

from THE INNER SANCTUM of
SIMON and SCHUSTER
Publishers, 336 Fourth Avenue, New York



ANGUS J. MACTAVISH paying attention to jokes told at his expense

111 Among the veryclosefriends of *The Inner Sanctum* who contribute their favorite Caledonian stories to *Scotch—or It's Smart To Be Thrifty* which MAC SIMON and MAC SCHUSTER (D. A. Numbers 119500 and 55525 respectively) release for publication [price 99 cents] Any Minute Now are

SINCLAIR LEWIS	EDDIE CANTOR
CLARENCE DARROW	LOWELL THOMAS
MANUEL KOMROFF	ROBERT L. RIPLEY
NEWMAN LEVY	WALTER WINCHELL
OGDEN NASH	RUBE GOLDBERG
HARRY HERSHFIELD	KENNETH COLLINS
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MARK HELLINGER	SIDNEY SKOLSKY
KARL K. KITCHEN	WALTER B. PITKIN
FRANK BUCK	EDWARD ANTHONY
SIDNEY S. LENZ	SILAS F. SEADLER

and the Scotchman who became a Chicago gangster and took his victim for a hitchhike . . . the bookseller in Aberdeen who married a half-wit because she was 50 off . . . the Highlander who sent his spats to the cobbler to be soled and heeled . . .

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What is the secret . . .



It is almost impossible, wrote Basil Davenport in the *Saturday Review*, to give an idea of the quality of ROBERT NATHAN'S books to the unfortunate people who have not read them. He is unique. ¶ The essence of his work defies the publisher's advertisement. But if you, reader, have a feeling for the subtleties of literature, for poetic mockery, and the beauty of melancholy, you will be grateful to us for calling your attention to Mr. Nathan's new novel, unquestionably his finest, *THE ORCHID*. ¶ What is the secret, wrote Davenport, that makes this book so different from all others? Perhaps you can answer him when you have read it. Ask your bookseller for a copy. The price is \$2.00.—*The Bobbs Merrill Company*.

THE ORCHID
By Robert Nathan

The PHOENIX NEST

SITUATED as he is at the moment in the mystic mid-region of Weir, beyond the beck of publicity, the *Phoenician* must now proceed to vamp until the latest advices reach him from the publishers' far-flung battle-line. He is enjoying a slight vacation. And there seems, at the moment, little to talk about save the scenery. It is very lovely scenery, mostly green in color, and the air is scented with pine-needles. Insects and birds are making strange noises, that is, strange to a city-dweller. Pretty soon the *Phoenician* is going out for a walk, and may step on a snake, though he hopes not. . . .

We hope we shall get sunburned. Though if we are going to sit indoors writing a history of the universe, or something like that, we don't see how we can. Still, maybe we can find a sufficiently secluded spot to take a sunbath. And will probably get covered with pine-needles till we look like a porcupine. . . .

Here in the mountains of New Hampshire we intend to tear off a novel of great importance which will burst like a bombshell upon our startled public some time within the next fifty years or so. . . .

And apropos of nothing at all, we recently came across this epitaph, preserved in an odd volume. It is said to be preserved in Pewsey Church, Wilts:

Here lies the body of
Lady Looney
Great-niece of Burke, commonly
called the Sublime.
She was
bland, passionate, and deeply religious;
also she painted in water-colours,
and sent several pictures to the Exhibition.
She was first cousin to Lady Jones,
And of such is the kingdom of Heaven. . . .

But you see how difficult it is to vamp! We had better take a text and preach you a little literary sermon. What shall it be? Oh, but let's not. The weather's too warm. We wonder where *O'Reilly* is. He used to help us out. But we guess he's gone forever. We remember now. He went down to Italy and became a Black Shirt. Maybe he'll come back sometime and open a speak-easy for mice. We're sorry now that we talked crossly to him. . . .

We've got to take a walk down to the post-office to get some envelopes and stamps and all that sort of thing, so that you'll be able to read this; and yet the first consideration really is that we should give you something worth reading, which we don't seem to be able to do. Our mind is sluggish, that's what's the matter. We have been living too long in New York. . . .

The thing that always abashes us so when we get into the country is that we don't know the name of a single tree, flower, or bird. They know it, too. Don't you believe they don't know it! The trees are always swishing at us, and every bird sounds to us like a mocking-bird. We're not *The Man the Trees Loved*, as *Algernon Blackwood* put it. They drop a branch on us every once in a while. And the grass trips us up. . . .

Well, if we don't know any names we're going to make them up from now on. That little blue yumia bird singing its little heart

out over there in that wack-wack tree is a second cousin to the tree-vole or crested pollywollydoodle. Admire how these mule-chestnuts take the afternoon sun! The meanest flower that blows—and how mean they can be—has a botanical monicker that to us is something too deep for tears. . . .

But you needn't sit here trying to be comic! Here it's three o'clock in the afternoon and you've hardly told your vast audience anything yet. You started out at nine o'clock this morning to tell them a whole lot. And then what did you do? You said you were going to commune with your soul, and the first thing you knew you were asleep. Fine kind of soul you've got, if it bores you as much as that! . . .

Well, I said, "Hello, Soul!" and it just said, "Hello!" So finally I said, "Nice day, what?" and it just said, "Oh yeah?" So finally I decided it didn't want to commune. I don't see any reason for my soul getting sulky, but if it's going to go and get sulky on me, well, I might as well have some rest until it decides to be neighborly. Anyway, I wasn't really asleep at all. I was just thinking. . . .

