## THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA LIBRARY EXTENSION PUBLICATION

VOL. VI

MAY. 1940

NO

## ADVENTURES IN READING

THIRTEENTH SERIES

AGATRA BOYD ADAMS



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VOL. VI MAY, 1940 NO. 4

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THIRTEENTH SERIES

AGATHA BOYD ADAMS
of the Library of the University of North Carolina



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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#### FOREWORD

"The best thing for disturbances of the spirit is to learn. That is the only thing that never fails . . . . Learn why the world wags and what wags it. That is the only thing which the poor mind can never exhaust, never alienate, never be tortured by, never fear or distrust, and never dream of regretting."

-T. H. WHITE. The Sword in the Stone.

Nothing seems quite so important nowadays as to learn to understand other nations. With that idea in mind, the present issue of *Adventures in Reading* has gone international; an attempt has been made to present here, through recent books, an airman's view of the world. The basis of choice has been to select those books which widen our perceptions and our understanding of people in other lands. Perhaps if we can experience, however briefly, the inner life of a Chinese princess, of a crofter in a Finnish forest, of a Spanish lady, of a refugee in Prague, of foreign soldiers and poets and seekers after truth, we can advance ever so slightly toward a genuine internationalism.

#### CHAPTER I

#### CEILING UNLIMITED

Among the tremendous number of words which H. G. Wells has written in his time there are very frequently stimulating ideas. One, which found Hollywood interpretation in the fantastic movie Things to Come, suggested that the leaders of the future, men who could build a new and better world, would be aviators, men of precision with an international point of view. Perhaps it is not too far-fetched to hope that the man who habitually views the earth from great heights may be among the first to realize and point out the stupidity of national boundaries and differences. It is worth noting that three of the most civilized writers in the world today are also aviators: Anne Lindbergh, who writes of flying with poetry and distinction; André Malraux, whose two great books, Man's Fate and Man's Hope are memorable interpretations of war in China and in Spain; and Antoine de Saint Exupéry, whose Wind, Sand and Stars we have chosen as the key book for this Adventures in Reading.

Christopher Morley calls Saint Exupéry "a man of great human tenderness... a man from another, a better planet." His book is an extraordinary blend of adventure and contemplation, of reality and poetry. Here is a first class aviator who is also a first class writer; who can describe tensely and swiftly, from first hand experience, the hazards and the beauty of flying. Yet here is also a philosopher who has taken advantage of the splendid solitudes of flight to meditate on the problems of human existence. The aviator as interpreted here is no daredevil who holds life lightly; he has instead a profound sense of responsibility and a profound reverence for human life. His courage is to defend life rather than to waste it; a less spectacular sort of courage and one that the world has need of today.

O lovely Light, look on thy ray perverse!
That makes a puny transit of the night
The generations of the sun traverse.
What star shall be its period of flight?
. . . Is there no peace but heritage of wars,
Here where we drive to impact on the dark,
For us, thy progeny of the fire born
To weave our broken rhythms in the stars?
—Lola Ridge. Dance of Fire.

#### SUBJECTS FOR STUDY

Wind, Sand and Stars, by Antoine de Saint Exupéry.

Only one book is used for this initial program, in order that sufficient time may be taken to catch the mood of this view of the earth from the heights.

Discuss the book from the two points of view which are interwoven here:

First: Adventures in the Air.

First Flight.

Typhoon in South America.

Prisoner of the Sand.

Second: Poet and Thinker.

A New Breed of Men.

Barcelona and Madrid.

Read aloud some of the sections which appeal to you most to illustrate the beauty of both style and thought.

What is the dual role of the airplane in modern civilization? Discuss it as the tool of both progress and destruction.

Show how Christopher Morley's words, quoted above, apply to the author.

Anne Lindbergh's Foreword may be summarized as a commentary on the book.

If a more extended program is desired, discussions of any of the following books would be appropriate.

#### Additional Reading:

North to the Orient, by Anne Lindbergh.

Listen, the Wind, by Anne Lindbergh.

Man's Hope, by André Malraux.

Night Flight, by Antoine de Saint Exupéry.

#### HOMELESS ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH

There have always been wanderers on the face of the earth, people who have not found a home, tribes driven by war or disaster to seek new regions, a fairer promised land beyond the threat of Egypt. Such vast migrations of nomads, or of the hopeful, have swept again and again across those fabulous regions that lie between Europe and Asia, turning now to the East, now to the West, always driven by a promise of some better way of life just beyond reach. Not unlike these historic migrations is the one we have seen recently, of dispossessed families from the dust bowl who travel toward the beckoning orchards of California. Steinbeck has written their epic in *The Grapes of Wrath*. Perhaps we can understand their story in clearer perspective if we set it over against the similar migrations of other folk in other lands, remembering that the basic needs have remained constant: food, shelter, freedom to work.

Few historians have described so vividly the sweep of a tribe across Central Asia as has W. L. River in his fine novel *The Torguts*. We feel the wind-driven snow in our faces, see the delicate crystals on barbaric furs, smell the smoke in tents of hide, and know the silence of desert spaces. An unusual setting, an unusual penetration of an alien people, awaits the reader here.

In Ararat, Elgin Groseclose takes us to one of the most anciently inhabited parts of the earth's surface, and to a people who have frequently been forced by fate to seek a new home. Isabel Patterson, in the *Herald Tribune* says of this distinguished novel:

"We were glad that *Ararat*, by Elgin Groseclose, got the recommendation of the American Booksellers Association as the book which deserves a much larger sale than it has yet had.... They picked it out of exactly 1,133 novels published during the past year. And we think it was among the three best."

#### SUBJECTS FOR STUDY

#### I. AN EPIC OF MIGRATION

The Torguts, by W. L. River.

"In 1771 the Torgut Mongols, half a million of them, travelled almost 3,000 miles from the Volga River in Russia to the Tian Shan Mountains

in China." There is the seed of the story. Show how the author has developed a moving epic of human effort from this obscure allusion in an old history book.

The map on the end papers gives the location. You will find it useful to refer to this; perhaps you can show it on a larger map.

What were the Torguts seeking? Freedom? Home? Space for conquest?

Trace the main events of their long trek. Note the vivid feeling of crowds of people.

Do you think the author succeeds in giving present day reality to this novel of a remote and alien race?

