

**THERE WILL** hardly be a more engrossing or illuminating book about this war than John Mason Brown's "Many a Watchful Night" (Whittlesey House). Lieut. Brown is naturally bent on seeing that the Navy gets full credit for its magnificent part in the invasion of Europe, and this he accomplishes in full measure. The man who emerges as the most inspiring hero of the book, however, is no Navy officer at all, but General Omar Bradley. Any reader will understand why Bradley is the idol and inspiration of the entire Army. When he first landed on a Normandy beachhead there was no official car awaiting him. This three-star General literally hitchhiked to the advance line.

"General Bradley," writes Brown, "goes in for none of the tawdrier dramatics with which military authority can exhibit itself. No flourishings of side-arms, no yodelings at those who cannot answer back, no bullying, and no swagger. Just the unchallengeable authority, imperceptibly exerted, of a good, patient man who is a master at his job and genuinely cares for his men. . . . When Bradley jerked his right thumb at passing jeeps, his dark eyes alight with the hope of all hitchhikers, drivers would suddenly recognize him, and come to a jarring halt. 'Won't you have my seat, sir?' a private or sergeant would ask. 'No, son,' the General would reply, swinging onto the running board and giving the boy a pat on the shoulder. 'You're much more tired than I am. I just wanted to see how things are getting along here. Go ahead.' Then he'd stand on the running board for five minutes or so, finding out what he wanted to know before swinging down, investi-

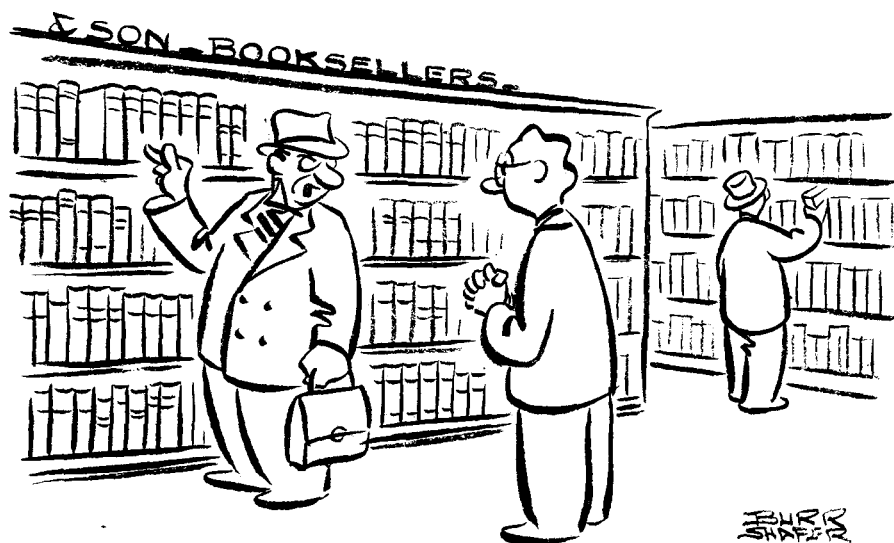
gating an outpost, and hitchhiking his way on the next vehicle to come along." . . .

**QUITE A MAN**, General Bradley! That goes for Lieutenant Brown, too. The day he joined the *SRL* board was a happy one for the rest of the staff! . . . Brown will also conduct the weekly radio program, "Of Men and Books," over CBS on Saturdays at two. . . . The *World-Telegram* has exercised every wile to persuade him to resume the post of drama critic that he left vacant when he accepted a commission in the Navy; the ante goes up every time he says no. . . . In his absence the *World-Telegram* drama page has gone into eclipse. Burton Rascoe is a master of the well-turned phrase, but he has no bump of direction. Compare his reviews with those of every other critic in town and it becomes obvious that three times out of four he goes to the wrong theater. . . .

