



The Medieval Peasants Covering Their Fires for the Night, Gave Us Our Word

## Curfew

In the Middle Ages, the peasants of France were required to cover or to extinguish their fires at a fixed hour in the evening. A bell was rung to notify them of the time to obey the command, "Cover the fire"—in French *couvre feu*. The French came to call the bell, and the time of its ringing, *couvre-feu* or *cueuvre-feu*. The Norman French conquerors used it in England, and the medieval English adopted it as *curfew*, meaning the hour and the signal for all citizens to retire to their homes. It became *curfew*, which to-day, although indicating perhaps a later hour, still is the time, or the signal, to retire from public places.

This is but one example of the many thousands of fascinating stories about the origin of English words which you will find in

## WEBSTER'S NEW INTERNATIONAL DICTIONARY

A number of them have been presented in a handsome illustrated booklet which we will be glad to send you free on request.

Not only do these word stories make the most interesting reading but to know them will give you an effectiveness in speaking and writing that can come in no other way.

The Merriam-Webster gives you the whole word power of the English language. It is a library in one volume. Its encyclopedic information makes it a general question-answer on all subjects. In its 2,700 pages there are 452,000 entries including thousands of new words; 12,000 biographical entries; 32,000 geographical subjects; 100 valuable tables; over 6,000 illustrations.

The Merriam-Webster is universally accepted and used in the courts, colleges, schools, and business offices of America.

### Send for Free Booklet

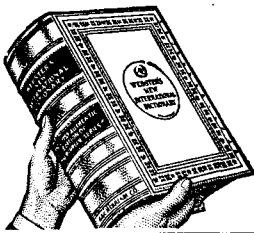
containing a number of fascinating word stories together with full information about the Merriam-Webster, and convincing testimony that it is

### The "Supreme Authority"

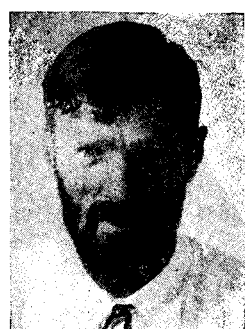
G. & C. MERRIAM COMPANY  
Springfield, Mass.

See It At  
Your Bookstore

Get  
The  
Best



## The Last Essay of



D. H. LAWRENCE

and other unpublished writings fill the pages of the current issue of

THE NEW ADELPHI

issued monthly beginning with September

The special Lawrence Number contains this great writer's last essay—nine letters to Katherine Mansfield—facsimile of his script, rare portrait and reminiscences of those who knew him personally. A choice collector's item. Subsequent issues will carry new Lawrence material.

### FREE WITH YEAR'S SUBSCRIPTION

Each issue of The New Adelphi sparkles with brilliant stories, articles, poems, essays and reviews. Advanced in thought and viewpoint. People of cultivated literary tastes in America and England are quoting and discussing this unusual magazine. Subscribe TODAY and receive the Lawrence Number FREE. Per year \$3.50, post free. Write

THE NEW ADELPHI  
Dept S.19, Cursitor Street, London, E.C.4, England

# The French Economic Background

By G. HIRSCHFELD

FRENCH literature has taken on new life; not that the increase in volume is considered in importance, not that the arguments of French writers are more heated than they used to be, not that any great personality is dominating the literary field—no, just the life, the aspect of life is different. And the war is responsible for that! All through the decades before 1913 France was tired; a great nation vanquished by Germany in 1870-71; the flaming spirit of revenge burning down steadily enterprise and activity; population failed to increase, the Panama Canal project fell through, industrial expansion efforts suffered serious mishap, the political particularism formed another handicap in the development of a nation, already tired and undecided. Then came the war and, in 1918, victory—and made another, a new France, with her national ardor flaming as in old days.

The efforts of writers and thinkers became more real, more serious, more tangible. Before the war, internationalism and its application was largely confined to the trio of Anatole France, the unbiased humanist, Romain Rolland, the moralist, and Jean Jaurès, the socialist. Today, internationalism and its force in national policies and economic tendencies is something very real and very actual and its spirit has created men like Briand. It is, then, no wonder that during the years since the war there has in French literature appeared a definite trend in the direction of those principles that govern the economic evolution as well as the national development of France. The problems which are facing French writers grow out of social, political, and economic difficulties, and they are as distinct in their shape as they are definite in their purpose.

