

WHEN PUBLISHER Anthony Bump arranged by telephone to lunch with Brashfort the literary agent, they met by common consent at the Ritz Grill. Bump liked the seclusion and quiet of the place—and the comforting knowledge that there were never more than seven competitors close enough to overhear him. Sometimes he was almost half-way back to his office before Johnny Hutchens and Roger Linscott had typed out the details of his secret negotiations for their respective columns in *The Times* and *Tribune*.

Brashfort was the hearty, high-powered type, with no conspicuous talent for understatement. An opposing attorney in a plagiarism suit once tried a lie detector on him. Brashfort emerged unscathed, but it cost three hundred dollars to repair the lie detector.

"I'm giving you first crack at a hot number," Brashfort told Bump as soon as they were seated. "Some major book club is bound to go for it. It's called 'I Too Broke with F.D.R.' The author is third assistant consul at Pizitz."

"When did he ever know F.D.R.?" asked Bump suspiciously.

"He didn't," conceded Brashfort,

"but F.D.R. once glared at him in a newsreel."

"Any chance of meeting the fellow?" Bump inquired. "I'd like to decide for myself if he's on the level."

Brashfort was outraged. "Bump," he said, "I consider that a slur on me, my client, and my client's ghost. I never allow my clients to meet their publishers. What if they got to be friends?"

"Any foreign or pic rights included in the deal?" pursued Bump.

"My dear fellow," said Brashfort, shaking his head, "you make things very difficult for me. I'm almost sorry I came to you first with this. I should have taken it to Humperdinck. Humperdinck never brings up things like that. He always gives a straight twenty per cent royalty, and he puts in an advertising guarantee, too. Why, he never even asks to read the manuscripts!"

"I hear Humperdinck went bankrupt yesterday," Bump interrupted mildly.

"You don't say," said Brashfort. "I wonder what brought that about!"

At this moment, Ken McCormick, of Doubleday, brushed by, and winked at Tony Bump. "Hi, Brashfort," he remarked cheerily. "Have

you found a sucker yet for that consul from Pizitz?"

Brashfort suddenly found it necessary to talk to a young lady at the far end of the room. "Back in a minute," he threw over his shoulder, and waved jovially at Harry Sherman and Meredith Wood, neither of whom appeared to see him.

Bump passed the time pleasantly enough, eavesdropping on a publisher from Forty-Eighth Street who was trying to lure an important author away from a publisher on Forty-Seventh Street. He was toying with his *pot au creme* by the time Brashfort bustled back to the table. "Sorry, old man," the agent apologized. "Bit of fluff I met at Beaverbrook's in Sussex one week end. I couldn't be rude to her. But to get back to the F.D.R. manuscript. I don't want to be arbitrary about it. I'm off myself tonight for an eleven-month holiday, but suppose I have my secretary bring round a two-page outline if she can find it. Take plenty of time with it—twenty-four hours if necessary—and then if you like it, we can settle on a purely nominal advance of twenty thousand or so."

"Brashfort," said Anthony Bump as he rose from the table, "I must tell you of a rather quaint decision we made at our editorial conference this morning. From now on, we're not going to sign up any book unless we can see at least half of the completed manuscript. We're not going to pay any advance that can't be earned on a reasonable first printing. And above all, we are going to insist on a fair share of the secondary rights."

"Have it your way," sighed Brashfort, "but don't be surprised if the agents stop offering you their most promising scripts. You're liable to find yourself whistling in the rain, old fellow."

They shook hands with a fine pretense of cordiality. "Arrogant ass," thought Bump. "I wish the publishers would get together on some kind of basic contract, and put an end to this degrading bickering." "Conceited popinjay," thought Brashfort, "I wish somebody would drop him in a vat of boiling oil."

There was about an equal chance of either of their wishes coming true. . . .

BY WAY OF celebrating its one hundredth anniversary, the flourishing G. Fox and Company department store in Hartford has been staging a series of literary afternoons, and its six-hundred-seat auditorium has been filled to capacity for every one of them. The day I acted as master of ceremonies, the stars were Nancy Wilson Ross, Richard Lauterbach,



"So your book is on the best-seller lists . . . now what?"