Oh, various things. I was thinking—. Listen, I've got to go down to the village now and get some stamps. You leave me alone, Conscience. Anyway, who asked you to come along on this trip. I'm doing my work, aren't I? Well, I do call it work. How can I know what the boys are doing in the big city, when I'm out here sitting in the middle of the woods? Anyway, don't you know how sick I am of the big city? I should think you could give a fellow a couple days rest as to who is publishing what. . . .

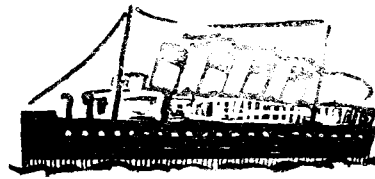
Anyway, don't you suppose in Rome they were always publishing something? Well, what happened to Rome? Or Babylon? Where's *The Babylon Graphic* today? Nobody even knows there was one! See? All that fuss! The thing is to live an enlightenedly bucolic existence, all among the cows and the cowslips. There's far too much thinking going on, too, I'll tell you that. Was anybody ever a bit happier for thinking? No. What happens? You sit down and begin to think and the first thing you know you've thought of something disagreeable. Poisons your whole day. . . .

A fine life you must have, Conscience, always thinking up things to nag me about. I wouldn't have a disposition like that if you gave it to me. No, sir! What pleasure do you get out of life? I don't suppose you've had a real good hearty laugh for a coon's age. You and Soul together make a pretty team! Well, suppose I did forget my notes, what of it? They can't send you to jail for that. I will not lose my job either! Won't! Go to thunder. . . .

All right, maybe it is thin stuff. I suppose you spend all your time at the typewriter. Ha! Whoever saw you doing any work? All you do is to sit around and make life unpleasant for other people. Well, now I'm going down to the village and get those stamps. Well, I've got to mail this copy, haven't I? Well, suppose I am going to get a chocolate ice-cream soda, what business is it of yours?

THE PHOENICIAN.

The AMEN CORNER



"I cannot rest from travel: I will drink Life to the lees!"

The Oxonian was somewhat startled to overhear Althea dramatically reciting these lines, with particular emphasis on "Life" and "lees," as she brandished a blue volume amid the quiet bookishness of the library at 114 Fifth Avenue. Althea explained that these desperate sentiments were not harbored by herself, but by a lady customer of one of her favorite bookshops, who could not start on her travels without a copy of the Oxford Tennyson,¹ and could not rest until she was assured it included "Ulysses" (which, of course, it does).

We ourselves have no great penchant for lees, but we like to travel. There is one trip especially that we have wanted to take ever since we read D. Randall MacIver's *Greek Cities in Italy and Sicily* which the Oxford University Press published the other day.

In these days of universal "tourism," as the French say, it is hard to get off the beaten track for the simple reason that nearly all tracks are beaten—or nearly so. This, however, is something different. Dr. MacIver describes the extant remains of the cities of Magna Græcia, relates the history of the towns, and tells how to get there. We love repeating the names of the cities—Cumæ, Pæstum, Velia, Hipponion, Medma, Locri, Caulonia, Croton, Ciro, Sybaris, Metapontum, Tarentum, Syracuse, Gela, Kamarina, Akragas, Selinus, Segesta, Enna.

We cannot go far without thinking of Vergil, particularly after the bimillennium which has lately been celebrated. The Oxford University Press contributed J. W. Mackail's beautiful edition of the *Aeneid*² with an Introduction that is a masterpiece; and *Virgil's Primitive Italy*³ by Catharine Saunders, which we shall study before embarking. On the voyage we shall carry in our pocket Dryden's translation of the *Aeneid* in the *World's Classics*.⁴ Indeed, we shall always have one of these handy and delightful little volumes in our pocket. In Syracuse the magnificent Greek Theatre recalls the great tragedians Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides so wonderfully translated by Professor Gilbert Murray. *Ten Greek Plays*⁵ is the best collection to take with you.

This is the region from which many of the most beautiful ancient coins come, as we were reminded by J. G. Milne's illustrated book on *Greek Coinage*⁶ which has just been added to the Oxford list. Another book which has confirmed us in our desire to sail the Sicilian seas and the Adriatic is Miss Richter's *Animals in Greek Sculpture*,⁸ one of the most beautiful books we have ever seen. (And we see a great many).

From the Isles of Greece, it is but a step to Marathon, and thence to Persia. In *The Persians*,⁹ Sir E. Denison Ross takes you on a series of journeys along the chief highways of Persia, with descriptions of the cities passed and the monuments seen. Besides, he gives the history of Persia and writes delightfully about Persian art and literature. The illustrations alone—especially one of a Persian garden—are enough to make one set out at once for this highly civilized and very aesthetic land. On the way, one can pay a few *Visits to Monasteries in the Levant* with the Hon. Robert Curzon.¹⁰ Which reminds us of another book for those who travel with discrimination—*Monastic Life at Cluny, 910-1157*,¹¹ by Joan Evans, with splendid illustrations and a fascinating chapter on Art and Letters at Cluny.

Bon Voyage! And if you want to be really intelligent when the Chief Engineer shows you over the ship read *The Romance of a Modern Liner*,¹² by Capt. E. G. Diggle. It is the life story of the *Aquitania*—that "floating palace of the High Seas"—written by her commander.

THE OXONIAN.

Our Book of the Month: *Greek Cities in Italy and Sicily*, by D. Randall MacIver, \$5.

(¹) Oxford Standard Authors, \$1.50. Send for complete list. (²) \$7.00. (³) \$3.00. (⁴) 80 cents each. Send for complete list. (⁵) Each play, \$1.25. (⁶) \$3.50. (⁷) \$2.25. (⁸) \$10.00. (⁹) \$2.00. (¹⁰) Oxford Miscellany Series, \$1.25. (¹¹) \$5.00. (¹²) \$2.50.

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