Dominating the social and economic background of literature in France is, of course, the war and—contrasting with it—peace. The great exponents, Clemenceau and Briand, Foch and Poincaré, aside from many others, have not been able to conceal the real issues: the tremendous wave of nationalism fighting the adherents of the Pan-Europe idea, the army of those who believe in a colonial empire arrayed against the democrats of the post-war era, the imperialists and the irreconcilables with hatred against the former enemies of their country, but also against Italy and the United States and Russia, contesting the faith and the will of those who prefer a peaceful Europe to the renovation of Napoleonic tradition and glory. These are the issues, and they are reflected with many brilliant variations in present-day French literature.

But not everything that glisters is gold! In spite of the enormous riches that have fallen to France after the armistice, in spite of a self-confidence that is now greater than ever, and in spite of her being the foremost military and perhaps economic power on the continent, France has been passing through a critical period just as practically every other European nation has. Before the war France was a predominantly agricultural country; through the return of Alsace-Lorraine French industry has gained new power, and the shift from an agricultural to an industrial nation has neither been easy nor has it been completed. Contrary to the German, the average Frenchman is not so much given to organization as to improvisation, and this characteristic has left traces in the post-war reconstruction work, be it in industry or agriculture, in the city or in the country. There is, to cite one instance, social insurance which was introduced long ago in the more progressive countries of Europe because the prosperity was not such as to protect people from the uncertainties of old age, sickness, unemployment, etc. There are about two and a half million employees, four and a half million workmen, and another three and a half million agricultural and home workers, or a total of ten and a half million in France for whom there is no social insurance at all. "Political parties," said a Frenchman to me some time ago, "are very active and progressive in political and worldly things, but as far as the welfare of the people is concerned, we still have a long way to go!"

In foreign affairs, which occupy much space in recent French books, three developments must be distinguished: one is intimately connected with Russia and Marxism, another with the United States and capitalism, and the third with the reflection of French influence and power, i. e., capital, in the world market. The tendency in all of these regards has hardly changed since the end of the world war. Read the new book "Au delà du Marxisme," by Henri de Man, who tries, just as in years past, to give incontrovertible evidence of the bankruptcy and collapse of Marxism. It seems, however, as if

these and other utterances about Russia were not purely dictated by intellect and analyzing intelligence, but were prejudiced to a certain extent. Life in Paris is strongly penetrated by the spirit of the Russian *émigrés*; besides, the famous French tradition of "liberté, égalité, fraternité" is not without a distinct flavor of personal liberty which is not exactly typical Marxism. Finally, the economic situation of France has improved so vastly since the war, the abundance of capital is such that the class struggle of the communists hardly finds the right soil for its seed. Still, the French Communist Party is not wholly unimportant and there are really fine books about the doctrine of Marxism, too.

The United States is another issue that fires the imagination of the writers; first, as an ally; second, as a creditor; third, as a competitor. The two latter relationships exceed the former in importance, and, accordingly, there is not much sympathy for America to be found in present-day French books. There was recently a book published, titled "Ce Qu'il Faut Connaître de l'Âme Américaine," written by Régis Michaud, in which the great American nation reflects itself in business, flappers, talkies, liquor, football, quick-lunches, self-made men, community chests, drug stores, ready-made goods, etc. Now, here once more we apparently find a bit of prejudice not so much because of the fact that France is a debtor or that the United States has become a very serious competitor as because the American style and fashion incite all the sarcasm, the *esprit*, the originality, and fine wit the French writer knows to handle so well—at the expense of the subject, of course. And it is not all a joke; the bitterness and head-shaking prevail on many an occasion for hardly any reason but that the American talks business when he means it while the Frenchmen (and for that matter, the German, the Italian, the Russian, and others) talks about the weather or women or horses or art—and means business, too. Not the purpose is damned but the means leading to it; the dollar is welcome, but don't talk about the debt.

