbon	.98
Yeats, W. B., tr.	<i>Ten Principal Upanishads.</i> 1937. (6)	Macmillan	2.00

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First Meeting: EDGE OF THE WILDERNESS

1. O Brave New World!
2. A People Delivered over to Fear
3. "Dreamers and Makers"

Second Meeting: FIRST FRUITS OF A NEW CULTURE

1. Renaissance in a Minor Key
2. Heir of the Transcendentalists

Third Meeting: WESTWARD TO THE ORIENT

1. Mr. Coffin Has a Song to Sing, Oh!
2. Artist into Ranger

Fourth Meeting: OUR DEATHLESS FOLK-EPIC

1. A City under Siege
2. A Private in the Army of the Cumberland

Fifth Meeting: CIVIL WAR IN SPAIN

1. A Sur-Realistic Madrid
2. Dirge for Santa Eulalia

Sixth Meeting: UNCHARTED COUNTRIES OF THE MIND

1. Escape to Reality
2. Toward the Temple of the Undistracted Mind

Seventh Meeting: THE ROAD IS WESTWARD

1. Inheritors of Hunger
2. Toward the Promised Land

Eighth Meeting: COVERED WAGONS IN AFRICA

1. What Price a New Nation?
2. The Out Trail

Ninth Meeting: EXILES LOOK BACK

1. The Still Small Voice
2. Pre-War Italy
3. Lost Coins of Syracuse

Tenth Meeting: ANOTHER LOST ATLANTIS

1. No Road to Shangri-la
2. Playing on Death's Doorstep

Eleventh Meeting: VARIATIONS ON POPULAR THEMES

1. A British Arrowsmith
2. Court of Domestic Relations

Twelfth Meeting: WIVES OF HEROES

1. Ringside Seats
2. Façade

Thirteenth Meeting: ARTISTS WITHOUT FAME

1. Famie's Son
2. An Adventure in Beauty

Fourteenth Meeting: CONTRASTS IN PRIZE NOVELS

1. On the Edge of Flight
2. "To Hold A Hand Uplifted over Hate"

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