Tell something of the story of Subutai and Cedar Chab. The princess at the end becomes a spokesman for the people. Comment on the ideas which she represents.

"Where man may come to the free and peaceful end of his long migration, travelled since the beginning of time"... These last words of the book carry it on up to the present time, to the Joads of *The Grapes of Wrath*.

#### Additional Reading:

Revolt of the Kalmucks, by Thomas De Quincey. The Seven Who Fled, by Frederic Prokosch.

#### II. THE POWER TO SURVIVE

Ararat, by Elgin Groseclose.

The prologue is worth a careful reading. It suggests many questions. See if you can answer some of them after reading the novel.

Give the geographical location of the story, and the time. What was the relationship of Turkey and Armenia as the story begins?

Show how Mt. Ararat dominates the story, as it does the landscape. Comment on the descriptions of the mountain in varying lights; the symbolism of Paul's climbing the mountain, and its place as a refuge for the children.

The opposing characters of Amos Lyle and Paul Stepanovitch are strongly individualized, yet each represents an abstract idea. Perhaps we over-simplify it if we call it reason versus faith. Show how each of these characters is brought out in the story, and how they are brought together at the end.

Later in the course, when you read As a Driven Leaf, you will find a similar conflict of reason and the need to believe. It will be interesting to refer to Ararat in that connection.

Can you analyze the power which enabled Amos Lyle and his refugees to survive?

What was Paul seeking? Did he find it finally?

#### Additional Reading:

Forty Days of Musa Dagh, by Franz Werfel. As a Driven Leaf, by Milton Steinberg.

#### AT HOME IN THE WORLD

The world has always known such lost and homeless folk as those whose stories we heard in the preceding program, but it has known also those who have been able to make themselves at home in the world. Perhaps they are only the wanderers who have reached the end of their long migration. They are the peoples whom we call civilized; they have achieved a rich and perfect equilibrium of adaption to their environment. They have roots, traditions, harmony in all their material circumstances. It is a picture of such harmonious civilized living that Lin Yutang has given us so enchantingly in Moment in Peking. The characters in his novel inhabit spacious courts and quiet gardens with such charming names as Calm Heart Studio and Little Stopping Place by the Peach Clouds. They are served by maids whose names are poems, Bluehaze, Silverscreen, and Dimfragrance. They are concerned with beauty in all its forms, poetry, and mountains, lakes, and ancient buildings, and most of all with beauty in the fine art of living. Their way of living is, however, balanced on the exquisite edge of change, a change which the author subtly suggests, so that we are grateful to him for having caught the picture before it vanished forever.

Perhaps we should remember that this was a way of life for only a very small portion of the Chinese nation. Pearl Buck has shown us unforgettably the other side of the screen. But it is nevertheless a delight to look through the magic casements of Lin Yutang's clear prose into a life at once rich, foreign, and profoundly human.

Apricot Cheeks and Almond Eyes forms an exquisite pendant for the longer novel. One of those seemingly incredible fairy tales that are none the less as true as the greyest fact in the dullest history book, it may suggest some of the sources for the beauty and the culture that enrich Moment in Peking.

SUBJECTS FOR STUDY

#### I. IN IVORY AND JADE

Moment in Peking, by Lin Yutang.

As the title indicates, this is a novel of city life. Discuss the culture of Peking as described here, as a background for the novel.

Describe the three families whose stories are interwoven in the novel: the Yaos, the Tsengs, the News, and show how they were inter-related.

Tell some of the interesting episodes, such as Mannia's wedding, or Mulan's adventure in the Boxer rebellion.

In spite of the exotic background, do the characters seem to you human, alive, comprehensible? Are their experiences unusual, or the ordinary stuff of human life?

Comment on the feeling for poetry, as shown throughout the novel; the advantages (or disadvantages) of ritual in living; the relationships of parent and child; of mistress and maid.

Show the changes that take place in the period covered by the novel.

Do you think that Mr. Yao reflects the Taoist philosophy of the author? If you have not read his other books, this might serve as an introduction to them.

#### II. THE MULBERRY CATERPILLAR

Apricot Cheeks and Almond Eyes, by Genevieve Wimsatt.

Tell this fascinating story of the foundling who became empress of China.

Give a sketch of palace life during the Sung Dynasty.

Read aloud some of the poems.

What attributes were most admired in a woman, and what qualities enabled the "mulberry caterpillar" to become Empress?

What connections can you see between this, and the modern culture depicted in *Moment in Peking*? Note especially the position of women, the interest in poetry, the pervading sense of beauty.

In his recent book *The Fate of Man*, H. G. Wells says: "If world citizenship is ever to be achieved, the comprehension of China by the West, the cooperation of China with the West, are highly important, if only because the Chinese are the greatest, the most central, and the most representative human accumulation in the world." Discuss this statement in relation to the two books studied here.

#### Additional Reading:

The House of Exile, by Nora Waln.

My Country and My People, by Lin Yutang.

Through China's Wall, by Graham Peck.

News Is My Job, by Edna Booker.

#### HEIRS AND DESTROYERS OF CHINESE CULTURE

In the past few years Japan has become more and more associated in our minds with the fierce bristly-mustached soldier of the cartoons, bayonetting peaceful China. There is of course tragic truth in this exaggerated picture. But if we would achieve a true airplane view of our modern world, we need to understand also the fine qualities in Japanese life, and to try to comprehend those forces which have caused this younger nation to turn in violence against the older culture from which they so richly inherited. Much of the beauty of Japanese life is derived from the Chinese tradition with which we became acquainted in the preceding program. In her novel The Patriot, Pearl Buck balanced these two cultures against each other, showing us, in the person of a young Chinese revolutionary married to a Japanese wife, the conflict of loyalties that is typical of the present war.

In Restless Wave, Haru Matsui reminds us that the war in China is not popular with everyone in Japan, but makes us realize also something of that blind obedience to the state which is required of the Japanese. Lin Yutang says of her book: "Restless Wave is full of compassion and beauty. It opens the Japanese heart as no other book can. Whether depicting a woman's longing or the slums and sufferings of fellowmen Haru Matsui generates a human warmth which, as if by magic, makes all national differences disappear."

