

# TRADE Winds

**SOME MALIGN INFLUENCE** has revived the perennial interest in the question, "What's the longest word in the dictionary?" Robert Fuller, advertising manager of Merriam's, publishers of the Webster dictionaries, complains that in the past few months, over a hundred booksellers have bombarded him with the same query.

"Here," says Mr. Fuller with a once-and-for-all look in his eyes, "is my answer. Until a year ago it would have been honorificabilitudinitatibus, a pedantic nonsense word owing its inclusion in the dictionary to the fact that it was used by Shakespeare in 'Love's Labor's Lost.' Reference to the New Words Section of Webster's New International Dictionary, Second Edition, however, reveals that this questionable honor has been captured by another word, a perfectly legitimate scientific term: pneumoultramicroscopic silicovolcanokoniosis, meaning a form of pneumoconiosis occurring especially in miners, caused by the inhalation of very fine silicate or quartz dust." Now you know! . . .

**THE SOCIALITE WIFE** of a famous author was guilty of a Freudian faux pas at a literary reception recently. She attended very much against her will, but promised her anxious husband that she would be her most charming self. She was, too—until the very moment of departure, when she seized the hand of her hostess, and assured her warmly, "It was so nice of us to come!" . . . Another patroness of the arts found occasion to telephone a famous detective story writer. He picked up the receiver, and said, "Dashiell Hammett speaking." She corrected him sharply, "You mean Dashiell Hammett, don't you?" . . . A new whodunit specialist, incidentally, aiming for the Hammett-Chandler groove, is Michael Morgan. In "Nine More Lives," the bloody saga of a Hollywood stunt man, he tells how one prankster had a removable steering wheel put on his car, and fixed it so he could steer with his knees. He'd take a girl out for a ride, speed up to seventy, then suddenly detach the wheel and hand it to the terrified victim, saying calmly, "Here, you hold this for a few minutes!" . . .

**ONE OF THE BEST** of the new crop of mysteries is printed in type that is much too small. Since several publishers have been guilty of the same false economy (and they no longer

can blame it on war shortages!) I think it would be unfair to single out one in print, but I can quote you a letter on the subject received by the author from his friend, Don Quinn:

I bought your new book last night and I hope I'll enjoy it as much as I—and the world—did your last one. If I do, I'll have my seeing eye dog bring me over to tell you, and believe me, if I get through this book I'll need a hound with 20/20 vision and a tolerant disposition. I'd like to make a suggestion for future editions. Knopf used to do it and what has Knopf got that your publishers haven't except maybe Garamond and Bodoni? Here:

## A NOTE ON THE TYPE IN WHICH THIS BOOK WAS SET

The type used in this volume is known, quite unfavorably, as 1/2-Point Myopia, and was designed in 1622 by Feodor Astigmatism, The Elder. It was deciphered in 1944 by means of the electron microscope and bids fair to become one of the most heartily disliked faces this side of Francisco Franco. We predict that it will be used extensively for engraving the text of Magna Charta on the edges of scalpels and to inscribe messages of love and devotion on gold toothpicks and stickpins presented to producers . . .

**BEING THE KIND OF** person who enjoys an occasional story about animals that can talk, read, and write, I had a very happy hour indeed with a little book called "Francis," by David Stern (Farrar, Straus). Francis is—or was—an army mule who had his own ideas about second lieutenants, and since they coincided remarkably with ones I cherished myself way back in 1918 at the IOTS, I found him a perfectly enchanting beast. My wife,

however, who views tales of this description with a jaundiced eye, reminded me that I also had spoken highly of David Garnett's "Lady Into Fox," Ted Pratt's "Mr. Limpet," and the Jones's "Peabody's Mermaid." "You have been conditioned by all those confounded shaggy dog stories you collect," she diagnosed coldly. My answer, borrowed from a Jimmy Cagney picture, was a not-too-convincing "That's the kind of hairpin I am." How fortunate, I reflected, that I had read "Black Beauty" some little time before I was married—and given my copy of "The Autobiography of a Flea" to my snowbound Uncle Herbert in Vermont! . . .

