

The PHOENIX NEST

By WILLIAM ROSE BENET

DECAMPING INCIDENT

I HAVE run slightly ahead of myself in this brief account of *The Saturday Review's* salad days, and find that I have omitted the incident of Mr. Morley's valedictory to the new owners of *The New York Evening Post*. My noble confrère is unusually apt at quotation, but in this instance he surpassed himself. He was struck by no less than a pure inspiration. In the final instalment of his *Bowling Green* as a regular newspaper column, he called upon William Shakespeare for assistance, and the Swan of Avon did not fail him. Morley, in fact, impeded his own fleeting wing with an immortal quill. He turned to "The Taming of the Shrew" and found there, in the first scene of the fourth act, the following opening lines of a speech by Grumio:

A cold world, Curtis, in every office but thine; and therefore, fire!

So inspired a farewell should have been started; but there exists a wider divergence in that unaccountable quality known as a sense of humor than, probably, in any other manifestation of the intelligence of man—and the valedictory quotation was killed in all later editions of the *Post*. Afterward, Mr. Curtis himself, whose sense of humor was keen, chuckled over this episode with Mr. Morley, and said he thought it a great pity the item had been removed.

OUR CONRAD ERA

My last mention of a date was June, 1925. On the 20th of that month we announced that, beginning the next week, and continuing until September, we would print successive instalments of Joseph Conrad's last novel, of which he had written 80,000 words at the time of his death. No one quite knew how the author had meant to finish the story, which returned to the Mediterranean scene and the Napoleonic epoch. We invited our readers to join in a game of literary speculation, and offered \$1,000 in prizes for the best essays on the probable ending of "Suspense," which was the title of the novel. It had been procured for serialization by arrangement with the then firm of Doubleday, Page & Company, the publishers of the book. There was to be a first prize of \$500, a second of \$250, and so on. The judges of the essays were Captain David W. Bone, an old friend of Conrad, Joseph Hergesheimer, and Professor William Lyon Phelps. The contest closed on October 1st, 1925. On November 14th the awards were announced, first prize going to Samuel C. Chew. His essay and the essay of the winner of the second prize, David Lambuth, were printed in that issue, while the winners of the lesser cash prizes had their contributions published in the following one. Fifty others received one volume each from a list of Conrad's complete works.

JOYS OF THE PHOENICIAN

At this time I was using asterisks in *The Phoenix Nest*, according to old practice on the *Post*—and in no invidious sense! Along about July 1926 I had done with them and began to end paragraphs with three dots. Isabel Paterson, of Books, *New York Herald Tribune*, still sprinkles her Book Worm discourse with three dots here and there, and I believe she once referred to the fact that she had been instructed to take over this idiosyncrasy from us. Mrs. Paterson became my most admired and respected rival and soon, indeed, forged far ahead of me in the philosophical content of her observations. And yet she never discovered such a poet as Vladimir Ladovitch, of Washington, D. C., whose "Gamut of Love" I fell upon, purely by accident, with a piercing scream. I still recall this stanza from his "Cossack of the Caucasus":

He threw his arms of steel about her form
(More ships fail in calm than storm);
He drew her face up to his own—nor made
she move nor moan.
Now on her lips his kisses fell, then sought
the doorlet of each eye's soft cell;
Brow followed next and soft coiffure—
madly he rove nor sought excuse to offer!

But, as I remarked at the time, "What excuse could he offer while so madly he rove?" Discoveries such as this were what made the harried life of *The Phoenix* almost unbearably happy at times!

ONCE MORE WE MOVE!

Though still published by *Time*, Incorporated, we were all taken by the forelock and moved from the East Thirties to the West Forties the beginning of September, 1925. With the Advertising Manager of *Time*, Bob Johnson, we shared at first the offices on the eighth floor that were later given over wholly to our own cohorts. While missing the redolent atmosphere—maltworms that we had become!—of the old Brewery district, we rejoiced in our smarter appanage and the proximity of glamorous Fifth Avenue. Across the street from us—which thoroughfare then was, as it still is, West Forty-fifth Street—we could almost see into the windows of the Harvard Club dining-room, while Putnam's was but a little way down the block. The infant *New Yorker* soon had floor-space above us and started in upon its coruscating career under the guidance of Harold Ross and Rea Irvin. We felt we were in very snappy surroundings and tried to act accordingly. At the end of January, 1926, so great became our independence that we announced that *The Saturday Review Company, Inc.* (And Inc. is such a necessary feature of a literary Corporation!) had purchased the stock interest of *Time, Inc.*, and would, with the next issue, take over the publication of *The Saturday Review of Literature*.