In world affairs, finally, France plays a singularly important role, at least in European countries, since she is the financial centre of the old world. When reading books about Latin-America and Asia and the Near East and East Europe, one might as well remember that the capital export from Paris is very considerable, and so is the cultural influence of France in general and of Paris in particular. In South America the "hacendados" and their wives speak of Paris as the *ciudad de la luz* (the city of light); they send their sons to Eton and Oxford but their women to Paris for shopping—and go themselves to Monte Carlo. But to return to the financially predominant position of France. Among the countries which have obtained loans are: Yugoslavia, Peru, Lithuania, Rumania, Finland, Chile, and how many other nations. As the attention of the smaller countries in the world is more and more focused upon France as a potential source of financial support, less attention is given to the United States where most of these smaller loans have been placed so far.

By winning the war, France and her people have been rejuvenated; her financial status, industry, and commerce have been brought back to a sound basis. This period of renovation has not failed to reflect properly upon the after-war literature, fiction or biography, history, short stories, novels, and so on. There is new life among the French writers. The only question is whether they will go further and their spirit last longer or whether the economic upward swing of the French nation will prove of more durability. The chances are that the writer and his spirit are intimately connected with the material well-being of his country; this has proven true of the past and it is likely to be just as true of the future.

### An Argentine Novel

EL DESTINO DE IRENE AGUIRRE. By MARTIN ALDAO (HIJO). Paris: Grasset. 1930.

Reviewed by HERMINE HALLAM HIPWELL

FIRST novels of undoubted promise are rare finds in Buenos Aires, where fiction is mostly a matter of luck, a casual hit or miss business, driving to despair the conscientious reviewer, and leading foreign readers to conclude that nothing of any merit is written by Argentine authors, a conclusion which is certainly unjust, though it must be admitted that Argentine literature at the present moment is strongest in the

realm of the ironical essay and the delicate regional sketches. Therefore, the publication of a first novel by the son of Martin Aldao, the well known Argentine essayist, came as a welcome surprise to all interested in the literary future of the country. For here was a young man—still in the very early twenties—a student who had spent most of his time in Rome and Paris, publishing a first novel whose plot was concerned with the lives and the emotions of Argentines abroad.

The subject is a comparatively new one—for few Argentine writers have ever left the safe security of Buenos Aires, its cafés and low haunts, for the simple reason that funds have been lacking and trips to Europe not to be embarked on without a certain amount of financial backing. It is thus not surprising that the majority of Argentine novels, written during the last few years should have dealt with the least attractive aspects of life in the city—the thinly veiled misery of the lower-middle classes or else the cheap crudity of night clubs, dock-side haunts, and the life of the "maleantet" or evil-doer—miserable fiction depressing to read and luckily destined to oblivion. "El Destino de Irene Aguirre" belongs to a totally different school. In the first place, the author is accustomed to the elegance and the intellectual pleasures of life in Europe, history and art appeal to him, they form a pleasing background for the characters of his novel, characters who, while typically Argentine in their Latin attitude toward life, have yet a veneer of European culture. It is a change to meet gentle folk in an Argentine novel, at any rate men and women accustomed to travel, to the appeal of historic associations, refined and quiet in their speech. And Martin Aldao's characters are certainly Argentine, yet with this difference that their attitude is mellower than that of the home-staying variety.

The plot centres round the love—unhappy like the majority of Argentine loves in fiction—of Saenz Rivas, the young historian and student, for Irene Aguirre, the daughter of well-born yet impoverished parents. The parents are opposed to the attentions of Saenz Rivas, and Irene, weak and vacillating in character, marries a wealthy and elderly political boss through whose aid her father intends winning a high position in the Government. Then she realizes, too late, the depth of her affection for Saenz Rivas, leaves her husband, and makes an attempt to join the young Argentine. She drives to meet him in her roadster on a stormy night, skids, and is mortally injured. The book closes with Saenz Rivas, broken-hearted, leaving Europe for Buenos Aires.