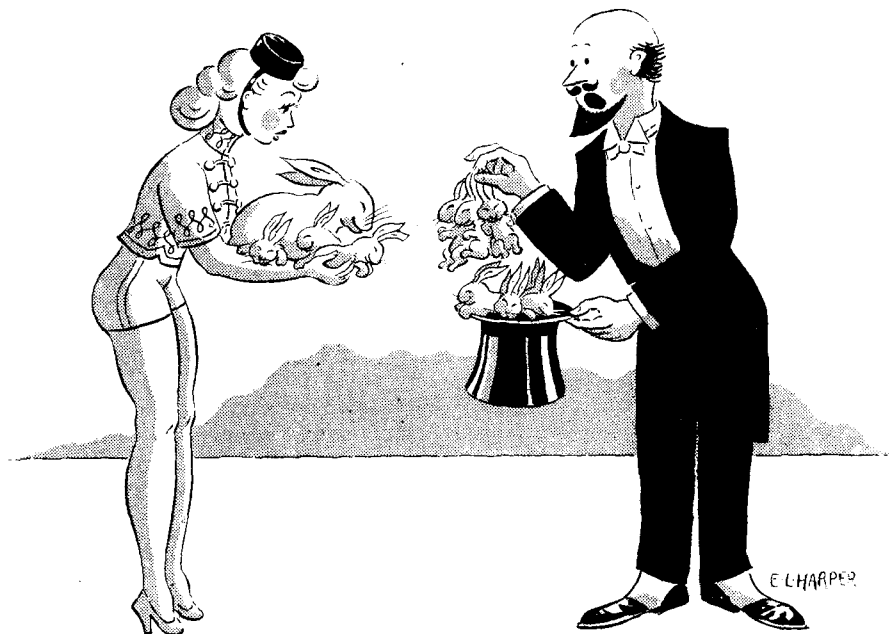
**THE FIRST BEST-SELLER** of 1945 undoubtedly will be John Steinbeck's "Cannery Row," a direct return to the style and spirit of "Tortilla Flat." It is an altogether delightful book; Steinbeck has never created more memorable characters than Doc, Mack, and Hazel; one chapter describing a wonderful frog hunt is worth ten times the price of admission. Occasionally you may feel that the whole fabric is a bit too deliberately contrived, too consciously planned to recapture the "Tortilla Flat" mood. And the chapters devoted to Dora and her house of shame seem surprisingly maudlin and corny for a man of Steinbeck's stature. This is quibbling over trifles, however. You'll have to read "Cannery Row." Look in particular for the chapter de-

scribing the death of the great humorist, Josh Billings. . . . I also remember gleefully the soliloquy of a drunken captain: "My wife is a wonderful woman. Most wonderful woman. Ought to 'ave been a man. If she was a man I wouldn't of married her." . . .

**WILLIAM L. WHITE'S** "They Were Expendable" was one of the very best books of the year 1942. The same author's "Report on the Russians" may well prove to be one of the very worst of the year 1945. White spent five weeks in Russia last summer as a member of the Eric Johnston party, but it is obvious from the parts of his story already printed in *Reader's Digest* that his mind was made up about the Soviets long before he first set foot on Russian soil. His report sounds very much like the sort of thing you might expect from the president of the Ladies' Temperance Union on a wild night at McSorley's Saloon. White is surprised at the lack of gaiety, the absence of "striking storefronts and well-arranged window displays," the paucity of the Muscovite bills-of-fare. He attributes most of the drabness to "lack of competition." It does not seem to occur to him that Russia has been engaged in a fearful struggle for existence for over three years, that a Nazi army penetrated to the very border of Moscow itself, that the Russian people have suffered privations of every sort in order to win this war, and are tired to death. . . . I spent several weeks in Russia in 1934 myself. I found many things that struck me as intolerable, but the people themselves were wonderful, and their supreme faith in the Soviet Government seemed in considerable measure justified. By American standards their factories, hospitals, stores, and hotels were, of course, primitive and inefficient, but the point is that, until the war broke out, they were getting better all the time. . . . The Russian people are extraordinarily quick to sense a hostile attitude on the part of visiting Americans. They probably spotted William White's attitude within an hour of his arrival, and reacted accordingly. In fact, an AP dispatch from Moscow, dated December 15, reports that a new comedy called "Mr. Perkins' Mission to the Land of the Bolsheviks" has "tickled the town and injected a shot of laughing-gas into Russian-American relations." Mr. Perkins is a Chicago sausage king who has come to Russia to "see Mr. Stalin and learn the weaknesses there must be in his system." The villain is an American journalist who tags behind Perkins, always skeptical and sneering at Russian character and accomplishments. His millionaire patron finally disowns him, saying, "The only weak-



