

# "From where I sit"



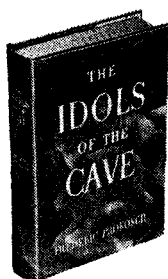
WHAT do you expect me to do, quote passages from PROKOSCH's new novel *The Idols of The Cave*, and then say "Now I submit that this is good writing"? I only do that once in a while when I think people may be getting bored with what else I have to say From Where I Sit. And I don't like to do it, because I think there exists these days a lot of confusion over such terms as *fine writing*.

Publishers, for example, usually rapture over fine writing when they've got a book they don't think will sell. What the hell, they say, we might as well get some prestige out of it, stress the fine writing angle. Critics, on the other hand, point to fine writing in the same delicious way they spy the canapé at their favorite canoppy. It gives them a chance to unleash a little torrent of personal brilliance.

Yet, whatever rapture it may evoke, fine writing is and should be secondary to the business of telling a story. If the writer succeeds,—and here is the tricky part—if he succeeds in transforming the raw material of the story into writing which sticks in the mind or lingers in the mental ear, then he is an artist, and PROKOSCH does and is. Now in this transforming process, he must frequently distort the facts, rearrange incidents, and angle his focus so as to interpret the bare reality we all have access to, and to heighten the personal experience of the reader as he reads along. As in painting, the writer's interpretation is of prime importance.

To quote the juicy passages in this new novel would be to quote almost the whole book, for PROKOSCH is intensely aware of everything he tries to describe. In addition to his awareness, he imposes upon the reader the distinctly sinister focus he is after. This is the dramatic story of wartime New York, but it is the specific wartime New York of the upper, shakier, and more frightening classes, and the scenery which never gets outside the protected radius of tall, expensive buildings with canoppy and Georgian doorways and Left Bank Bohemia, is

especially luminous and vertical and impossible to escape from. The characters, each an idol to someone, and very often to themselves, cannot escape. And what makes it art, the reader cannot escape.



paul

DOUBLEDAY

## TRADE Winds

THE ENTIRE SCRIBNER editorial force having been alerted for weeks to signal the arrival of a new Hemingway manuscript, there were cries of exultation and relief when a battered suitcase, lettered "E. H." and bearing a Key West tag, was deposited with a thump in Max Perkins's private office recently. Unfortunately, nobody could get it open, and outside help had to be sought. Impatient, Mr. Perkins bent down, put an ear to the suitcase, and remarked quietly, "My God, I think I hear something ticking." It was at this point that Whitney Darrow suddenly remembered an important date at Princeton. The ticking proved imaginary, however; the valise finally was pried open—and out fell two old suits and a single page of unmistakable Hemingway long-hand. The message, quoted here in full, read, "Can't some good dry-cleaner get a few of these damn spots out?" . . .

PENGUIN BOOKS HAS a new number called "The Weather," by George Kimble and Raymond Bush. Penguin also is readying a twenty-five cent edition of "Lady Chatterley's Lover." Kimble and Bush may have to add a brand new chapter on atmospheric disturbances when Mr. Hearst hears what's afoot. . . . Jack Smart, abundantly endowed by nature for the title role he plays in Dashiell Hammett's radio serial, "The Fat Man," had a sobering thought at the Players' Club one evening. "Wouldn't it be terrible if I lost my sight?" he asked. "Cheer up," counseled a friend. "You could always get a Seeing-Eye Horse." . . . The Home and Hobby Shop, of Atlanta, stocks cook books exclusively. The proprietor was reading "The Egg and I" for his own amusement. While he was out to lunch, a young housewife chose it in preference to Fanny Farmer and "The Joy of Cooking." Up to the present writing, the book has not been returned. . . . The Metropolitan Museum of Art has a white jade dog, carved by an unknown



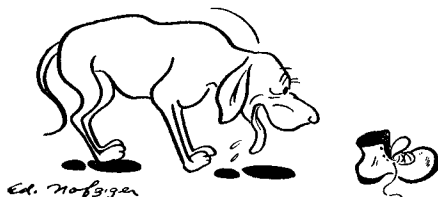
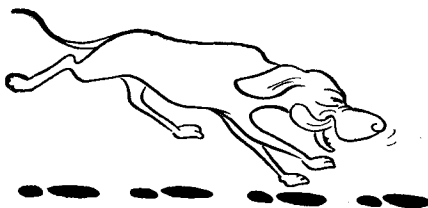
Chinese over two centuries ago, that is a dead ringer for Jim Thurber's canine drawings. If you don't believe it, says Alan Priest in *The Art News*, look at Thurber's "How to Raise a Dog" (page 31 in particular) and then at this photograph of the Metropolitan's treasure.

