

THE CUSTOMERS ALWAYS WRITE

BILL BUCKLEY, assistant to Van Cartmell at Doubleday, sends this True Confession:

Because of the tremendous size of Doubleday & Co., most of its employees confine their activities to their particular jobs, but occasionally there is a cantankerous one like me who operates independently. This can cause embarrassment, and I'll show you how.

For many months, I had been a devoted reader of a series of human interest stories by a *World-Telegram* staff writer. His name was Norman Katkov. It occurred to me suddenly that he might consider writing a book. I called him. He was very gracious. "I'm from Doubleday's," I said, "and I think you ought to write a book." "I have," he replied. "Have you sent it to a publisher yet?" I asked. "I have," he assured me, "and they accepted it." "May I ask who it was?" I persisted, my spirits descending. "You certainly may," he said. "It was you."

Anyhow, Katkov's book, "Eagle at My Eyes," turned out to be a great success, and I have forgotten—well, almost forgotten—my embarrassment.

CHARLES E. WILSON, president of General Motors, ruefully tells the following story:

A young couple was having an intimate family discussion: should they buy a new car or have a baby? They realized they probably could not have both so they finally decided to have a baby—because they could get it more quickly!

FROM SAMUEL F. FARQUHAR, manager of the University of California Press:

Here is one for Trade Winds: Recently a professor told of a young friend of his who began an epic poem but got no further than the first line because he couldn't, for the life of him, think of even a second line that would go in in the same way. Here is the first line (and the entire epic):

"When hag-sprung brats first chafed the horny bellies of their dams"

FROM JOHN JAMIESON, of the H. W. Wilson Co:

Since you wrote in TRADE WINDS that we could supply information concerning literary agents and teachers of writing, we have had numerous requests for same.

Won't you please run a note to the effect that we do not consider ourselves authorities on this subject? The best advice we can give is this: consult the current issue of

the Bowker Company's "The Literary Market Place" at the nearest public library.

Mr. Jamieson's tip is a sound one. As a matter of fact, the current issue of "The Literary Market Place" (it is an annual publication) is worth owning personally if you have manuscripts for sale. Its listings are complete and thoroughly checked. . . .

WITH THE PERELMAN-HERSHFELD saga of a trip around the world about to be published in book form, an extract of the speech Groucho Marx made on the eve of their departure has a certain academic interest:

As a rule I don't waste my valuable time attending banquets. The only dinners I attended last year were the Academy Award dinner, the dinner that Basil Rathbone gave for Mrs. Rathbone, the dinner the railroad men gave for Chu Chu Johnson honoring Chu Chu Martinez, and the dinner that Mrs. Rathbone gave for Basil Rathbone. Other than getting a meal on the cuff I don't see much point to a public banquet.

But Hershfeld and Perelman are leaving the country! I can just imagine the furor this news will cause throughout the civilized world. After all, other men have scrambled for parts unknown. Abe Hummel left the country, Judge Crater has never been found, and Dore Schary finally landed at RKO.

A boat trip can be tragic if two people aren't compatible, but I am sure that Syd and Al will get along swimmingly. Syd is a lovable companion and a born diplomat. I might say he's as comfortable to be with as an old glove, and just about as interesting.

This trip will do President Truman a lot of good, for you must remember it is under his Administration that the boys are leaving the country. This is one thing the Republicans won't be able to take credit for.

I want to wish you two a success-

ful and happy journey. Come back to America safe and strong, for America needs you. A country is only as strong as its weakest link and it is only lads like you that can supply that.

So I say to you two bold adventurers—stretch out your hands for the fruits of the world. Bring back tales of the African veldt, of the snows of Kilimanjaro, of the Rumanian peasants plowing the furrows and chanting the songs of Boris Morros. Live dangerously, my young friends. Have yourselves a brawl in Singapore and go on a bust in Bali.

As for your book, I'm sure it will be a huge success. I know that I, for one, will be standing in line to grab a copy as soon as it reaches the lending library.

