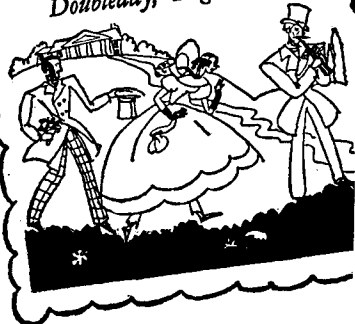


"the most brilliant novel of the year"

"The kind of book I can enjoy and admire equally—the kind of book I wish all writers of fiction were sufficiently civilized to write—the kind of book I wish the Pulitzer Prize committee could realize as the most civilized possible picture of the highest standards of American manhood and manners."—FRANCES NEWMAN

## The Romantic Comedians

by ELLEN GLASGOW  
3rd large edition \$2.50  
Doubleday, Page & Co.



### Exaggeration?

Publishers are often accused of a weakness for superlatives. Exaggeration is supposed to be their only form of self-expression. May we, in one instance at least, refute this charge?

Last September, in announcing the publication of *The Romantic Comedians* we said "this is the most brilliant novel of the year." Subsequent critical comment indicates that this was an understatement. For see what skilled and impartial judges have said.

Henry Seidel Canby wrote in the *Saturday Review*: "When a mind as subtle and civilized as Miss Glasgow looks at our generation there are new things to be said, new thrills, new beauties . . ." "Witty, wise and delicious," wrote Carl Van Vechten.

"A brilliancy of dialogue and a competency of analysis which will put Edith Wharton to shame," said the *Boston Transcript*. "A great book, I repeat it, a great book!" wrote John Farrar in *The Bookman*. "Both dialogue and analysis are full of sentences that seem too good to be true," said *The Nation*.

Frances Newman called it "the kind of book I wish the Pulitzer Prize Committee could realize as the most civilized possible picture of the highest standards of American manhood and manners." Dr. Joseph Collins wrote in the *N. Y. Times*: "What Conrad has done for 'Youth' Miss Glasgow has done for old age."

Harry Hansen wrote in the *N. Y. World*: "It is our guess for the Pulitzer Prize for 1926."

Day after day more delighted readers are discovering this magnificent novel—which is not only a huge success, but also a brilliant one!

## The Romantic Comedians

By Ellen Glasgow  
95th thousand  
DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & CO.  
\$2.50.

## The Phoenix Nest

IF you want to review the chief tendencies of the year 1926-27, *Grant Overton* has gathered together a number of most interesting people to tell you all about it. They do so in "Mirrors of the Year" (Stokes). They include *Mark Sullivan*, *Clarence Darrow*, *Elmer Davis*, *Kathleen Norris*, *Homer Croly*, *Muriel Draper*, *Carl Hovey*, and others. . . .

He whom we think of as the pre-Revolutionary, *Artzibashev*, was only forty-eight years old when he died the other day. "Sanine" was published twenty years ago. It was a sensation. In it man's natural instincts were defined. First the Continent, then London and New York were fascinated by it. The author admitted that he was influenced—not by Nietzsche but by *Max Stirner*. *Artzibashev* was not a one-book man. He wrote long short-stories, "novellen," and "Breaking-Point," a novel. The Viking Press tells us all this, and adds

*Kosciusko*, upon whose fall Freedom shrieked, was *Artzibashev's* maternal great grandfather. The author's mother died when he was three years old; "as a legacy she bequeathed me tuberculosis," he wrote. Like many other writers he was proficient in another art: he studied at a school of art and made some reputation as a caricaturist before he turned to letters.

The same publishers have just brought out a volume of poems, "Red Flag," by *Lola Ridge*. *Lola Ridge* is one of our enthusiasms as a poet. We haven't seen her new book yet, but we are sure it will be full of glorious stuff. "Sun-Up" was, and it has been altogether too long a time since "Sun-Up." . . .

By the way, what a spring it is for good poetry: we can name four new volumes right off the reel that have interested and excited us. First, *George O'Neil*, in "The White Rooster" (Boni & Liveright), has an astonishing book to his credit. Recently in the most select circles there has been much clapping for *Hart Crane* who wrote "White Buildings." But *George O'Neil's* mastery of language and brilliance of technique make *Hart Crane's* verbal architectonics look absolutely gelid. *O'Neil* has taken a long stride forward, and if we don't look out we shall have another first-rate poet on our hands, one to rank with Frost and Robinson. . . .

