

# It's Thawing

T'S thawing! I think I heard crows cawing And in the back-yard slush Everything's awash.

The eaves go drip-drip-dripping, I feel like skipping! After six weeks of icebound roads, Fuel-oil in costly loads, Lining windows of abodes With weatherstrip and felting, Streets like skating rinks, Clattering fenders, monkey-links, Snow drifting and sleet pelting, Glycerine on windshield panes, Gales and gelid rains, I've taken off the chains— It's melting!

Farewell golosh And frozen plumbing, By gosh Spring's coming!

It feels slick! The thermometer's forty-five: I'm out on the drive with a pick Where the ice is thick. I'm actually sweating, and getting Down to the gravel So cars can climb the hill Without a spill And the cook can travel. (When she fell and crocked her knee It had to be paid by me At a dollar a stitch...)

### Once more

I'll be able to open the cellar door; Now the nights are shorter I won't hear such frequent roar Of the burner on the basement floor And oil at  $7\frac{1}{4}$ .

It'll be difficult, in the blaze Of approaching summer days To realize that chip and scar That now my steps and pathway mar, All those scratches on the brick, Were made with bang and slog and slice By pick and shovel, gouging ice. Unlikely then as any novel To think of the midwinter shovel. O sun how sweet! Soft air how nice! I don't even want to stay in Long enough to write these verses. Did I once praise winter? Nix! Let the winter of Thirty-Six Pass with reminiscent curses. As soon as you like, let spring begin. Let the word be aprication When I can walk to Roslyn Station, Make sure that there's no hocus-pocus About the crocus And very likely cry on The neck of the first dandelion.

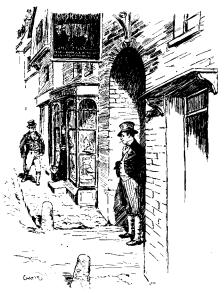
I began to fear that frost was chronic, But now all creatures feel spring tonic. Electric bills and snowdrifts lessen, The goat sign's up in delicatessen, Again the groundhog leaves his dark hole, The dogs are dragging bits of charcoal From the fireplace onto the rug; And the final cure, you may be sure, Is to smell manure When beds are dug. Hopeful anew, the housewife reads The annual catalogue of seeds And puts away odd pairs of mittens. Even the cat forsakes her kittens And takes an airing on the roof.

Can it all be just a spoof? For I'm still wary: It's only the end of February, Too soon to compliment Spring for sincere intent. This welcoming allure Is premature; She's full of guile, Knows her tricks from A to Izzard, So wear your woollens yet a while: In a sudden mood to vex She may still conceal a blizzard. On her lip see mischief pucker: Very like some freak has struck her-In the humor of her sex (Like the late lamented Tex) Calling to us, Hello sucker!

So, equinox,
On the 21st prox
Be clear and prompt;
Not swamped
With flood and fog and mud and bog
And mercury seesawing.
O March, not too much hemming and hawing—
Anyhow, it's thawing!

### **Miss Mitford**

It's good to learn that I was quite wrong in supposing (Feb. 15) I might be the only person reading Mary Russell Mitford. Mrs. W. F. Harris in Toledo, Mrs. F. G. Hall in Durham, N. C., have both written with much interesting detail. Mrs. Harris confesses herself a special enthusiast and distributor of Miss M., having once bought several copies of Our Village (with the Hugh Thomson illus-



DRAWING BY GEORGE MORROW From "Country Stories" by Miss Mitford.

trations) at a remainder sale for 10 cents each. She quotes the gratitude of friends to whom she sent copies. And Mrs. Hall notes that just before our paragraph appeared the ladies' literary club of Durham, N. C., enjoyed a report on that book by one of the members.

It almost tempts one to ask whether anyone is reading Galt's Annals of the Parish, the publication of which preceded the Our Village sketches by just a few years.

### A Design for College Presidents

Johns Hopkins University is fortunate in its new president, the noted geographer Isaiah Bowman; and it is sad to think that by praising his new book (which we do, most heartily) we probably add to his burdens; such burdens as high competence brings on a worker in any field. For there can be no question that if his A Design for Scholarship (Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore; \$1.75) reaches the public it deserves President Bowman will be even more beset with invitations to speak at other colleges and universities. This little volume, a collection of addresses made at various gatherings of learning (Johns Hopkins itself, Bryn Mawr, the University of Pennsylvania, Dartmouth, M. I. T., the Association for the Advancement of Science, etc.) is a model of its kind. Each one of Dr. Bowman's talks is wholesome with charm and vigor, with both gaiety and high purpose, and salted with a rich and miscellaneous learning. A great reader, a far traveller, a sagacious and humane observer, Bowman has the rare touch for

(Continued on page 16)

# WHY KEEP THEM ALIVE! by PAUL de KRUIF author of MICROBE HUNTERS, MEN AGAINST DEATH, etc.

# **DOROTHY L. SAYERS**

Gaudy Night

"It's the Louvre Museum, the Coliseum, the Mickey Mouse of detective stories ... so excitingly good, so brilliantly planned, so excellently written."— *Robert Van Gelder, N. Y. Times.* 469 pp., \$2.50

### A Glimpse at the Contents

1. WHY SHOULD THEY DIE?— In "Microbe Hunters," "Men Against Death," "Hunger Fighters," Paul de Kruif told vast numbers of Americans of the battles which science was winning for them against disease and death. They need not die—some of them.