## NATURAL SELECTION

By Richard Armour

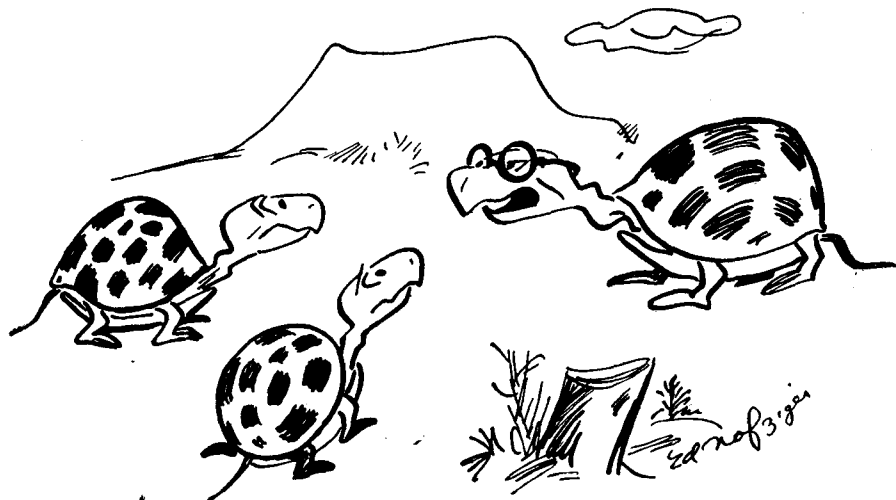
The publisher ruffles in the lukewarm review

To find him a book-selling blurb  
Consisting of adjectives three or two  
To one paltry noun or verb.

Though many the words of another stripe,

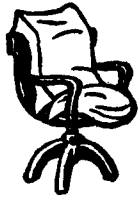
A flattering few he frisks.  
What he wants, he prints in a bold, black type,  
What he doesn't he asterisks.

**IN "THE HUCKSTERS,"** Fred Wakeman twisted a familiar proverb to read, "A thing not worth doing at all is not worth doing well." Dr. Morris Fishbein thinks Gypsy Rose Lee could give it an even better switch—to "a thing not worth undoing well is not worth undoing at all." The good doctor also tells of two fleas who shared Robinson Crusoe's island hut with him. The fleas engaged in a sprightly conversation, and when the time came for parting, one waved affably and said, "So long, kid. See you on Friday." . . . Funk & Wagnalls have picked the perfect editor for their new "Standard Handbook of Quotations"—a gentleman named Franklin P. Adams. Publi-



"Well, what are you staring at? They're tortoise shell."

# "From where I sit"



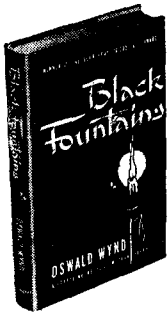
HAD a complaint the other day—a guy wrote that he was sore because I talked all about how Americans have to be loose and Irene Dunne and told him nothing about the book, *What D'Ya Know for Sure*. I suppose he thought I hadn't read the book and was just trying to bull along. I suppose I ought to alternate my columns—one column about the plot of the book, the next about authors and writing and sundry mondry and tuesday.

But you take **Black Fountains** by OSWALD WYND and see what happens when you try to tell just the plot. Here we go. Omi Tetsukoshi, daughter of a prominent Japanese banker, returns home from America. She has become almost an American girl, and to her disgust, she finds her parents fast returning to the ceremonialism of the past. Her outspoken, Western ways require that she be exiled to a lonely mountain region near Kobe lest she bring disgrace and suspicion upon her whole family. While there. . .

You see how it goes, just another book. You can read all about the plots of books by looking at the flaps when you are in a bookshop or lending library. The advertising spaces tell the same story in screaming headlines. Why should I triplicate?

