

CORN—BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

TROUBLES APLENTY are brewing for the book publishers these days, but shucks, who wants to hear about them with a long holiday week-end coming up? Time enough for all that later! Now I thought you might prefer a round-up of the more respectable yarns that have been circulating around town of late. One or two might even coax a smile from a crusty Fourth-of-July host—or guest!

A young writer with a considerable reputation on Broadway was given a contract by a powerful motion picture studio. When he turned in his first scenario, the head of the studio called for an aspirin and the writer's agent. "Get rid of this fellow quick," he bel-lowed. "He's such a highbrow I bet he writes failures on purpose!" . . . The same agent, back in New York, submitted a sheaf of essays to a publisher, and protested bitterly when they were rejected. "You are passing up a potential genius," he declared. "Nonsense," laughed the editor. "You're trying to make a Montaigne out of a molehill." . . . A Random House salesman, back from the wars in the Pacific, reported, "I'll never forget the day our transport landed us back in San Francisco. I hadn't seen a white girl in two years. I rushed to my girl's house to dine with her and her family. I could hardly wait to get her alone in the ping-pong room. She beat me, too—21/14." . . .

A HIGH-POWERED insurance agent talked an aging and overworked book publisher into taking out a new policy. The publisher submitted to a physical examination and then waited in vain for a call from the agent. Finally, he called the agent and asked the reason for his silence. In an embarrassed tone, the agent explained, "You may have noticed that our company doctor makes out a chart and punches a hole in it wherever he finds something that isn't just right with the applicant."

"I noticed, all right," said the publisher. "What did he do with my chart?"

"I am sorry to inform you," said the agent, "that the doctor took your chart home with him and tried it on his player piano. The tune it played was 'Nearer My God to Thee.'" . . .

HERBERT BAYARD SWOPE, famous editor of the late lamented *New York World*, dines at hours that seem very

peculiar to his more rational friends. He recently phoned George S. Kaufman at 9:30 p.m. and inquired, "What are you doing for dinner this evening?" Kaufman told him, "I'm digesting it." . . . Margaret Case Harri-man, after slaving for months to complete a revealing profile of Helen Hayes, met a dowager at a dinner party who told her, "That series of yours on Helen Hayes was a masterpiece, the most informative piece *The New Yorker* ever ran." Then the dowager lowered her voice and added, "Now tell us, my dear, what she's really like." . . .

A MAN WHO HAD been very poor all his life made a fortune almost overnight and began to splurge in almost every direction at the same time. One of his greatest joys consisted in inviting old cronies up to see his sumptuous new estate. "Come and see the grounds," he boasted to one of them. "I will show you my three swimming pools."

"Three swimming pools," echoed the friend. "Isn't that a bit excessive?"

"Not at all," the host assured him. "One has cold water, one has hot water, and one has no water at all."

"One with cold water I can understand," conceded the guest. "I can even see a reason for one with hot water. But what's the idea of a swimming pool with no water at all?"

The host shook his head sadly. "You'd be surprised, Joe," he confided, "how many of my old friends don't know how to swim." . . .

THE PUBLICITY department of the New York Central Railroad likes to bandy the names of famous industrialists, statesmen, and picture stars who scurry back and forth between New York and Chicago aboard the once-plushy but now chromium-yum Twentieth Century Limited. One of its most prized commuters was the founder of a more famous collection of packers than Green Bay—J. Ogden Armour, Esq.

Mr. Armour, they say, was breakfasting aboard the Century one morning when he imperiously summoned the dining car steward and demanded, "Is this some of my own ham I'm eating?" The steward assured him that it was. "Humph," commented Mr. Armour. "It's damn bad ham!" . . . From the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad (now more or less linked to the New York Central through the manipulations of the dynamic Robert



"Madam, your D.D.T."