When two poets are commissioned by their publishers to report on a war, we may expect something different from the usual war correspondent's record. Journey to a War has an unusual flavor. We are struck first with the fact that Auden and Isherwood had a very good time in China, where they drank extraordinary quantities of tea and met numbers of interesting people. This sense of enjoyment, and the fact that they disclaim any special knowledge of the East, give the book a spicy spontaneity.

#### SUBJECTS FOR STUDY

#### I. GROWING UP IN MODERN JAPAN

Restless Wave, by Haru Matsui.

Describe the home in which young Haru grew up, noting the special circumstances which made her girlhood unusual, such as her mother's death, her father's liberalism.

Discuss her education, both formal and informal, *i.e.*, the influences that touched her outside of school.

This is a book of unusual interest to women, since it is an intimate record of a young girl's growing up. Note also the qualities which give it universal interest.

Note that this is not a translation, but written directly in English, no small achievement for a Japanese girl. Discuss the simplicity of her prose, and read aloud some parts which seem to you pleasing.

Compare the life of Haru and her sister with that of Mulan and Moochow in Moment in Peking.

In Place of Splendour, to be studied later in this program, tells the story of a young girl in Madrid. A comparison would be interesting.

#### II. Japan in China

Journey to a War, by W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood.

This book falls into an interesting division, and may be reviewed in two ways:

First:

A rather light-hearted account of two young Englishmen travelling in war-ridden China.

Trace their itinerary on a map, and give some of their descriptions.

Discuss their impressions of certain personalities, such as the Chiang Kai-Sheks, Agnes Smedley, Peter Fleming.

Describe their efforts to get to the very elusive front in the latter part of the journey.

Second:

(This may be omitted.) A very serious commentary on war in general, which they have chosen to keep out of the diary, and express in Auden's poems.

One of the leading poets of our time, Auden is cerebral rather than emotional; his thoughtful poems are well worth the effort sometimes involved in reading them.

Read aloud and discuss: The Ship, The Traveller, Hong Kong, Sonnets XIV and XV.

#### Additional Reading:

Inside Asia, by John Gunther.

The Patriot, by Pearl Buck.

Wheat and Soldiers, by Ashihei Hino (A Japanese soldier's diary).

To the Mountain, by Bradford Smith (A sympathetic picture of Japanese life).

#### CHAPTER V

#### PRELUDE IN SPAIN

". . . A man must die
For what he believes—if he's unfortunate
enough to have to face it in his time—
And if he won't then he'll end up believing
in nothing at all—and that's death too."

-Maxwell Anderson, in Key Largo.

Most of us are lucky enough to live out obscure and peaceful lives without ever being brought face to face with the tragic dilemma that Maxwell Anderson states in *Key Largo*. But through some twist of fate, certain individuals have always had to make that decision; perhaps more frequently now than at any recent period in history. *In Place of Splendour* is the true story of such a decision; of individuals who were forced to choose at great personal cost on which side they would stand.

The war in Spain has been forgotten in the greater pressure of events since Munich. Yet in a sense it was a prelude for that drama with which we have become all too familiar: the suppression of a hope of freedom, and the overrunning of a small nation by a large. Spain was the first in the fateful procession of Austria, Czecho-Slovakia, Poland, and Finland. Of all the many writers who have described the Spanish tragedy, no one has done it quite so well, nor from such a point of vantage, as Constancia de la Mora. Her warm and vivid autobiography carries its own interest, regardless of its setting.

Maxwell Anderson's *Key Largo*, although the prologue occurs in Spain, goes beyond local interest to set and at least partially answer the universal question of personal courage.

#### SUBJECTS FOR STUDY

#### I. ONE WOMAN'S CHOICE

In Place of Splendour, by Constancia de la Mora.

Like Haru Matsui's autobiography, previously studied, Constancia de la Mora's story is one of peculiar interest to women. It may be divided into two sections.

First: Girlhood in Madrid.

The "poor little rich girl" in a Spanish palace.

Describe the circumstances of Constancia's life; her education, début, and marriage.

Second: Work for the Loyalists.

Trace the influences which led her to side with the Loyalists.

Comment on the fact that, although she is a zealous "feminist," she never seems unfeminine.

Recount her work for the Loyalists, first as housekeeper for six hundred babies, later with the foreign press bureau.

Trace, from her point of view, the struggle and downfall of the Loyalists. Note that, although she is obviously partisan, she does not minimize the weaknesses of her own side.

The final description of the trek from Spain over the mountains to France is worth emphasizing. It may bring to mind the tribal migration of the Torguts. (Chapter II of this outline.)

#### II. "COWARDS DIE MANY TIMES"

Key Largo, by Maxwell Anderson.

State the situation in the prologue. Do you think King acted as a coward, or simply as a man of common sense?

If the others had escaped with him, would he have had the same conviction of cowardice?

The remainder of the play is a resolution of the problem set in the prologue. Show how the author has built up around King a situation from which there is but one escape.

Discuss the characters of Alegre, Victor, and D'Alcala; show the influence of each on King.

Comment on the quotation at the heading of this chapter, and show how it relates to the two books studied here.

#### Additional Reading:

Not Peace but a Sword, by Vincent Sheean. (The chapters dealing with the war in Spain, especially "The Last Volunteer.")
Winterset, by Maxwell Anderson.

#### CHILDREN OF CHANGE

Sometimes a very simple and quiet book can take us further than a more ostentatiously powerful one; as a traveller might see more of the wild flowers and small ferns and delicate grasses of a country from a pony cart in a lane than from an eight-cylindered car on a concrete highway. Martin Hare's *Polonaise* is such an unsophisticated journey to Warsaw, so ingenuous and wide-eyed that you find with surprise at the end how subtly you have been initiated into the friendship of a gentle Polish family. The author, who is married to a Polish officer, and has lived in Warsaw and in the Carpathian Mountains, is fitted not only by experience but by her native Irish sensitivity to describe this life which she knows so well. It is one more reminder to be grateful for, of the existence of men and women of good will everywhere in a world which is rapidly being overshadowed by war.

