

went in wading together, but merely that in radio as elsewhere you must assume an intimacy if you have it not. Most likely the two first met in the studio five minutes before the broadcast and took an instant aversion to each other. This, however, would never do for the radio audience. It must be Dotsie and Flossie with marshmallow added.

The other night, a political commentator interviewed a newly elected Congressman on his evening program. Not content with calling him Mr. Blank or Representative Blank, he had to be Representative Tommy Blank, but so flustered was the commentator with this sudden affirmation of endearment that he stumbled verbally almost to the point of tripping.

When a war veteran is introduced at a Community Fund rally, he is always Sergeant Chuck Watson, never Sergeant Charles Horner Watson or merely Sergeant Watson. When a woman telephones her husband's lawyer, whom she has met only twice, she calls herself Edythe Murdock, never Mrs. Henry or plain Mrs. A cocktail invitation is doubtless in the back of her mind. "Modern" children are encouraged to call their parents Herbie and Eloise. "O.K., Bud" is a commonplace from the taxi-driver, while the girl behind the millinery counter injects a hearty "Dearie" whenever occasion permits. "Hi, Toots!" also has its place and, in certain circles, "Baby" has a meaning all its own. Or is it already "Sugar"?

THE eating joint on the State Highway is familiarly known as Bill's Place, Dan's Diner, or Betty Mae's, and if you want a beer it's on tap at Andy's; a forbidding Coach and Four would never draw the trade. A sign over the filling station tells you that Mac is the boss. Political aspirants bill themselves coyly in campaign literature as "Nat" and "Stan," using quotes. If it's Hank and Joe and Dave on the baseball diamond, so must it be with the sports writers and announcers. Journalists' by-lines read Mel and Roge. A mere Dick would have to suffice for Richard Harding Davis.

The cult of the first name, or worse, is so firmly entrenched both in social and business intercourse that to be guilty of a Mr., Mrs., or Miss is to take a stand directly behind the eight ball. On your second meeting with a man named Edward, it is considered definitely on the beam to address him as Ed—even if the rest of the world knows it's Ted and you haven't yet caught on. Red Lewis and Willie Maugham have a lot of close friends but not nearly as many as you would surmise if you keep your ears open

at the Algonquin. Total strangers begin business letters "Dear Alden Hatch" or "Dear Mary Welch" and the implied compliment is returned. Alden and Mary soon develop if the correspondence continues. The fact that you don't even know what he or she looks like doesn't make any difference at all. It's really a cinch when you once get into the groove.

In fact it's elementary, my dear Jack.

However, I think my great-aunt went a step too far in the opposite direction. Until the day of his death she called her son-in-law Mr. Smith. What difference did it make if he *was* three days older than she was—or could it have been that she simply couldn't abide the name Phineas?

DALE WARREN.

War of Attrition

THE ASSAULT. By Allen R. Matthews. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1947. 216 pp. \$2.50.

Reviewed by
BRIG. GEN. DONALD ARMSTRONG

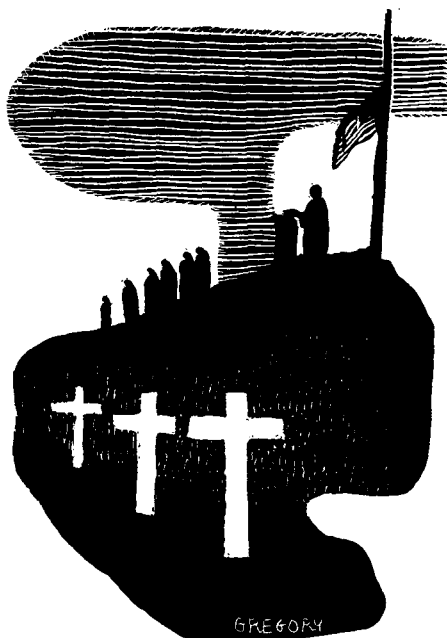
WHEN the Marines landed on Iwo Jima, Allen Matthews and his squad were among the assault troops. Twelve days later, exhausted and ill, Matthews was ordered out of the line for hospital treatment. The twelve days and nights of Iwo Jima were doubtless as tough an ordeal as foot soldiers have ever faced. By the fourth day the squad of thirteen had lost seven men. On the ninth day only three members of the original squad were left. If the term "war of attrition" signifies nothing to you, this book will tell you what it means literally, at least for one squad of the Fourth Division, United States Marines.

