

WYSTAN AUDEN and Christopher Isherwood are confirmed Americans now, scarcely distinguishable from sons of Harvard, but on the day that they first landed in New York aboard a British cargo vessel, they were two very bewildered young men. I didn't add very much to their sense of security when I selected "Hellzapoppin'," Olsen and Johnson's mad melange of nonsense, for their first evening's entertainment. I had notified Ole Olsen that I was bringing Auden and Isherwood with me. The result only became apparent in the very last scene. Olsen asked a four-hundred-pound stooge with a cake of ice in his arms, "What's your name, Buddy?" The stooge answered "Wystan Auden." Auden jumped three feet in his seat and cried "Good God!" The next man who sauntered onto the stage was a human string bean. "What would you charge to haunt a house?" jeered Mr. Olsen. "How many rooms has it?" shot back the stringbean. "By the way," said Olsen, "I don't think I caught your name." "The chaps call me Christopher Isherwood," confided the stringbean. Isherwood's reaction to all this was highly gratifying, but I was a bit dismayed when I felt a tap on my back, and wheeled around to find Alfred Harcourt sitting directly behind me. "It's very interesting to see, Mr. Cerf," he said, "just how you spend your busy hours!" . . .

GENERAL BILLY MITCHELL, ill-used prophet of modern serial warfare, is the subject of two biographies on the Fall lists. Duell, Sloan and Pearce have announced one by Isaac Don Levine, and the Dutton imprint appears on the other, the joint work of Emile Gauvreau and Lester Cohen . . . Little, Brown have just put through another printing of 50,000 copies of Fannie Farmer's "Boston Cooking-School Cook Book." That makes fifty-eight printings in all for a grand total of 2,086,000 copies, which is precisely 2,085,400 more than we sold of a little number called "The Young Concubine" last year . . . So long as we are citing statistics, we may as well tell you that Donald Geddes, the demon commentator of the Columbia University Press, has spent the hot summer afternoons counting the number of words in various famous novels, and proudly announces the following computations: "Anthony Adverse," 500,000; "Of Time and the River," 360,000; "Gone with the Wind," 412,000; "Tom Jones," 340,000; "David Copperfield," 390,000. The average novel runs

from 80,000 to 120,000 words. Hemingway's "For Whom the Bell Tolls" approximated 150,000 . . .

SENATOR OLIVER ST. JOHN GOGARTY, noted wit, statesman, limerick reciter, and author of at least one rattling good book ("As I Was Going Down Sackville Street") recently paid a prolonged visit to our shores, in the course of which he gave several publishers the opportunity to publish his new novel. The day that he mentioned to me the advance he expected, I thought he had belayed me with his shillelagh: everything went black before my eyes! The book was ultimately published here. I don't know the size of the advance that the voluble Mr. Gogarty finally settled for, but if it was anything like his asking price, he earned about two dollars a copy on every one sold. Mr. Gogarty is the most thoroughly Irish Irishman I ever encountered. His makeup, brogue, and blarney make my favorite Irish actor, Barry Fitzgerald, look like the character man in the Jewish Art Theatre. The only thing that ever stopped his flow of oratory was a juke-box in Tim Costello's Third Avenue pub. Somebody dropped a nickel into the contraption just as the doctor was hitting mid-season form, and his dissertation was drowned out by the strains of "Jingle Jangle Jingle." "Confound it!" roared Gogarty. "I can't enjoy a beer in this whole ridiculous country without some blackguard dropping a coin into one of them illuminated coal scuttles and annoying me to death!" . . .

AN ANNOUNCEMENT from Berlin notes the suspension of the firm of Tauchnitz, in Leipzig, who for more than a hundred years published paper-bound editions of leading American and English authors on the continent. It usually took the better part of a journey from Paris to Genoa just to cut the pages of a Tauchnitz edition, and when you were finished you looked as though you had been caught in the blizzard of 1888. Nevertheless, the Tauchnitz books enjoyed vast popularity with American tourists until the better-made Albatross editions, introduced in Paris by J. Holroyd Reece about twelve years ago, abruptly terminated the Tauchnitz monopoly. Manuel Komroff, Herbert Wise, and I visited the Tauchnitz plant in 1928. We had brought a half dozen Modern Library volumes with us to show Count Tauchnitz, and although we explained to him that they were the only copies

we had in Europe, he was so insistent that we leave them with him to show his colleagues, that we reluctantly gave them to him. On our way out, the Count suggested that we might like something to read on the two-hour train trip back to Berlin. Each of us picked out a Tauchnitz edition, and the Count calmly allowed us to pay for them—at the retail price. The total amount involved was only about sixty cents, but I've never been able to look at a Tauchnitz book since without remembering that ridiculous scene, and Manuel's disgust as we walked to the Leipzig station . . .

[It may have taken Mr. Cerf the better part of the way from Paris to Genoa to cut the pages of a Tauchnitz volume but it was love's labor lost; we ourselves were the admiring witness of the neatness and dispatch with which in less than a minute a bookseller in Heidelberg placed our newly purchased copy of G. P. R. James's "Heidelberg" under a machine and with one swift motion sliced all the pages open.—*The Editor.*]

IN THE NEW Manhattan Classified Directory, there is a listing under "Upholsterers' Supplies," that intrigued us. "Lorraine Fibre Mills, Inc.," it reads—and following in parenthesis, "The Slomowitz Boys." . . . An arresting headline in a current advertisement: "Let's all keep our shirts on—but for heaven's sake, let's roll up our sleeves!" . . .

THE PRINCETON UNIVERSITY Press is publishing a particularly useful book next week called "A Layman's Guide to Naval Strategy." The author is Bernard Brodie. Despite the use of that wicked word "layman," the Navy itself is taking 500 copies. Datus Smith, Jr., the director of the Press, tells me that there will be three printings before publication which, he adds, "is some pumpkins for a university press." The book is the first anti-Seversky document that is two-fisted, up-to-date, and not swathed in gold braid. It shows how air power has revolutionized naval strategy, but Mr. Brodie isn't ready yet to throw the entire Navy onto the scrap pile.

OLIN CLARK reports the story of a mother who lost her young daughter in the week-end confusion at Penn Station. After a frantic search, she finally located her in the midst of a group of nuns. Both the little girl and the nuns seemed to be having a very good time. "I hope my daughter hasn't been giving you too much trouble," exclaimed the relieved parent. "On the contrary," chuckled the Mother Superior. "Your little girl seems to have the notion that we are penguins!" . . .

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