A Stricken Field is also told with gentleness and simplicity, though some of the events it recounts are almost unbearably poignant. Polonaise may be taken as a picture of quiet living before war came; A Stricken Field shows truthfully what happens when the same sort of people become refugees. Although one takes place in Warsaw and the other in Prague, the circumstances are not dissimilar. Martha Gelhorn had friends in Germany and Czecho-Slovakia who were also people of good will, and who were overwhelmed by the forces of evil let loose. Edna St. Vincent Millay's sonnet to Czecho-Slovakia is in the same mood:

"If there were balm in Gilead, I would go
To Gilead for your wounds, unhappy land,
Gather you balsam there, and with this hand
Made deft by pity, cleanse and bind and sew
And drench with healing, that your strength might grow,
(Though love be outlawed, kindness contraband)
And you, O proud and felled, again might stand."

#### SUBJECTS FOR STUDY

#### I. A HOME IN WARSAW

Polonaise, by Martin Hare.

The intial incident, the English Dovemounts' divorce, may be briefly set forth. Comment on Madeline's manner of dealing with her children, especially Cas.

Describe the home of the Polish cousins, the location of the Orangery, the occupation of Rey.

Each of the children is clearly individualized; give a brief description of each.

Discuss the differences in manner of living, and show what the English children learned. Do you think there would be similar differences between American children and European children?

Comment on the delicacy of the style and the quiet humor, qualities which give *Polonaise* its charm.

Does the final episode of Cas's accident seem to you over-sentimentalized, or strained? Note the restraint of the last pages, with only a hint of the menace of war.

#### II. REFUGEES IN PRAGUE

A Stricken Field, by Martha Gelhorn.

This, like the author's previous book, is a series of vignettes rather than a novel. She is an excellent reporter; select some of the episodes to read aloud or describe, such as the crowds along the roads, or the children singing in the refugee home.

Show how the events gain in poignance because the narrator, Mary Douglas, is herself secure.

The story of Rita is told with great tenderness, except for the final tragedy. One reviewer has commented that this is too strong for art; do you agree? Have you any reason to believe that it might be true?

Tell about Mary's idealistic attempt to get the order of expulsion postponed.

The pictures of Lord Balham, and General Labonne are especially interesting. Comment on them first as typical of their respective nations, and then as showing the helplessness of men of good will in the Europe of 1939.

Since A Stricken Field is at least partly autobiographical, there is especial interest in the author, a brilliant young woman who has already become something of a legend. The reference in Time below will give a sketch of her life.

#### Additional Reading:

Inside Europe, by John Gunther (sections dealing with Poland and Czecho-Slovakia).

Reaching for the Stars, by Nora Waln.

The Trouble I've Seen, by Martha Gelhorn.

Europe To Let, by Storm Jameson.

Time Magazine, March 18, 1940, p. 92.

#### CHAPTER VII

#### LAND OF HEROES

"Finland is part of the promise of the next Europe at the end of all the present travail."—H. B. ELLISTON.

That is the promise which we need to remember now. Finland's courage caught the imagination of the entire world. What sort of people are these, we wanted to know, these stubborn peasant fighters in their land of lakes and forests? We have known them chiefly through the great tone poems of Sibelius, through reports of their enlightened and progressive democracy. Let us now go to the works of their writers and see if we can become better acquainted with the characteristics of the nation.

It was singularly appropriate that the winner of the Nobel Prize in literature in 1939 should be a Finn. F. E. Sillanpåå has written many novels of the humble people of his land. Now for the first time two of his novels are available in English. They show us a race of peasants, dwellers in remote farms, people apparently without ambition, certainly without the glamour of courage. We may find reading *Meek Heritage* a disappointment; here is a straightforward undecorated account of a rather sordid life. Yet even this peasant contributed in his grotesque, half comic way toward the freedom of his country. Perhaps in knowing his earthy almost animal life we touch the roots of Finnish strength.

Sun and Storm, by Unto Seppannen, carries the story farther. Here we see the rise of a peasant family over a span of several generations, from beginnings as humble as those in *Meek Heritage*. The story takes place in the years when Finland was first winning her independence from Russia, and the family's progress toward security, education and freedom keeps step with that of the country, so that it may be taken as a vivid miniature of the growth of a new nation. More than that, it is also a warm vital picture of family life, told with a freshness that makes one remember the clear air over northern lakes.

SUBJECTS FOR STUDY

#### I. Forest Roots

Meek Heritage, by F. E. Sillanpåå.

The story here is very simple—the life history of an obscure man. Do you feel that it has enough significance to justify its use as a writer's theme?

While the story carries the air, there is a deeper undertone which pervades the novel like strong chords from the bass violins. Notice the sense of the surrounding, encompassing forest, and the similar dark sense of an overshadowing fate.

Discuss the Nobel award to this novelist, and compare him with a previous Nobel Prize winner, Pearl Buck, whose *The Good Earth* is also a story of close-to-the-earth peasant life.

#### II. THE GROWTH OF A NATION

Sun and Storm, by Unto Seppannen.

Link the beginning of this novel with the story of Meek Heritage.

Notice that both books refer to the opening of the railroad from Leningrad to Helsinki. Show how this was an epochal event for Finland.

Trace the rise of Markku and his family.

Describe life on this prosperous farm.

As in *Moment in Peking* we have here the essential materials of ordinary human experience in a foreign setting. Discuss both the universal and the foreign elements in the novel.

Do you think there is too great a distance from Markku to Matti? Is the family progress too rapid for plausibility?

The translator's note at the end gives the historical facts of the revolt from Russia. Connect this with the novel. Note that the author writes even of revolution without violence, but with compassion and understanding.

If a more detailed study of Finland is desired, the following books will be found interesting:

#### Additional Reading:

Finland, the New Nation, by Agnes Rothery.

Finland, by John Hampden Packson (a brief history).

Finland, Land of Heroes, by Toivo Rosvall.

The Maid Silja, by F. E. Sillanpåå.

Mariana, by Sally Salminen.

Scandinavia Beckons, by Amy Oakley.

Sisu: A Word that Explains Finland. Reader's Digest. March 23, 1940.

Finland. Life Magazine, March 30, 1939.

#### CHAPTER VIII

#### THE SCEPTERED ISLE

"This happy breed of men, this little world,
This precious stone set in the silver sea
Which serves it in the office of a wall,
Or as a moat defensive to a house
Against the envy of less happy lands;
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England."
—Shakespeare. Richard II.