JULY 5, 1947

5

"From where I sit"



WITH so much chromium around, and fluid drive, and now television in bars, people tend to think that just because it is so easy to get on the alkaline side of life, they are extremely modern, more modern than anybody else has ever been. It's really a shame, they think, that Lucky Strike green, which went to war and was apparently killed in action, isn't around today to see all this wonderful, postwar modernity.

But the fact is, being modern is a very old idea, and all it comes to mean is the latest thing in any progression. "So the old pastor is dead," he said at length. "Was it long since?"

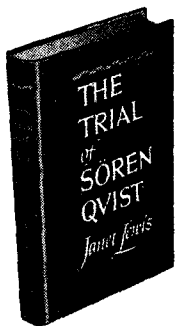
The old woman seated herself on the bench in which she had bestowed the bread.

"Long since indeed," she said. "I was young then. Well, at least I was but in my forties, and today that's young."

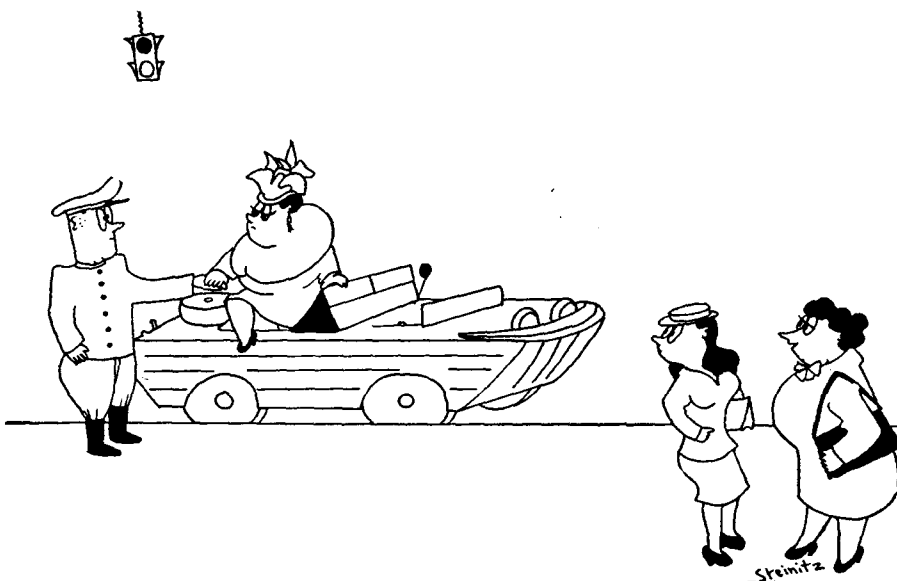
Now that is a typical kind of statement these days. Anyone knows that forty isn't old these days. But that statement happens to have been made in 1646 in Denmark.

This is the sort of thing that good writing is able to bring out—it is able to take something that happened centuries ago and breathe life into its velvet doublet. JANET LEWIS does just this on every page of *The Trial of Sören Qvist*. I gave you the plot of it several columns back, and maybe by now you've picked up a copy. If so, don't you agree with me and with the reviews that she has done a magnificent job here—never over-elaborate, always choosing the most graphic word for things? The thing I liked the best,

aside from the story itself, is her way of not letting historical description stick out all over the place. Everything seems to fit naturally, and that's what makes it all seem so modern.



paul



"Mrs. Koozens lives just across the river in Jersey."

R. Young) comes a story of a millionaire who bought a large estate near a tiny whistle-stop station on a neglected branch line. From Sears-Roebuck he ordered a prefabricated chicken coop, and when he received word that it had arrived, set out in a truck with his butler to bring it home. No one was about when he spied the coop along the right of way, and he soon had it loaded on the truck. Half a mile up the road they passed a little man in blue who had "Station Master" written on his cap. He took one look and shouted, "Stop that car. What do you think you got on that truck?" "My new chicken coop," explained the millionaire. "Chicken coop, my eye," cried the station master. "That's Grigsby Junction!" . . .