**EBONY, THE NEGRO DIGEST** Publishing Company's new picture magazine, is obviously modeled on *Life*, but it is edited with taste, intelligence, and a shrewd understanding of what its public wants. Result: almost half a million circulation per issue before its first year is completed. Book publishers are testing its pulling power as an advertising medium. . . . A more widely touted newcomer, *Holiday*, is perking up sharply after a shaky start. . . . The daily columnists have printed more bunk about the Field-backed-Cousins-edited *USA* than all other magazine projects put together. Facts: a staff of over thirty is quietly but unostentatiously planning a weekly magazine that will imitate nobody, discover its own special place in the sun. The editors themselves do not know when the first issue will go on sale. . . . In early spring another powerfully backed newsmagazine will make its bow. It is tentatively labeled *UN World*, edited by a staff recruited in large measure from *The New Republic*, and sponsored by a group that includes Jock Whitney, Nelson Rockefeller, Michael Straight, and Max Ascoli. . . . More on the literary side will be the new quarterly *Mainstream*. Dashiell Hammett, Arnaud d'Usseau, Samuel Sillen, and Howard Fast gave a reception last week to celebrate its official launching. . . . One of my favorite magazine features is a lively weekly page in *Tide* called, reasonably enough, Tidings. Recently it described Aviatrix Jacqueline Cochran's cocktail party in honor of her husband, multi-millionaire Floyd Odum. He was lamentably late for his own party, but finally entered amidst the reverential hush that befits a director of a dozen great corporations. "Darling," was his method of making amends to his wife. "Surprise! I bought you a new airplane today." Everybody thought that was pretty wonderful except one unappreciative drunk whose comment was heard distinctly by the entire assemblage: "Humph! All the flower shops must have been closed!" . . .

LAWRENCE R. MAXWELL, who special-

*The Saturday Review*

izes in avant-avant-garde books for the Greenwich Village elect, reports that a customer marched into his shop in search of a tome on city planning, and, brushing aside explanations, marched out with a copy of Cyril Connolly's "The Condemned Playground." . . . Brand Aymar's roommate was confused by a new book title, too. "Is that La Farge novel about the hurricane worth reading?" he asked. "I think it's called 'The Sudden Gust'." . . . Crowell's new edition of Roget's Thesaurus is the most valuable reference book that has come to my desk this year. I understand it will be out of stock in short order. Hurry, hurry, hurry! . . . James Gray, new book editor of the *Chicago Daily News*, has a volume of criticism,

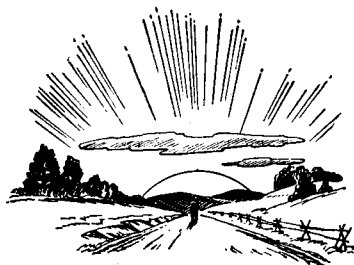


"On Second Thought," on the fall University of Minnesota Press list. . . . Barbara Frost, able publicity representative for Lippincott, has written a whodunit called "The Unwelcome Corpse." Coward-McCann will publish it early in 1947. . . .

**JIM FLAGG'S** aptly-named autobiography, "Roses and Buckshot" (Putnam), will delight especially members of the Dutch Treat Club and the Artists and Writers Golf Association. Of Frank Crowninshield, one of the best-loved and most famous of the Dutch Treat's founding fathers, Flagg remarks, "He bought posters from me when he was art editor of Appleton's and I was sixteen. But this wit, this always polished man of the globe, despite the fine head-start I gave him, lacks intelligence in one subject—art. With great reluctance, I say a little bit less than nothing in these pages about 'modern art.' I just rely on the evidence, that dreadful gallery of mod-

**if** you like  
**falling leaves**

**the smell of smoke  
in the air . . .**



**clear autumn skies**

**memories and thoughts  
of the country . . .**



**and such Americana as** stone walls, root cellars, old orchards, watering troughs, two-man cross cut saws, kerosene lamps, wheel barrows, pungent sassafras, scarlet autumns in New England, green-clouded swallow tails, Indian Summer, April showers, wild blueberries, snow banked woods, and high-hot summer . . .