"Do you realize that you've sold the book I was reading?"



"I knew this would happen some day!"

ness I've found in the Soviet system is that it doesn't know its own strength." When William White heard this story, he told a *Herald Tribune* reporter, "A sense of humor on both sides of the Atlantic is a healthy thing at this time. I hope the play is a success. I won't sue." . . . This undoubtedly will reassure Joe Stalin. Mr. White might reflect meanwhile that it is precisely such prejudiced and deliberately angled reports as his that make Soviet officials and censors so eternally suspicious of the foreign journalists quartered in their midst. . . .

**ONE OF DUELL, SLOAN, AND PEARCE'S** ads for Bill Steig's cartoon album, "Small Fry," showed a cocky young sprout puffing blissfully on a cheroot. This enraged a reader in New Jersey, who admonished the publishers: "You should forever avoid pictures of this sort. Never refer in advertising to tobacco, liquor, coffee, tea, or colas. Tobacco contains some of the most deadly poisons known to science. Your sense of smell should tell you how bad it is. About two years ago, before I stopped smoking, my little granddaughter refused to sit on my lap. She said, 'You 'mell bad.'". . . 8 to 1 the gentleman 'mells just as bad this very minute. . . . Sterling North and Yasha Frank have written a play called "Margaret" that will be produced shortly by Alexander Ince. Sterling says it's about "a woman in all her component parts." . . . Helen Hoke is the new juvenile editor of Reynal & Hitchcock. . . . *Tide* reports that the Doubleday, Doran book stores plan to sell phonograph records after the war. Pocket Book salesmen will be carrying outside lines long before that. . . .

**MORRIS ERNST**, well-known New York attorney, has been approached to act as editor of a volume of newspaper columns by famous journalists that were never printed because of political or personal reasons. The volume would feature Winchell's open letter to Churchill omitted by the *New York Mirror* on December 11, Heywood Broun's unprinted classics on the Sacco-Vanzetti case (the cause of his ultimate resignation from the *World*), certain pieces by Drew Pearson, and other material that made timid newspaper editors reach for their shears and blue pencils. . . .

**GYPSY ROSE LEE**, last of the red-hot Sixty-third Street mamas, is the star of a picture called "Belle of the Yukon" that will be at your neighborhood theater any minute. Harriet Van Horne reminds you that in this picture the Belle does not peel. . . . Two of the season's biggest play hits, "Dear Ruth" and "Anna Lucasta," will be published in book form by Random House. . . . Henry Wallace, next ex-v.p. of the U.S.A.—and a hero of Trade Winds—calls people who can't raise their own vegetables or tack up pictures on the wall "muscular illiterates." . . . Bill Sloane, heads-up editor of Henry Holt, has signed Bill Mauldin for a book of cartoons. Mauldin is one of the great new talents uncovered by this war. Watch for "Up Front with Mauldin" some time this spring. . . . A cotton-tail rabbit, nibbling thoughtfully at his evening carrot, noticed that his son was in a particularly jovial mood. "What makes Junior so happy?" he asked. Mama Rabbit explained, "He had a wonderful time in school today. He learned how to multiply." BENNETT CERF.

## "From where I sit"



You readers of EMILY HAHN'S CHINA TO ME may be puzzled by her passion for gibbons, especially if you don't know what they are. The gibbon is a small but Oh My ape.

