

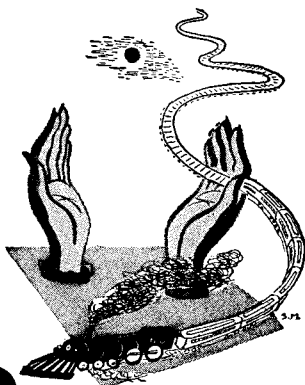
"The literary find of the year." — T. S. Stripling

The Heart is a Lonely Hunter

CARSON
M'CULLERS

A novel "radiant with truest poetry." — Dorothy Canfield Fisher

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TRADE WINDS

P. E. G. QUERCUS

THE WASHINGTON POST, we believe, was first to recall that *The Riddle of the Sands*, by Erskine Childers (a Sinn Fein leader who was executed by the British in 1922) was the earliest novel to forecast an invasion of England with Ireland used as a base. We had a hankering to reread the book but we believe it was our own copy, borrowed from us years ago by the editor of the Washington Post, that prompted their excellent editorial. We were interested to note a letter addressed to the press by K. F. suggesting that the Secret Weapon of the Nazis is really Benzadrine. This is the little understood drug which has caused such astonishing achievements by White Collar Girls in storming the prepared positions of American business.

★ ★

Several clients have reported to Old Q. their own methods of temporary relief from present disasters. W. C. G. says after a hard day in the office she found Angela Thirkell's *Before Lunch* good entertainment. A young woman who had to go to hospital for an operation took with her two volumes of Austin Freeman's *Dr. Thorndyke* yarns. A Connecticut reader fell back on the three volumes of Mary Russell Mitford's *Recollections of a Literary Life*. Old Q. himself found the one-volume edition of H. A. L. Fisher's *History of Europe* (Houghton Mifflin, \$5) extraordinarily valuable perspective, written with all Fisher's astringent wisdom and irony. The epilogue takes the tale as far as October, 1937, when Mr. Fisher was still moderately hopeful. How pleasant to read history written with some gainliness of style. His account of the abdication of Edward VIII from his "persevering celibacy" gave irreverent Q. a grin. Another lethe-draining escapism is the Saturday evening *Gay Nineties Revue* on the Columbia Broadcasting System (WABC). To hear Beatrice Kay sing *Waiting at the Church* was a return to our youth—but don't hoke it too hard, Beatrice.

★ ★

Excellent irony was Don Gordon's backhander in *American News of Books*: "There are national political conventions due shortly. . . . Remember? See page 5 of your local paper." We are eager to see the new Michael Innes *A Comedy of Terrors*. The Logan Pearsall Smith prize at Haverford College, awarded for the most interesting personal library collected by a student, was divided this year between two seniors. Both had organized collections of over 700 volumes, one dealing with history and customs of the "Pennsylvania Dutch" communities, the other specializing in Elizabethan lyric poetry and music.

This seems to show that the book-collecting prizes now existing in many colleges are exerting valuable influence. A leaflet from the Graduate School of the University of Iowa notes that one of the jobs to be done in second-year graduate study in English is "an aesthetic and philosophical criticism of *Hamlet*, *Paradise Lost*, and *Tom Jones*." To take on these three champions concurrently is no small scuffle. It reminds us somehow of a young woman's engaging remark about an ecclesiastical novice: "He had taken vows of poverty, chastity, and—well, I guess that covers everything."

★ ★

William Howard Church (Berkeley, Calif.), noting our interest in booksellers' catalogues sends us a copy of the excellent Gallimaufry II issued by Roy Vernon Sowers of 117 Montgomery St., San Francisco. The cover of this tempting catalogue is a jumble of typographic slugs and editioneering catchwords, chosen by Mr. Sowers to suggest the look of a bookseller's mind while preparing a catalogue. Mr. Church writes pleasantly of his dealings chez Sowers, for instance:

Mr. Sowers is precisely the sort of bookseller one is always picturing in one's mind, but never meeting. He exhibits a beautiful Japanese print, let us say one of Hasui's deep-blues,—and the conversation flows affably; but after a while you will realize, if you are at all intuitive at these times, that it is not you to whom he is talking. He is talking to himself, and you have overheard him. All of your answers have merely functioned as release-springs to his inner flux of thoughts.

Here is a book on witch-craft, bound enchantingly in green vellum. He tells how it caught his fancy the last time he was abroad, and you watch his lean fingers flick over the leaves. What is he thinking of? He is thinking of something amusing, because a strange smile is transient on his fine lips. The smoke lags in his cigaret; suddenly his tall figure sways, and he looks at you queerly; his grey eyes are frankly puzzled; he had forgotten you were there. . . . When not selling books or reading them, Mr. Sowers is a rancher in the Santa Cruz mountains."

★ ★

New York University will hold this year its quinquennial election of candidates for the Hall of Fame; together with other zealots we put in a word for Thomas Paine, whose line "These are the times that try men's souls" is mighty apropos in 1940. One of the best ways of sidestepping the heebies is to study who-all got into the new edition of *Who's Who*. Book publishers in N. Y. who broke into *Who's Who*: Messrs. Brace, Cerf, Coward, Crofts, Hitchcock, Schuster, Simon, J. H. Smyth, Horace Stokes.