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No. 3

READER'S MISCELLANY

Adventures in Reading, 32nd Series

BY

MARY CUTLER HOPKINS



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READER'S MISCELLANY

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MARY CUTLER HOPKINS

This is a list of books, published within the past twelve months, recommended for book club programs. Since many clubs prefer to have a varied program, rather than to devote the entire year to the study of a single subject, the list represents a selection of novels, biographies, plays, books on history, travel, and explorations into the problems of our times. A good program can be prepared from one or all of the books in each section with critical reviews, material on the author, and supplementary reading borrowed from the public library.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
PROGRAM I. YESTERDAY IN THE SOUTH	5
<i>The Great Plantation</i> , by Clifford Dowdey	
<i>The Gallant Mrs. Stonewall</i> , by Harnett Kane	
<i>Weep No More</i> , by Janet Stevenson	
<i>The Plantation South</i> , by Katharine M. Jones	
PROGRAM II. CURTAIN GOING UP	5
<i>Pieces at Eight</i> , by Walter Kerr	
<i>Visit to a Small Planet</i> , by Gore Vidal	
<i>The Sleeping Prince</i> , by Terence Rattigan	
<i>Look Homeward Angel</i> , by Ketti Frings	
PROGRAM III. ALL IN THE FAMILY	6
<i>A Death in the Family</i> , by James Agee	
<i>Please on't Eat the Daisies</i> , by Jean Kerr	
<i>The Return of Lady Brace</i> , by Nancy Ross	
<i>The Birth of a Grandfather</i> , by May Sarton	
<i>Remember Me to God</i> , by Myron S. Kaufman	
PROGRAM IV. LIFE AMONG THE BRITONS	7
<i>The White Witch</i> , by Elizabeth Goudge	
<i>Peacocks and Avarice</i> , by Joyce Warren	
<i>Village Diary</i> , by Dora Jessie Saint	
<i>The Woman From Sicily</i> , by Frank Swinnerton	
PROGRAM V. FOREIGN NOVELS IN TRANSLATION	7
<i>The House of Lies</i> , by Françoise Mallet	
<i>The Makioka Sisters</i> , by Junichiro Tanizaki	
<i>The Month of September</i> , by Frédérique Hébard	
PROGRAM VI. WINDOWS ON THE EAST	8
<i>View to the Southeast</i> , by Santha Rama Rau	
<i>The Small Woman</i> , by Alan Burgess	
<i>Bridge to the Sun</i> , by Gwen Terasaki	
<i>The Treasured One</i> , by Rudivoravan, Princess of Thailand	
PROGRAM VII. SUCH INTERESTING PEOPLE	9
<i>The Diary of "Helena Morley,"</i> by Alice Brant	
<i>My Little Church Around the Corner</i> , by Randolph Ray	
<i>White Mother</i> , by Jessie Bennett Sams	
<i>Victoria, Albert and Mrs. Stevenson</i> , by Sarah Stevenson	
<i>Dr. Livingstone, I Presume</i> , by Ian Anstruther	
PROGRAM VIII. LOOK AT AMERICA	10
<i>The Crack in the Picture Window</i> , by John Keats	
<i>The Hidden Persuaders</i> , by Vance O. Packard	
<i>A Surfeit of Honey</i> , by Russell Lynes	
<i>The American Earthquake</i> , by Edmund Wilson	
<i>Reflections on America</i> , by Jacques Maritain	

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

	<i>Page</i>
PROGRAM IX. SHORT STORIES	10
<i>Prize Stories 1958, the O. Henry Awards</i>	
<i>Two by Two</i> , by Martha Gelhorn	
<i>Exile and the Kingdom</i> , by Albert Camus	
<i>A Dangerous Woman</i> , by James T. Farrell	
PROGRAM X. VISTAS OF FRANCE	11
<i>Queen of France</i> , by André Castelot	
<i>Madeleine</i> , by Catherine I. Gavin	
<i>The Greengage Summer</i> , by Rumer Godden	
<i>Right Bank</i> , by Elaine Neal	
<i>Voltaire in Love</i> , by Nancy Mitford	
PROGRAM XI. THE ARTS	12
<i>Come Dance With Me</i> , by Ninette de Valois	
<i>The Private World of Pablo Picasso</i> , by D. D. Duncan	
<i>A Testament</i> , by Frank Lloyd Wright	
<i>Gilbert, His Life and Strife</i> , by Hesketh Pearson	
PROGRAM XII. OF THIS AND THAT	13
<i>The Courage to Be Happy</i> , by Dorothy Thompson	
<i>The Winthrop Woman</i> , by Anya Seton	
<i>The Island</i> , by Robert Payne	
<i>Alarms and Diversions</i> , by James Thurber	

Program I.