There is true magic in some of the poems in *Scudder Middleton's* "Upper Night" (Holt). He too has advanced his standard and given us some beautiful creations. "Astrolabe" by *S. Foster Damon* (Harpers) is fitfully brilliant, glittering with individuality. And "Lost Eden" by *E. Merrill Root* (Unicorn Press), though of lesser merit than any of these, furnishes some true poetic entertainment. . . .

Then, of course, in "Tristram," *Edwin Arlington Robinson* has achieved again,—and, what with *Lola Ridge's* book coming, we must repeat that it's a great spring for poetry. . . .

We were speaking of the great *Artzibashev* above. His son, *Boris*, inherited his father's ability to draw. One of the son's most recent drawings has been for the jacket of *Evelyn Scott's* "Migrations" (A. & C. Boni). What we have read of "Migrations" we found a solid and vivid reconstruction of the ante-bellum South, of the community of Mimms, Tennessee, in 1850. Mrs. Scott was born in Tennessee, in '93. This new book of hers, as we skimmed it, seemed hardly tinged at all by the neuroticism that gave a sour taste to her earlier work, brilliant, in many respects, as it was. . . .

*Sumpun marvelous* is "an unrivaled panorama of the history and adventure of sea and ships," namely, viz., to wit, "The Sea, Its History and Romance," by *Frank C. Bowen* (McBride). This mighty work is in four big volumes and the set costs twenty dollars, but the plates, culled from old prints and maps and engravings, many reproduced in beautiful color, are a delight to pore over. Ah, to possess these four huge hunting-red volumes and spend a week in the library with them! . . .

Two lighter books that have attracted our attention are "The Magic Casket" by our favorite detective story writer *R. Austin Freeman*, who produced "The Singing Bone," "The Red Thumb Mark," "The Shadow of the Wolf," etc., and has created the interesting "Dr. Thorndike" who, to our mind, now far excels the *Sherlock Holmes* who has fallen upon his dotage in the pages of *Liberty*. . . .

Well, we got so wound up in that sentence that we had no breath left to say "and." The other of the "two lighter books" that we meant to mention is

"Lancelot and the Ladies," by *Will Bradley*. It would seem to us that *John Erskine's* "Galahad" may have suggested this quite different but fantastic romance, in which a modern dreamer, touching English yew, enters into the days of the Round Table and lives a double romance thereafter. But then you really might as well say that "A Yankee at King Arthur's Court" suggested it, so different are all three books. Bradley's is light and sentimental romance. . . .

*Ludwig Lewisohn* has translated from the German and *Mahlon Blaine* has illustrated, "The Sorcerer's Apprentice" by *Hans Heinz Ewers*, a horror story of religious hysteria coming to an Italian mountain town. The John Day Company has beautifully made the book. Ewers is a celebrated contemporary German writer. This, his first novel, was originally published in Germany back in 1910. It is the first of his novels to be translated into English. . . .

This week's mail bag was particularly full. The response to the ferocious sonnet idea has been so immediate that we are (comparatively) swamped in ferocious sonnets. *Harry Crosby* has sent one all the way from France. *Leonard Doughty* of Texas has not only provided us with some of his own but has chosen and copied out some fine ones from the great poets of all time. This week we have not room to print any of these sonnets. But next week we shall provide you with a *Ferocious Sonnet Number* of the *Phoenix Nest*. Dead and living bards will be represented. Come early and avoid the rush. . . .

Oh, we forgot to say, that among these sonnets will be two by *Kenneth Slade Alling*, whom we lately requested to contribute. The sequence is entertaining. We thank Ken especially for so prompt an acquiescence and reply. . . .

*Power Dalton* writes us from Boston, first about the reception given to *Harriet Monroe* on her recent visit. *Mr. Leighton Rollins* was master of ceremonies. Several hundred people attended the luncheon. The table of honor was presided over by *Mrs. Henry Jewett*, *Leonora Speyer*, *Grace Hazard Conkling*, *Nancy Byrd Turner*, *Curtis Hidden Page*, *Dallas Lore Sharp*, and others graced the board. Secondly, *Power Dalton* thanks us for recently printing that poem of *Rupert Brooke's*, the one that is framed in the *Pink and Lily* pub near the English village of *Princes Risborough* which we visited last summer. . . .

As for the still unsolved mystery as to what a "goofus" is, we receive from Boston the following hint:

The enclosed announcement of this year's Hasty Pudding Club play should interest *Abbe Niles* and his six jazzists who say "there is no such thing as a goofus" (The *Phoenix Nest*, March 19, 1927). As the Pudding play is to be given in New York on April 22nd there will be opportunity for these seven to hear and see the goofus. I think they owe it to your readers and to themselves to buy seats for the show. This same Henderson "stopped" last year's Pudding play with his goofus-playing.

