

**CYNOSURE OF ALL EYES** in literary circles last week was neither best-selling "So Little Time" nor onrushing "Under Cover," but a hefty and ponderous tome published by the State Department. This purported to be the diplomatic correspondence of the pre-war decade, but it turned out to be as carefully angled as a political campaign speech. Incredulous critics searched in vain for Ambassador Dodd's explicit and repeated warnings of Nazi plots and imperialistic blueprints, Ambassador Bowers's crystal-clear analyses of the real forces behind the war in Spain. The report, in short, promises to be the first book in history that will be more famous for what it left out than what it included. Omission of the data on Spain was particularly unfortunate in light of the fact that a national weekly chose this time, above all others, when even the most trusting and quiescent citizens are beginning to understand that Francoism and Hitlerism are cut from the same cloth, to print a eulogy of the slippery Iberian Fascist by a high churchman who ought to know better. Wendell Willkie labelled the State Department report "a white paper on a black record." . . .

**IN EUROPEAN** publishing circles before the Nazi scourge, the name of Kurt Wolff was something to conjure with. In Munich (Kurt Wolff Verlag) and Florence (Pantheon Casa Editrice) he published some 2,000 titles—beautiful art books, the work of such headliners as Sinclair Lewis, Romain Rolland, Franz Werfel, André Gide, Heinrich Mann. . . . Overnight he was robbed of the fruits of years of brilliant planning and impeccable craftsmanship. Now, undaunted, he has come to America to begin all over again. A serious, fine-looking man, who suggests Paul Lukas, the star of "Watch on the Rhine," Wolff has incorporated Pantheon Books, and, from his home at 41 Washington Square, published his first American list. . . . "I am happy indeed," he writes, "to have the possibility of a new start here. My idea, however, is not that of competition with the great American publishing houses. I believe that there is justification in the publishing of European

authors of high quality, representative of trends of thought still active in present-day Europe, its history, its politics. The first Pantheon list exemplifies this idea: Peguy, George, Burckhardt, de Coster—French, German, Swiss, Belgian, each of them an outstanding representative of his nation." . . . Later on Kurt Wolff hopes to get around to some American books and some fine art books. Of the fifteen titles on his first list, the most promising is a handsome new edition of "Tyl Ulenspiegel." This is no children's book, as many people suppose, but a memorable story of man's fight for liberty, with several episodes distinctly on the bawdy side. Another Pantheon book that will attract attention is "Danse Macabre," a book of drawings by the celebrated Frans Mase-reel. . . . Trade Winds admires Kurt Wolff's courage and good taste, and welcomes him to the fraternity of American publishers. . . . A postcard will bring you the first Pantheon list, a neat bit of typography on its own. . . .



**ANOTHER PUBLISHING HOUSE**—this one strictly homegrown—that is quietly but surely developing into major stature is Crown. Not so many years ago this outfit's chief concern was remainders and publishers' overstock—the first serious threat to the doughty Max Salop's hegemony in this field. Since it has begun publishing on its own, and gobbling up tottering houses (Covici-Friede; Lothrop, Lee, and Shepard) Crown has hit big sales figures with such excellent anthologies as "Men at War" (edited by Hemingway), "Twenty Best Plays of the American Theatre," "Best Cartoons of 1943," "The Complete Etchings of Goya" (with a foreword by Aldous Huxley). Its "Cheerful Cherub," acquired from Covici, is up to 125,000, the "Five Little Peppers" series far above that figure. Crown's fall list features its first novel: "This Is My Brother," by Louis Paul, the story of an American soldier awaiting death in a Jap prison camp. Its "Twenty Best Film Plays" contains the complete scripts of such memorable screen dramas as "Mrs. Miniver," "Rebecca," "Here Comes Mr. Jordan," "Zola," and



"It Happened One Night," also a few sleepers like "Make Way for Tomorrow" which never got a tenth of the credit it deserved. The idea behind this book strikes me as a very sound one; in fact, it cuts the ground right out from under a similar notion hatched for the Modern Library by Garson Kanin, who probably never would have gotten round to it anyhow. Presiding genius of Crown Publishers is soft-spoken, reticent Nat Wartels; its address, 419 Fourth Avenue, New York. . . .

**THE DIETZ PRESS**, of Richmond, Virginia, has published a book by Marnyell William, called "Script-easers," which is designed to give radio announcers ear-catching openings for commercial programs. For the gentry in the profession this book should come in mighty handy; the general public, I suspect, would prefer an invention that would turn off the radio automatically when the "commercial" was about to begin. To this listener, at least, the most bearable commercials are the Heinz plugs on "Information Please" and Ben Grauer for Jer-gen's on the Winchell spot; the most maddening, by far, the drool you have to listen to with Lucky Strike's "Hit Parade." . . . For the best brief essay on radio commercials, Trade Winds will present a photograph of Ezra Pound, suitable for framing. . . .