HERE'S ANOTHER RAILROAD story from the more serious-minded *Santa Fe* magazine:

A young man once found a five-dollar bill between the ties. From that time on, he never lifted his eyes from the ground while walking. In the course of thirty years he accumulated 25,916 buttons, 52,172 pins, seven pennies, a bent back, and a sour, miserly disposition. He lost the glories of the light, the smiles of his friends, the songs of the birds, the beauties of nature, and opportunity to serve his fellow man and spread happiness. . . .

LITTLE LINDA SET OUT for Sunday services in her best bib and tucker, equipped with two shiny nickels—one for the collection plate, and one for an ice-cream cone on the way home. She scarcely had left the house when one of the coins slipped out of her fingers and rolled into a drain. "Gosh darn," said Linda. "There goes the Lord's nickel." . . . A long-time inmate of an insane asylum was pro-

nounced cured by the examining board and came to bid the director goodbye before faring into the outside world. "What are your plans?" asked the director. "I haven't quite made up my mind," confided the ex-patient. "I may resume my medical practice. I've also been thinking about becoming a newspaper reporter. Then, on the other hand, I may be a tea-kettle." . . .

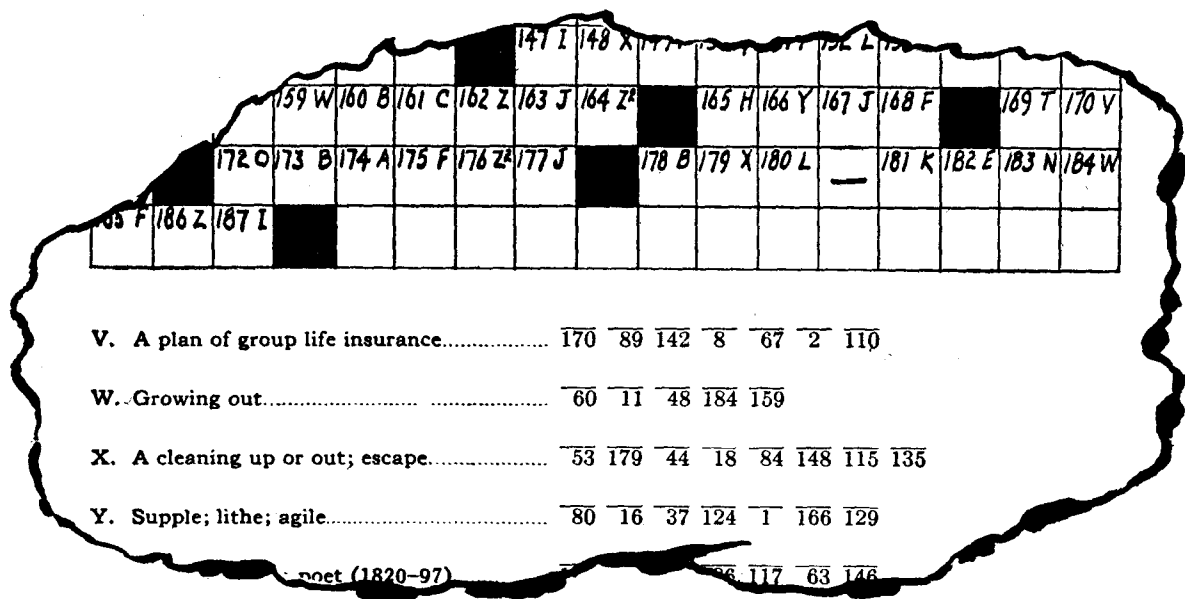
THERE IS A SUBTLE bit in Noel Coward's superb motion picture, "Brief Encounter," that is flashed on the screen too quickly for many spectators to catch. The hero and heroine are visiting a local cinema to see something called "Flames of Passion." In tiny letters under the title appears the legend, "From 'Gentle Summer' by Alice Stoughtey." . . . That reminds me of the producer who hired a top writer to make a scenario of a Broadway hit the studio had bought for a modest half million or so. The producer didn't like the scenario at all. "What did I need him for?" he complained. "It's just like the play!" . . .