It must be confessed, however, that this move was specifically prompted by the "crashing" of a certain Air Mail plane in the mountains of Pennsylvania. *Time*, though still in New York, was at that time published in Cleveland, owing to the exigencies of a growing circulation. Therefore our own copy and cuts were also shipped to Cleveland, and with the crashing of that unlucky plane, we suddenly lost the material for an entire issue, for which we were forced to find substitutions within twenty-four hours! We felt that such frenzied crises must be avoided in the future.

Our next masthead bore signs of reorganization, inasmuch as Roy E. Larsen now became our Vice-President, and Noble A. Cathcart our Secretary-Treasurer. All business communications were to be addressed to the latter. Roused by all this excitement I myself changed the title of "Cursive and Discursive" to "Cursing and Discouraging," drew an owl's pen-and-ink for the column-head, and crying "Still more merrily move the days!" left in a cloud of dust for West Philadelphia, writing a phenomenal poem en route, which, I remember, began:

A young man who had been to a cocktail
party ending in liqueurs
Was now sitting in a Pullman car that was
bound for Philadelphia.
He envied his wife the composure of feature
so classically hers.
So regal she looked he felt like saying,
"Hello, you little Guelph, ye!"

Nevertheless, I had to return to work anon. It was, perhaps, just as well!

SOME TWINKLING STARS

At about this time I distinctly recall—not without a glance, a mere glance, at the invaluable files!—that Mr. Louis Kronenberger contributed to the *Review* a short discourse upon a new story-writer praised by such worthies as Sherwood Anderson and Ford Madox Ford, whose name happened to be Ernest Hemingway. His book was "In Our Time." Mr. Kronenberger, while admitting Mr. Hemingway's achievement, opined that he was a "synthetic observer" rather than an "analyst." In the same number of our periodical *Elmer Davis* was deftly parodying John Erskine whose "Helen of Troy" had just come over the horizon.

We had begun using a small woodcut of a medieval ship to set above certain special essays and longer poems which we published from time to time in our 10-pt. section. Notable contributions under this head were by Stella Benson, Emanuel Carnevali, Edmund Wilson (a poem), Mrs. Joseph Conrad, and others. Then Mr. Morley went for a trip abroad, and Ernest Sutherland Bates, the late Charles A. Bennett (one of our liveliest wits), and other notables filled *The Bowling Green* in his absence.

I find, at this point, that the variegated fulness of our history will necessitate a third instalment of this inimitable chronicle. Watch for it next week!

A novel of a phase of contemporary American life as strange, exotic, outlandish, as existence in the remotest Chinese village, and yet as truly and vigorously American as life on your own street. In its pages a scene and a people unknown to fiction spring into vivid being

South Moon Under

by
Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings

"A deftly handled piece of fiction, as well as a careful and convincing picture of a strange country about which virtually nothing has been written. . . . The book is rich in humor of the natural man, seasoned with the salt of earthy speech, and touched many times with beauty."

—*New York Herald Tribune*.

Here are the leading characters



OLD LANTRY: Nobody knew whence he came to the "scrub," and most were afraid to ask him. He had fled from something and to him the scrub was sanctuary.



PIETY: She was Lantry's favorite daughter, "pungent as the pine woods, indefatigable, and loyal," who loved the strange wilderness and passed on that love to her son.



YOUNG LANT: He was "the true child and man of the scrub," who knew its beauty and dangers, and, at last, found it the way of escape for a hunted man.



KEZZY: She matched young Lant in her fearlessness of the wild country, and when her husband was killed by the man she had always loved she knew what to do.

"The Florida country is far away, unseen, but here, in this story of its loves and hates and beauties, it has power to move us strongly and strangely."

—*Boston Transcript*.