Galley-shaped, it belongs to the species Nijinski, and any similarity is entirely so. When it comes to mink-dyed muskrat, and skunk-dyed otter, the gibbon, with sometimes 2035 hairs per square centimeter, wins arms down—which is strange considering that it walks with its hands behind its head surrendered-prisoner like. Against the bosky green of our reception room, a gibbon would look very Henri Rousseau.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**SHAKING** the blood back into his numbing fingers, smiling his zipper smile, JOE E. BROWN autographed 1200 copies of YOUR KIDS AND MINE in two hours at Los Angeles' Bullocks. Two weeks later he gave a repeat performance at Los Angeles' Broadway, trembled out 1300 more Browns. Dried up were three fountain pens and the clientele of lingerie and sporting goods. What looked like a ration line was in truth a pilgrimage to YOUR KIDS & MINE and the charming MR. BROWN whose smile and good will are unrationed.



★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**IN** a recent article which appeared in the *New York Post*, BENNETT CERF, whose performance may be seen a little to our left, referred to MR. VAN H. CARTMELL as the Humphrey Bogart of the New York literary stage. But he did not mention that SRO (STANDING ROOM ONLY) is the fifth drama anthology they have done together. And anyway, CARTMELL thinks CERF is the Charlie McCarthy of the book world.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★



Contrary to the prevailing fashion of titles which have nothing to do with the printed matter inside, CARL W. DREPPERD'S PRIMER OF AMERICAN ANTIQUES is exactly what it says it is. An antique, according to DREPPERD's glossary, is anything from acetarre to zoetrope, and the range is so wide that it makes every nostalgic attic prowler an antique collector. What is interesting is that man in his rush to meet the deadlines of history has found time to use things like gotchbelly, incroyable chairs, or even to kibosh. In fact this glossary is a world in itself.

paul

DOUBLEDAY, DORAN

## THE MORAL ATHLETE

(Continued from page 4)

role. Because the love of God speaks with authority, it does not follow that it must speak all the time. With God and conscience forever looking over his shoulder, a man cannot devote himself to any interest, however innocent, with the absorption which is the condition of its satisfaction. To acknowledge God's authority it is not necessary to run to God with every little problem. It is as though a man should take the Supreme Court as his guide, philosopher, and friend. God and conscience, like the Supreme Court, take no cognizance of the greater part of life. It is their function to determine a general orientation and to define limits. Within these limits subordinate principles—the appetites, prudence, family love, communal loyalties, science, and art—must enjoy autonomy. Without that autonomy they cannot be fruitful of good, and the effect is to create a waste instead of orderly abundance.

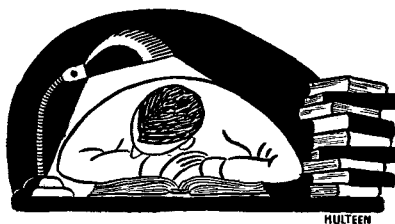
The moral will divorced from its natural content, freed from accountability to the human desires which it is designed to serve, proceeds to extravagant lengths. It may lead to a masochistic pleasure of self-denial, or to the hoarding of a personal power which yields no good beyond its own subjective satisfactions. Aldous Huxley has described such a case:

In a mild and spiritual way Herbert was very fond of his food. So was Martha—darkly and violently fond of it. That was why she had become a vegetarian, why her economies were always at the expense of the stomach—precisely because she liked food so much. She suffered when she deprived herself of some delicious morsel. But there was a sense in which she loved her suffering more than the morsel. Denying herself, she felt her whole being irradiated by a glow of power; suffering, she was strengthened, her will was wound up, her energy enhanced. The dammed-up instincts rose and rose behind the wall of voluntary mortification, deep and heavy with potentialities of force. In the struggle between the instincts Martha's love of power was generally strong enough to overcome her greed; among the hierarchy of pleasures, the joy of exerting the personal conscious will was more intense than the joy of eating even Turkish delight or strawberries and cream.