BEFORE THESE proceedings get completely out of hand, I conclude with a story about Samuel Hopkins Adams. Sam, always willing to try anything once, accepted an invitation to a nudist party on a Fourth-of-July week end a few years ago. Describing the experience to his friends in Auburn the next day, he said, "They certainly didn't do things by halves. Even the butler who opened the door for me was completely nude."

"How did you know it was the butler?" asked Mr. Adams's literal-minded publisher.

"Well," said Mr. Adams, "it certainly wasn't the maid."

BENNETT CERF.



A surprise for Double-Crostic fans

(in connection with the new book of *Double-Crostics, Series 20*)

IT'S happened at last. For the first time in the thirteen years since the first book of Double-Crostics came out, the publishers have figured out a completely new way of setting up Mrs. Kingsley's wonderful puzzles so *that they are easier to read and there's much, much more room to write in.*

Above is a piece torn out of the

new page, showing actual size.

We hope the thousands of fans who eagerly await each new Double-Crostic book will be pleased with this spacious new design. It makes its debut in *Double-Crostics, Series 20*. You can get your copy by sending this coupon, to-day, to your bookseller or The Saturday Review.

Condescending note to SRL readers who have never tried Double-Crostics

It will take you 3 minutes flat to learn how to do a Double-Crostic. Then you'll see why Kenneth Roberts calls them "a unique and absorbing form of entertainment" and why Dr. John Haynes Holmes says, "Mrs. Kingsley (creator of Double-Crostics) is indispensable to modern life." And you'll see why the SRL guarantees to refund full purchase price of \$1.50 to anyone who, having purchased Double-Crostics, Series 20 (from any source), returns it to us because he is not completely delighted with it.

SEND THIS COUPON TODAY for your copy of DOUBLE-CROSTICS, 20

To your bookseller or
The Saturday Review of Literature
25 West 45 Street
New York 19, N. Y.

Gentlemen: Please send me copies of
DOUBLE-CROSTICS, Series 20. I will pay post-
man \$1.50 per copy plus few cents mailing charges.

Name.....

Address.....

City..... Zone..... State.....

☐ Check here if remittance enclosed. In this case
we'll pay postage.

JULY 5, 1947

7

SOME FREE SAMPLES FROM A DELIGHTFUL BOOK

SAMPLING, a technique wherein you are given a little in the hope you'll buy a lot, is an accepted method for introducing a new baby food, or soap, or cigarette. It may be a good way to introduce a book whose simple, sunny words and simple, humorous pictures speak better for themselves than we could speak for them. May we introduce *EL COYOTE THE REBEL*, the adventures of Luis Perez, illustrated by Leo Politi:



Overcome with emotion, with tears rolling down his hollow cheeks, and with several tumblers of pulque in his stomach, my grandfather said, "My son, you are old enough to know and to understand the sad misfortune which befell your parents. You are beginning a life of misery and must learn to face the truth like a brave little man and a stout-hearted soldier of fortune. I am waiting for my son, your uncle, to have him take you back with him to the United States."



An older boy, who knew my troubles, advised me to leave my family.

* * * *

A week after I joined the Mexican army, my captain commander came to me and said, "My lad, I am very proud of you. As far as I know, you are the youngest rebel in the Mexican army. I admire you for it." "Thank you, Captain," I replied.

"I want to take a picture of you to use in the recruiting posters."



"I just came from the general's headquarters," said the Sergeant. "A whole lot of food is being prepared for the feast. I dare you—in fact I *command* you—to go there and steal some of that good food for us."

* * * *

"Long live the coyote who stole the chickens," repeated Pancho, while three of the men took their guitars and began singing "*La Cucaracha*."

So, from that day on I was known to my comrades as "*El Coyote*."