**then you will  
surely like**



**An American Year**

**BY HAL BORLAND**

Illustrated with 50 lithographs, wood cuts and etchings by leading American artists. Wherever books are sold. \$3.00. Simon and Schuster

**NOW AVAILABLE IN  
FIVE LANGUAGES**  
*Portuguese Edition Now Ready*



**TRYPHOSA  
BATES-BATCHELLER'S  
Finest Book  
THE SOUL  
OF A QUEEN**

**Emerald-eyed Louise Marie de Gonzague, Queen of Poland, is one of history's loveliest heroines, the reigning belle of France and Poland. Filled with romance and intrigue, her fascinating story makes a fictionized biography that is completely absorbing. Profusely illustrated.**

**English edition: \$3.00; Deluxe, \$7.00  
French edition: \$2.75; Deluxe, \$6.00  
Spanish, Portuguese, and  
Polish editions: \$1.50**

*and in English and French*

**FRANCE IN  
SUNSHINE  
AND SHADOW**

**The glitter and gaiety... the famous names of society, of the arts and of international politics. These were France to Mrs. Bates-Batcheller. And then there was war—a France under Nazi rule. Tryphosa Bates-Batcheller recalls with tender bravery, the years of war and peace touched with the magic of the French.**

**English edition: \$2.50; Deluxe, \$5.00  
French edition: \$2.00; Deluxe, \$5.00**

**BRENTANO'S**

**586 Fifth Avenue, New York 19, N.Y.**



**"You'll have to shuttle over to Grand Central and take the Woodlawn Express."**

ern fungi Crownyn reproduced for years in Vanity Fair." . . .

**TWO OF THE MOST** satisfying of the flood of new fall juveniles are Robert Misch's "At Daddy's Office" (Knopf) and Ruth White's "Ollie the Ostrich" (Nelson). Misch is vice-president of the Al Paul Lefton Advertising Agency; Mrs. White is the wife of the Bill White who wrote "Pale Blonde of Sands Street," and the daughter of William Morris, whose present far-flung theatrical empire was built originally around the fabulously profitable tours of Sir Harry Lauder.

Every now and then Sir Harry would announce that he was through with performing on the stage, and Mr. Morris would have to brave the cold winters of Scotland to make him change his mind. Mr. Morris swore that the bedrooms in Sir Harry's house were kept at a steady temperature of twelve degrees below zero. One night he simply couldn't stand the penetrating chill a moment longer. Throwing off the blankets, overcoats, bath towels, and creeper rugs he had

piled atop his bed, he ran shivering into Sir Harry's room, woke him up, and demanded more heat. Sir Harry, deeply annoyed, grumbled something about pampered, hot-house Americans, stamped into the library (where the only fireplace in the house was in operation)—and threw a single additional coal onto the fire. . . .

**THEY HAVE REVIVED** the story of the shrewd lady who bet fifty dollars that she could get a perfectly terrible poem reprinted in full in *The New York Times Sunday Book Review*. Her bet covered, she typed out the first four stanzas and mailed them to the *Times* "Queries and Answers" department with an accompanying note that read, "In my childhood, my old mammy used to lull me to sleep with a lovely poem. I enclose the lines I remember. Could some kind reader finish it for me?" Her letter and verse were duly printed and two weeks later she sent in the balance, noting "Here are the missing lines that your correspondent could not recall." The bet was paid—under protest.

BENNETT CERF.



## Not by Bread Alone

"In 1906 I went to the Arctic, with the food tastes and beliefs of the average American," says the noted explorer, Vilhjalmur Stefansson, in his latest book, *NOT BY BREAD ALONE* (Macmillan, \$3.50). Some of these beliefs were:

Sailors used to die of scurvy because they lacked vegetables and fruit

To be healthy, one needs a "balanced" diet, including food from both the animal and vegetable kingdoms

If you are forced to eat only one thing, you develop a strong revulsion to it

To have sound teeth, it is necessary to eat fruit, vegetables, and milk

Primitive peoples have good teeth because they chew a lot and eat coarse food

It is unhealthy to eat fat meat in hot weather  
Salt is a necessary element of diet

Eating too much meat may cause hardening of the arteries, high blood pressure, or kidney trouble

"During the following twelve years," Stefansson continues, "I spent ten winters and the intervening summers as an Eskimo among Eskimos . . . which included living on Eskimo foods prepared in the Eskimo way. In that process my tastes underwent a gradual change, and I came to realize that many of my former beliefs were due to the locale of my birth and upbringing; that they were matters of social and not of biological inheritance."

In *Not by Bread Alone* Stefansson tells about the experiences which have led him to the conviction that an exclusive diet of meat or fish is not only possible, but desirable from the standpoint of health. He recounts the adventures of other explorers, fur-trappers, Indians, and soldiers who have thrived on an exclusive meat or fish diet, and adds the evidence of anthropology, history, and science.

*Not by Bread Alone* will shake up the ideas of many of us who have been unduly influenced by vitamin enthusiasts, dentifrice advertisers, and the common food superstitions of our civilization. Some people will disagree violently with Stefansson's conclusions. But if you read his book with an open mind, you will be forced to take them seriously, because he has based them on actual experience and scientific experiment.