**THE ECSTATIC** two-page spread on Whitney Darrow, Jr.'s "You're Sitting on My Eyelashes" in a recent *New York Times Book Review* is credited with initiating the landslide of demands for that cartoon album. An inveterate smeller of rats pointed out that the review was signed with the initials "W. D.," which correspond roughly with those of the author's father, the voluble vice-president of Scribner's. Darrow père, waxing wroth, called attention to the fact that the review in question contained such words as "let's-cock-a-snooks," "acerb," and "transmutation." "Not even Max Perkins uses words like that in our organization," he declared. Furthermore, he has done a little sleuthing of his own at *The Times* offices. Says they've recently taken on a new assistant in the book department there. Girl named Wisteria Dinkelspiel. . . .

**ATTENTION OF CRITICS** who proclaim that war books have lost their popularity: Holt's first printing of Ernie Pyle's "Here Is Your War" is 125,000 copies. . . . The reddest face in town belongs to the advertising agent who prepared the copy for a new Spanish

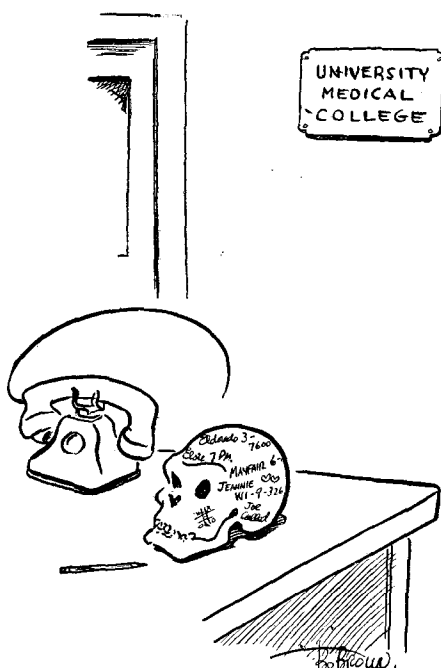


primer, and committed a grammatical error in the simplest kind of Spanish sentence in the text. . . . Applications for Houghton Mifflin's ninth annual Literary Fellowships, offered both in fiction and non-fiction, will be accepted until January 1. Previous winners include "Green Margins," "Young Man with a Horn," and "The Giant Joshua." . . . Success story: Nine months after he joined the staff, Lee Barker has been appointed editor-in-chief at Doubleday, Doran. That firm's advertising will be handled henceforth by the streamlined, up-and-coming Spier and Sussman agency. . . .

**THERE SEEMS TO BE** considerable dispute about the origin of the story about the scientist who avoided a week's torture by tricking a band of cannibals into lopping off his head. Kenneth Porter, of Vassar's History Department, and Van Cartmell, of Garden City, agree that the story is Jack London's "Lost Face." Cartmell adds that the scientist didn't eat the herbs that he claimed would render him immune to death, but rubbed them on the back of his neck. That made the headsman's swipe all the more dramatic. Amendment accepted. Jay Lewis, of *The Norfolk Ledger-Dispatch* says the story was written by Hugh Pendexter, and appeared in the old *Adventure Magazine* under the title of "The Fighting Years." My lawyer's bride, recently known as "Miss Northampton," insinuates that I made up the story myself, since it has no point whatever. Robert Hammond Murray writes "That's an easy one! It's by Grace Livingston Hill. Vide her 'My Sugarbowl of Horror Tales.'" . . . Maybe we'd better drop the whole thing. . . .

**THE NATION'S** colleges and universities might study with profit to themselves and their communities the technique of the college-sponsored public forum as developed and operated by Cooper Union in New York City. Here is something that is pretty much of a power plant for democracy all by itself. Let me give you the picture: On the fringes of New York's Bowery—not the rowdy-dowdy, wide-open place it used to be, but still plenty tough today—stands the old brownstone six-story Cooper Union Institute, built before the Civil War. You go downstairs to the auditorium, a large, semi-circular affair liberally sprinkled with supporting pillars; it has a seating capacity you would guess at about one thousand. The platform is saturated with history; it was here that Abraham Lincoln gave his famous Cooper Union address.

Into this hall three evenings a week to attend the lecture series come all kinds of people from all over the city—intellectual students from the uptown



colleges; businessmen, some from the garment district, some from the financial district, some just storekeepers; seamen in port for a week or two; poorly dressed old men straggling in from the Bowery; comparatively well-to-do ladies and gentlemen from the Upper East Side. They come because Cooper Union has become something of a headquarters in the world of ideas, because this is the Congress of the Common Man. There are three forums a week—all of them presided over and planned by Prof. Houston Peterson, of Cooper Union. He has the toughest forum job in the country, but has a genius for handling situations loaded with dynamite. . . .

**DR. GAYLORD HAUSER'S** "Diet Does It," a new Coward-McCann publication, is planned "to let all of us in on the secrets of beauty and health that were originally confined to Hollywood's chosen few." On a recent visit to New York, Dr. Hauser told of the beneficial effects of his dietary system on "his girl friend." His guests suddenly realized that he was referring to Greta Garbo. . . . Walter Lippmann defines propaganda as "that branch of the art of lying which nearly deceives your friends without deceiving your enemies." . . . Colonel Rex Smith, first editor of *The Chicago Sun*, relays the latest sergeant-rookie variation. The sergeant spoke his piece on the shoes the rookie wore to assembly. The rookie explained that he had worn them in private life. "So what?" snapped the sarge. "Did you have a high silk hat when you were a civilian, too?" "Why, yes, Sergeant, I did," was the reply. "Then why don't you wear that here, too?" "Don't be silly," snapped the private. "Who ever heard of wearing a top hat with brown shoes?"