One evening about seven-thirty, while I was resting in my commander's tent, he came in, and after a short conversation he said, "*Coyote*, tonight I want you to go with me to *La Casa del Amor*."

"Captain, I don't think I should go there with you."

"And why not? A man should know something about everything. Why, *Coyote*, when I was your age I was an expert at lovemaking."

"Well, Captain, I am your orderly, and I am here to obey orders. I am just like putty, and I can be molded any way to fit the plans of the day."



Once the patrolman had gone by I rolled under a barbed wire fence at the border. As soon as I saw my way clear, I started up the road that led to my uncle's house in the United States.

When my uncle came home, I said, "Hello, Uncle!"

"Hello," he replied halfheartedly.

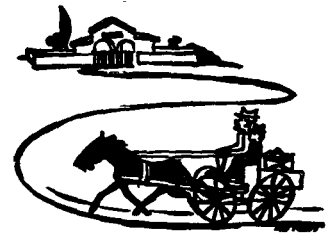
"How is business, Uncle?"

"I have no business," was his abrupt answer. Then looking at me closely, he asked, "Who the hell told you that you could wear my hunting suit?"



The girl was about fifteen years old and very attractive. She had a well-proportioned figure and it synchronized quite nicely with her coquettish ways.

For some unknown reason, Consuelo, the daughter, fell in love with me, and to make everything worse, my friend fell in love with her. Every day Consuelo would try to find new things to show me, and would take every opportunity to talk to me.

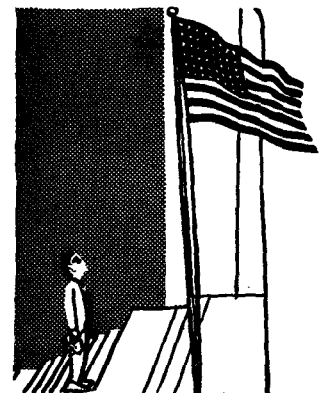


I arrived at Albuquerque the fifth day of September at about three in the afternoon. When I got off the train, an old man greeted me in Spanish, saying, "How do you do—are you Mr. Perez?"

"Yes, señor, I am Luis—Luis Perez," I replied.

"My name is George Williams—Dr. Williams. I am the dean of the school. Have you ever been in school before?"

"Yes, señor, about a week when I was nine years old."



I was glad to go to Los Angeles, to enter the seminary.

At the door, a jovial, fat, colored guard, patted my shoulder and said, "Congratulations, mistah, now you is an American citizen. Yeah, suh—you is one of us."

When I stepped out of the building I happened to glance to the right, and high on top of the steel mast the flag of my newly adopted country proudly waved with the breeze.

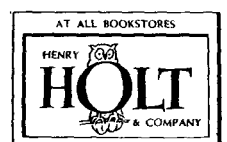
EL COYOTE THE REBEL

Recollections of a Reluctant Man of Action

By LUIS PEREZ

Illustrated by LEO POLITI

\$2.75



Diary of a Quasi-Libertine

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

WHEN, at the age of eighteen or nineteen, André Gide began keeping his first journal, he already intended to be a writer. Indeed he was even then elaborating his first literary work, a symbolic prose-poem interspersed with poetry, which in recounting the conflicts of his awakening to life was to draw heavily upon that journal. His often-interrupted formal education was drawing to a close, for he had left the strict and pious Protestant school, which had once mortified his family by expelling him, and had even signed up at the University with a vague intention of working for an M.A. He was living in his native Paris with his widowed mother and Aunt Claire, who still treated him as an irresponsible child. Once a week he lunched with Miss Anna Shackleton, the Scottish spinster who after tutoring his mother as a girl in Rouen had become her lifelong companion, and with her he practised his faltering German. Every day he played his beloved piano for hours. The summers he spent at the family estate not far from the sea in Normandy walking with his cousins, perfecting his technique at the piano, patiently herborizing with Anna Shackleton, and voraciously reading. Already versed in the French classics, he was during the next few years to discover Baudelaire and Verlaine, Dante and Goethe and Shakespeare, and the German philosophers.