2. DISCOVERY THAT CHIL-DREN ARE FORGOTTEN-Every year, de Kruif found, over 1,100,000 American children die *preventable* deaths.

3. DISCOVERY THAT IT'S DOL-LARS OR CHILDREN—But it would cost money to save over a million lives. On the one hand, the marvels of science; on the other, the mothers and fathers who can't afford to buy it. Is it dollars or children?

4. THE POWER OF SCIENCE WITHOUT MONEY—The law of the survival of the fittest would be a fine rule to live by if you really knew who was fit to survive. Is having enough money the answer? 5. THE PEOPLE'S DEATH-FIGHT—When people get excited, they can do something. Look at the story of Detroit and its fight against tuberculosis.

6. DROUTH IS A BLESSING-Is it really? Can scarcity *ever* produce plenty?

7. WHO OWNS OUR SCIENCE? —From the evidence in this book, there is only one answer

8. OBSERVATION OF THE CHILDREN OF THE SHADOWS -Some stories of the mass murder of children in typical American cities.

9. SHOULD CHILDREN EAT?--Or should milk be thrown away to keep prices up? There *never has been* enough milk for American children.

10. CHILDREN CAN LIVE—The story of the Dionne quintuplets. They had only one chance in a billion to live when they were born. Science—and money—made<sup>•</sup> that chance a reality

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cinating journey across Europe by boat, taking his 26-foot yawl from Rotterdam to the Black Sea, an eight-month cruise freighted with adventure. *His sixth volume*—one as rich as *Personal History* or *IWrite As I Please*, would be the years as foreign correspondent, during which time dictators and diplomats were his almost daily associates

"But Farson, with the same prodigality he has shown toward life, crammed the whole rich pageant into a single quarter-million word volume."—Sterling North, Chicago Daily News. 602 pages, \$3.00

## HARCOURT, BRACE AND COMPANY, 383 Madison Ave., New York



# The Situation

G OOD WRITING is being done these days in America, as well as some that is not so good. An enormous amount of both is published in book form. When the first novel of a genuine and original talent appears, it travels a long and circuitous route from the publisher's warehouse, through the chaos of good and bad writing, into the hands of those persons who ultimately discover that they want it and enjoy it One sees an exciting review of a new book, decides to read it and mentally ties a string on one's finger Then one struggles against mnemonic lapses and is forced to muster considerable initiative before one actually remembers to buy it

# For the Untamed Reader

W<sup>E</sup> propose to spare you this intellectual feat of memory. The Discoverers will drop in your lap, five times a year at approximately bi-monthly intervals, a book.

It will be a limited first edition, autographed by the author, and numbered. It will be sent to you well in advance of publication, before it is released to the general public or the critics.

Our purpose is to gather around us a small group of people who have the same gambling spirit and active interest in unusual literature that we must have as publishers. This group, we hope, will give us a quick response to books we are excited about The publisher, releasing a first novel to the public and then waiting a year or so before those people find it who would enjoy it, feels very much like a sixteen-year-old girl who is keeping a beautiful secret. Publishers grow old before their time, trying not to keep secrets, waiting for word of books to get abroad. By way of *The Discoverers*, it is the publisher's hope quickly to circulate his excellent secret. That *The Discoverers* themselves will be pleased is taken for granted.

# A Word about the Publishers

T HOUGH it is true that the books sent to *The Discoverers* will be selected from the output of one house, it is the same publisher who found and presented such discoveries as *February* 

Hill by Victoria Lincoln, Anthony Adverse by Hervey Allen, Deep Dark River by Robert Rylee, Stars Fell on Alabama by Carl Carmer, The Sea Witch by Alexander Laing, The Incredible Marquis by Herbert Gorman, The Cautious Amorist by Norman Lindsay, The Answering Glory by R. C. Hutchinson, The Green Pastures by Marc Connelly, Land of Plenty by Robert Cantwell, Arctic Adventure by Peter Freuchen, The Folks by Ruth Suckow, and Finnley Wren by Philip Wylie. As you undoubtedly know, many of these did not remain secrets; were selected by Book Clubs and were widely appreciated.