FROM LORNA SMITH, of Glendale, Calif.:

It was back in 1942. Our son had been awarded his wings of gold in the Naval Air Corps and was home on leave. In honor of the occasion Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Dreiser were having dinner with us.

My husband was serving and we were discussing the various foods we did or did not care for. Our twenty-one-year-old son heading for the Pacific related: "I was able to eat everything until one night they served us quail. I couldn't stomach that. They looked so little—as if they hadn't had a fair chance in life."

"I can eat anything but rabbit," Theodore Dreiser remarked. "I simply cannot stand the taste of rabbit."

As my husband placed the fried rabbit on our plates I replied, "Well, you're—" and catching my breath I never finished the sentence, "going to now." Fortunately for everyone, I decided when Mr. Dreiser accepted his third portion.

HERE IS A SOUND SUGGESTION from H. H. Trice, of Miami, Fla.:

The great number of characters appearing in novels (for example, "House Divided") frequently are lost in the maze, resulting in slowing up the reader in order to ascertain "who is who."

Might it not be helpful if the characters were arranged in order of their appearance on the fly leaf? The cost would be nominal in comparison to the convenience to the reader, and I have an idea that many





America has a new hero. One with a shy grin and a quiet voice, a man whom other men instinctively follow and love because of his unpreached integrity. He was the focal point of life on the *Reluctant*, a battered supply ship which plied the backwaters of the Pacific, in Thomas Heggen's book, "Mister Roberts", published last year. And he is brought to life by Henry Fonda in the Broadway version of "Mister Roberts", by Thomas Heggen and Joshua Logan.

The book was hailed as "a little classic" and "a little masterpiece" on publication. It was loved for its vigorous, male, sometimes sardonic humor through which the frustrations of an inactive war expressed itself. These qualities have not been lost in the play. After seeing it, John Mason Brown said in the *Saturday Review*: "No play about Americans at war since 'What Price Glory?' has possessed the vitality and truth of this comedy of heartbreak . . . it is superlative theatre . . . one of the most uproarious, heartwarming, and yet touching evenings Broadway has yielded in many a long year."

About the book, Mr. Brown said: "Every self-indulgent reader must by now have read Mr. Heggen's profoundly moving, if hilarious, sketches . . . Mr. Heggen's was a remarkable book. Indeed, in my opinion it is the most valid volume about life on a ship to have been written by an American since Marcus Goodrich wrote that minor masterpiece 'Delilah'".

Mister Roberts is universally liked — by book reviewers, readers, play critics, and playgoers. Those who have read the book have bought out the house for months ahead. Those who see the play will find the book a must for Mister Roberts is a very pleasant man to have around the house. \$3.00

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY



"We call it 'Ecstasy,' but it's really a variant of tri-butyl-xylene!"

additional books would be sold as the result of such delineation.

The brief descriptions on the jacket are not sufficient. Usually highly colored to excite rather than inform and while I admit many books are sold from the jacket description, many additional copies would pass over the counter if the prospective purchaser could gain a clearer picture of the characters.

Occasionally, but very seldom, have publishers used this plan. It should be universal.

TO GIVE YOU AN IDEA OF THE SORT of thing that's going on in Princeton these days, here is a contribution from Charles D. Learks:

Excuse me, but as I sit dismally trying to do my homework I am reminded of the sad story I overheard an old sailor tell once. It went something like this:

"So, he says, 'take the elm fir me, Cy, while I go below and spruce

up.' He was going ashore as soon as we hit port, you know. I pine for those good old days when I was poplar with the ladies. But don't you bet that I wasn't a stubborn lad—I had a willow my own! Once, I remember, we was docked in Singapore. I told Sam, he was my mate, 'Tonight I going to the balsam, so don't expect me back early.' Lulu, she was my best gal, come around about half past eight—you should have cedar! She was dressed fit to kill. But she took one look at me an' says, 'Cyprus those pants of your'n and fix that hemlock I tole you to.' I got mad and told her to quit nagging me so. And she leaves in a huff. After she'd gone, I was sad. I turned to Quoy, the Chinese cabin-boy, and told him, 'Sequoia don't want ever to make an ash of yourself like I just did.' All he said in reply was: 'Oak.'