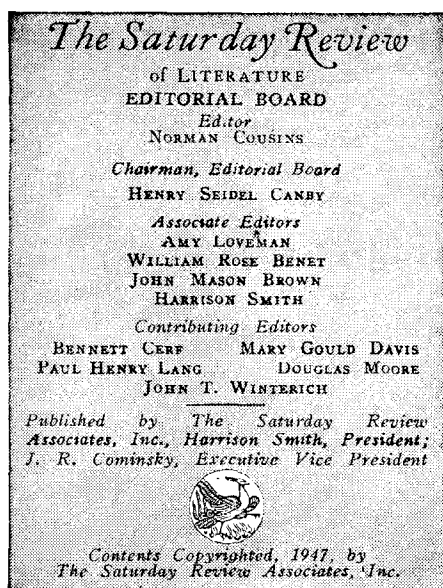
Allen Matthews, who was about thirty at that time, was the old man of the squad. This ex-newspaper reporter was "Pop" to his comrades, and the extra years he carried didn't help at all in facing the strain of the campaign. Matthews's story of those twelve days of fatigue and fear, of hunger and thirst, of wounds and death is an extraordinary descrip-

tion of human beings in combat. This is the war seen from the shelter of the foxhole or shell crater for only a few feet in all directions. This is the ordeal of battle endured by a small group of men, unaware of strategic purpose, whose duty it was to advance a few yards, take an objective and hold it. There is no glamor, no pretty heroics. The simple realism of an exceptionally sharp observer has recorded the team work of these few men whose struggles against the enemy and an equally cruel nature give an unforgettable report of how men fought World War II with rifle, machine gun, and hand grenade.

In the landscape of this Japanese island without trees or cover of any kind tanks showed up like targets in a shooting gallery. They merely served to draw the enemy's fire. Consequently they were most unwelcome company. This was not mechanized war. It was the struggle of frightened men who conquered their fear in the closely knit comradeship of their organization. The reader will long remember many episodes, such as the rescue of wounded comrades under fire and the close combat fighting day and night. Matthews summarizes this chaotic struggle when he writes, "Perhaps somewhere on somebody's map the actions of our company made a pretty pattern against the whole picture, but what the readers of those maps probably didn't know was that it was a pretty pattern of desperate little confusions."

Matthews has written an admirably honest and outspoken description of the foot soldier in battle. Obscenity and profanity are not politely indicated by asterisks or dashes, but the crude vulgarities of these fighting men emphasize the arresting realism of this war record. Bill Mauldin's introduction is a deserved appreciation of the book that, he wisely says, "needs to be read by a lot of people, because nobody should forget about war as long as there is the possibility of war." Readers of this vivid history of thirteen men on Iwo Jima are little likely to forget about war and its misery.





Before the Eagle Screams

THIS member of *The Saturday Review* staff has been brooding quietly for some weeks over an editorial by Mr. Harrison Smith appearing on this page titled "Let the Eagle Scream." Mr. Smith, it will be recalled, presented an eloquent tribute to the greatness of America. He itemized a striking inventory of "our blessings, our gifts of ingenuity and energy, our power to work and produce," and called for "a song dedicated to our strength and our virtues." America is going to need, Mr. Smith wrote, plenty of self-confidence, even national egotism, for the job ahead, so that we should be able to "stand unmoved and stalwart through the coming years."

Now Mr. Smith's editorial is not to be confused with the come-hell-and-fire-water school of bleating chauvinism; he is no high-voltaged proclaimer of American perfection, but a reasoning man who has a deep sense of pride in his country.

