

**THE SPORTS PAGES** are full of a lot of stories about the impending Kentucky Derby, and a new novel by James Branch Cabell, to be called "There Were Two Pirates," has been announced for fall publication. These two entirely unrelated facts lend a strange timeliness to a fascinating letter received by Trade Winds from Mr. Bruce Starks:

You are being burdened with this story because you have become the curator of anecdotes in any way connected with the Arts, and particularly with writers, and this is a story about Archie Robertson, whose book "Slow Train to Yesterday" has recently been published, and also indirectly about Mr. James Branch Cabell.

The second paragraph on page 65 of "Slow Train to Yesterday" reads: "On a May evening in 1932, young and broke, I parked on the crest of the Blue Ridge to watch the sunset. Besides the clothes on my back, I owned a small equity in my new car and a seasonal winter-resort job from which I was returning for a visit home."

That was a sad May for all of us in Louisville, and just about everyone was broke. Five Louisville banks had folded in unison on a bleak Monday morning the previous November, and not since 1865 had there been a greater shortage of solvent Kentuckians. Colonel (he owned a car) Robertson arrived home amidst this dearth of cash on the first Saturday in May, which, as everyone knows, is always Derby Day, excepting in 1945. He phoned me and asked me what my plans were for seeing the race. As we had suffered together at his beloved Male High, and had later on been room-mates at Harvard, I told him the worst, and invited him to come on to my apartment and hear the race with me. He came, bringing part of a bottle of non-bonded Bourbon.

No one but a native Kentuckian could appreciate the tragic pathos of our situation that afternoon. Contrary to popular conviction, Derby Day is not simply a Saturday set aside for the hotel and restaurant proprietors of Louisville to retaliate upon the Yankees for their effrontery in outlasting the South in the War Between the States. It means as much to Kentuckians as the opening of "Gone With the Wind" meant to the people of Atlanta, and you can find plenty of Louisvillians who have been to every Derby since they were carried to the first ones in long clothes, and who can name the winners and their prices from Aristides on up to date. Archie and I were frankly depressed, and moodily sipped Bourbon highballs, lacking the spirit to crush mint for juleps.

Archie had been glancing around the apartment with a speculative expression on his face, and finally I noticed that he was staring up at

the top shelf of one of my bookcases where the Storisende Edition of "The Works of James Branch Cabell" reposed in unopened and uncut dignity, three volumes to a slip case, eighteen volumes in all, for which I had paid ten dollars the volume.

Well, the first secondhand bookstore we tried on Second Street offered us twenty dollars for the set. We hauled the books back to Archie's car and tried the other secondhand bookstore in Louisville, on Liberty Street. Time was running out on us, so when we got the bid up to thirty dollars spot cash the deal was closed, and we were off to Churchill Downs with forty-five minutes left before post-time of the Derby race. Archie found a parking place that charged us only one dollar, and we bought two tickets for the grandstand. Without a reserved seat our chances of actually seeing a horse were slim; but at least we were on the premises. But then Archie, who is a man of considerable savoir faire, found a boy who sold us the privilege of standing upon a plank supported by ice cream freezers for one dollar each. And we still had around twenty dollars.

In those days, and probably even today, Kentuckians habitually bet on the Bradley Entry; so while Archie guarded our places on the freezers I stood in line at the pari-mutuel and put the last of our cash on the Bradley Entry, on the nose, of course.

The Bradley colt that had a chance that year was named Brother Joe. We learned that, and his number, from a man standing next to us on the plank.

Leaving you to fill in for yourself the familiar local color about Boots and Saddles, the playing of "My Old Kentucky Home," the little man in the pink coat on the gray horse leading the parade to the post, etc., etc., etc., and skipping to the finish of the race, be it known that Brother Joe was not good



enough, not by several horse-lengths, and most of them were occupied by horses. The crowd yelled "Burgoo King!" and Archie and I climbed down from our plank and sadly shook our heads.

We were just starting to tear up our tickets when somebody in the crowd said, "Good old Bradley! Done it again!" And it was only then that we learned that Burgoo King was the other half of the Bradley Entry. At the pay-off window we cashed our tickets for one hundred and eighty dollars, which, by the wondrous workings of providence, was the exact original cost of the Storisende Edition!

That was long ago, and I have missed most of the Derbies since then, and have given up such foolishness as gambling. Otherwise I would offer you eight to five that you can't produce another purchaser of the Storisende Edition who ever got all of his money back out of it, not to mention two tickets to the Derby to boot. . . .

**ONE OF THE** most promising new book publishing ventures in years is William Sloane Associates. Mr. Sloane, with Norman Hood, Keith Jennison, and Helen Taylor, all previous executives of Henry Holt & Co., will sponsor their first list this fall . . . Joseph Brandt remains as president of Holt. He faces a difficult task in finding new editors as capable as the ones he has lost—but Joe has accomplished miracles in publishing before! . . . A new factor in Holt affairs is a Texas millionaire who acquired a big block of stock in the open market . . .