The moat may not seem quite so defensive now, nor the sceptered isle so far-reaching in power, but there is still for most of us an undeniable charm about English life and English ways; a charm due partly at least to a long and pleasant familiarity with English novels. No other European literature has so rich a heritage of novel writing; there seems to be something peculiarly congenial to the English talent in the unprecise, untrammeled, and almost limitless scope of the novel.

H. M. Tomlinson writes in the great tradition of the English novel, although his complex somewhat mannered prose style is very individually his own. His most recent novel, *The Day Before*, has more than a touch of homesickness for the England that is vanishing—an England before 1914; more significantly, perhaps, before Berchtesgaden and Munich. He has felt and transferred to paper the power, the complexity and the variety of English life. His feeling for ships, and his masterly descriptions of everything pertaining to the sea, increase his ability as an interpreter of England.

Elizabeth, Countess Russell, first became popular as an interpreter of Germany, but she is also a representative of one of the most thoroughly delightful types of English novels, the novel of manners. Jane Austen has had few more entirely charming descendants than this witty, gay, and extraordinarily penetrating lady. Her newest novel, *Mr. Skeffington* is a pure delight in these days of the heavily realistic; yet it can not be dismissed as trivial, for its theme is a universal one, and the changes rung upon it are as memorable as they are graceful.

J. B. Priestley belongs to the lineage of Dickens; he loves eccentricities of character, and leans toward a hearty mingling of the sentimental and the comic. Let the People Sing is to Mr. Skef-

fington as ale and cheese to champagne and caviar. There are moods and times for both.

#### SUBJECTS FOR STUDY

#### I. ENGLAND BEFORE 1914

The Day Before, by H. M. Tomlinson.

Describe the rather exciting device with which the story opens. Do you find the denouement of this disappointing? Is the author's real interest in plot?

Do the characters come alive to you? Does England seem more important than any character?

Discuss three of the high points of the book:

The strike on the London docks. Show how a world is changing here.

The naval maneuvers. Comment on the feeling of power.

The sinking of the Titanic. Is this in any way symbolic of the end of an era?

Henry Seidel Canby says that H. M. Tomlinson "has equipped himself with one of the most beautiful and expressive prose styles of our times." Do you agree?

The author is an old man now. Is this fact reflected in his book, as it was for instance in Santayana's *The Last Puritan*?

Read in connection with this Vincent Sheean's chapter "From the 13 Bus" in Not Peace But a Sword, as a contrasting commentary on England.

#### II. AN ENGLISH COMEDY OF MANNERS

Mr. Skeffington, By Elizabeth.

Sketch the character of Lady Fanny and outline the story briefly.

Read aloud some parts which seem to you best to illustrate the author's wit.

Recount some of the incidents which show the author's knack for contriving amusing situations.

Comment on the ending. Is it in keeping with the novel as a whole?

Christopher Morley says of Mr. Skeffington, "there will be a good many women who will not forgive Elizabeth this book." Do you feel that way about it?

If you have read Kitty Foyle contrast the two books as intimate portraits of women.

#### Additional Reading:

Kitty Foyle, by Christopher Morley.

All Passion Spent, by Victoria Sackville West.

#### III. A DICKENSIAN VIEW OF ENGLAND

Let the People Sing, by J. B. Priestley.

If the program seems too long, omit either this book or *Mr. Skeffington*. Describe the situation which threw Timmy and the Professor together, and outline their subsequent adventures.

Describe the love story. Is it important in the structure of the novel? What elements are more important?

Do you agree with the London Times that the novel has "sound solid sense... sharp satire"? Give examples of each quality.

Discuss J. B. Priestley as a successor of Dickens. Is he as robust? As inventive? As sentimental? What qualities make one compare him to Dickens?

#### Additional Reading:

The Good Companions, by J. B. Priestley.

Midnight on the Desert, by J. B. Priestley. (The United States as Priestley sees it.)

#### LAND OF LOST CONTENT

In our imaginary flight over the world we have observed homeless wanderers and those who have made a fine art of living in gracious homes; we have seen cultivated nations at peace, and the same nations torn by war. It is pleasant to turn from them—for our reading is an airplane that can be guided by a touch—to green remote places and to folk who live close to earth.

The somewhat lyric title *How Green Was My Valley* sets the mood of this novel, a nostalgic poetry of longing for the dearly remembered valleys of childhood. Perhaps Richard Llewellyn has somewhat romanticized his Welsh valley; but the Morgan family and their friends are as robustly real as the brandy broth which they drink with such gusto. Their way of living has both dignity and beauty—a beauty compounded of deep feeling, of strong family loyalty, of profound interest in music, and a pervading sense of the mountains.

It is illuminating to check such an idlyllic picture of life in a coal mining valley before the slag heap grew too large with a more realistic picture of a similar community completely dominated by the slag heap. *River of Earth* is the story of a coal miner's family in the mountains of Kentucky. Although the author is a poet, his style is much more subdued, less ebullient, than Richard Llewellyn's; you may find it in places even more poignant. We see the characters and scenes of *How Green Was My Valley* through an enhancing veil of distance; but the family in *River of Earth* are as close to us as across the next ridge.

#### SUBJECTS FOR STUDY

#### I. FAR AWAY AND LONG AGO IN WALES

How Green Was My Valley, by Richard Llewellyn.

The main thread of the story is an autobiographical one and can be simply told. There is no real plot.

What gives the novel richness and substance, in spite of this absence of plot? Comment on the characterizations: Huw's parents, his brothers, the preacher.

Describe some of the folkways of this Welsh valley; the frequent gatherings, the neighborliness, the abundance of good food.

The music festivals are an important feature of Welsh life. Comment on their part in this book.

Show how the element of change enters in—the coming of labor troubles, the gradual growth of the slag heap. From this point of view compare it with *Moment in Peking* as a picture of a rich way of life shadowed by change.

Discuss the poetic style, to which some reviewers have objected. Do you find it in harmony with the mood and intentions of the novel?

The publishers tell us that the author destroyed the manuscripts of five novels before he finished this one. Do you think it shows the results of careful workmanship?

#### II. A COVE IN THE KENTUCKY HILLS

River of Earth, by James Still.

Here too the simple story may be very briefly told.

Contrast this with *How Green Was My Valley*. Which seems to you to have greater reality? More richness? More genuine beauty?

Do you think the author's gift for poetry is evident here in these simple and restrained sketches?

