



A scene from the forthcoming Paramount picture version of Ernest Hemingway's "A Farewell to Arms". Gary Cooper as Frederic, Helen Hayes as Catherine, Adolphe Menjou as Rinaldi.

ning down the highway of fiction, he feels it is his duty to spread a few literary horseshoe nails and bits of broken glass across the road. As a matter of fact, the grumble that people are growing tired of automobile stories is very far from the truth indeed. The man or woman who can spin a clever yarn with an automobile as the real hero, and bring in enough allusions to sooty spark-plugs, defective insulation, stripped gears and imperfect timing to satisfy the taste for local colour, need not look far for a market.

At the same time another problem arose in connection with the automobile novel which THE BOOKMAN took up at some length—the accusation that authors were using their pages to advertize specific makes of car. The Williamsons, for instance, were suspected in *The Lightning Conductor* of advertizing the advantages of the rising Napier (as well as an automobile tire and a toilet soap), and on the other hand were actually sued by the manufacturer respon-

sible for the "German horror" which brought discomfort to the hero and heroine in the early pages of the book. Perhaps Mr. Garnett will yet have to answer for having had such a good time in a Puss Moth, but somehow in this day and age we doubt it.

The Morgantic Mystics

THE astonishing success of Charles Morgan's *The Fountain* in this country gives rise to reflection. The writing is distinguished without being brilliant; the love story, although extra-marital, is almost sternly unvoluptuous; except for the old Dutchman, van Leyden, the characters are not highly individualized. The setting alone has novelty: an internment camp for English prisoners in Holland.

But on the whole it is hardly a book one would expect to find on the list of best sellers. Before one has read very long, however, the clue to the mystery turns up. Mr. Morgan is bringing light to the Gentiles through his hero, Lewis Alison. In fact a neater trick, if only it could be successfully done, than the author has attempted would be hard to find: Lewis Alison is a "secular mystic", and those who follow him with becoming docility will find that they may have, not only the Light that never was on sea or land, but all the kingdoms of this earth as well.

Now this is a highly engaging thought: that only a little elementary fastidiousness combined with no slight misapprehension as to what the pre-Christian mystics were teaching will transform one into a contemplative, and at last into an initiate of mysteries, and since Mr. Morgan is specious to the point of being persuasive, we have no doubt that little groups of Morganites are springing up here and there all over the country.

Here is Lewis at his concentrated deepest.

Will all true Platonists (in particular) please note: "As time went by, this distinction [between the contemplative ideal itself and the extreme practices of the Middle Ages and the Counter-Reformation] became more and more clear to Lewis. It was, he saw, the link between the conditions of the modern world, wherein faith in revealed truth was no longer predominant, and the philosophic mysticism of the pre-Christian era. To establish a citadel within the sensible world without first annihilating the senses, to build the spirit not with the deaths of mind and body but with their selective and disciplined vitality, to lead the whole man . . . into that peace which is invulnerable and requires no immortal armour—these were his purposes". And here one may break off to say that if, as the originator of a sect, Mr. Morgan wishes to confuse methods with purposes, that is his affair, but that he should not too lightly commit, by implication, the pre-Christian mystics to the same confusion.

But to return, the Christian saints were "bound to the fulfilment of their faith, as a rich man to his riches, but a modern contemplative, excluded from Christianity [*i.e.*, being too "reasonable" to be Christian], must be like Socrates, bound to nothing, afraid of no encounter, capable of no loss but of his own integrity. . . . Though he were persuaded by reason or intuition of the immortality of the soul . . . he must be prepared for reason to unmake what it had made".

And later, pre-Christian Greek meeting Greek, Lewis learns at the feet of his mistress's husband, Narwitz:—

"Then the purpose of a contemplative is to develop the faculty of wonder?" Lewis asked. 'Is that the imitation of God?'"

The answer springing to the lips of all Mr. Morgan's Modern Contemplatives will be "Yes"!

This truly must be materialism's last stand. The Age of Reason has faded back into its twilight; it was a dawn that had no day.



Another scene from the screen version, shortly to be released, of "A Farewell to Arms": Ferguson (Mary Phillips) and Frederic (Gary Cooper) in an army hospital.



Margaret Ayer Barnes's "Westward Passage" as produced in motion pictures by RKO-Pathé. The members of the cast shown are Juliette Compton, Laurence Olivier, Bonita Granville, and Ann Harding.

But the die-hards of reason are not to be routed. They will have the best of both worlds or know the reason why. If it must be done by misreading Plato, ignoring Plotinus, and extracting in a gingerly fashion those Buddhistic precepts which do not stress too strongly the phenomenal world as illusion, why then they will do it in that way.

Perhaps a handful of readers, here and there, will like this item culled from the *Publishers' Weekly*, in which Mr. Knopf, who publishes Cather and Undset, as well as Morgan, offers advice on Undset's *The Burning Bush* to booksellers: "I believe you can safely recommend it to anyone who liked *Shadows on the Rock*, and to almost anyone who liked *The Fountain*. Certainly to everyone who, having read *The Fountain*, has come back to you and asked for more". Or perhaps better, to those who have come back and asked for an antidote.

Pity and Terror, American Style

MR. Edward J. O'Brien's selection of American stories, printed from May 1, 1931, to April 30, 1932, which he believes "may fairly claim a position in American literature" has just been published—*The Best Short Stories: 1932* (Dodd, Mead. \$2.50)—and in his introduction Mr. O'Brien sums up his findings since he undertook his arduous and important task in 1914.

The years from 1915 to 1922 were, he admits, lean years. A prosperous period found "machine-made" stories in command of the field, and unadventurous editors. From 1922 to 1930 came the shaping period. "I sought hard", the anthologist says, "for whatever was stirring on the face of these very muddy waters, and I found Sherwood Anderson. A little later I found Ernest Hemingway. These were two homeless artists who loved