Actually there are a lot of things about this \$20,000 prize winning novel that have significance and interest outside of the mere recitation of the facts. A synopsis of the book shows nothing of the atmosphere of the book, the convincing detail, the complete familiarity with people and place which the author possesses, having lived in Japan two-thirds of his life. The author was born of Scotch parents in Tokyo on American Independence Day, 1913. His two sisters are American citizens, his brother a Canadian. WYND went to school in Japan, in Atlantic City, and finally at Edinburgh University. During the war he was a member of the Scots Guards, and later the British Intelligence in Malaya. He is now living in Edinburgh, but hopes to return to the Far East as roving correspondent. He says he will then attempt to add spoken Mandarin and Malay to his

knowledge of Japanese. Now isn't this far more interesting than a plot summary? This author gets around. He writes well, he knows his subject thoroughly. The book is unusual. Don't you want to read it?



paul



"Fetch me a grandchild, Roberts . . . I feel an object lesson coming on."

cation is scheduled for the coming Fall. . . Tom Coward, paying tribute to the late Max Salop, who revolutionized the remainder book business in America, writes, "He and I bought together the publishing department of Brentano's. In the two or three years following, when we were actively selling or leasing plates and rights, somewhere between \$50,000 and \$100,000 must have been involved. Yet through the whole transaction there was never one line of writing to bind the contract—nor the slightest suspicion of a disagreement. He was a fine, generous man and we shall miss him very much." . . . Latest ABC circulation figures for the nation's ten most popular magazines (excluding digests) are: *Life*, 4,699,688; *Ladies' Home Journal*, 4,463,950; *Sat. Eve. Post*, 3,710,392; *Woman's Home Companion*, 3,691,238; *McCall's*, 3,586,333; *Collier's*, 2,809,341; *Woman's Day*, 2,800,939; *Good Housekeeping*, 2,794,565; *Better Homes and Gardens*, 2,644,722; *Farm Journal*, 2,540,092. . .

**DOCTORING AND STYLING** manuscripts is only part of a conscientious editor's job; a great deal of his time must be spent in wet-nursing his authors in sickness and in health, listening to their intimate secrets and boastings,

preventing them and their wives, often with extreme reluctance, from bashing each other's heads in with a fire tong.

One editor I know was deeply relieved to hear that a troublesome but famous author finally had decided to sue his wife for divorce, after a series of endless and sensational battles. The terms of the settlement were arrived at after negotiations that dragged on longer than the Nuremberg trials—and all through them the principals glared at each other with such maniacal hatred that the judge had them searched every morning for concealed weapons.

The wife had already signed the papers and the husband was flourishing his pen, when, to the editor's consternation, he stopped short and declared, "There's one thing more I must have—or it's no deal. My wife has a stickpin I insist upon having."

The wife said no. The judge ascertained that the pin was worth less than twenty dollars. "My dear friend," begged the editor, "do not sabotage this whole settlement, and find yourself still tied to a woman you loathe, for a measly, inexpensive stickpin! Why do you want it, anyhow?"

"You won't understand," brooded the author. "It's for sentimental reasons."

BENNETT CERF.

**"A wise and  
provocative  
book"**

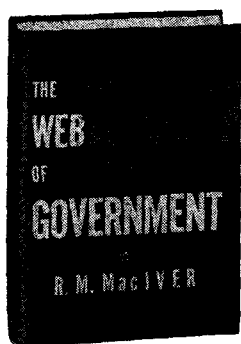
**Thomas K. Finletter  
NEW YORK TIMES**

In the *Saturday Review of Literature*, T.V. Smith says of Professor MacIver's new book, "The background perspective . . . is rich. Few if any American social scientists command more of the materials of sociology, social anthropology, and psychology than does our author . . . solid in content, straightforward in style, fecund of perspective."