In his Introduction to the book, Dr. Eugene F. Du Bois, Medical Director of the Russell Sage Institute of Pathology, says: "Here is a book that should be read by everyone who eats meat. It will relieve unnecessary apprehension regarding the food we most enjoy. Of course it should be read by, or read to, everyone who does not eat meat."

—MACMILLAN

*"It's good to know that  
such a man as Vazakas  
walks among us"*

—WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

## Transfigured Night • Poems by BYRON VAZAKAS

In his introduction to these poems by Vazakas, William Carlos Williams says, "He is gentle-vitriolic, kind-inhuman, forgiving-obdurate, a poet whose urbanity is inviolate. He seems more the artist, the poet in the full sense of a transformer by work of the imagination, than anyone I know. Nor is this to be a poet's poet; this is to work at his trade; he's a good hard worker at his job . . . What has Vazakas actually accomplished? This: He has completely done away with the poetic line as we know it, a clean sweep, not a vestige of it is left. He has found a measure based not upon convention, but upon music for his reliance, a measure that is inviolable to the old attack . . . He brushed aside everything that might impede its music, caught by the music, caught by the music alone. As a starter, this is enough for any man."

At your bookseller \$2.00

### Other MACMILLAN Poets

The Macmillan Company publishes the work of many contemporary poets, such as Marianne Moore, Ruth Pitter, and Marya Zaturenska. In recent months the following have been published: *SECRET COUNTRY* (\$2.50) by the eminent Ecuadorian poet, Jorge Carrera Andrade, translated by Muna Lee; and *CRUSADE* (\$2.00) by John Waller, a brilliant young English poet.

MACMILLAN

**A plague  
on both your  
poorhouses**

**W**AS it G. K. Chesterton who said of G. B. Shaw, or G. B. Shaw who said of G. K. Chesterton, that you must be orthodox in most things if you want to succeed in your own particular heresy. It might have been said of Hilaire Belloc. For Belloc also battled against many orthodoxies. So much so, that his favorite heresy made little headway in his own lifetime. Nevertheless, the truth is great and shall prevail. Thirty years later, Belloc's belief that mankind was turning again to the serfdom of the Dark Ages has become almost a commonplace.

Belloc's *THE SERVILE STATE* was first published two years before World War I (which made Hitler a corporal) and five years before the Bolshevik Revolution (which made Lenin a Russian saint.) England then was flourishing. The rich were still being carried forward on the tidal wave of nineteenth century expansion. The condition of the poor was steadily improving. It seemed to most men that God would soon be in his Heaven and all would be right with the world.

But not to Belloc. He saw a basic weakness in capitalist society. In political theory, it was democratic. There was equality before the law for all. The few who controlled the means of production (the capitalists) were the equals of the many who had nothing to sell but their labor (the proletarians or wage earners.) Each man could work or not, as he chose. Each could get a job, or not, as he chose. Yet the economic fact did not bear out the political theory. The capitalist could work or not, as he chose. The laborer could work—or starve.

Most social reformers saw only two ways out of this. One was to humanize economic inequality. Let the capitalist provide food and shelter for the worker on the condition that the laborer work for it. That was the way the England of 1912 seemed to be tending. There were already workmen's compensation laws, compulsory insur-

ance, demands for minimum wages. The other way was to collectivize the means of production. That is the tendency of England in 1946.

Belloc saw serfdom either way. In the humanized capitalist society, as he saw it, the worker would become the slave of the capitalist. As a corollary, he would gain such obvious advantages of slavery as food and shelter. In the collectivist society, the worker would become the slave of the state, and would reap the same advantages. To a man of Belloc's highly individualistic mind, the inevitable answer (though he was careful to make it only by inference) was:—"A plague on both your poorhouses."

Since Belloc's time, the general theme of *THE SERVILE STATE* has been discussed several times by professional economists and professional politicians. (Two noteworthy examples are Professor Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom* and Lord Hewart's *The New Despotism*.) Belloc himself offered his ideas in simple terms, without benefit of documentation. He, who rode in the horse-drawn buses of London or New York, could easily have read and understood. In England, few did. In America *THE SERVILE STATE* was not even published. Yet, today, when the policies and economies of the world are becoming ever more complex and the regulations governing them more voluminous, it is clear that Belloc's heresy is one of the basic political truths of our time.