Excessively developed, and divorced from all positive goods, the moral will

takes pride in its own negating, and flaunts it before the world. Deprived of natural delights, it retaliates by affecting to despise them. Instead of conceding the innocence of natural goods until they are proved guilty, it considers them as presumptively guilty since they have not proceeded from itself. Hence that strange fanaticism, vividly portrayed by Walter Scott, and pilloried with delicate restraint by Richard Hooker.

Fanaticism may assume many different forms, use different symbols, excite different emotions, formulate different ideologies, but whether it be the puritanism of the seventeenth century or the communism and fascism of the twentieth, its characteristic danger is the same. The measures taken to give a cause ascendancy, to



secure allegiance to its supremacy, beget a forgetfulness and reckless disregard of that concrete beneficence which originally commended it, or which at any rate constitutes the only ground on which it possesses a moral justification.

By a curious paradox the rigorism of the puritan evades the most serious difficulties of life. His effort takes the form of a kind of brute strength rather than of skill. The difficulties which he overcomes are forces rather than complexities—forces that can be overcome by a dead heave of the will, and with comparatively little discrimination or understanding. Puritanism *will*s hard rather than *thinks* hard. Similarly, the puritan's precisionism involves the minimum of intellectual difficulty. The casuistical application of rules, especially of rules that are codified and set down in an authoritative document, is perhaps the simplest form of morality, requiring only a few steps of inference. The rules may go against the grain, and their application may require an overcoming of temptation, it may be difficult to *do* what one ought to do; but to *discover* what one ought to do is comparatively easy.

It is only a small part of morality which can be subserved either by "main strength" or by the direct application of rules. Abstinence, yes; and punctuality. But temperance, wisdom,


loyalty, friendship, happiness, justice, benevolence, liberty, peace—these are goods which require something more than overcoming, and something more than purity or scrupulousness. The supreme moral difficulties are similar to the difficulties of art, requiring judgment rather than exactness of power. Strength of will divorced from the art of its judicious application leads to brutality; and rules divorced from the purpose which justifies and interprets them lead to pedantry.

If it is fair to exhibit the puritan's defects, it is also fair to remember, here as elsewhere, those opposite defects which he condemned—to remember them is to feel some sympathy with the puritan's excessive reaction. He regarded his opponents much as the youthful athlete of today regards the libertine. The lack of moral control, whether due to infirmity of will or to violence of emotion, translates itself from age to age into different terms.

The puritan of the seventeenth century had the effect of "bracing character in a period of relaxation." He stood for "the lit lamp" and "the loins girt" against the indulgence and improvidence of his times. That he should have specifically attacked drunkenness, sexual looseness and perversion, the brutality of sport, licentiousness at carnivals and feasts, dancing, card-playing, was in some degree a historical accident. These may or may not remain the most conspicuous symptoms of moral weakness. If not, then others have superseded them. There is always a loose living in some sense, a laxity, a shortsightedness, a recklessness of passion, a narrow preoccupation with the immediate satisfaction, an inordinate fondness for physical pleasures. "Self-indulgence" is a term of reproach under any code, since it implies an indifference or resistance to that code as such, whatever code it be. Therefore he who takes arms against puritanism must consider that by so doing he gives aid and comfort to the puritan's enemy, who is in some sense also his own.

The puritan's rigorism contains, then, an important element of moral truth, both in that which it champions and in that which it opposes. He may with perfect right be made to serve as the symbol of that which he made peculiarly his own, and for which he sacrificed residual and compensating truths. So to use the puritan does not contradict the sober judgment which discovers his faults. Symbolism is not sober judgment; it is a simplification and subordination of the concrete complexity in order to point a moral. Its one-sidedness is overcome by the use of other symbols. The moral pantheon as a whole corrects the one-sided cults of its component deities: the worship of Zeus and Ares is mitigated by the

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in  
**LIFE WITH  
FATHER?**



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worship of Athena, Aphrodite, and Apollo.