Yesterday in the South

Here are four books about the Old South, from the earliest settlements in Virginia through the Civil War. In them we can trace a way of life that is gone, but is far from forgotten.

The Plantation South, by Katharine M. Jones. Bobbs-Merrill, 1957. \$5.00.

Life on the great estates of the ante-bellum South is illuminated in these excerpts from contemporary letters, diaries and other written accounts of the times, skilfully selected and edited by the author of *Heroines of Dixie*.

The Great Plantation, by Clifford Dowdey. Rinehart, 1957. \$6.00.

The story of Berkley Hundred, one of the oldest and most beautiful of the Tidewater plantations and home of the Benjamin Harrisons, from Jamestown to Appomattox. The people who crowd these pages are filled with vitality, and the political and social history vividly portrayed.

The Gallant Mrs. Stonewall, by Harnett Kane. Doubleday, 1957. \$3.95.

This novel of the Civil War, whose events are seen through the heroine's eyes, is based on the life of Anna Morrison, the North Carolina girl who was Stonewall Jackson's second wife.

Weep No More, by Janet Stevenson. Viking, 1957. \$3.95.

Elizabeth Van Lew, a Southern abolitionist who lived in Richmond during the Civil War and served as a spy for the North, is the unusual heroine of this historical novel.

Program II.

Curtain Going Up

There is an endless fascination for most of us in reading new plays and books about the theatre, and here are some choice selections for the armchair first-nighter.

Pieces at Eight, by Walter Kerr. Simon and Schuster, 1957. \$3.95.

Impressions of the contemporary theatre by the dramatic critic of the *New York Herald Tribune*. Actors, audiences, opening nights, writers and directors are discussed in this series of witty and perceptive sketches.

The Sleeping Prince, by Terence Rattigan. Random House, 1957. \$2.95.

A sparkling comedy of political intrigue and extra-curricular royal romance, set in London at the time of the coronation of King

George V., this dramatic trifle is charmingly written and delightful to read.

Look Homeward Angel, by Ketti Frings. Scribner, 1958. \$2.95.

Thomas Wolfe's famous novel, skilfully adapted for the stage, highlights the struggle of adolescent Eugene Gant to free himself from the domination of his strong-willed mother. The family, the boarders, the shabby old house itself come to life anew in these pages.

Visit to a Small Planet, by Gore Vidal. Little, Brown, 1957. \$2.95.

When a visitor from outer space lands in the Spelding's rose garden, confusion over his identity and intentions and his own bewildered impressions of American life and customs make an amusing and sophisticated comedy.

Program III.

All in the Family

Family life with its stresses and strains, its problems and its satisfactions, is a theme that has always fascinated the novelist and the reader. Here are five books that artfully explore the contemporary scene and the mysteries of human relationships.

A Death In the Family, by James Agee. McDowell, Obolensky, 1957. \$3.95.

The quiet, deeply moving story of the effect of a father's death on his family—his wife, his two small children and his numerous relatives. The scene is Knoxville, Tennessee but the theme is universal.

Please Don't Eat the Daisies, by Jean Kerr. Doubleday, 1957. \$3.50.

Home life in the suburbs described with wit and verve by the mother of four highly individualistic children and wife of a dramatic critic husband.

The Return of Lady Brace, by Nancy Wilson Ross. Random House, 1957. \$3.75.

Lady Brace returns to her childhood home in New York and finds herself involved in the problems of her brother, her two married daughters and her grandchildren—a beautifully written novel of the search for values in a bewildering world.

The Birth of a Grandfather, by May Sarton. Rinehart, 1957. \$3.75.

A year and a half in the lives of the Wyeths, a well-to-do New England family. This quiet novel is a discerning picture of a marriage, highly successful on the surface but strained by the conflict of personalities.

Remember Me to God, by Myron S. Kaufmann. Lippincott, 1957. \$4.95.