BENNETT CERF.

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—*The New Yorker*

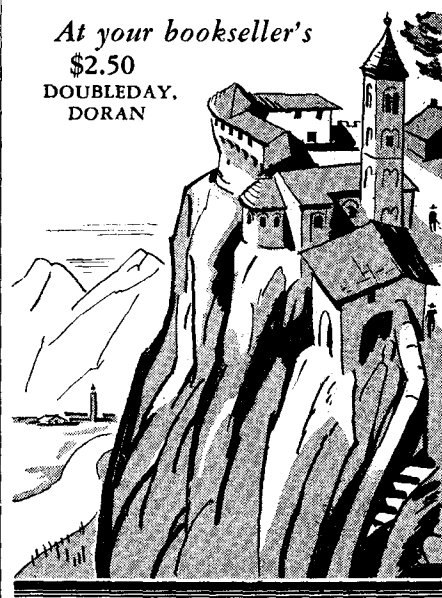
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## The Career of Kathrine

KATHRINE. By Hans Habe. New  
York: The Viking Press. 1943. 416  
pp. \$2.75.

Reviewed by STRUTHERS BURT

**H**ANS HABE in this latest book  
of his has chosen one of the  
most difficult tasks a novelist  
can set himself; the story, from its  
beginning, and the intimate psychol-  
ogy of an intellectual and successful  
courtesan. How she got that way,  
what she does with it, and its effect  
upon herself and other people.

Here is no prostitute, high or low,  
accompanied by the possible pity a  
losing performance invokes, but a  
clear-eyed, cool-blooded, outwardly  
lovely person, using her talent, her  
beauty, and her body, to play double  
or quits with the world. And what's  
more, she wins. And what's more, she  
wins without compunction or regrets.  
There is no trace of the death, spiri-  
tual or otherwise, which is supposed  
to be the wages of sin. Quite the  
contrary.

Kathrine, after whom the novel is  
named, born Kathi Stoessl of peasant  
stock, but through a marriage of con-  
venience financed by herself with a  
worthless old aristocrat become Kath-  
rine, Countess von Hugh, has been  
for fourteen years the mistress of  
Bertrand Lacoste, the motor-king of  
France; the discreet, aloof, dignified,  
and beautifully furnished mistress.  
The French have a phrase for it, *bien  
tenu*. And before that, but for shorter  
periods, she has been the mistress of  
other rich men. And before that, her  
first experience, she has been bet-  
trayed by a dashing young officer of  
the Austrian cavalry who has come  
upon her in her native Vienna; an  
episode which embarked her upon

her career of compensation and re-  
venge. The young officer, killed by a  
fall while steeplechasing, leaves Kath-  
rine with an illegitimate daughter,  
soon to be born, and it is this daugh-  
ter, Manuela, who becomes the main-  
spring of her mother's life; the ob-  
ject of a slow, careful, well-planned  
campaign on the part of the mother  
to make the daughter what the  
mother can never altogether be, a  
great, rich, and respected lady. Man-  
uela personifies to Kathrine, Kathrine  
herself in reverse.

The background is Paris and France  
in the years immediately preceding  
the declaration of war in 1939, and  
the year following.

Now, this is a rich and dramatic  
background, and the plot vaguely out-  
lined is a rich and dramatic plot  
with many possibilities, but, once  
more, a peculiarly dangerous one, and  
it is no very severe criticism to say  
that while the novel succeeds admir-  
ably with the background and the  
minor characters, and is consistently  
interesting and worthwhile, it does  
not altogether succeed with the lead-  
ing character. I doubt if any novel  
could. Women like Kathrine should  
be kept where they belong, in history  
or biography. The difference between  
history and fiction, and the reason  
why fiction is more important than  
history, and its only excuse, is that,  
while history has no point of view,  
great fiction, no matter how uncon-  
scious this may be on the part of the  
author, invariably has. In fact, that is  
the primary definition of all art, if  
the world, including a number of ar-  
tists, would only realize it. Art is a  
selection and arrangement; life, un-  
less it is viewed in terms of eons, is  
frequently casual and chaotic. And  
it is this selection and arrangement,  
inevitably entailing a point of view,  
which involves the reader emotion-  
ally in the lives of fictional char-  
acters; otherwise, he has the same  
sense of loss which accompanies time  
spent with any unrewarding person.  
The reader must care what happens  
to these people, even if their Fate is  
satirical, or else he must care what  
happens to life because of the folly,  
or wickedness, or stupidity of these  
people.

Hans Habe, it seems to me, missed  
a great opportunity, considering the  
background of his novel, when he  
failed to show the smallness of the  
plans of even as careful a person as  
Kathrine in face of the terror sweep-  
ing down upon her from the north.  
He does show this with his other  
leading character, Bertrand Lacoste,  
and as a result Bertrand Lacoste,



Hans Habe

—Bernice Abbott