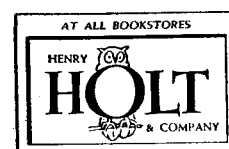
Belloc erred in some respects. He thought, for example, that collectivization would never come because it could only come through confiscation—and confiscation was repugnant to mankind's deep-rooted sense of personal property. Russia proved him wrong. In its broad sweep, however, his thesis has been justified by the broad sweep of history (with some little help from men like Lenin and Stalin, Mussolini and Hitler). For good or ill—and Belloc himself was the first to acknowledge the good—the servile state is already with us.

Many of us, probably most of us, dislike the servile state. All the more reason for us to understand its first principles and the alternatives to it. That is why we feel it a service at this time to present the first American edition of

## **THE Servile State**

by HILAIRE  
BELLOC

\$2.50



*The Saturday Review*  
*of Literature*

# At an Alarming Rate

JAMES M. MINIFIE

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** From February 25, 1944 to May 2, 1945 James M. Minifie was deputy psychological warfare officer of the Anglo-American Fifteenth Army group in the Mediterranean theatre and director and supervisor of Allied Italian propaganda. He was foreign correspondent in Europe for the New York Herald Tribune from 1930-1941. At present Mr. Minifie is writing a novel.

**I**N two years we founded sixteen papers between Lampedusa and Vienna. Not all of them survived. Some withered; others are still flourishing. All made money, some of them in embarrassing amounts. Some made history too.

In those two years we cleared, after paying all the expenses except the salaries of the exiguous British or American personnel, approximately one million dollars. In Austria we were making so much money that General Clark set a committee to investigate us. Generals are perfectly happy when money is being spent. But when anyone under their command begins to make money, they feel that something must be very wrong. The committee duly reported that while it couldn't find anything actually illegal in our activities, it was unquestionably true that we were making money "at an alarming rate." And despite their disapproval we are still doing so.

It isn't real money, perhaps. Certainly you cannot take it out of the country in which it was made. Nor can you turn it over to the United States Government or spend it personally. There are regulations against both courses. So most of the money was allocated to relief or charity or education, always after consultation with the local military government.

The agency which did this was the Psychological Warfare Branch of the Anglo-American Fifteenth Army group in Italy and its successor, Information Services Branch of the United States Forces, Austria.

PWB was formed to conduct a war of nerves against the enemy, but it soon found that a vital part of its

functions was reeducating the peoples of liberated lands. This activity increased in importance as the liberated areas grew larger. Its instruments included press, radio, movies, the theatre, propaganda shops, and display centers.

Newspapers were founded in every important town as soon as possible after it was taken. They sometimes appeared before the enemy was out of artillery range. In the case of the Salerno landing our newspaper began publication there under shell-fire, and when it was by no means certain that the beachhead could be maintained.

They ranged in size from the single mimeographed sheet of *Il Faro di Lampedusa*, which for a brief period lightened the darkness of that benighted patch of Italian sand between Sicily and Africa, to the sixteen-page Sunday edition of the *Wiener Kurier*, whose daily 380,000 circulation in Vienna is more than double that of the nearest competitor—Russian, British, French, or Austrian.

They were founded with four objectives in mind. We wanted to provide the population with news, and military government with a channel for its announcements. We wanted to train non-Fascists in the technique of newspaper editing and publishing, which Mussolini, and to a lesser degree Hitler, had always maintained

as a closed party preserve. We wanted to set a standard of impartial non-political presentation of the news for the new press to live up to. And we wanted a vehicle for the exposition and demonstration of democratic principles. This last was the most important objective, the one we hoped would not be lost to view after we moved on.

This was more difficult than we had anticipated. We thought our principles only had to be heard to be accepted. We found out that other peoples had quite a different set of principles which they regarded as equally self-evident and to which they were equally devoted. The little *Faro di Lampedusa* had something more than the historical importance of being the first free paper to appear in the totalitarian realms. In spite of its tiny size and short life, it taught us this great philosophical lesson of the invasion, and it did so in its own peculiar Lampedusan style.

**T**HE island is the wretched haunt of a few hundred fishermen who live in illiterate poverty. It gained some notoriety at the time of the invasion at the beginning of July 1943 by reason of the combination of bombing and leaflet dropping which brought about its surrender. One of the first ashore was Sergeant Calabi, of PWB, who galloped over the sands with a typewriter under one arm and a sheaf of mimeographing paper under the other, determined to bring knowledge of the blessings of democracy to these simple fisherfolk.

The first side of his paper Sergeant Calabi devoted to a brief survey of world events and timely announcements by Military Government. Then the sergeant editor cast about for a suitable subject for an editorial for the back page which would bring home to the Lampedusans the nature of their new freedom and the responsibilities devolving therefrom. Now in Lampedusa the results of a certain simplicity of manners strikes every foreign eye and nose. Sergeant Calabi could be in no doubt as to his