Under this plan, the books selected will be the most interesting and original manuscripts that we have been able to find. They will either be the first work of an author, the first book of an author to be published in America, or a completely new departure for a writer of established reputation. Some of *The Discoverers'* books will be non-fiction, and at rare intervals, where the temptation is forgivably strong, we may issue a long narrative poem, like *Conquistador* or *John Brown's Body*. But most important—they will be books that cause an unmistakable sense of excitement to sweep our editorial offices.

Had this plan been in operation during the past few months, you would have received autographed, first-edition, numbered copies of such distinguished books as INNOCENT SUMMER by Frances Frost, which *The N.Y. Times* called: "An original, sensitive and moving book"; OLD MAN GREENLAW by Kenneth Payson Kempton, about which *The Boston Herald* said: "Its primitive and salty humor is that of life itself. Distinctly a novel of today, with a flavor all its own"; and FISH ON THE STEEPLE by Ed Bell, about which Sterling North of *The Chicago News* said: "A discovery, Ladies and Gentlemen! A New, Exciting Novel. Nothing Less! We vote this book the most delightfully fresh and stimulating first novel of the year. It sings, swears, capers and dances through 312 sparkling pages!"

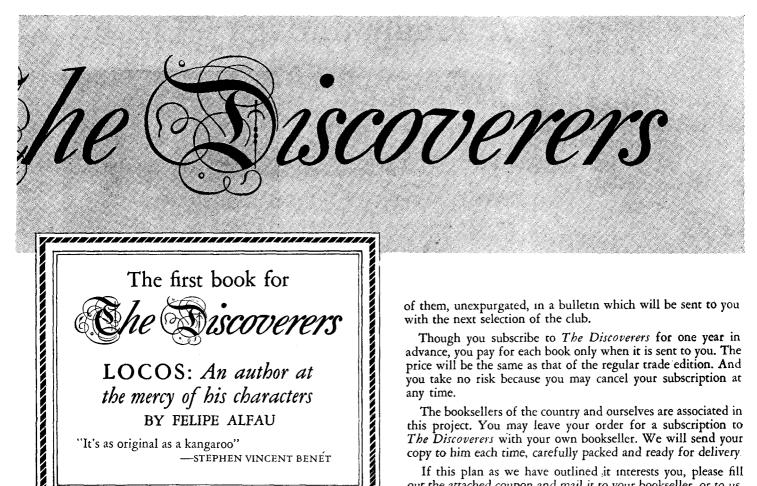
# The First Selection

MANY of you no doubt have read these books. Many of you in the future, whether or not you subscribe, will very likely want to read books selected for *The Discoverers*.

For instance, our first book—LOCOS: An author at the mercy of his characters, by Felipe Alfau.

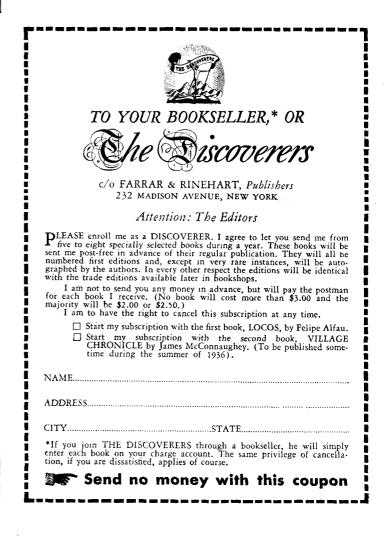
Here is a book that will excite a contagion of laughter, aston-





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ishment and appreciation. We believe that not since Aldous Huxley's Limbo has there been a book as devastating, humorous and exotic. Stephen Vincent Benét, who happened to read the manuscript, said, 'It's as original as a kangaroo.'

BY FELIPE ALFAU

----STEPHEN VINCENT BENÉT

"It's as original as a kangaroo"

The author, Felipe Alfau, is a young Spanish gentleman who, like his illustrious countryman George Santayana, came to America at an early age and prefers to write in English.

The Discoverers' edition of this first selection will be limited to 1250 numbered copies, which will be signed by the author.

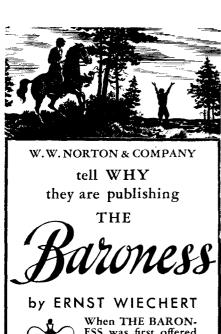
Some of the books that we select may gain a considerable reputation for their authors. Some of these authors will undoubtedly go on and write their way to fame. In either event this early work is likely to have first-edition value. But we feel that these considerations are secondary to the immediate excitement and pleasure the books will bring you. At no time in the future, incidentally, will *The Discoverers*' editions exceed 2500 copies. In other words The Discoverers will remain an adventure and not a large commercial enterprise. The subscribers will have the satisfaction of being members of a strictly limited group.

