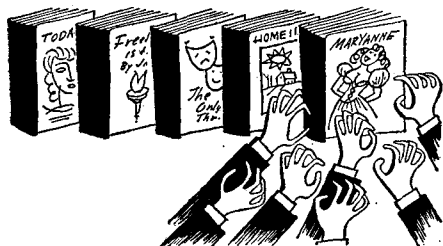


# TRADE Winds

**WARNING TO AUTHORS:** never try sarcasm on your dear, deserving wives. Listen to what happened to one novelist who signed for a six-week stretch in Hollywood and was persuaded to let his bride go with him. "Will I need my driver's license out there?" she asked at the end of a long string of similarly brilliant queries. "Of course not," he answered wearily. "They don't have drivers' licenses in California." Result: three weeks later she was caught in a traffic violation on Wilshire Boulevard and when the officer demanded her license she assured him brightly, "I haven't got any. My husband told me I don't need one."

Jacket research: The book editor of the *Oregon Journal* received a review copy of Rosamond Marshall's "Laird's Choice" (Prentice-Hall), removed the jacket, and then sought to persuade somebody to review it. Several pros-



pects flipped idly through the pages and murmured, "I don't think I'm right for this kind of book." The editor then replaced the sexy jacket and went to lunch. When he got back five people were fighting for the privilege of reviewing "Laird's Choice." All of which proves that those lads who order daring jackets for paper-backs know their onions—or casaba melons, as the case may be.

**A DISTINGUISHED COMMUTER** from Saratoga, who reluctantly signs checks "Frank Sullivan," has dug into his box of Faulkner reminiscences for Charlie Hughes's high-toned *Detroit Athletic Club News*. Says Mr. S. in part:

Two middle-aged writers were interested in and pleased by an item of literary news recently. To tell the story let us go back to the early Thirties, when the two lads, both at the time banging away like all get-out at *belles-lettres*, shared an apartment in the Beekman Place section of New York.

One of the roommates was, and is, Corey Ford. The other, a rather handsome chap some years Ford's senior, was known slanderously as

the Ugly Roomer, an inaccurate epithet bestowed in the thoughtlessness of youth by Ford, to whom the apartment really belonged. It was a comfortable diggings, run on the liberal lines you might expect in the establishment of two bachelors. Anything was apt to happen, and usually did.

Harmony prevailed between the two roommates because they rarely saw each other. Ford, a sober and industrious practitioner of his craft, led a fairly sane life; that is to say, he went to bed at night and got up in the morning. The Handsome Roomer was the reverse; he was fond of staying up all night and resting by day. By the time he got up Ford had usually finished his day's work and gone gallivanting into town. The two met so rarely, in fact, that once when they passed each other in the living room Mr. Sullivan (for the Ugly Roomer was none other) tipped his hat courteously and said, "Mr. Ford, I presume!"

One noon Mr. S. rose at his wonted hour, did his setting-up exercises, which consisted of opening and shutting his eyes twelve times near an open window, the first three times by using his thumb and forefinger to pry the lids loose, and emerged for breakfast. The sound of a clicking typewriter smote his ear. He winced, for it was a disagreeable reminder of work to be faced later. He sought the source of the uproar and saw a smallish man hunched over a typewriter in the living room. He passed into the kitchen and in pantomime besought Mrs. M., the factotum of the establishment, to tell him who the stranger was. Mrs. M. whispered, "Some writer. Mr. Wasson brought him up; he wanted to use a typewriter." Mrs. M intoned "some writer" in that mixture of condescension, pity, and bafflement, not unmingled with hostility, which experience had caused her to use when referring to her employers' fellow craftsmen.

After breakfast, partly from curiosity and partly from courtesy, Mr. S. introduced himself to the stranger, bade him welcome to the castle, and asked if he had everything he needed for his work. The stranger thanked him and introduced himself. Said his name was Faulkner—Bill Faulkner, in New York on a visit from Mississippi. He had a story for *The Saturday Evening Post* to finish, wanted a quiet place to do it in, and Ben Wasson



had brought him to the Ford-Sullivan apartment. Ben Wasson, a native of Faulkner's Oxford, was a popular literary agent of that era, who soothed his stable of temperamental writers in a magnolia-scented accent that endeared him to one and all.

Your correspondent, having read "Mosquitoes," "The Sound and the Fury," "Sanctuary," and other Faulkner writings of that period, hurried to the closet, got out the red carpet reserved for special guests, and rolled it out.

It is obvious from the way he has reacted to the Nobel Award that Bill Faulkner is the same unassuming, friendly, genuinely modest, and likable man he was then and always had been. If we call him "Bill" it is not because we are among those people who never use anyone's surname after five minutes' acquaintance but because he was simply not the kind of person to be called "Mr. Faulkner" by anyone who knew him at all well.

Well, Mrs. M. was right when she said he was "some writer," but she should have placed the accent on the "some."

Mr. Faulkner's recent wanderings, incidentally, include a pilgrimage to the Kentucky Derby, where he won a bundle on Count Turf not only for himself but for optimistic editors who entrusted him with their modest savings. . . . Berney Geis, of Grosset and Dunlap, heard that Faulkner's forthcoming "Requiem for a Nun" included an interlude of three acts for a play and said to the author, "I thought you didn't generally visit the theatre." "I don't," replied Faulkner. "I can count on my fingers all the plays I've seen in the past twenty years." "Evidently that didn't prevent your including what amounts to an entire play in your new book," pursued Geis. Faulkner's reply stopped him cold. "I don't read many novels, either," he said.