**R. M. MacIVER**



# The WEB of GOVERNMENT

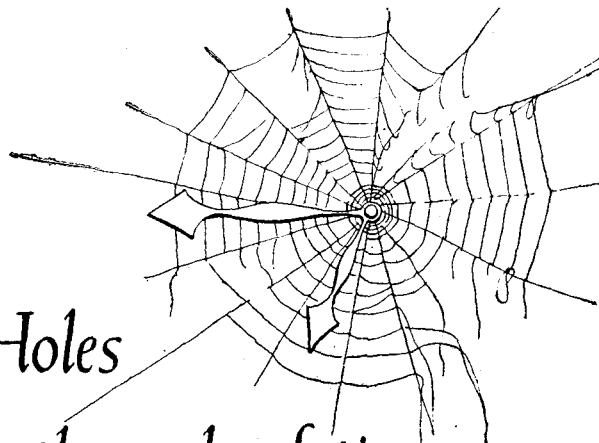


Americans, says Professor MacIver of Columbia, must develop an intelligent and *conscious* philosophy of government, because our philosophy (whether conscious or unconscious) is directly responsible for the kind of government we get. As a foundation for that philosophy, he analyzes the nature of the state, how it has evolved, and what its functions are. He asks the basic question, "Why do men set up ruling authorities, and why do they obey them?" He finds the answer in man's social nature, the myths that guide him, and the necessities of community life. Refusing to accept past assumptions at face value, he presents a new and original analysis of the evolution of authority. He offers a new classification of the various forms of government and describes the factors that cause political change. *The Web of Government* is a book for every intelligent American who takes his citizenship seriously.

**\$4.50 at your bookstore**

**MACMILLAN**





## Holes in the web of time...

IT IS THE tragic destiny of the creative mind to be forever ahead of its time. If the gap between that mind and the time is not too wide, and if the force of the mind's idea is powerful enough, the time is pulled ahead to link with the mind . . . and a new era has begun. Usually, however, the heavy hand of the reluctant present keeps the creative mind from upsetting things too much, or even nudging them.

Sometimes desperate years go by before the age catches up with the man. We have not yet caught up with Nikola Tesla, whose experimental wireless power transmitter was destroyed, probably forever, during the first World War because the authorities were afraid of it; with Charles Fort, whose magnificent, roaring books have given Science its neatest hotfoot since Paracelsus; with Edgar Cayce, whose amazing career of psychic healing deserved more from medicine, for humanity's sake, than the stupid threats of "exposure", the grudging investigations, the silence.

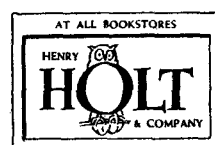
Every now and then a novelist, or even a poet, joins this magic advance guard . . . and then we find ourselves trying to catch up with someone like William Blake, who is still about a hundred years ahead of us, or with Hermann Hesse, the neglected and forgotten author of twenty books, who finally won the Nobel Prize for Literature last year. In the case of Hesse, the catching up goes back twenty years, since his *STEPPENWOLF*, which Holt originally published and is now reissuing, was first printed in 1927, in the grim and embittered Germany that had lost the first World War and was beginning sullenly to plan for another. Hesse warned that Germany's sickness was a universal sickness, but the world paid no attention. Perhaps it is ready to listen now.

*STEPPENWOLF* is a novel . . . a strange and beautiful one. Not all of what it says to us can be expressed in words. In this, it is like other great novels—like *Moby Dick*, like *The Magic Mountain*, like *Penguin Island*. If it has a theme it is that man is nothing else than the narrow and perilous bridge between nature and spirit. But it is the overtones and undertones, the hidden and subtle meanings, the revelations, the discoveries, that make this story of Harry Haller one of the most extraordinary, surprising and stimulating of reading experiences.

As the story opens, Haller is wandering drunkenly around Berlin. He runs into a peddler selling a *Treatise on the Steppenwolf* and recognizes himself . . . a blend of human and wolfish traits . . . in the *Steppenwolf*. The rest of the story moves in the twilight world between the conscious and the subconscious. It goes around the city to a tavern, a funeral, a professor's home, a masked ball, and the Magic Theater where one can split one's personality. There, Harry "pursued philosophy and music and had his fill of war . . . discussed Krishna with men of honest learning . . . loved Erica and Maria . . . became Hermine's friend . . . shot down motorcars or chased pedestrians, in the fearful war between men and machines . . . slept with the sleek Chinese . . . encountered Mozart and Goethe, and made sundry holes in the web of time."

In one sense, Harry Haller's story is the record of a journey through hell . . . "a sometimes fearful, sometimes courageous journey through the chaos of a world whose souls dwell in darkness, a journey undertaken with the determination to go through hell from one end to the other, to give battle to chaos." Whether Harry Haller wins that battle depends, oddly enough, on the reader. Thus the reader becomes the co-author of the story he is reading. Twenty years ago, *STEPPENWOLF* was ahead of its time. *And now?* What happens to us in the next twenty years hangs, threateningly, on the answer to that question.