And yet, even doing full honor to Mr. Smith's intentions, we find ample margin for argument. Unless we miss all the signs, no bolstering is needed—either here or elsewhere—of national egotisms. Indeed, so well muscled are the national egotisms today that the planet itself is hardly big enough to contain them now that they are being flexed in the direction of each other. If the setting-up exercises for the next war are to be arrested, some higher quality than national egotisms may have to be invoked, if humanly possible. Perhaps wisdom or conscience, or both; who knows? One suspects that the real trouble is not national sovereignty but national egotisms—much more combustible, much more difficult to pry open.

Mr. Smith calls for songs of national greatness. They come a dime a dozen these days. The words and the music are always the same, only the accent is different. For other nations are making their own music in the power cacophony. The trouble with songs of greatness is that they are too easy to strut to; and strutting and marching are not far apart.

We should be grateful for our blessings, certainly; but they would be even more meaningful if we justified them. We have been blessed with fabulously rich crop yields—so large, indeed, that in order to keep the prices up we have casually dumped millions of tons of potatoes. We have been blessed with mounting wealth for all—so much, indeed, that we were able to spend seven billion dollars last year for liquor, and eight billions to bet on horse races. We have been blessed with imagination and scientific genius—so much, indeed, that we now know how to saturate the air over vast areas with radioactive death; but we ourselves have become supremely vulnerable to atomic attack.

What lyrics should we write for your song of greatness, Mr. Smith? Should we write that at a time when the only proper business was the business of survival, our legislators were preoccupied with the sorting of the take? Should we write that at a time when this nation had the opportunity and the responsibility to mobilize for mercy, it became fascinated with trivia? Should we write that at a time when numberless millions were going blind for want of food, we were willing to let UNRRA die? Should we write that we dropped not one but two atomic bombs on human beings,

invoking the false pretext of having saved American lives, though we knew, as high American military and naval spokesmen have since revealed, that there was no military justification for the use of the bomb? Should we write that our professions in behalf of a world without barriers sound feeble and tinny against the background of a bill in Congress to impose a high tariff on wool?

Greatness is as greatness does, Mr. Smith. The proof of it is not to be found in a catalogue of abundances, but in the day-to-day demonstration of purposeful leadership; for it is not the fact of wealth that is important, but how it is used. The national balance-sheet may begin with an inventory of natural and material assets, but the final figure is always based on moral standing. Nor is greatness a reflection to be seen in a mirror; if it is to be seen in us, it must be seen by others; and to be seen it must be felt.

There is still time for real greatness. There is still time to lead the way in a vast liberation from national egotisms, still time for proclaiming larger and higher allegiances than we have yet known. An experienced hand in the development of such allegiances once wrote that "the advance of liberalism encourages the hope that the human mind will some day get back to the freedom it enjoyed two thousand years ago. This country, which has given to the world the example of physical liberty, owes to it that of moral emancipation also."

But Thomas Jefferson, who had ideas such as these about an American destiny, never counted our blessings without also counting our responsibilities. N. C.

Philosophers

By Gustav Davidson

PLATO taught wisdom,
His pupil, knowledge;
They differed widely
Like profs in college.

Stoics and Skeptics
Followed after;
The deeper they got,
Often the dafter.

Spinoza saw God
All about him;
Hobbs explained things
Mainly without Him.

Locke pulled one way,
Hume another;
Hegel had little
Use for either.

The world to Schopenhauer
Was depraved and blind;

To Berkeley, merely
A state of mind.

Beyond good and evil
Was Nietzsche's thesis;
But he, poor fellow,
Went to pieces.

Spencer was Positive,
Bergson, Ideal;
James, Pragmatic,
Russell, Real.

The apostles of Spirit
Score those of Reason;
The in-betweeners
Are charged with treason.

What shall we make of
Such folk, forsooth,
Who argue, but never
Arrive at truth?