**THE FORTHRIGHT** Fred Babcock, of the *Chicago Tribune*, often has admitted in print that the obscurantist poetry of E. E. Cummings leaves him completely mystified—a failing, if such it be, that is shared by the undersigned. The current *Sewanee Review*, however, contains an article by George Haines IV that has clarified not only our Cummings but our goings. First Mr. Haines quotes Mr. C.'s immortal "Poem Number 48":

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Then Mr. Haines explains, "This is poetry for the eye as well as for the ear. At a time when nearly all poetry is read silently, this should be regarded as an extension rather than a restriction of the possibilities of poetry. Cummings's purpose in this poem is to realize completely his meaning." The first ten dolts who will honestly confess they haven't the faintest idea what E. E. Cummings is driving at will receive a beautifully embossed copy of Nick Kenny's latest sonnet autographed by Bob Considine.

**A COUPLE** of young fellows in Hollywood named Stephen Bosustow and John Hubley recently won themselves fame, an Oscar award, and a wad of currency with a hilarious Doctor Seuss short called "Gerald McBoing Boing," all about a modern-day two-year-old who disdains ordinary speech and just goes around making the horrible sounds he hears in radio commercials. Now they've embarked upon a more ambitious project: a full-length James Thurber film called "Men, Women, and Dogs," a potpourri of live action sequences, animations of famous Thurber cartoon creations, and a commentary by the master himself. John Housman will produce those reels which involve living performers. The whole thing sounds pretty wonderful to this department. . . . *The New Yorker's* Harold Ross tells how the wily Sam Goldwyn, following the success of Danny Kaye's interpretation of Walter Mitty, attempted to lure Thurber out to Hollywood for a writing stint. "I'll pay you five hundred a week," proposed Goldwyn. "Sorry," answered Thurber, "but Ross has met the increase." Goldwyn raised the ante to a thousand, then fifteen hundred, and finally twenty-five hundred but each time would get the courteous reply, "Ross has met the increase." There followed a long interim of silence. Then one day Goldwyn wrote again. This time his offer was down to fifteen hundred. Thurber wrote back, "Sorry, but Ross has met the decrease." —BENNETT CERF.

# To Broaden Your VIEW OF ASIA

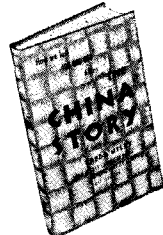
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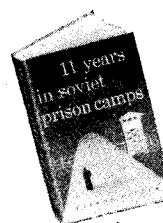
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EDITOR'S NOTE:  
*During the years he served as chief editor for Charles Scribner's Sons, Maxwell Evarts Perkins acted as literary midwife to the labors of writers as varied and talented as F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Heming-*

*way, Ring Lardner, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, Marcia Davenport, Taylor Caldwell, and Thomas Wolfe. This appreciation of Max Perkins by one of his authors and closest friends is published on the fourth anniversary of his death.*

THERE is no doubt that Thomas Wolfe was touched with genius. But genius is not so rare as all that. There are other men and women touched with genius who are also aware of discipline and form and the right of those around them to live. Unfortunately, genius is seldom recognized as such unless it is loud, disturbing, and cataclysmic. In my opinion the collaborator of "Look Homeward, Angel" and "Of Time and the River," Maxwell Evarts Perkins, was a greater genius than the author.

Now I will say something that has never before been said publicly. But it is time it was said

in the interest of truth and of literary history and in order to set the record straight. There is not the slightest question in the minds of the few who knew Maxwell Perkins intimately that the Tom Wolfe episode killed him. Exactly from the date of Tom's betrayal he began to die. (His death occurred four years ago, June 17, 1947.)

I am not too much impressed by uncontrolled genius. I was when I was young, but I am no longer young. I am not sure that in the sum total the game is worth the candle. Uncontrolled genius has a dreadful, devouring, proliferating quality; cancerous. The world has had a lot of it. It seems to me that what we are in need of now is character, which after all is genius and also for any kind of genius the point of best departure. In the last two decades the world has witnessed too much uncontrolled genius.

Influence is the most mysterious by-product of personality, and personality sits at the heart of mystery. I think the foundation of Maxwell Perkins's influence was that extremely rare quality, integrity; integrity of taste,

of selection, of learning, of human relationships. He never committed himself until he was sure, but once committed he was committed. He never let a man down or an idea or a belief. He was completely steadfast, loyal, and unbetraying. If you add to these qualities knowledge, acumen, imagination, and taste, then you have a formidable nucleus of influence, a radioactive base. Moreover, the more implicit influence is the less exhortatory, the more influential and impressive it is. It is ancient knowledge that example is the best precept. You were ashamed to be disloyal to life or ideas when you were with Max Perkins; unconsciously you did your best. It never occurred to you to be cheap or malingering. And all the while he never said anything about these things. He never even thought of them. If he had he would have been ashamed of himself. He was that rarest of all creatures, the non-hortatory male. He hadn't two seconds of lecturing in him, not a trace of the podium.

Habit is an odd companion. Most of the time it walks beside you silent and unnoticed, but familiar circumstances recurring it steps forward with pre-emptory command. Even now the first thing I find myself wanting to do when I arrive in New York (I get there as a rule only twice a year, spring and fall, and then only for a hurried week or so)