A simple plot undoubtedly, not particularly novel nor exciting, yet it is this very quality of naïveté which gives "El Destino de Irene Aguirre" its special charm. The style in which this tale of thwarted love is written is wholly pleasing, slightly more formal than the usual *idioma nacional*, yet far from being pedantic. "El Destino de Irene Aguirre" is not a great novel by any means, nor yet the work of a budding genius, but there is every reason to believe that Martin Aldao (hijo) will one day publish a satisfactory Argentine novel which will prove conclusively to foreign readers that in Buenos Aires and among the Argentines of any intellectual pretensions, fiction is not held in as low esteem as some local critics would have them believe.

### Round about Parnassus

(Continued from page 124)

Living in the present almost entirely, as he did, the prospect immediately changed. That was enough. Tragedy was temporarily forgotten. The inherent irony is deep.

"Life of the Party" has in it all the stuff of a tragic three-act play. These two narratives seem, to us, the best. They both hinge on the desperate struggle to get on in the world. As to the sonnets, the first, concerning fame, is well-turned but not remarkable. The second sonnet is good, up to the final couplet, which seems rather tacked on. "Postscript," however, is arresting. "To an Unknown Passerby" is less good. And here again—the insistence on the passing of youth! A queer note for Weaver, at his age! And this new book is undeniably slight, though in his best work the still comparatively young poet gives new evidence of his keen observation of the life around him.

We refuse to take seriously Mr. Weaver's clumping into an easy-chair at this juncture in his career, and calling for his slippers. He should have a hundred more stories—verse to fashion for us in his old inimitable manner. He retains pronounced individuality. So we shan't be satisfied with just this.



**Frederick A. Stokes Company**  
**has the honor to announce the**  
**first novel in two years by**

**Louis Bromfield**

# 24 HOURS

**A provocative novel of New York today**

**The story begins at a Sutton Place dinner one evening and ends at a Murray Hill tea the following day. In it the lives of a group of people fuse and come to a crisis. . . . . \$2.50**

**Limited edition, 500 copies, numbered and signed by the author, boxed, \$5**

*(Published serially under the title of "Shattered Glass")*

**"The great New York novel . . . He has touched every side of New York life worth writing about." — Gertrude Atherton**

**By the author of "The Green Bay Tree," "The Strange Case of Miss Annie Spragg," etc.**

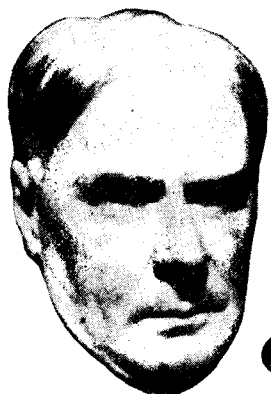
***Buy your books of your bookseller***

**443 Fourth Avenue • Frederick A. Stokes Company • New York**



By **NORMAN DOUGLAS**

Author of "SOUTH WIND"



## Good-bye To Western Culture

"The book is written with all Mr. Douglas's skill of phrase; it glitters with his malicious wit; it is intensely readable. It compels you to think; it compels you to see the phenomena of European civilization from a new angle."—ARNOLD BENNETT

\$3.00

HARPER &amp; BROTHERS

You will enjoy reading

## The Musicale

By FRANCIS STEEGMÜLLER



THE story of *The Musicale* takes place within a few hours, and unfolds through the thoughts of the guests in Lucia Hibbett's drawing-room. The action flows forward first in one mind, then in the next, in a style which is distinguished and original.

Just published, \$2.00.

JONATHAN CAPE &amp; HARRISON SMITH

"Better than THE GOOD COMPANIONS"—Sylvia Lynd

## J. B. Priestley

AUTHOR of "THE GOOD COMPANIONS" has written a new novel even finer than that great story of the English provinces which swept England & America.