Discuss especially the chapter about the colt. This was published separately as a short story, and has a poignance all its own.

Comment on the mother's recurrent wish to keep her children away from the towns. What drew them back again and again? Does this mother remind you of Ma Joad in *The Grapes of Wrath*?

Is River of Earth in a sense a picture of a mining town after it has been conquered by the slag heap, that is, a later stage of the story begun in How Green Was My Valley?

Comment on these stories together as evidence of the human tendency to destroy natural beauty, and discuss ways of counteracting this tendency. We need to preserve the green places of earth.

#### Additional Reading:

The Trees, by Conrad Richter.

Beyond Dark Hills, by Jessie Stuart.

My Wales, by Rhys Davies.

#### CHAPTER X

#### YOUTH IN A BROKEN WORLD

"There is no place in the world For those who love."

-W. H. AUDEN.

One of the interesting trends apparent in recent books has been the growing disillusionment of our liberals with the Russian experiment, the disillusionment that found expression in such books as Eugene Lyons' Assignment in Utopia, and more recently in Stalin's Russia, by Max Eastman. Perhaps this last title expresses part of the cause of that disillusionment; from being a great peasant experiment which seemed to hold out a promise of a better way of living for masses of people, Russia has become more and more another dictator-ridden country, where no amount of material progress can make up for the loss of human freedom.

Maurice Hindus was one of the first writers to interpret for this country the story of the Russian Revolution; in *Humanity Uprooted* and *Red Bread* he gave us unforgettable accounts of both the need and the promise of that revolution. In these earlier books he dealt with humanity in the mass. Now, in a sharply focussed novel, he shows us through the lives of a small family the bitter personal conflicts that must accompany revolution. *Sons and Fathers* has the compressed dramatic quality of a good play. Its basic tragedy goes beyond the conflict between the generations, between revolutionary and non-revolutionary; it is the tragedy of the waste of youth in a ruined world.

That waste is again poignantly expressed in Auden and Isherwood's play . . . On the Frontier, which dramatizes the tragic stupidity of national hatreds, symbolized by the frontier dividing essentially similar people. It is a thrilling experience to drive from the United States over the wooded hills of Maine and into Canada, remembering the armed frontiers of Europe and realizing that we need no bristling guards along the neighborly boundary line. The play . . . On the Frontier leads our hopes forward to the time when the nations of the world may abolish their Siegfried and Maginot lines, and when youth may no longer be wasted in the clash of national differences.

#### SUBJECTS FOR STUDY

#### I. Two Generations and Two Worlds

Sons and Fathers, by Maurice Hindus.

Read the quotation from Turgenev's Fathers and Sons, at the beginning of the book, and show how Hindus' novel reverses the theme of the older novel; here the younger generation, turned conservative, is ashamed of its revolutionary parents.

Show how the story carries out the theme of the sub-title: Kolya's generation against his fathers, Kolya's world against Irina's. Sketch the differences here between generation and class.

What does Kolya really want of life? What does Irina want? What makes all their hopes impossible?

Does Mitosa seem too inhuman in his attitude toward Kolya?

Is Irina's return to her own world true to her character?

Discuss whether or not the aims of the revolution justify the human waste involved. Does Mitosa really see farther and more truly than Kolya?

#### II. No Room for Love

.. On the Frontier, by W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood.

Here is a good place to become acquainted with the poetry of W. H. Auden, if the poems in *Journey to a War* seemed too obscure. Here, in certain passages, he is at his lyric best.

The fantastic setting, the hysteric leader, can readily be linked with actual countries and personages. Sketch the background of interlocking interests, weaving like intricate wires back and forth across the arbitrary division of the frontier.

The somewhat startling device of the divided room brings out the essential likeness of human beings, regardless of human boundaries. Do you agree with the author on this point? Discuss other books in this program which bring out the same thought.

Read aloud some of the lovely poetry in the conversations of Eric and Anna, on pp. 65-68 and again at the end.

Comment especially on the lines (p. 66) beginning "All of us wanting to be kind and honest," as applying to both the books studied in this program.

Discuss the similarity of the tragedies of Irina and Kolya, Eric and Anna, and compare their stories with that of Rita and Peter, in A Stricken Field.

#### Additional Reading:

Assignment in Utopia, by Eugene Lyons. Stalin's Russia, by Max Eastman. Fathers and Sons, by Ivan Turgenev.

#### EDUCATION OF A FIGHTING MAN

The British army is scarcely the place to which one would naturally turn to seek a mystic. Certainly not in the gilt-accoutered security of peaceful 1928; perhaps in time of war, when perceptions are sharpened by pain, but not during regular army maneuvers on Salisbury Plain. Robert Henriques could not have chosen a more unlikely setting for his story of a man's search for his soul; a story which in its mystic implications harks back to those legends of medieval knights who were attended by angels and dedicated to more spiritual undertakings than the practicalities of warfare. There is startling contrast, between a setting in which one would expect a rousing tale of horses, battles, and love, and a story which is concerned almost entirely with things of the spirit.

No Arms, No Armour won the All Nations Prize Competition; a very interesting award at a time when the number of men under arms has increased tremendously. It is not safe to draw too fanciful conclusions from such an award—prize committees do not always follow the logic of pure reason—but at least we may be permitted to guess a response here to a growing need for spiritual sanctions in a world that has lost most temporal sanctions.

On a Darkling Plain, a less bulky and somewhat less pretentious book, has perhaps even more to say about that tantalizing subject which no one has answered with the finality of the Shorter Catechism: what is the chief end of man? There is an interesting similarity between the two books, but the author of On a Darkling Plain goes beyond the austere solitudes in which his soldier hero begins to find himself, to a warm realization of human needs and of man's relationship to his fellows.

#### SUBJECTS FOR STUDY

#### I. "No Armour against Life"

No Arms, No Armour, by Robert Henriques.

Give the description of Salisbury Plain at the opening of the book, and of the men encamped there.

Show how Windrush is, at the beginning, "the perfect young officer."

The three most important people in Windrush's life are Sammy, Lydia, and Daddy. Show how each influenced him.

The high points of the book are the race; the trial of the men in barracks; Tubby's sojourn in the desert. Give some time to each.

"Tubby was a soldier and a good soldier. But, somewhere beneath the uniform, a man was buried." Discuss this as a summary of the novel.