This story of a prosperous Jewish family in Boston is written with warmth, humor and sensitive perception. The reader comes to know and sympathize with the upright, dignified father, the son at Harvard who wants to renounce his Jewish heritage, and the naive teen-age daughter.

Program IV.

Life Among the Britons

Because the British are so like ourselves and yet so different, there is a special fascination in reading novels of English life.

The White Witch, by Elizabeth Goudge. Coward-McCann, 1958. \$4.95.

Romance and adventure, with a dash of gypsy lore highlight this novel of England in the era of Puritan and Cavalier. Peaceful scenes of country life contrast with episodes of violence and the stage is crowded with vivid, colorful people.

Peacocks and Avarice, by Joyce Warren. Harper, 1957. \$3.50.

Sketches of life in an English rectory a generation ago, and an intriguing gallery of village eccentrics, both gentry and "ungentry." Most of the pieces originally appeared in the *New Yorker*.

Village Diary, by Dora Jessie Saint. Houghton Mifflin, 1957. \$3.50.

This sequel to *Village School* continues the quiet but absorbing adventures of an English school teacher. The author has many wise things to say about life in a small community—about people, and problems and pleasures, and about the ever-changing charm of the English countryside.

The Woman From Sicily, by Frank Swinnerton. Doubleday, 1957. \$3.75.

A highly sinister mother-in-law almost succeeds in destroying the happiness of her son's delightful family but is thwarted by her son's wife, who is one of the nicest women in fiction. The scene is an English coastal town from 1911 to 1914.

Program V.

Foreign Novels in Translation

Foreign novels, even when they are read in translation, often give us an insight into the life and thought of another country that we can gain in no other fashion.

The House of Lies, by Françoise Mallet. Farrar, Straus & Cudahy, 1957. \$3.75.

A rich and tyrannical Dutch brewer, who has dominated the lives of everyone about him, is defied at last by the weakest of his victims. This is a solid, often brilliant study of human relationships.

The Makioka Sisters, by Junichiro Tanizaki. Knopf, 1957. \$4.95.

The decline of a rich Japanese family in the years before the war is told with a wealth of intimate detail in this story of four sisters. The reader comes to know the Makiokas as if they were close friends of long standing.

The Month of September, by Frédérique Hébrard. Little, Brown, 1958. \$3.00.

The old story of the wife, the husband and the other woman, told with delicacy, warm sympathy and an unexpected solution. The book is appealing, not only for its people but for its glimpses of life in Parisian literary and artistic circles.

Program VI.

Windows On the East

Beautiful, mysterious, and dangerous—the Orient has always intrigued the Westerner, but never before has it been so important for us to try to know and to understand the peoples of the East, their problems, their aspirations, their world.

View to the Southeast, by Santha Rama Rau. Harper, 1957. \$3.50.

A leisurely journey through the Philippines, Burma, Bali and other countries of Southeast Asia, described by the author of *Home to India*. The charm and complexity of the region the writer loves so well is revealed in this series of delightful sketches.

The Small Woman, by Alan Burgess. Dutton, 1957. \$3.95.

The almost incredible experiences of a little English parlormaid turned missionary, who lived and worked in China for seventeen years, until the Japanese invasion forced her to escape the country.

Bridge to the Sun, by Gwen Terasaki. University of North Carolina Press, 1957. \$3.50.

A Tennessee girl, married to a Japanese diplomat shortly before the attack on Pearl Harbor, describes vividly their life in Japan during the war. Through her eyes we see and come to know not only the misled, suffering Japanese people but the author and her small, devoted family.

The Treasured One, by Rudivoravan, Princess of Thailand. Dutton, 1957. \$3.95.

A Siamese princess, educated in England and now an American citizen, paints a fascinating picture of her girlhood in the royal palace in Bangkok and contrasts it with her life in Washington

today. She is the granddaughter of the King of *Anna and the King of Siam*.

Program VII.

Such Interesting People

If "the proper study of mankind is man," then reading and discussing a good biography should be a highly rewarding experience. Here are five very readable books about some extraordinarily interesting people.

The Diary of "Helena Morley," by Alice Brant. Farrar, Straus & Cudahy, 1957. \$4.75.

This diary written in the 1890's by a young Anglo-Brazilian girl gives a delightful picture of life in a prosperous Brazilian family, and of an unusually intelligent and charming adolescent.