## ANGEL & PAVEMENT

Harper & Brothers are proud to publish this latest work of a master of the modern novel. At all booksellers. 494 pages. \$3.00

## Manuscript Analysis Without Charge

by John Gallishaw

John Gallishaw is interested in surrounding himself with a small group of writers who can profit by his counsel and criticisms. You are invited to bring your manuscript to Mr. Gallishaw, so that he may judge your eligibility for his small, one night a week group which is now forming.

Call Miss Roe at LONgacre 1587 for an appointment.

JOHN GALLISHAW SCHOOL for CREATIVE WRITING, Inc.  
11 WEST 42nd STREET NEW YORK CITY

## Special Notice to Booksellers:-

Don't you think you would sell a lot more books if your regular patrons were reading THE SATURDAY REVIEW OF LITERATURE each week?

We have developed a successful method of getting the regular customers of bookstores to subscribe. Let us make your customers better book buyers.

If you will write to us now, we will be glad to give you all the details of this special plan so that you may consider it for use this Fall.

For information, please write to: **Bookstore Department,**  
**THE SATURDAY REVIEW OF LITERATURE**  
25 WEST 45th STREET, NEW YORK, N. Y.

## Points of View

### Jeffers's Faith

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:  
SIR:

The article called *Uneasy Death*, by Mr. Louis Untermeyer, printed some time ago in your magazine (in the issue of April 19, to be specific), struck me as very misleading and not justified in the way that Mr. Untermeyer's unquestionable ability as poetry critic lies.

He speaks of Jeffers's propitious and superabundant force but feels in him the lack of a faith. How can anyone, even one superficially familiar with Jeffers's poetry, accuse him of a lack of faith? The highest point reached by Jeffers is to be found in his cosmic faith in eternity and human immortality.

I choose at random lines from "The Tower beyond Tragedy" which are soaked in the faith of humanity:

*No desire but fulfilled; no passion but peace,  
The pure flame and the white, fierier  
than any passion; no time by  
spherical eternity . . .*

In "The Torch Bearer's Race," "Might," and in "The Truce and the Peace" such lines as:

*The robbers triumphed, the roof burned overhead,  
The eternal living and untroubled God  
Lying asleep upon a lily bed.  
Men screamed, the bugles screamed, walls  
broke in the air,  
We never knew till then that he was there—*

could not have been written by one lacking a faith, or having only a little faith. It would be unjust to undervalue Jeffers's powerful faith by accepting Mr. Untermeyer's article as a true interpretation of his five-volume work.

One thinks of Nietzsche's, Shelley's, and Wordsworth's faith in connection with Jeffers—whose faith, too, is that mankind can best be saved and served by beginning with the cultivation and the salvation of the individual.

One feels that Jeffers has felt and lived his faith in every fibre of his being—not to feel or be moved by his faith is to miss Jeffers the poet and "the rhythm of that wheel"—but he "who can behold it is happy and will praise it to the people."

RUDOLPH GILBERT.

Briarcliff Manor, N. Y.

### Concerning Tolstoy

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:  
SIR:

May I take exception to the statement in the review of "The Diary of Tolstoy's Wife," in your issue of June 28, that Tolstoy when past sixty still had "a passion for cards" and "was unable, even at so ripe an age as seventy, to rid himself of his love for gaming." This is quite untrue. The main facts of Tolstoy's life, no longer seriously in dispute, are plainly on record in the reliable Russian biographies by N. N. Gusev and P. A. Birukov, as well as in the two-volume English "Life of Tolstoy" recently issued in the Centenary Edition of his works. The plain truth is that after the year 1861 (when he was thirty-three) Tolstoy ceased to gamble and played cards merely as a domestic recreation, usually when too tired to play his favorite game, which was chess.

There is no ground at all for the assertion that "Lenin and Vronsky in 'Anna Karenina' were twins carved out of Tolstoy's own duality." In fact, there is no similarity between Vronsky's personality and circumstances and Tolstoy's. When Tolstoy put himself into any of the characters in his novels (as he often did), his sympathy with such a character is always noticeable, whereas he shows no sympathy at all with Vronsky and even finds it hard to be fair to him.