**PERCY BLAND**, of the Ferris Printing Company, sent the following letter to Ted Rinehart. Comment would be superfluous:

Kindly place our order for 25 copies of "Battle Report," Volume 2. In connection with this book, I am presenting the following human interest story.

As I told you, we have employed a considerable number of ex-service men who are now in the process of learning the printing trade. Among these are several Navy veterans.

As we were printing "Battle Report," Volume 2, one of these men, Frank Arthur Spiller, a Navy veteran, helped lay out the plates for the press. Discovering that the book was about the Navy, he took home a rough set of proofs to read and found his name listed on page 487 as a recipient of the Navy and Marine Corps Medal.

No one at Ferris, until he mentioned finding his name in the book, had known that he had received a citation. I talked to him this morning and discovered just what had happened in conjunction with the event that led up to his being cited. His citation is as follows:

FRANK ARTHUR SPILLER  
COXSAIN  
UNITED STATES NAVAL RESERVE

"For extraordinary heroism and outstanding performance of duty in rescuing three shipmates from the



"... and heaven help you find a house."

sinking portion of the U.S.S. *Glenon*, when that vessel struck a mine.

"When the mine was struck, Coxswain Spiller, who was below in a living compartment, was thrown up and out through a break in the deck, and then fell back inside. He saw immediately that there were many men still in the compartment, and with great presence of mind, he remained to assist wounded to safety. He was the last to leave and left just as the compartment became submerged. He succeeded in removing three wounded men, although wounded himself.

"The courage, initiative, judgment, and prompt actions displayed by Coxswain Spiller on this occasion were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.

"Harold R. Stark  
Admiral, U. S. Navy"

This action took place between June 8 and 10, 1944, in the Bay of Seine, France.

An event not mentioned in the citation was the fact that, in addition to his saving three of his shipmates, he also saved the payroll sack with \$60,000 in it. As he describes it, he saw the payroll sack, recognized it for what it was, and decided he might as well take it along with him.

In conjunction with this action, he also received the Purple Heart.

To me, the most remarkable part of the whole thing is that Spiller, who, previous to his coming with us, had no intention of ever being in the printing business, should arrive just at the time we were printing "Battle Report." The chance of this chain of events occurring is so slight as to be fantastic.

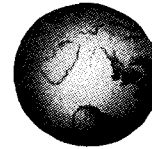
THERE IS A movement afoot to coax

Leo Cherne, the economist, into writing a book of poetry, the title of which, of course, would be "A Cherne for the Verse." . . . And David Feltz, Decatur's ace commentator, thinks "General Ike's wife should dash off a volume called 'My Three Years Without Eisenhower'." . . . The latter's greatest tribute to the late General Patton's military skill, incidentally, came at the climax of the battle for Europe. Somebody asked, "Where's Patton?" "How in hell should I know?" answered Eisenhower. "I haven't heard from him for three hours." . . . In a letter to the *Herald Tribune*, an unknown philosopher has diagnosed to his own satisfaction the cause of our current capital-labor difficulties. "The trouble with this country," he announces solemnly, "is that the poor people have all the money." . . . Two atom bombs are about to fall on Chicago's literary world. . . . Major Patrick Dolan conceived a bold idea in 1943: a fake Nazi radio station that would broadcast demoralizing orders and propaganda inside the Reich. He will tell the story of the brilliant execution of the scheme in a thriller called "Operation Annie" (Rinehart: fall publication). The canny Alfred Hitchcock has the screen rights sewed up. . . .

A gent named Henry L. Mencken inquires, "Can somebody tell me the etymology of the common American term, 'to goose'?" Is there an ornithologist in the house?

BENNETT CERF.

"From where  
I sit"



IF I HAD MORE ROOM here, I could do something other than make a few general remarks about **Western World** by ROYCE BRIER. But, lest such remarks as I do make be very inadequate, they must be general. This is because the scope of this book is Western civilization itself.

Perhaps someone will have the ingenuity, under the stimulus of pecuniary aggrandizement, to invent a new rage in parlor games. The hands will be dealt, and perhaps you will be playing food forces, your husband trade forces, your partners will be tracing cultural forces. Pretty well along in the game you may find that happiness and machines are incompatible, or that with regard to Germany, "no great people has found its own temperament so disparaged by its own literary exponents".

But if you read **Western World**, you will be playing such a game with yourself. For here is a literary penicillin, a rather elementary mould formed by the common forces of the past, the bread of our civilization. Take two or three chapters before bedtime, and by the time you come to the chapter called Summer, you will begin to see clearly the forces which, seeping and boiling through the centuries, came to make that ominous summer of 1939 the safety valve of the latest crisis in our civilization.