But his inseparable companion—even more frequently opened than his piano, even more essential to his spiritual life than his cousin Emmanuel, whom he was already planning to marry—was the Bible. All his thoughts were interpreted in the light of the Scriptures. If he “anointed his literary style with music,” if he even dreamed of “writing in music,” that style had already received its basic form from the Bible.

A tall, well-built youth, André Gide was inordinately austere and pain-

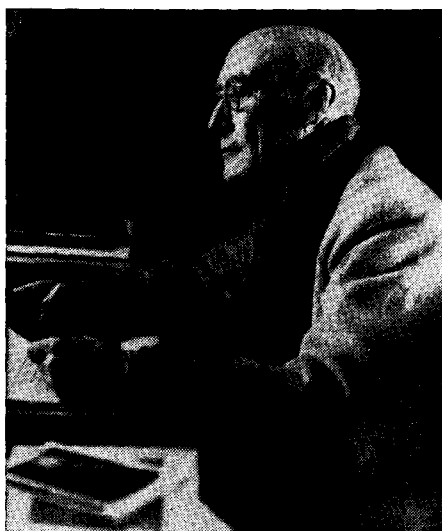
fully shy. His upbringing had developed in him an excessive sensitivity and feminine grace. His hair fell below his ears almost touching his stiff collar; his cheeks were covered with a soft down that was soon to become a full beard. Hypnotized by his keen dark eyes, everyone but Oscar Wilde failed to notice his full sensual lips and fine aquiline nose. He dressed with a somewhat antiquated elegance, preferring soft, flowing bow ties, a loose cape, and a broad-brimmed soft hat.

Such was the young man whose uncompromising intellectualism and devout faith rather embarrassed the other disciples at Mallarmé's charmed gatherings each Tuesday evening in the early Nineties, or in the more social salon of the poet Heredia where, amidst literary discussion, his friends Pierre Louys and Henri de Régnier courted their future wives among the poet's daughters. The Symbolist Movement was at its height: the poetry of Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Verlaine, Laforgue, and the teachings of Mallarmé were forming the taste of a generation; little reviews and new

theories of versification were rapidly multiplying; Schopenhauer was the rage and Nietzsche was beginning to be discovered; Wagner's music (against which Gide was perhaps the only one to revolt) made the young swoon at concerts and led to endless discussions of new art forms; painters like Gustave Moreau, Puvis de Chavannes, and Odilon Redon were producing literary allegories and painting symbolic visions; the art theatres were stirring audiences to ecstasy and indignation with novel and ambitious works that were most often singularly undramatic. From Paris the electric current flashed to *avant-garde* groups everywhere: in Italy Gabriele d'Annunzio recognized the call and subscribed at once to the new *Mercure de France*; Oscar Wilde, Whistler, George Moore, Aubrey Beardsley, and others came over frequently from London and took back ideas for their own *Yellow Book*; the young Maeterlinck came down from Brussels and was hailed in Paris as a second Shakespeare; in provincial Montpellier Louys met the young Paul-Ambroise Valéry and sent him to Gide in Paris.

In this world André Gide moved stiffly and cautiously. With his friends he started several little reviews and contributed to others, sometimes as far away as Liège. He shared Mallarmé's conception of the nobility of the artist and the sacrifice of everything to the work of art. His first works were poems in prose and in verse, symbols in limited editions and without name of author, legible only to the initiate.

MOST appropriately, his journals for these first years are concerned principally with himself. Notes on his reading, travel, diaries, records of conversations with friends (that play such a large part in the later journals) occupy but few of these pages devoted almost exclusively to self-scrutiny and dreams, to philosophic hes-



André Gide: “[My] asceticism was such that in the beginning I had to force myself toward joy.”