# Steppenwolf



A NOVEL BY

**Hermann Hesse**

NOBEL PRIZE WINNER 1946

309 pages, \$2.75

## *The Last Time I Saw Berlin*

DOROTHY THOMPSON

NO ONE knows, nor can he quite know, what is going on in the German mind, for no one except Germans have had their peculiar experience. The experience is in the nerves and the unconscious, and it is not communicable. In Berlin, for the first time since the war and for the first time since I said good-by, with the Gestapo's expulsion order in my pocket in 1934—I met the remnant of my old friends. But they were not the same friends—not the same people. They were very glad to see me, as I was glad to see them, and proud of them, too, for they had been among the resisters—not able to do much really; pitiable when you think how much they risked for so little possible accomplishment—but not believing, not going along with the hysteria, secure in their pessimism that what had started so badly would end worse, absolutely certain from first to last that Hitler would lose because Germany under Hitler had to lose. I think many conscious intelligent Berliners were like that. Berlin was never a Nazi town.

It was exciting to know, too, that we had not been wholly separated even during the war, for they had heard my "Listen, Hans" broadcasts. One was a widow. Her husband had been hanged by Hitler. One—a physician to whom I owe my life and the intimate friend of a resister who was hanged—had lived for a year and a half before the end of the war under the shadow of the Gestapo, reporting weekly and never knowing whether he would come out of the door he went in. One was a publisher who after a year and a half in concentration camp had been transferred to Moabit prison and sentenced to death, and then after standing eight hours half naked in a pouring autumn sleet had been set free—for no more reason than he had been arrested for. And at the point of death from pneumonia he had lived through a direct bomb hit on the shelter of the Charlottenburg Hospital to which his wife had

taken him. Another, a writer, had a Jewish grandfather whom the Nazis had never discovered. One was just a society woman, almost frivolously anti-Hitler, as a pure matter of taste. They had all held together during the war, in many groups, with many others, finding comfort in the silent communication of their hearts, no one caring about political parties or terms like "left" or "right." But that, they told me, was over now, since none of the conquerors knew how to discover and use their community of feeling while ambitious party leaders who had shot up like weeds out of the rubble were busy dividing the community of the decent as they had divided the Weimar Republic. The divisions between the Allies made it worse; so my friends had lost their unity to the various parties and conquerors and so had lost all they had—that inner tie of resistance in which there was warmth and no loneliness.

None of them knew of all that had gone on in the concentration camps, the gassing, for instance; but when

it came out they were not surprised, nor shocked, either. For when you have lived through every kind of iniquity, through a total moral debacle, no new manifestation of that debacle is surprising. These were all highly civilized people; the unbridgeable chasm between myself and them was the chasm which would exist between people who had been to hell and those who had not, and who knew they were still in hell and probably you were, too, only you did not know it yet.

THERE we sat together, perfectly sane, discussing, since they were literary people, the tragically early death of Thomas Wolfe, the last days of the great painter Liebermann, the last novels—which they had not yet seen—of Thomas Mann; it was an effort to turn the clock back, back to 1934 when I was last in Berlin—and to take up the thread of an interrupted conversation. But we could not take up the thread really; for in no conversation before the great fall would a gentlewoman have spoken of the rape of her daughter, quite casually, as a somewhat upsetting but rather minor incident, fortunate on the whole because the raper had not been diseased, and there had been only one, not a dozen. Still, with this word or that, one could participate remotely in that twilight of the gods when the city came finally crashing down and the Russians, savage with combat, came through the shelters with flashlights at night picking their women and dragging them out, and by day plundering the shops with the Berlin mob joining them, women fighting with each other for strings of sausage or jars of marmalade, smearing jam like blood on each others' faces and in each others' hair, pairs of them tugging at sausages until they broke and both fell sprawling; women of the kind called "nice," led out weeping to be raped and returning at dawn drunken, laden with bottles and exuberant, because rewarded with the



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