South Moon Under

A Book-of-the-Month Club Selection

at all bookstores • \$2.00 • 60th thousand

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS, NEW YORK

Best Short Stories, 1933

Edited by EDWARD J. O'BRIEN

A standard for many years. Includes all the best American stories published during 1932. \$2.50

The Midst of Life

MINA CURTISS

"An exalting love story told in beautiful language. The simplicity of emotion is unforgettable."—*N. Y. Herald Tribune*. \$1.90

Storm Beach

VIRGINIA HERSCH

Ludwig Lewisohn called this story of old Charleston, "A charming book, beautifully felt and sensitively done." \$2.00

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

"A master . . . has quietly made his appearance."—*The New York Times*

MEN OF GOOD WILL

by Jules Romains

"ALL the pleasure and anguish, all the triumphs and defeats, all the moodiness and bravado, all the actualities and dreams of a great metropolis merge, fuse and vibrate in this novel. . . A superb literary performance."—*New York Herald Tribune*.

"No piddling succession of phrases . . . can convey the riches of the book. . . He is one of the few living writers who point unhesitatingly straight toward the future. At some later date, when the little ones ask you 'Grandfather, what did you do before the revolution?' perhaps the only answer many of us will be able to make will be, 'I was a contemporary of Jules Romains.'"—Clifton Fadiman, in *The New Yorker*.

"Should not be missed by anyone wishing to share the best of French literary life. . . [It has] the true epic touch, the epic spaciousness."—Dorothy Canfield, in the *Book-of-the-Month Club News*.

At all bookstores \$2.50



ALFRED · A · KNOPF · PUBLISHER · N · Y ·



JUST PUBLISHED!

A novel the publishers believe to be one of the greatest and most exciting additions to the American literature of our day. It is vast in scope and action, and wealth of character — a many-voiced human comedy with the genuine mannerisms and passionate utterance of life.

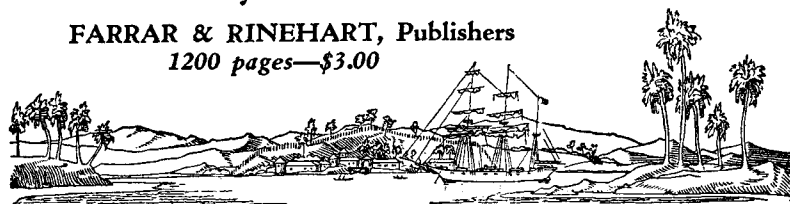
Ellen Glasgow writes: "A book so spacious, so unhurried, so humane in feeling, and so romantic in mood will do much to restore our lost confidence in the scope and the variety of the modern novel." "A thousand separate incidents, encounters and adventures . . . Both romance and realism . . . One of the richest, liveliest, and diversified kinds of story telling, told by a poet and a scholar."—*Book-of-the-Month Club News*.

The *Book-of-the-Month Club* selection for July

ANTHONY ADVERSE

A Novel by HERVEY ALLEN

FARRAR & RINEHART, Publishers
1200 pages—\$3.00



The New Books

Fiction

TRAVAIL OF GOLD. By E. F. BENSON. Doubleday, Doran. 1933. \$2.

It is just forty years since the appearance of his brilliant "Dodo" turned the limelight upon the younger son of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Since then Mr. Benson has placed to his credit a list of titles of considerable variety,—it needs a whole page of the fly leaves of this book to record them—ranging from the delectable "David Blaize" series to caustic novels such as the present story. This is a study in cynical meanness; the full length picture of an intellectual, highly polished cad,—a devastating performance, carried through unsparingly. It leaves a bad taste in the mouth—as Mr. Benson means it to do.

Chris Merivale starts as a young man of promise, still in possession of ideals and aspirations as a dramatist. He is shown in contrast to the woman who loves him, Nancy, a struggling young actress,—who develops into an English Duse. While she succeeds, Chris fails and becomes embittered, jealous of her triumphs. Then he too succeeds, by abandoning his ideals and writing venomously clever satirical plays. The story then records his progressive degeneration until he becomes a monster of cynicism and selfishness. The book is highly effective; one will not forget the unspeakable Chris.

TOUCH US GENTLY. By HARRIET HENRY. Morrow. 1933. \$2.