My Little Church Around the Corner, by Randolph Ray. Simon and Schuster, 1957. \$5.00.

The third rector of New York's Church of the Transfiguration has written an informal history of his parish. Told with affectionate detail, this is a fascinating picture of an earlier New York as well as of a church with a romantic appeal.

White Mother, by Jessie Bennett Sams. McGraw-Hill, 1957. \$3.95.

The story of a kindly young white woman in a small Florida town who befriended two wretched little Negro girls and helped them to find a new and better life. The book was written by one of the girls, now grown-up.

Victoria, Albert and Mrs. Stevenson, by Sarah Stevenson. Rinehart, 1957. \$5.00.

During five years in England with her husband who was American Minister to Britain, Sallie Stevenson wrote voluminous letters to her relatives in Virginia, describing the splendors of court and society in the early years of the young Queen Victoria's reign.

Dr. Livingstone, I Presume?, by Ian Anstruther. Dutton, 1957. \$3.95.

A lively, colorful biography of Henry Stanley, the illegitimate Welshman who came to America as a cabin boy, fought on both sides in the Civil War, became a foreign correspondent for the *New York Herald*, and found the famous missionary in the depths of Africa.

*Program VIII.**Look at America*

If we are sometimes inclined to be a little smug about "the American way of life," it is instructive if dismaying to have some of our weaknesses pointed up for us by discerning critics. In these five books only the Frenchman, M. Maritain, takes an indulgent view.

The Hidden Persuaders, by Vance O. Packard. McKay, 1957. \$4.00.

A popular and highly readable account of the behind-the-scenes forces that influence the American people as to the foods they eat, the cars they buy, the houses they build, and the political candidates they support. Alarming but entertaining.

The Crack in the Picture Window, by John Keats. Houghton, 1957. \$3.00.

A brilliantly humorous, but disturbing view of American families living in the mass mediocrity of the modern housing development suburbia, and becoming "regimented," not to say "dehumanized" in the process.

A Surfeit of Honey, by Russell Lynes. Harper, 1957. \$3.00.

This satire, mixed with a powerful dose of truth, offers, "a friendly, if sometimes skeptical, excursion into the manners and customs of Americans in this time of prosperity."

The American Earthquake, by Edmund Wilson. Doubleday, 1958. \$6.00.

A selection of magazine articles, written in the 1920's and 30's, that presents a fascinating panorama of an era in our history that began in delirium and ended in collapse.

Reflections on America, by Jacques Maritain. Scribner, 1958. \$3.50.

A French philosopher, who learned to know this country well when he was a visiting lecturer at the University of Chicago, looks at America with a loving eye. He sees our faults, but finds great hope in our virtues.

*Program IX.**Short Stories*

A good collection of short stories not only entertains us with its variety, but can often interpret, indirectly, the temper and texture of the world about us.

Prize Stories of 1958. The O. Henry Awards. Doubleday, 1958. \$3.95.

This thirty-eighth volume in the series offers an unusually fine collection of modern short stories, and shows an admirable variety as to subject and style. First prize was awarded to Martha Gelhorn, and the list includes Jean Stafford, Elizabeth Enright, and other well-known writers.

Two by Two, by Martha Gelhorn. Simon and Schuster, 1958. \$3.50.

Four skilfully written stories of modern marriage that take their titles and themes from the vows of the wedding service: "for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, 'til death us do part."

Exile and the Kingdom, by Albert Camus. Knopf, 1958. \$3.50.

In this collection of six stories by the youngest living Nobel Prize winner, Camus comes back again and again to the same problem: by what values are we to live in this terrible and bewildering period in our history.

A Dangerous Woman, by James T. Farrell. Vanguard, 1957. \$3.50.

Fourteen stories, only a few of which are set in Farrell's familiar South Side Chicago. Although most of his people live aimless, sometimes desperate lives, the author writes of them perceptively and with compassion.

Program X.

Vistas of France

The enchantment of France and the French is a potent spell, made up of the wayward charm of the people and the sensuous appeal of the Gallic atmosphere to the eye, the taste and the heart.

Queen of France, by André Castelot. Harper, 1957. \$5.00.

The ever-fascinating story of Marie Antoinette, re-told with a wealth of new material obtained from sources that have never been published. The tragic queen moves to her destruction against a vivid backdrop—the pageantry of Versailles, court intrigue, the mobs, the massacres, and the trials.