What this Pulitzer Prize author shows us unmistakably, is that there are no historical doctors who can determine what stage of this latest crisis we are now in. All we can know is that when Western civilization "ceases to grow, to dare everything, every answer and every fate, when it ceases to put itself in danger of the judgment, but shrinks back, awed and gray and in quest of refuge from the endless peril of living, then say to it, hail and farewell."

We have become too complicated a civilization to be able to trace the intricate siftings of a Spengler. **Western World** gives us a diagnosis of existence which is clear as a bell. And if you don't agree with its conclusions, you at least will be certain of that with which you disagree.

paul

DOUBLEDAY



# Seeing Things

A TALE OF ONE CITY

**G**OD! Was I happy to see America again!" He was a young Texan; at first sight, the kind of boy you would expect to see as a contestant in any rodeo. He was thin, tanned, scraggly; a healthy extrovert, you would have said, until you noticed that his face wore an expression of pain which refused to quit it when he laughed. He had the cowboy look, even if driving a Fort Worth taxi did happen to be his job.

He had been a paratrooper; a proud member of the proud 101st Airborne Division. He had seen the works—in the air and on the ground. For three months he had been a German prisoner. The wretched gruel he had forced himself to eat had cost him his teeth. He had been beaten badly, too, on the head and back, and had his left hand crushed, for showing his Texan independence by spitting in a German officer's face. His description of the fear which had possessed him every time he had had to jump from a plane; of the broken legs and fractured arms his friends had sustained when they, also, had jumped; and of the boys he had known who were shot in the air or when they landed in trees, was something to freeze the blood.

"Yes, sir, I was goddamn glad to get back. Twenty-one months is too long a time. But comin' back wasn't easy. This country don't know a damn thing about the war, 'n seems to care less.

"Why, do you know," he asked, and the smile faded from his face, "when our troop ship came in, we anchored right off Coney Island. 'N guess what they were doing there? They had one of those World's Fair parachute machines set up, 'n hundreds of people were paying good money to take jumps on it—jus' for the fun of it; jus' to giggle and shriek—when we hadn't had any fun jumpin' at all. Can you beat that? That was my first view of home, 'n it made me mad."

I could not help thinking of this young Texan when, the other afternoon in the midst of New York's comfort, I dropped in to see "Open City."

\*OPEN CITY (Citta Aperta), screen play by Sergio Amidei and F. Fellini. Directed by Roberto Rossellini. English titles by Pietro di Donato and Herman G. Weinberg. Produced in Italy by Excelsa, and released in United States by Mayer-Burstein, Inc. With a cast including Aldo Fabrizi, Anna Magnani, Marcello Pagliero, Vito Annichiarico, Mario Michi, Henry Feist, etc. At the World Theatre.

For this Italian film, dealing with Rome during the German occupation, is the most eloquent and pulverizing proof the motion-pictures have yet set before us of how different for civilians was the world of war that Europe knew from the one that we knew here.

"Open City," may I quickly point out, is not a documentary. Yet it gives the illusion of being one. Its anguishes do not appear to have been tricked up for the screen. They seem as genuine as if, by coincidence, an appalling sequence of events had just happened to take place in orderly narrative fashion before the news-reel cameras. The picture leaves us feeling, not as if we had been listening to dialogue, but as if we had eavesdropped on the actual speech of mortals tested almost beyond mortal endurance.

There is melodrama. Plenty of it. It is of that lurid, Jean Valtin kind in which Hollywood would revel for purely cinematic reasons. In "Open City," however, this melodrama is part of the film's accuracy as coverage of that most monstrous of all melodramas—war itself. It is sprung from the actualities an invaded nation was forced to survive rather than from the contrivance a scenarist was

free to imagine. In peaceful California this tale of the Underground's struggle with the Nazis would have been told in Dietrich and von Stroheim terms. In war-torn Italy its characters wear no make-up except the mascara of human misery.

The studio touch is, for the most part, blessedly missing. Street scene follows street scene in which the people act like people, not actors. Even the central figures—the Catholic priest; the Communist leader; his actress-sweetheart, whose love of luxuries leads her to betray him; the printer for the Underground, and his proletarian fiancée who is shot down by the Germans on the night before she was to be married—all of these manage to behave so naturally that one is never allowed to realize that they are also performing.

This constant sense of the candid camera at work is, of course, an illusion, skillfully created and maintained to contribute to both the power and illusion of the film itself. Yet it is the product of more than the art which conceals art. It is the expression of artists who have something far beyond mere showmanship on their minds and in their hearts.

The Italian studio which made the picture was not merely turning out a film. It was recording the agony of a city; the horror that was Rome, when, with death, starvation, and disease as their companions, her people lived under the blight of the German terror and faced the barbarism of Nazi torture chambers.

This cross-section of what Rome endured is suggested in terms of the families who dwell in flats around



... for all people who knew the war only in this country, and hence cannot ... imagine what civilians elsewhere endured, 'Open City' should be shotgun seeing."