"O.K., Pop, now tell us a story."

Maurice Hindus, Vilhjalmur Stefansson, and, as a final pièce de résistance, the surprising and thoroughly disarming Nancy Bruff. Miss Bruff, author of such lusty fare as "The Manatee" and "Cider from Eden," is herself the kind of girl you find yourself supporting gently as she steps off a curbstone four inches high. "This is my very first speech from a lecture platform," she told her rapt audience. "At this sort of thing, if I may use the word, I'm a virgin." "Just like her heroines," whispered someone, "at least, up to page three or four." . . . Miss Ross, said by her publisher to have traveled all over the country in a trailer, was two hours late arriving from Worcester. On this day at least more than her left hand must have been dreaming. . . .

Not only the mammoth G. Fox and Company, but its chief competitor in Hartford, Brown Thomson, is owned and operated by a dynamic lady named Beatrice Fox Auerbach. On the side, she supervises a beautifully run foundation which she endowed with a whopping gift of six million dollars. Mrs. Auerbach brooks no opposition. She doesn't even recognize it. When she sails through her domain, even the steel girders tremble slightly. We all followed meekly in her wake, stopping especially to admire the spotless pharmaceutical department, which is patronized by the entire state of Connecticut.

"Here," said Mrs. Auerbach, "is a special machine for rolling pills. Push the left lever and a white pill drops out. Push the right lever, and you get a brown one." She pushed sharply on the left lever—and a brown pill appeared! There was a moment of hushed silence, and then Hindus predicted, "Heads will roll because of this. I saw the same thing happen in the Kremlin."

Mrs. Auerbach's literary teas, generous advertising, and unflagging personal interest have made Fox's book department one of the finest in the country. The city boasts a half dozen other first-rate book stores, and there are fine literary sections in both the *Courant* and the *Times*. Publishers' representatives look forward to their stopover in Hartford. . . .

WHEN SINCLAIR LEWIS finished "Kingsblood Royal," he flew to Hollywood, and, by way of relaxation, put in several weeks on a screen adaptation of "Adam and Eve" for Producer Leo McCarey. Word of the intriguing venture got around, and one morning a famous star of the twenties, still dressing like an ingenue although she showed signs of cracking around the edges, applied for the role of Eve. McCarey eyed her sourly and commented, "It's true I'm going to do a new version of 'Adam and Eve'—but not with the original cast."

BENNETT CERF.



*The moth is on the
coonskin and the
gin is legal now*

. . . but even those of us too young to remember the password of a certain speak just off Sheridan Square will shake heads with a vicarious nostalgia (and a sly look at Father) at the mention of that decade . . . From the Left Bank to the Algonquin and Greenwich Village, a fabulous group of men and women talked and wrote during the twenties—and carved a glowing milestone in America's literary history.



BURTON RASCOE was part of all this—he not only lived and wrote and traveled and talked during that decade—he found it gay and exciting. And now he has written of it all in lively retrospect, which means a wonderfully intimate account of Sinclair Lewis, Ring Lardner, Otto Kahn, George Gershwin, Ernest Hemingway, T. S. Eliot, Joseph Conrad, Gilda Gray, Theodore Dreiser and—well they're all here.

The age of prohibition will long be the subject of reminiscences. It was the age of cloche hats and Capone, rum-runners and expatriates, Hemingway and hot jazz and F. Scott You-know-who. But few books will be written from as intimate a view, and with such lively wit as this latest by the author of *Before I Forget*.

We Were Interrupted

by Burton Rascoe

At your bookseller's, \$4.00

DOUBLEDAY

SEPTEMBER 27, 1947

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EXTRA!! SPECIAL!!

ONE OF our extra special friends, when we were roommates at the university, told us of a little incident that has stayed live in our memory. When he was eight or nine, our roommate was a newsboy; and on a particularly bad day, after he had trudged the streets for hours without finding anyone to buy that last paper, he suddenly had an intuition about people. Turning the corner onto a fresh new street, he began shouting, "EXTRA!! EXTRA!!"

A rotund jolly man rushed up to him immediately to buy it. "What's the Extra about?" the man asked, fumbling for change.