The Henderson referred to is *C. E. Henderson*, '28, who is mentioned in the announcement as "top-sergeant of them all, and also as an actor and Goofus-player." The Pudding Show is its eighty-first annual spring production, is entitled "Gentlemen, the Queen!" and bears the slogan, "What could be fairer—more or less—than a day in the life of Good Queen Bess?" . . .

From Cannes *Hosward Vincent O'Brien* tells us that there is a clue to the baffling popularity of *Mr. Guest*. He writes:

Think of him as "Eddie," not as "Edgar A." And then consider this: at a certain commercial banquet, the oratorical semi-windup dealt with aspects of synthetic chemistry. The next to speak was *Mr. Guest*, the peoples' poet. He rose, surveyed the weary throng, and said: "We have listened to the improving words of Professor Blank. He has told us everything about chemistry except the thing I wanted most to know, namely—what I should put on spinach so my kid will eat it."

From then on the audience was, as we say, one hundred per cent his!

It is this ability to hit the lowest common denominator of the public emotion which obliges his publisher to buy paper in carload lots. Whatever he may be as a poet, as a salesman he is an authentic genius.

Which gives us a new idea. We have now two swell tributes to *Edgar* to reprint in this column. Won't some of our darling readers come across with more, that an *Edgar A. Guest Number* of *The Phoenix Nest* may blossom as the rose? Think it over. Let us hand a regular whopper of a nosegay to this modern Burns.

THE PHOENICIAN.

from THE INNER SANCTUM OF  
SIMON and SCHUSTER

Publishers • 37 West 57th Street • New York

One of the alluring things about an intimate column like this is the opportunity it affords for setting down items that are ruthlessly deleted by the cold-blooded copy-writers in the advertising department. A recent flourish for *The Story of Philosophy* began, quite fittingly, we thought, with a quotation from John Milton, but the high-pressure lads thought it didn't have sufficient "selling punch". Out it went, and now that we have a chance to salvage the quotation in this more private vehicle, back it goes:

How charming is divine Philosophy,  
Not harsh and crabbed as dull fools  
suppose,  
But musical as is Apollo's lute  
And a perpetual feast of nectared  
sweets  
Where no crude surfeit reigns.

This quotation is our favorite answer when inquiring reporters ask for an explanation of the unprecedented sale of *Will Durant's* 592-page book, at \$5. *The Story of Philosophy* is now in its nineteenth large printing. 137,421 copies were sold up to 10 o'clock this morning.

Our recent double-page advertisement in *The New York Times*, characterizing *The Story of Philosophy* as the best of the best-sellers in every city of these United States except

Cedar Rapids, Iowa  
Kalamazoo, Michigan  
Traverse City, Michigan  
Eau Claire, Wisconsin  
Savannah, Georgia  
Stamford, Connecticut and  
Pasadena, California

brought down upon this unprotected retreat a barrage of telegrams from the hinterland. The embattled librarians, book-sellers, ministers and teachers of Stamford refuted the allegation with sales statistics ranking *The Story of Philosophy* first by a wide margin; the liveliest Chamber of Commerce in Wisconsin pointed to *Durant's* book as the outstanding best-seller, not only in Eau Claire proper but in all its outlying suburbs, environs, and abutting areas; the bell-ringers of Traverse City, Michigan, alone were forced to admit the soft impeachment.

We pause for a reply from the illuminati of Cedar Rapids, Kalamazoo, Savannah, and Pasadena.

According to all the rules of the game, every intimate gossip column must contain at least one "now-it-can-be-told" paragraph. Here's ours: *Liggett Reynolds*, the mysterious author of *Sweet and Low*, that "smashing indictment of the younger generation" which paralyzed *F. P. A.'s* diaphragm and seriously threatened the vertebrae of *Will Rogers*, is none other than *Robert A. Simon* (not a member of the firm), novelist, detective story writer, music critic of *The New Yorker*, harmonica virtuoso, anthologist of *The New York Wits*, and raconteur-at-large.

Coming Attractions: Forthcoming tidings and tidbits from the inner sanctum will include an important announcement from Vienna concerning *Franz Werfel's* next book, an interview with *Arthur Schnitzler* on a subject of timely interest, a private letter from a fair young novelist of the Southland, the first revelation of the full names of the *Whoops Sisters*, and an indiscreet foot-note on a recent book which has sold more than a million copies.

—ESSANDESS

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