In his insistence upon the importance of salvation, the puritan symbolizes the choice of a supreme good and its preference over all other goods. Conceived as a moral athlete, the puritan symbolizes the enthronement of such a preëminent good—its control of the appetites, its practical ascendancy over intermediate goods, and its scrupulous regulation of conduct. He represents that inflexible adherence to creed which will always appear as fanaticism or obstinacy to more balanced minds—as the faith of the early Christians appeared to their more cultivated pagan contemporaries. He represents the ruthless subordination of every lesser consideration to the one thing needful. The puritan was single-minded—which is, in effect, to be narrow-minded. He stripped for battle by divesting himself of wordly attachments, he economized his spiritual resources by reducing his appetitive liabilities, he tempered his will in the fire of enthusiasm.

Such an ancestor may properly be worshiped in those recurrent periods of individual and social reform when there is an ominous sound as of surf on the rocks. The puritan, said Stuart Sherman,

comes aboard, like a good pilot; and while we trim our sails, he takes the wheel and lays our course for a fresh voyage. His message when he leaves us is not, "Henceforth be masterless," but, "Bear thou henceforth the sceptre of thine own control through life and the passion of life." If that message still stirs us as with the sound of a trumpet, and frees and prepares us, not for the junketing of a purposeless vagabondage, but for the ardor and discipline and renunciation of a pilgrimage, we are Puritans.

The puritan sailed his ship in the open seas. Despite his cult of moral vigor, he was not a moral introvert. He did not confine himself within his moral gymnasium, but used his strength out of doors, in the world. He pursued his calling, and he participated in the public life of his time and place. In the wars and revolutions precipitated by the Protestant Reformation he assumed the role of statesman and soldier. From this school of discipline came men who were notable for doing what they soberly and conscientiously resolved to do, despite temptations and obstacles—such men as William the Silent, Admiral Coligny, John Knox, Oliver Cromwell, John Milton, and our New England ancestors. The puritans imprinted on English and American institutions a quality of manly courage, self-reliance, and sobriety. We are still drawing upon the reserves of spiritual vigor which they accumulated.

DECEMBER 30, 1944

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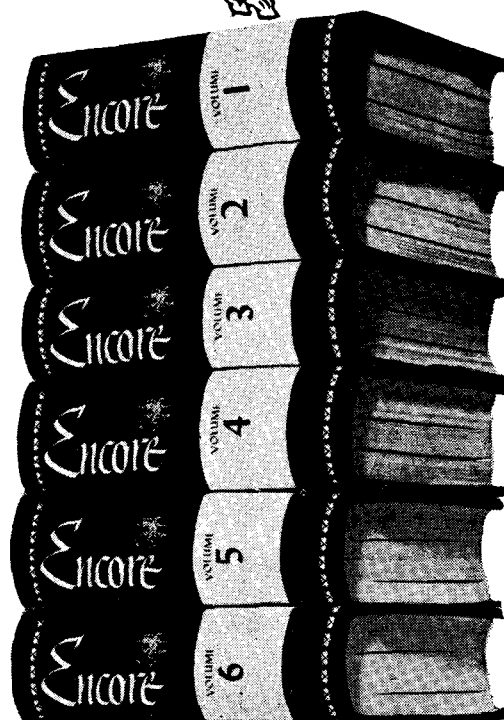
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# the Phoenix Nest

I HAVE thought of a new kind of stunt which may or may not prove interesting: the writing of "Leave Out" couplets. What is left out will usually be a proper name. Here is my

## LEAVE OUT, NO. 1

War's high-tide rages; and still —  
Wrangles and wrangles with the War  
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I will print only really good ones,  
if and as they are submitted. I will  
print no explanations.