"It isn't about anything," said our little roommate. "It's just an extra newspaper."

The man thought it such a fine joke on himself that he was quite as pleased as if there had been an earthquake or another war. "You will go far, my little man," he said, patting our roommate on the head and tipping him a dime.

Our roommate, now a very successful lawyer, lives in Grand Rapids, Michigan, with his wife and two lovely daughters. The three of them are out of this world, too.

We recall another incident, but this one happened to us when we were eight or nine. On a lovely, golden, memorable day, about this time of year, we were taken to the State Fair; and during that one day we saw enough people and things to last us a solid year.

The person we remember particularly was a barker on a high platform outside one of the Midway tents. He was a very natty figure, short and swarthy, gray pants pinched-in at the waist, striped blue-and-white pull-over shirt. He had a red-and-blue tattooed mermaid on the upper part of his right forearm and a dark mole under his left eye.

We stood listening a long time. "THIS way, THIS way, ladeez an' gentlemun . . . Step right inside an' see the Fair's most EXTRAORDINARY, most SPECIAL attraction — the REE-gal GOLDEN PIE-thon . . . She is THIRTY-FIVE feet LONG an' weighs FOUR HUNDERT an' TEN pounds . . . Step right up, ladeez an' gentlemun . . . ten cents a throw . . . Come see THE ONLY ONE in captivi-TEE — the REE-gal GOLDEN PIE-thon . . . How she LIVES . . . how she LOVES, very mysterious, very mystic . . . EVERYTHING explained . . . THIS way, THIS way, ten cents a throw . . ."

We didn't get to see the Regal Golden Python that day

advertisement

nor did we have everything explained, being whisked off by the hand down the bright Midway, but we looked back longingly because it sounded to us then as though that barker had something quite special. Maybe it is just as well that the fine edge of remembrance was not taken off the day.

At least we have retained all our days a healthy inquisitiveness about what goes on in the world outside our skin. We have retained also a reserve of curiosity concerning the way in which are recorded the memorabilia enacted around the round world, beyond our own love, laughter, and tears.

Joseph G. Herzberg, city editor of *The New York Herald Tribune*, and twenty-eight of his colleagues have written a book called *LATE CITY EDITION* which goes a long way toward satisfying that curiosity. It tells how a big city newspaper converts the raw material of news into the finished product that appears daily on the newsstand. *LATE CITY EDITION* is newspaper shoptalk by twenty-nine journalists, each writing about that aspect of the intricate operation which he knows best.

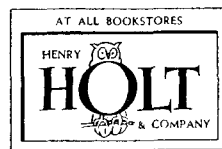
Quite frankly we like this book. We like its organization, beginning as it does with the primary job of collecting the news and working gradually to the mechanics of its final co-ordination. We like especially the ease and orderliness with which the whole complicated process is unfolded. We like the lively way the keeper of the morgue opens his chapter on the reference library: "I am burgeoning like a flower. A book about the newspaper business, with a chapter about the library? And the librarian himself to write it? It's the millennium, and I plan to file it, accordingly, under 'M'." We like the lightness of touch with which a reporter is defined in the chapter on news writing: "He is male and female, and young and old, and he works twenty-four days a day, including Sunday, cranking out his short-lived wares — hot stuff today, shelf paper tomorrow." We like the urbane informality that enables a man to say: "A modern newspaper is Thucydides sweating to make a deadline. From the Broadway night clubs and from strange places thousands of miles away, the stories come in side by side; the world is measured off once in twenty-four hours, and one who drops a coin on a newsstand and picks up a paper buys a piece of himself each day."

LATE CITY EDITION is a warm first-hand account of the journalist's world. It is also a book by experts on a medium of communication that records and shapes our life and our world. So far as we have been able to determine there is no other book of its sort in existence. Admittedly it is not thirty-five feet long nor does it weigh four hundred and ten pounds, but no one can accuse us of barking at a fair — or being intuitive — when we say frankly that *LATE CITY EDITION* is really something very extra special.

LATE CITY EDITION

By Joseph G. Herzberg and
members of *The New York
Herald Tribune* staff.

\$3.00



The Saturday Review