Discuss Sammy as a "man unbelievably human." What does he mean by each individual having "a moment of truth"?

"There was a strange thread of truth in the pattern that was being woven." Discuss the pattern in the lives of the three soldiers in this novel.

You may wish to compare this with the American winner in the same competition: Sam, by John Selby, an almost completely materialistic novel.

#### II. "No Arms against His Brother"

On a Darkling Plain, by Wallace Stegner.

Matthew Arnold's poem *Dover Beach* has an important part in Vickers' story. It might be interesting to begin with a reading of it. Show how it expresses Vickers' mood when he left the army.

Do you think that Vickers' mood is a fairly widespread one today? The author is too artistic to point the obvious, but the implication is plain.

What does Vickers hope to find when he goes out to live alone? Describe his first days and nights alone.

Give a sketch of his friendship with Ina.

Show how he is gradually and then swiftly drawn back into a need for human relationships and a realization of others' needs. Is the final tragedy an inevitable one?

Discuss the book as a continuation of the quest described in *No Arms*, *No Armour*. Windrush finds only himself; Vickers finds other human beings and their needs.

Discuss On A Darkling Plain as an example of the skillful handling of the short novel form. Does he manage to say as much as other writers do in many pages? How is the result achieved? Some other writers are listed below who have used the short novel with skill.

#### Additional Reading:

Remembering Laughter, by Wallace Stegner.

Portrait of Jennie, by Robert Nathan.

Pale Horse, Pale Rider, by Katherine Anne Porter (the title story in this collection has a description of the influenza epidemic which could be compared with that in On a Darkling Plain).

#### CHAPTER XII

#### MAN'S UNENDING QUEST

". . . a cry toward something dim in distance, which is higher than I am and makes me emperor of the endless dark even in seeking."

-MAXWELL ANDERSON. Winterset.

These are the words with which Esdras, the venerable Jew who has just lost his daughter and the lad who might have been his son, closes the tragedy of *Winterset*. They are especially appropriate on his lips, for no race in all the earth has been more dedicated to the quest for spiritual certainty than the Jews, and no race has carried that quest so far. Wherever men have lived, at all times and in all places, the quest of the spirit has gone on, the need for God and the turning to God; and it is in Hebrew literature and in Hebrew thought that we find the highest expression of that need.

It is not difficult to see in contemporary literature an increasing trend toward religion, or at least a growing expression of man's need for the things of the spirit. This was apparent in the two novels studied in the preceding chapter. In his latest novel Aldous Huxley teaches a relinquishment of the ego, a denial of self, which is close kin to the practice of the Christian mystics. And W. H. Auden, one of the leading English poets of our day, finds in the straight forward ethics of Jesus a way of living for modern man. The great popularity of *The Nazarene* is another interesting straw in the wind.

The two novels to be studied here deal with much the same theme, although *The Nazarene* gives the divine answer to the riddle suggested in *As a Driven Leaf*. Since it is an answer, it is put last on this program, even though its setting is an earlier period historically.

Some of the books studied in this course have shown us mankind at his worst, futile, frustrated, warring, and knowing no cure for his desperate disease of war. Here then at the end we have mankind at the highest, a spirit forever aspiring and forever impelled toward the divine.

#### SUBJECTS FOR STUDY

#### I. THE RIDDLE

As a Driven Leaf, by Milton Steinberg.

Sketch the setting: Palestine in the second century of our era. Rome ruled the world. Trajan was Emperor.

Describe Elisha's home and the conflicting influences that touched him there.

Discuss the contrast, as brought out here, between Hebrew faith and Greek philosophy.

What was the position of the Sanhedrin in Jewish life? Its relationship to Rome?

What events led up to and determined Elisha's decision to go to Antioch?

Describe the Graeco-Roman city of Antioch, as Elisha came to know it. What did he expect to find in Greek philosophy? Was his undertaking possible, to find a rational basis for faith, as demonstrable as a proposition in Euclid?

Do you think his endeavor was worth while? Trace the steps in his defeat, and his return. Show in what ways the riddle of this book is a universal one.

#### II. AN ANSWER

The Nazarene, by Sholem Asch.

The story is told from three different points of view. It might be possible to assign each one to a different reviewer; at least discuss how each one is brought out.

First: The Roman Officer

Show how the story gains in effectiveness from being told by a hard-boiled and skeptical soldier.

Note especially such beautiful episodes in this first part as the description of the Temple, of Miriam's garden, of the setting for the Sermon on the Mount.

Second: Judas the Enthusiast

The middle section describes the important years of Jesus' life. Discuss the portrayal of Judas here, as the zealot, the seeker. In what way is he like Elisha, in *As a Driven Leaf*?

Third: The Young Scholar

Notice especially here the preparation for being a Rabbi, the position of Jesus among the other Rabbis, and among the poor people of Jerusalem.

Bring out the subtle differences of style in each section, each appropriate to the narrator.

At the end these three different points of view are brought together, so that we see the final scenes through the eyes of the Hegemon, of Judas, and of Jochanan.

The personality of Jesus has been variously interpreted; how is he characterized here? Divine or human, or both? Notice the symbolism of the white robe.

Notice that Phillippus, the Greek sage who adopted the Jewish faith, is the counterpart of Elisha in As a Driven Leaf.

"A small poor people in an obscure desolate country." Comment on what their influence has been.

The author of *The Nazarene* was educated in the Orthodox tradition, with the thought of becoming a rabbi. He has travelled frequently and extensively in the Holy Land, and studied every available source of information about the period of his book. He says, "In a sense I was only an instrument in the telling of the story. I read and dreamed dreams, and the novel grew slowly." He was nearly thirty years writing it. Show how this slow maturing is apparent in the novel.

#### Additional Reading:

The Son of Man, by Emil Ludwig. Life of Christ, by Giovanni Papini. Life of Jesus, by Ernest Renan.