Madeleine, by Catherine Irvine Gavin. St. Martin's Press, 1957. \$4.50.

Pretty, frivolous Madeleine d'Arbonne, maid of honor to the Empress Eugénie, is sobered when disaster comes to her mistress and her country, and refusing to follow the Empress into exile she stays in Paris to drive an ambulance during the siege. A romantic novel of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870.

The Greengage Summer, by Rumer Godden. Viking, 1958. \$3.50.

Five English children, stranded in a village on the Marne, are involved in a complex of adult relationships and are saved from disaster by their own innocent courage. The color and texture of French country life are woven into this absorbing narrative.

Right Bank, by Elaine Neal. Morrow, 1958. \$3.75.

All the charm of Paris in the early 1900's is seen through the eyes of a prosperous Boston family who go to live on the Right Bank. The author's knowledge and love of France breathes through every page of this delightful novel.

Voltaire in Love, by Nancy Mitford. Harper, 1958. \$5.00.

The sprightly Nancy Mitford has told the story of the love affair of Voltaire and the Marquise de Châtelet, one of the most brilliant and fascinating women of her day. Although he was a man of many affairs, this was the one great love of Voltaire's life.

Program XI.

The Arts

Ballet, architecture, painting and comic opera are represented in these four books. The themes are widely different, but in each we see ourselves and our world intriguingly reflected through the discerning, though usually astigmatic eyes of an artist.

Come Dance With Me, by Ninette de Valois. World Publishing Co., 1958. \$6.00.

The shy little Irish girl who became the founder of the Royal Ballet, previously the Sadler's Wells, tells the story of her life as a dancer in these reminiscences of people, places, and performances.

The Private World of Pablo Picasso, by D. D. Duncan. Harper, 1958. \$4.50., Ridge Press (paper) \$1.50.

An informal, day-to-day portrait of the artist told in a series of superb photographs with a casual, accompanying text. This book will appeal not only to the reader who is interested in painters, but to the reader who is interested, primarily, in people.

Gilbert, His Life and Strife, by Hesketh Pearson. Harper, 1958. \$4.50.

This briskly written biography of the peppery English barrister who wrote the librettos for the Gilbert and Sullivan operas gives us an engrossing view of the Victorian scene as well as of the creator of the perennially popular comedies.

A Testament, by Frank Lloyd Wright. Horizon, 1957. \$12.50.

The irrepressible eighty-eight-year-old architect holds forth on a variety of topics, from art to politics, in this highly informal autobiography, with its wealth of magnificent photographs.

Program XII.

Of This and That

Four readable books on a variety of subjects, any one of which will make an interesting program.

The Winthrop Woman, by Anya Seton. Houghton, Mifflin, 1958. \$4.95.

This historical novel, by the author of *Katherine*, is the story of the high-spirited young widow, Elizabeth Winthrop, daughter-in-law of the Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and a most unwilling Puritan.

The Courage to Be Happy, by Dorothy Thompson. Houghton Mifflin, 1957. \$3.50.

This selection of articles that were published over a period of twenty years in the *Ladies' Home Journal*, ranges over a wide variety of subjects and shows the author at her provocative, argumentative best.

Alarms and Diversions, by James Thurber. Harper, 1957. \$4.50.

A collection of the writings and drawings of James Thurber that will delight his old friends and win new ones. Most of the pieces appeared originally in the *New Yorker*, and many are published in book form for the first time.

The Island, by Robert Payne. Harcourt, Brace, 1958. \$4.95.

The story of Gardiner's Island off the tip of Long Island, "a bit of the American past held in a state of suspension," and of the distinguished family that has owned it since it was given to them by royal grant in 1639.

Directory of Publishers

- Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 730 North Meridian St., Indianapolis 7
Coward-McCann, Inc., 210 Madison Ave., New York 16
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E. P. Dutton & Co., 300 Fourth Ave., New York 10
Farrar, Straus & Cudahy, Inc., 101 Fifth Ave., New York 3
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Random House, Inc., 457 Madison Ave., New York 22
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Rinehart & Co., Inc., 232 Madison Ave., New York 16
St. Martin's Press, Inc., 103 Park Ave., New York 17
Charles Scribner's Sons, 597 Fifth Ave., New York 17
Simon & Schuster, Inc., 630 Fifth Ave., New York 20
University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, N. C.
Vanguard Press, 424 Madison Ave., New York 17
Viking Press, 625 Madison Ave., New York 22
World Publishing Co., 2231 W. 110th St., Cleveland 2