Miss Henry's fourth novel is the familiar stencil of the older wife, younger husband, and young girl triangle, executed with little skill and conceived of practically no talent. To spice the well-known ingredients she has added the following complications, each of which might have

(Continued on next page)

The P. E. N. Conference

(Continued from page 667)

a time seemed improbable. Second, it passed a general protest against the specific wrongs committed in Germany. Third, and thanks largely to H. G. Wells, it preserved the right to a free expression of opinion, and gave voice to the torture of the expatriated writers of Germany. No one spoke more eloquently than Toller. I append a few of his remarks:

"I have been advised by many not to speak and told again and again why it is the part of wisdom to keep silent. But the first duty of the writer is to the spirit. Anyone who believes that life is ruled by moral law as well as by force has no right to maintain silence. . . ."

(Interruption:) "You have no right to speak, as you are a communist. You are attacking Germany."

"I am not a member of the Communist party. I speak as a writer, not against Germany, but against violence anywhere throughout the world. I fought in the war on the German side, and only when I discovered that the war was an outrage did I rebel against it. . . ."

(Here follows a bitter arraignment of the German P.E.N. Club for its subservience to Hitlerite doctrine, and its failure to take up the cause of its members exiled or in prison.)

"It will be charged against me in Germany that I have spoken against my country. That is not true. I have taken my stand only against the methods of the men who are today in control in Germany but who do not represent all of Germany. Millions of men in Germany dare not speak or write freely. What I say here I say for those millions who today are perforce voiceless. The German rulers refer to the great figures of their country. How are the intellectual precepts of Goethe, Schiller, Kleist, Herder, Lessing, Frederick the Great, reconcilable with the persecution of free men, with the persecution of the Jews? How brilliantly are these precepts carried out by the regulations which today prevail! The only living grandson of Bismarck is ruled out from holding office because he had a Jewish grandmother; the son of Stresemann cannot be a state advocate because his mother was a Jewess.

"Madness is the order of the day, barbarism has seized upon humanity. The air about us grows more and more difficult to breathe. Do not let us deceive ourselves; the voice of humanity will only be heeded by the mighty when it serves as a support for their political purposes. Let us not deceive ourselves into believing that politicians of other lands will endure us, or not pursue us, as soon as we become uncomfortable for them. And the voice of truth has never been comfortable."

--AND PUBLISHED BY MORROW



THE ARCHES OF THE YEARS

by Halliday Sutherland

Life, as seen by a famous British physician, in an informal autobiography of rare charm and excitement. \$2.75

TOUCH US GENTLY

by Harriet Henry

Her finest novel, about an actress who won her greatest triumph when her marriage was wrecked. \$2

FAÇADE

by Theodora Benson

A love story of smart English society told with humor and intelligence. \$2.50

WALK INTO MY PARLOUR

by Pamela Frankau

A modern novel of two young people who thought they were immune to love. "Highly satisfactory to the reader."—*N. Y. Times*. \$2

ASK A POLICEMAN

A different mystery novel—by six great writers: Anthony Berkeley, John Rhode, Milward Kennedy, Dorothy L. Sayers, Gladys Mitchell, and Helen Simpson. \$2

DEATH on the LIMITED

by Roger Denbie

Mile-a-minute mystery. "Ingenuity—Read it!"—*Saturday Review*. \$2

GERMANY PUTS THE CLOCK BACK

by Edgar Ansel Mowrer

The whole picture of Germany today. \$2.50

YACHTS UNDER SAIL

92 remarkable photographs of yachts in action, selected by ALFRED F. LOOMIS. Designed by Gordon C. Aymar, bound in waterproof duck. \$3

Check this list and consult your bookseller.

--AND PUBLISHED BY MORROW



CAN YOU

Break a Perfect Alibi?

You'll have to — to solve "Death Whispers."

CAN YOU

Stand Spine-Chilling Thrills?

You'll have to take them—when you read of how Roderick Myncheon died.

CAN YOU

Chuckle—Laugh—Roar?

You won't be able to help yourself — when you meet Ocoola Archer, detective.

Here's the first new writer in years worthy to rank with the best of Van Dine, Ellery Queen and Barnaby Ross.

DEATH WHISPERS

by JOSEPH B. CARR

THE VIKING PRESS \$2.00