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#### DIRECTORY OF PUBLISHERS

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

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Jackson, John H.	Finland. 1940 (7)	Macmillan	2.50		
Jameson, Storm	Europe to Let. 1940 (6)	Macmillan	2.50		
Lindbergh, Anne	Listen, the Wind. 1938 (1)	Harcourt	2.50		
	North to the Orient. 1936 (1)	Harcourt	2.50		
Lin Yutang	My Country and My People.	Reynal	3.00		
	1935 (3)	2003 1141	3,00		
Ludwig, Emil	The Son of Man. (12) (reprint)	Sundial Press	1.00		
Lyons, Eugene	Assignment in Utopia. 1937 (10)	Harcourt	3.00		
Malraux, André	Man's Hope. 1938 (1)	Random	2.50		
Morley, Christopher	Kitty Foyle. 1939 (8)	Lippincott	2.50		
Nathan, Robert	Portrait of Jennie. 1940 (11)	Knopf	2.00		
Oakley, Amy	Scandinavia Beckons. 1938 (7)	•	2.50		
Papini, Giovanni	Life of Christ. 1923 (12)	Harcourt	3.50		
Peck, Graham	Through China's Wall. 1940	Houghton	3.50		
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Porter, Katherine Anne	Pale Horse, Pale Rider. 1939 (11)	Harcourt	2.00		
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Renan, Ernest	Life of Jesus (translated from 23rd French edition). 1923 (	Little 12)	2.50		
Richter, Conrad	The Trees. 1940 (9)	Knopf	2.50		
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Rothery, Agnes	Finland, the New Nation, 1937 (7)	Viking	3.00		
Sackville West, V.	All Passion Spent. 1931 (8)	Doubleday	2.50		
Saint Exupéry, A.	Night Flight. 1932 (1) (Penguin reprint)	Century	.25		
Salminen, Sally	Mariana. 1940 (7)	Farrar	2.50		
Selby, John	Sam. 1939 (11)	Farrar	2.50		

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Sillanpåå, F. E.	The Maid Silja. 1940 (7)	Macmillan	2.50
Smith, Bradford	To the Mountain. 1936 (4)	Bobbs	2.50
Stegner, Wallace	Remembering Laughter. 1937 (11)	Little	2.00
Stuart, Jessie	Beyond Dark Hills. 1938 (9)	Dutton	2.50
Turgenev, Ivan	Fathers and Sons. (10)	Modern Library Edition	.95
Waln, Nora	House of Exile. 1933 (3)	Little, 1933	
	Reaching for the Stars. 1939 (6)	Little	3.00
Werfel, Franz	The Forty Days of Musa Dagh. 1934 (2)	Modern Library Edition (1937)	1.25

### SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

First Meeting: Ceiling Unlimited
Wind, Sand, and Stars

Second Meeting: Homeless on the Face of the Earth

An Epic of Migration
 The Power to Survive

Third Meeting: AT Home in the World

1. In Ivory and Jade

2. The Mulberry Caterpillar

Fourth Meeting: Heirs and Destroyers of Chinese Culture

1. Growing Up in Modern Japan

2. Japan in China

Fifth Meeting: PRELUDE IN SPAIN

1. One Woman's Choice

2. "Cowards Die Many Times"

Sixth Meeting: CHILDREN OF CHANGE

1. At Home in Warsaw

2. Refugees in Prague

Seventh Meeting: LAND OF HEROES

1. Forest Roots

2. The Growth of a Nation

Eighth Meeting: THE SCEPTERED ISLE

1. England before 1914

2. An English Comedy of Manners

3. A Dickensian View of England

Ninth Meeting: LAND OF LOST CONTENT

1. Faraway and Long Ago in Wales

2. A Cove in the Kentucky Hills

Tenth Meeting: Youth IN A Broken World

1. Two Generations and Two Worlds

2. No Room for Love

Eleventh Meeting: EDUCATION OF A FIGHTING MAN

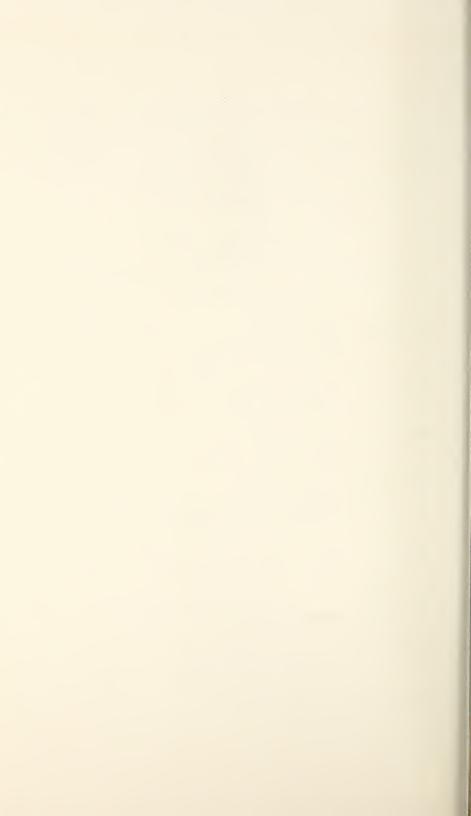
1. "No Armour against Life"

2. "No Arms against his Brother"

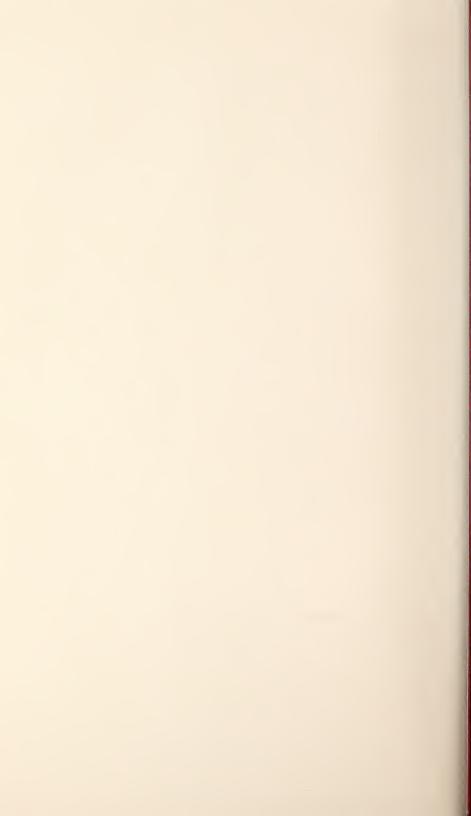
Twelfth Meeting: MAN'S UNENDING QUEST

1. The Riddle

2. An Answer







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