

# the incompetents

by

R. E. SPENCER

The new novel by the author of *The Lady Who Came To Stay*, one of the most highly praised novels of 1931 and listed by William Lyon Phelps among the "ten best books" of that year.

● John Cowper Powys writes: "I have read *The Incompetents* with the utmost interest and delight. . . It is a triumph . . . the kind of book you cannot stop reading till you've finished it . . . carries your interest breathlessly along from point to point and stage to stage just as a tale of adventure does."

● William Soskin writes in the *New York Evening Post*: "A patrician novel. . . The clearly distilled substance of his story, the careful polish of the essential details involved in his character studies, the meticulous care with which he has reduced all situations to their pertinent factors, all testify to the patrician nature of this writer's art."

\$2.35 At All Bookstores

NOTE: *The Lady Who Came To Stay* is now in a \$1.00 edition.

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of Poetry

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## Willow Pattern Mystery



A waterfall, pale and lovely in the dusk—a dishevelled bed revealing horror in the dawn—little Ming So sees them both in this gossamer tale of Oriental crime, told with knife-edge subtlety and biting humor. Something completely new in mystery stories.

By KEITH WEST

# HANGING WATERS

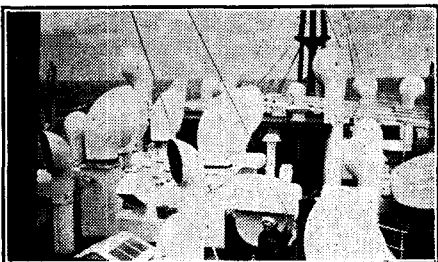
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## Trade Winds

By P. E. G. QUERCUS

Our favorite funnel-and-ventilator artist, Mr. W. S. Hall, whose marine water colors have been handsomely shown in this department, has lately returned from a month in Haiti, of which he tells us agreeable stories. One item in particular is curious: that in Port-au-Prince, a town of 100,000 or thereabouts, there is no bookshop. On board S.S. *Haiti*, of the Columbian Line, Mr. Hall took a photograph of all ventilators turned to catch the Trade Wind; this Old Quercus reproduces as symbolic of our doldrum traffic.



And now we hear the interesting news that Mr. Hall is joining in business with Mr. Henry M. Snyder, the well known Oriental representative of many American publishers. Book sales in Japan, China, Philippines and Hawaii are steadily growing and we wish the Snyder-Hall combination increasing fortune in this most fascinating field of trade.

Old Receptive Quercus has been having an industrious orgy with publishers' news notes. Putnam's contribute a statement from Cornelia Penfield, author of *After the Deacon Was Murdered*, on mystery novels vs. sex stories: "There are readers who are a little weary of the Facts of Life and prefer a good clean murder. There are so many ways of committing a murder and only one way to have a baby." Which may or may not be begging the question. Also from Putnam's comes the announcement of Dr. Sherwin Cody's six-volume opus, *The New Art of Writing and Speaking the English Language*, explaining how the rules of grammar may be broken as a sign of sophistication, not of ignorance. Dr. Cody quotes an editorial of Mr. Canby's "as an example of American style today. It is as direct and vigorous as Mark Twain, with the same easy, colloquial language, but without Mark Twain's natural flexibility and grace." This is a delightful tribute to the appropriateness of Quercus's letterhead, in which Mr. Canby and Mark Twain (among other literary figures) are shown persuading the hesitant subscriber to cross the dotted line.

From E. P. Dutton and Co. comes the best publicity of the season, a collection of publishing stories from *At John Murray's*, which Old Careful Quercus is reluctant to print without a copy of the book to check with. Also the welcome information that the price of Everyman's Library has been reduced to 70 cents a volume. A less famous reprint library, The Macy Classics, published at \$1.98, was recently on sale at Macy's business book counter at 47 cents a volume. But that's different.

The Crime Club celebrated its fifth anniversary May 26. Old Quercus, who distinctly remembers that the first Crime

Club book, by Kay Cleaver Strahan, was published in April, '28, wonders if Mastermind has adopted the 13-month calendar.