Mr. Learks neglected to give his class. Probably he's in the graduate school.

BENNETT CERF.

The MOOT POINT

Peter De Polnay

if you fear that adult writing has perished forever—in this day of Hollywoodized plots—take heart. In this beautifully conceived novel of cruel psychological repression and its tragic consequences you will discover—as leading critics already have in *Two Mirrors* and *The Umbrella Thorn*—writing as truly mature as it is exciting.

\$3.00



* AT YOUR BOOKSTORE

The GILDED HEARSE *by Charles O. Gorham*

is a searing story of contemporary America—in particular a day of crisis in the life and love (honorable and otherwise) of a publisher's bright young man. \$2.75

OUT OF THIS WORLD *by Sylvan M. Shane, D. D. S.*

Anesthetics and What They Do To You . . . "I should like to see this book in the library of every hospital, where it should be given to patients as preparation for an operation."—Dr. Henry E. Sigerist \$2.00

*Exuberant, vital—she will not
submit to the tyranny of years . . .*

Helena desperately searches for a brief respite from old age—that “avenue of stone.” She finds it in a younger man who does not hesitate to take advantage of her unconscious love for him. This is a sophisticated, moving novel of a splendid woman. \$3.50

AN AVENUE OF STONE

By Pamela Hansford Johnson

*Lights up the corners of the
Russian mind . . .*



An outstanding author, Sir John Maynard, here offers a brilliant analysis of the peculiarly Russian ideas upon which the U.S.S.R. is based, and how these ideas have been put into practice. The first part of *Russia in Flux* charts the main currents of Russian thought up to the October Revolution; the second part deals with contemporary Russia. The book contains the heart of two great works originally published in England under the titles *Russia in Flux* and *The Russian Peasant and Other Studies*. \$6.50

RUSSIA IN FLUX

By SIR JOHN MAYNARD

SIR BERNARD PARES, distinguished authority on Russia, says: “Every serious student of Russia of the Revolution should read and digest this book before he tackles any other.”

Have we a horse-and-buggy ethics?



Here a distinguished scholar and scientist tells us how to bring morality up to date. He maintains that morality must change focus from man as individual to man as member of society. His revolutionary book favors an ethical system which would not be based on what he considers to be outmoded theologies. \$3.00

Life And Morals

By S. J. HOLMES

What's lurking here?

Spine-tingling shocks and surprises await the reader of this mystery story about a Hollywood star, the murder of her unlovable husband, and some rather abandoned characters—all in a glamorous setting. \$2.50

My Love Wears Black

By OCTAVUS ROY COHEN
Author of *Don't Ever Love Me*.



the labor leader

Eli Ginzberg here presents a study of leaders in general, labor leaders in particular—what kind of men they are, how they got to be where they are, and what they do after they get there. \$3.00

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

H. G. Wells

The End of a Faith

GERALD HEARD

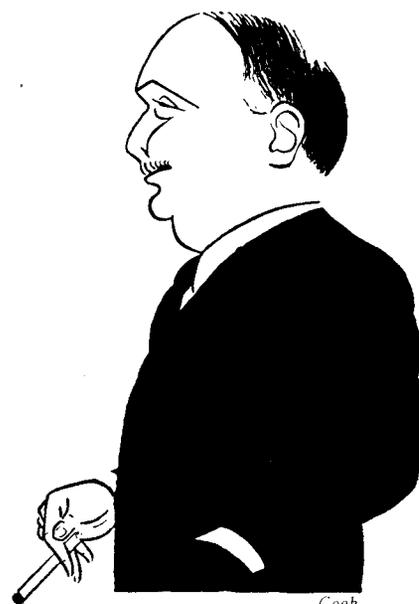
THOUGH Bernard Shaw's life and work ends a cycle, it opens out into another. He is a kind of Janus. But H. G. Wells in the actual sculptural sense was a "term." His end marked the end of Utopianism, that specific mythos of the Modern Age, the Faith which took the place left by the gap when the Dantesque Divine Comedy closed with the close of the Middle Ages.