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VOLUME XIV

John Charles McNeill. A biographical sketch. Agatha Boyd Adams. January 1949. No. 2 Cloth, \$2.00; paper, \$0.75

VOLUME XV

Thomas Wolfe: Carolina Student. Agatha B. Adams. January 1950. No. 2 Cloth, \$3.00; paper, \$1.50

Adventures in Reading, 24th Series. Mary C. Hopkins. April 1950. No. 3
The South in Biography. Emily Bridgers. July 1950. No. 4

VOLUME XVI

Modern French Literature. Jacques Hardré. October 1950. No. 1

Paul Green of Chapel Hill. Agatha B. Adams. January 1951. No. 2 Cloth, \$3.00; paper, \$1.50

Adventures in Reading, 25th Series. Mary C. Hopkins April 1951. No. 3
Other People's Lives, Twelfth Series. Cornelia S. Love. July 1951. No. 4

VOLUME XVII

Reading for Freedom. L. O. Katsoff. October 1951. No. 1

Inglis Fletcher of Bandon Plantation. Richard Walser. January 1952. No. 2 Cloth, \$3.00; paper, \$1.50

Adventures in Reading, 26th Series. Mary C. Hopkins. April 1952. No. 3
American History Through Historical Novels. Walter Spearman. July 1952. No. 4

VOLUME XVIII

North Carolina Authors: a Selective Handbook. October 1952. No. 1 Cloth, \$3.00; paper, \$1.50

The Great West: in Fact and Fiction. Emily Bridgers. January 1953. No. 2
The World of Wonderful Books: Adventures in Reading, 27th Series.

Mary C. Hopkins. April 1953. No. 3
Other People's Lives, 13th Series. Cornelia S. Love. July 1953. No. 4

VOLUME XIX

North Carolina Writers. Revised. Walter Spearman. October 1953. No. 1
Adventures in Reading, 28th Series. Marion Brown. January 1954. No. 2

Plays of Today: 1950-1954. Cornelia S. Love. April 1954. No. 3
Frederick H. Koch: a Short Biography. Samuel Selden and Mary T. Sphangos. July 1954. No. 4 Cloth, \$3.00; paper, \$1.50

VOLUME XX

The Ageless and Eternal Sea. Emily Bridgers. October 1954. No. 1
Bernice Kelly Harris. Richard Walser. January 1955. No. 2 Cloth, \$2.50; paper, \$1.00

Adventures in Reading, 29th Series. Jessica Valentine. April 1955 No. 3
Plays for Schools and Little Theatres. H. A. Whetstone, Jr. July 1955.
 No. 4. \$1.00

VOLUME XXI

Africa: South of the Sahara. Emily Bridgers. October 1955. No. 1
Other People's Lives, 14th Series. Rosalie Massengale. January 1956. No. 2
Adventures in Reading, 30th Series. Helen B. Hogan. April 1956. No. 3
North Carolina Musicians. N. C. Federation of Music Clubs. July 1956.
 No. 4. Cloth, \$3.00; paper, \$1.50

VOLUME XXII

Studies in the American Short Story. Mary Jane Wing. October 1956.
 No. 1
O. Henry in North Carolina. Cathleen Pike. January 1957, No. 2. Cloth,
 \$2.50; paper, \$1.00
Of Fact and Fiction. Jane Cutler Bahnsen. April 1957. No. 3
English History Through Historical Novels. Emily Bridgers. July 1957.
 No. 4

VOLUME XXIII

The Theatre Today. Ray Carpenter. October 1957. No. 1
North Carolina Fiction, 1734-1957: an Annotated Bibliography. William S.
 Powell, ed. January 1958. No. 2. Cloth, \$3.00; paper, \$1.50
Adventures in Reading: 32nd Series. Mary Cutler Hopkins. April 1958.
 No. 3
Forty Years of Pulitzer Prize Novels, 1918-1958. Charlotte Georgi.
 July 1958. No. 4
 Single Copies, \$0.75; to residents of North Carolina, \$0.50 each.
 Exceptions: *Thomas Wolfe, Paul Green, Inglis Fletcher, North Carolina
 Authors,* and others in the Biographical series.