Quercus is glad to see that the New York papers are giving a big hand to the Hop Light Ladies, an enterprising organization of women without income but with various bright ideas to create employment for themselves. One of the ideas is for Open Air Book Marts, bright-colored movable stands holding upwards of 100 books. These will decorate the parks of New York City, from Washington Square to Morningside Heights. The Hop Light Ladies will sell only second-hand books, avoiding competition with regular bookstores. Since the venture has the benefit of advice from Frederic G. Melcher—long an enthusiast for open-air book-selling—it has every opportunity for success in New York and emulation elsewhere.

It must be a record of some sort when the ads for a book beat the book at its own game. The Viking Press campaign on *In One Ear* has amused Quercus even more than Frank Sullivan ever managed to do.

Kerekes' famous German bookstore (East 86, near 3rd Avenue, in the heart of Yorkville) has been selling a lot of Hans Fallada's *Kleiner Mann, Was Nun?* I like the story of Herr Fallada (a very quiet modest fellow) going out to lunch in Berlin with his American publisher. "Do you suppose," he said, "it would be all right if we had some really good wine? It's a long time since I had a real vintage." Curious collectors will find some interesting variations among the different editions of *Little Man, What Now?* It was twice translated, once from German into English, then from English into American.

A very steady seller is Hornibrook's *Culture of the Abdomen*, now in its 8th printing (\$2.00). One form of literature in which we are extremely choosy is detective stories. *The Loose Rib* by Austen Allen, published by H. C. Kinsey, is exceptionally good. Also, which is genuinely remarkable, it has a jacket which is cleverly and subtly tied up with the crux of the story. *The Sapphire*, by A. E. W. Mason (Doubleday, \$2.00), is a fine yarn by an experienced hand. Burma forests, the Irrawaddy River, Moulmein, and pagodas, and all the color of Kipling's famous song—and a superb sapphire, a rascally steamboat captain who turns Buddhist monk, mystery, and a love story—this is full value in entertainment. Ho for the Irrawaddy, which was never real to this reader before.

This week Old Calculating Quercus and a corps of assistant statisticians produce the Trade Winds Turn Table, a mathematical game of their own invention. The box score underneath this paragraph represents their informal opinion of some of the high spots of the spring publishing season. The figures are on a scale of 10; the first three columns give the author's batting average, the last three the publisher's. It is called a turn table not because it calls the turn, but because you have to turn it to read the headings, which, Quercus hopes, are self-explanatory. (Realization of possibilities means whether or not the author's abilities are fully represented.)

TRADE WINDS TURN TABLE			Author's Score			Publisher's Score		
(By QUERCUS ASSOCIATES)			Popular Appeal	Permanent Value	Realization of Possibilities	Format and Jacket	Advertising and Publicity	Sales Effort
Title and Author								
ANN VICKERS Sinclair Lewis			7	5	7	8	9	10
THE LAST ADAM James Gould Cozzens			7	6	9	8	6	8
SOUTH MOON UNDER Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings			5	5	9	4	3	3
100,000,000 GUINEA PIGS Arthur Kallet and F. J. Schlink			8	7	9	5	9	8
MARIE ANTOINETTE Stefan Zweig			9	8	10	7	7	7
BRITISH AGENT Bruce Lockhart			8	7	10	5	4	5
ADVENTURES OF THE BLACK GIRL IN HER SEARCH FOR GOD—Shaw			2	2	1	10	3	4
THE HOUSE OF EXILE Nora Waln			7	7	9	7	8	8
AS THE EARTH TURNS Gladys Hastly Carroll			6	6	9	8	8	9

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FARRAR & RINEHART

MODERN ITALY by GEORGE B. McCLELLAN has just been published by the PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS.—"At last," says the *New York Sun*, "an intelligent book about Italy, by an American . . . a calm, dispassionate, reasoned view of Italy under Mussolini." The price of the book is \$3.00.

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With Merchant Princes  
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# MARIE ANTOINETTE

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