Neither Shaw nor Wells can be fully understood without viewing the other. They have to be considered together because the two men through fifty years of influential writing did live in a complementary relationship. Their relationship was so contra-distinct that there is only one word to describe it—symbiosis. They came into action at the same time, for Shaw was a decade older than Wells when he began to have his specific effect. By the time that the plays were startling the public, "The Time Machine" had already interested readers who were on the outlook for real originality. It is significantly curious that Wells should have started his imaginative career with *Time*. For it was to prove that just here lay his limitation, or to use his own word, frustration. Though he saw this was to be the master theme of the oncoming generation, he could not hold to it. *Time* in the end proved too much for his imagination to handle; it slipped from him and the man's message was over before the man himself ended. Indeed his whole life story may be said to turn on this, his struggle really to keep on being contemporary. And he was defeated. He chose to be right at once instead of right at the end, to be the ill-traitor rather than the creator.

We can understand this better if we compare him with another famous writer who was his actual contemporary and in a way closer to him than even Shaw, though they appeared at the time even more opposed. That is Kipling. Kipling on a smaller scale—on the British Imperial scene—instead

of the world-wide one of Wells—repeats the Wells history. For he, too, starts with the mystery and terror of life only to be balanced by the vision which the mystic may have of its grandeur. What can be more filled with bestial terror than "The Mark of the Beast"—which some magazine editors of the day thought too filthy to print? "The End of the Passage" is equally horrifying. Then in "Kim" and "The Light That Failed" Kipling tried his hand at the full-length novel and in "Kim," with the lama's vision at its conclusion, we have an author, already famous for his skill with that tailored style which is the approved writer's mode, actually attempting to render the mystic's vision. Kipling, too, tried the story of the future and had a share in introducing scientification. But that genre is rightly called Wellsian. He had the immense vitality to rear this and a couple of other new lines in writing.

For though Kipling, Wells, and, to a certain extent, Shaw all worshipped at that dawn-of-the-century shrine, Efficiency, they did so for very different reasons. Men may bow to that strange god out of the machine with opposed intentions. Certainly Wells and Kipling did. They were right in shunning each other. For Kipling—that strange culmination of talent that flowered in its twenties and for the rest of a long life like a patient schoolmaster went on repeating himself to a dwindling class—Kipling worshipped efficiency because he hoped thus to repress revolution so that those who had arrived might not be disturbed by newer, cruder arrivals. Wells revered the god of ever betrayer means because this would mean you could change everything and get more liberty for yourself. Wells and Kipling were together in their love of the machine and the engineer because they both hoped this would permit mankind to be left alone: alone to be managed, for the weapons will be in the hands of the elite, thought



—Cook.
H. G. Wells . . . a "term."

Kipling—alone to go his own way, thought Wells, for with production at plenty no class would be able to starve a man for doing as he likes. But though they differed they agreed all too tragically on one thing. Though they both had a glimpse of the authentic vision, they chose as their goal means and not the end; they advocated efficiency as a substitute for meaning.

As to their competition there can be no doubt that Wells won on points. Indeed the only point in which he did not win—the point of style—is the most doubtful. Kipling wrote well, very well, with the care of that "myotic" good taste that made English male clothes the best and the dullest fashion ever invented by men. Finish and quiet were everything; consequently growth was really impossible. Wells never wrote with that care about words which if it cannot say what it means in a perfect flow of phrases would rather not say it. Bernard Shaw remarked at lunch the day that George Moore—the master of that type of style—died, "George was a writer—in a way. He made one remarkably good sentence and he always used it. The only trouble about it was that you couldn't say anything in it." Wells was always exuberant. He, like Kipling, made a permanent place for himself with the short story and it is doubtful if anything that Kipling wrote will outlast "The Door in the Wall" or "The Country of the Blind."

THEN Wells turned to the novel, the romance, and with a deluge of books dilated that already varicose web. Sociology and sex, which till then had only dared peep round the rustic arbor in which the conventional lovers sat, walked out with boldness and