# Bouquets and Brickbats

A FTER reading each of these books you may, if you wish, write and tell us what you think of it, and why. We shall be glad to have these advance opinions and shall reprint some

DISON AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY

The Saturday Review



ESS was first offered to us it had not yet become the most successful novel of the year in Germany, where almost 100,000 copies have since been sold; but it seemed to us a very unusual book, unusually done—this story of the Baroness who rides alone, ruling over her estates, and of the soldier who returns after twenty years of wandering to become her game-keeper.

The story has suspense and there are intensely dramatic situations as aristocrat and peasant face their world; but it is not this alone which so won our admiration. It is the way the story is told, with such delicacy of apprehension, so nice a feeling for words and atmosphere, with so sharp an observing eye, with such insight into people and things and so profound an understanding of the countryside. It seemed to us that here was a book which might well be called a work of art. We believe that there are many people who will remember the Baroness as long and as vividly as any fiction character of our time. \$2.50



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ernst Wiechert was born a forester's son in East Germany. He has written short stories, novels and plays, winning the Wilhelm Raabe Folk-Prize and the Schunemann Prize. *Die Majorin*, already translated into 7 languages and here published in English as THE BARONESS, achieved for him the position he now occupies as one of the most widely read and distinguished of European novelists.

W. W. NORTON & CO.

# A Family through a Century

THE YANKEE BODLEYS. By Naomi Lane Babson. New York: Reynal & Hitchcock. 1936. \$2.50.

Reviewed by THEODORE MORRISON

HIS admirable novel, as nearly as any good book can, should appeal to the innate appetite of most readers for universality. "The Yankee Bodleys" finds the universal where it should be found, in a very particular family living in a very particular place, Cape Ann, in Massachusetts; a family that talks Yankee idiom, thinks Yankee thoughts, marries, dies, labors, quarrels, and suffers according to the ways of a tribe and the changes and moral climate of a small region during the better part of a century. But universal the book certainly is. Loves, jealousies, pleasures, and losses; the one way of being born into life, varying only as it is piously sanctioned or piously gossiped about; the many ways of getting out, which all end in one common finality; the lively and eager sense of the future, the solitary and heartrending sense of the past; this is the stuff of which "The Yankee Bodleys" is made.

This is Mrs. Babson's first novel, and as such it is surprisingly mature. I can see only one source of misgiving about Mrs. Babson's future, and one complaint with the book, one point at which the hand of the amateur may be detected. A century of time and four or five generations of people make a good deal of material for a single volume of ordinary size. One of the Bodleys complains, at some point in the story, that the family seems to be running out. The descendants of Adelia and Horatio are not recruiting the numbers of the clan. This is too bad for the Bodleys, but good luck for the reader. I found it hard enough to keep four generations of them distinct, especially when family names, Gamaliel, Serena, Deborah, and the rest, began to reappear in successive litters of cousins. The book, after a time, threatens to become the story of generations rather than of people, of change rather than of characters.

Will Mrs. Babson have any material left to write about after this book? That is the misgiving one feels at the end of "The Yankee Bodleys." If she has, and God forbid that she shouldn't, I hope that she will again take toward her material an attitude as wise, as understanding, shall we say as reconciled, as in this book. We have nowadays writers of fiction who take every attitude toward their material except that of sympathy. They use their material to browbeat the reader into a state of indignation with society, or to work off on him some other mood of the times. Mrs. Babson has few indignations; or if she has, she conceals them. She likes her people without condoning them.



NAOMI LANE BABSON

When they act from spite, hypocrisy, or cowardice, she does not disguise their delinquency; neither does she apologize for it. Much of their lives is passed under the influence of sexual appetite or timidity or jealousy. Mrs. Babson understands them, and represents their outward behaviour and their inward impulses with honesty and with knowledge, but without display, without false glamor, without turning aside for condemnation or defense.

The sense of change in the book is, properly, a sense of loss and of tragedy, of the ultimate sorrow of things. Mrs. Babson has a gift of pathos which is quite without sentimentality; two or three scenes in "The Yankee Bodleys" will not easily give up their hold on the mind.

Theodore Morrison is an instructor in English at Harvard University, and is the author of several volumes of verse; his latest book is "Notes of Death and Life."

### The Bowling Green

(Continued from page 12)

this kind of essay. We adjure the various academies to restrain their natural eagerness to solicit him for speech; universities are perennially loquacious; let them buy and contemplate his book instead and give him his chance to get on with his big exciting job in Baltimore.

Part of our own job, though ill accomplished, is to keep an occasional eye upon the outputtings of the university presses. If a father wants a stimulating book for a son at college, or an alumnus cares to make a small gift to his college library, or a college president would like a fireside companion for the scant and late hours that are his own, try A Design for Scholarship.