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"Ziba" by James Pipes, that, highly exciting book of poems inspired by the conversation and tall tales of Louisiana Negroes? Anent the name "Ziba," Georgina S. Townsend of Santa Monica, California, tells me:

It is a name I have never seen used except as by my grandfather, Ziba Woodworth Boyce of North Fayston, Vermont, who was born in 1812 and died in 1876. He was a minor Vermont poet of the early 60's and a nephew of Samuel Woodworth of "Old Oaken Bucket" fame. I find it used but once in the Bible —because it is such an unusual and unused name it has always held a certain amount of mystery for me, although I believe its meaning is "a husbandman." My grandfather was that, and a successful one, as well as a poet, a member of the State Legislature, and a grandson of Jonathan Palmer, one of the Green Mountain Boys under Ethan Allen at Ticonderoga.

Speaking of mysterious names, you should recall Edwin Arlington Robinson's poem of the two men of all mankind that he wished to know more about; but that, despite "forever thinking on," he could no further locate. The middle two verses go:

Melchizedek, he praised the Lord,  
And gave some wine to Abraham;  
But who can tell what else he did  
Must be more learned than I am.

Ucalegon, he lost his house  
When Agamemnon came to Troy;  
But who can tell me who he was—  
I'll pray the gods to give him joy.

So the names Melchizedek and Ucalegon chased the great poet everywhere, until he too died and became for us a man of quite as infinite mystery.

And then Mrs. Townsend's speaking of Ticonderoga reminded me of the Camerons, and Robinson's poem "The March of the Cameron Men," and Robert Louis Stevenson's poem, "Ticonderoga." Stevenson says he first heard the Ticonderoga legend from a man of letters "there in roaring London's central stream." The two clans of Campbells and Camerons lay claim to it; but he says that the Camerons only must be allowed. I wish I had written that legend of the western Highlands in the great verse R. L. S. brought to it. It concerns the plighted troth that may not be broken. If more heed were given to such troths today—the parable of this story—it might be a better world. The name left to the clansman, by the warning of the dead, was the name "Ticonderoga." Over all the world he sought the name:

"Many a name have I heard," he thought,  
"In all the tongues of men,  
Full many a name both here and there,  
Full many both now and then.  
When I was at home in my father's house  
In the land of the naked knee,  
Between the eagles that fly in the lift  
And the herrings that swim in the sea,  
And now I am a captain-man  
With a brow cockade in my hat—  
Many a name have I heard," he thought,  
"But never a name like that."

But finally he fought at the place,  
and "sleeps in the place of the name."  
In the first part of the ballad, when the Stewart is fleeing from the Cameron he killed, what a gorgeous verse is here:

Out over cairn and moss  
Out over scrog and scaur,  
He ran as runs the clansman  
That bears the cross of war.  
His heart beat in his body,  
His hair clove to his face,  
When he came at last in the gloaming  
To the dead man's brother's place.  
The east was white with the moon.  
The west with the sun was red,  
And there, in the house-doorway,  
Stood the brother of the dead.

Boy! That's writing!

From an Army Captain in Italy, who had his eye caught by a sentence of mine in our Anniversary Issue, comes the following. His name is David Streger, and it seems that I had said, "I like the human race, and in many ways I intensely admire human beings; but sometimes I think their taste most execrable." Captain Streger writes in rhythm:

Then come, Benét, and learn how well  
you spoke:  
how much the human race should be  
admired:  
how execrable its taste can really be!  
(Do not be hesitant because you had  
in mind its taste in poems; your words  
apply.)  
Let us regard this monastery, built  
by men who wished to save their fellow  
men.  
One rightfully admires those who raise  
such structures to their God: this  
edifice  
had strength, had beauty, had inspir-  
ing charm.  
But if you look at it more closely yet  
up here—that is Cassino down below—  
you see the shell-gnawed shredded  
stones,  
the terrifying havoc done by those  
who also wished to save their fellow  
men.  
You must complete the picture men-  
tally,  
imagining where once the tower stood  
or is it needless to go on—now that  
you know just how diverse men's  
tastes can be?

Earle Walbridge says he is not yet an initiate of the National Fan Fantasy Federation. "Just what is stefnic and stfan?" But he has the manuscript ready for a book double the size of his "Literary Characters Drawn from Life" (Wilson, 1936). He says that