The reviewer tells us that "she (Countess Tolstoy) herself speaks of having copied the 'Essay on Art' ten times." If this refers to "What Is Art?" which I translated in close collaboration with Tolstoy—personally and by correspondence—I can confidently say it is untrue. If it relates to some one of the eight other essays recently issued in "What Is Art?" and "Essays on Art" in the World's Classics series, then (as they differ greatly in length) the statement conveys little unless we know what article it refers to. But it is fairly clear that the Countess's remark: "I have copied it ten times," was the rhetorical exaggeration of an exasperated woman, and to reproduce it in cold blood as a record of actual fact is merely to misapprehend the nature of the material dealt with.

I often felt much sympathy with the Countess in her very difficult position, when I talked to her and saw how ruthlessly she was attacked by Chertkov, but I believe the "Life of Tolstoy" makes it abundantly clear that the vehement struggle between V. G. Chertkov and the Countess was the direct cause of Tolstoy's home-leaving and death. A very extraordinary ten page letter Chertkov wrote to Tolstoy three months before the latter's death, which is given in full in the last chapter of the "Life," makes it impossible to sympathize with the methods by which Chertkov ultimately attained his aim; but to excuse the Countess for the ruthless tenacity of her struggle, which defeated itself, deprived her of all she was fighting for, and disregarding her husband's suffering drove him to his death, one has to remember that the doctors had already pronounced her to be suffering from paranoia, and she had developed a suicidal mania, preliminary symptoms of which had shown themselves many years previously. To treat her Diary as balanced, reliable evidence, not needing to be checked from other sources, is grossly unfair to Tolstoy, but for whose genius her book would be read by few.

The real value of her Diary, its obvious self-contradictions, and its due relation to the rest of the available evidence, are dealt with in the "Life of Tolstoy," of which Bernard Shaw has written: "Tolstoy is not even à prendre ou à laisser. You have to take him whether you like him or not, and take him as he is. This book, which will stand, I think, among the big biographies of our literature, must be read, no matter what you may try to think of its hero."

Curiously enough, though issued some months ago by the Oxford University Press in New York, it has not yet, as far as I know, been reviewed by a single American paper. Were it read, I venture to think such reviews as the one against which I am protesting would hardly be written.

AYLMER MAUDE.

Great Baddow, Chelmsford.

### Emily Dickinson

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:  
SIR:

While the investigations into the love affairs of Emily Dickinson might be a painful surprise to her could she know of them, they are simply amazing to those who supposed the legend was permanent that seeped from Amherst into the outside world on the first publication of her poems.

In the heyday of poetical enthusiasm my own joy in reading the poems was enhanced by the graphic reminiscences of a gifted German woman who had taught languages more than one summer at the Amherst Summer School, a few years after the death of Emily Dickinson, when her memory was still treasured by townspeople who had seen her, and known the story of her life. This teacher had boarded with the widow of a minister and was also the mother of Emily Dickinson's youthful lover whom her father had not only forbidden her to meet, but had commanded should never be admitted within the Dickinson front door. The story was fresh, apparently authentic, and thrilling as an important story of English village life: the same cruel father of high degree, his exquisite daughter, and her lowly suitor. The traditional New England Victorian father was very different from the present Georgian "dad," stern and autocratic he was a formidable person. It is true to the period that when he issued his mandate, his characteristic Victorian daughter should have obeyed him literally, at the same time proving herself "a chip of the old block" by never again going in or out the front door forbidden to her lover. Even when death came, her casket must be carried through the same back door she had used in loyalty to him.

As the story went, the lover was graduated from college, then went to Hawaii as a missionary, not returning for a home visit until after the death of the woman he loved.

She, as all the world knows, became a recluse.

Although the poems are greater than any purported lover, it is curious to note how the contemporary gossip resembles yet differs from later literary research, and the impermanence of local fame is further illustrated by the experience of a friend of mine who, motoring through Amherst last summer, stopped at a drug store. During a course of refreshment she inquired where Emily Dickinson had lived. The surprised clerk replied that he had never heard of her.

EMILY R. SUGDEN.

Windsor, Conn.