

# In Paper Covers

*The Saturday Review's Guide to the Best New Reprints*

<i>Title &amp; Author</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Critics' Consensus</i>
BEULAH LAND <i>H. L. Davis</i> (Pocket: 25¢)	Chronicle of a long and hazardous journey by two young people (young man and girl) through the Mississippi Valley to "Beulah Land" (Indian territory) in the early nineteenth century.	Highly praised for its vivid and authentic picture of the American frontier; some critics felt it lacked sufficient vitality and dramatic excitement to be a first-rate novel.
BUDDENBROOKS <i>Thomas Mann</i> (Pocket: 50¢)	The decline and dissolution of a prosperous, conservative, and respected German merchant family in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Translated by H. T. Lowe-Porter.	One of Mann's earliest and best works, never before available in this country at so modest a price.
THE CARAVAN PASSES <i>George Tabori</i> (Signet: 25¢)	Varga, a ship's surgeon, is the unwitting catalyst of a revolt against colonialism in an Oriental port. Revised and abridged from the hard-cover edition.	Engrossing, fast-paced, well-written little story.
THE DISENCHANTED <i>Budd Schulberg</i> (Bantam: 35¢)	The physical and spiritual disintegration of Manley Halliday, a literary genius of the Twenties, ending his days as a writer of grade-B films. The novel is said to have been inspired by the career of F. Scott Fitzgerald.	Hollywood scenes and people satirized superbly, but Schulberg fails to convince readers of his hero's great and tragic qualities.
THE FACE OF INNOCENCE <i>William Sansom</i> (Signet: 25¢)	Amorous intrigue and emotional crisis hidden well beneath the surface of an apparently successful middle-class marriage.	Few contemporary writers in English can match Sansom's effortless, witty style, but his tale slows down a bit at the end.
NO STAR IS LOST <i>James T. Farrell</i> (Signet: 50¢)	Continues the story of young Danny O'Neill and his family begun in "A World I Never Made" (also available in a Signet edition at 50¢). The locale is Chicago, the time thirty-five years ago, the characters poor Irish.	The critics hailed a few magnificently done, unforgettable scenes, but complained about the book's lack of unity and overuse of detail.
ONLY THE DEAD KNOW BROOKLYN <i>Thomas Wolfe</i> (Signet: 25¢)	Seven short stories ("Men of Old Catawba," "The Four Lost Men," "Circus at Dawn," "The Bums at Sunset," "Only the Dead Know Brooklyn," "Death the Proud Brother," "Gulliver") and an essay, "The Story of a Novel," an account of how Wolfe wrote "Of Time and the River."	Stories, powerful and sprawling; essay, a classic of literary self-analysis.
SONG OF BERNADETTE <i>Franz Werfel</i> (Pocket: 35¢)	The story of the French peasant girl who, at Lourdes in 1858, had a vision of a "beautiful lady" which the Church later declared to be a true evocation of the Holy Virgin. Translated by Ludwig Lewisohn.	Beautifully written, excitingly told chronicle of Catholic faith by a distinguished Austrian novelist.
TWO ADOLESCENTS <i>Alberto Moravia</i> (Signet: 25¢)	Two psychological stories about young boys, members of well-to-do Italian families, becoming aware of adult emotions. The translations are by Beryl de Zoete and Angus Davidson.	Although Moravia's concern with adolescence is almost entirely for its sexual aspects, he handles his theme with realistic power, delicacy, and a subtle moralism.

## RECOMMENDED MYSTERIES:

**Puzzles:** "Mr. and Mrs. North Meet Murder," by Frances and Richard Lockridge (Avon, 25¢); "The Black-Eyed Stranger," by Charlotte Armstrong (Pocket, 25¢); "Three Doors to Death," by Rex Stout (Dell, 25¢); "The Tragedy of Z," by Ellery Queen (Avon, 25¢).

**Suspense:** "Judgment on Deltchev," by Eric Ambler (Pocket, 25¢).

**Tough:** "The Bigger They Come," by A. A. Fair (Erle Stanley Gardner) (Pocket, 25¢); "Turn on the Heat," by A. A. Fair (Dell, 25¢); "Spill the Jackpot," by A. A. Fair (Dell, 25¢).

—RAYMOND WALTERS, JR.



## ASSASSIN

### A Drinker of Hashish

**I**n eleventh century Persia, a secret order was founded by Hassan ben Sabbah, indulging in the use of the Oriental drug hashish, and, when under its influence, in the practice of secret murder. The murderous partakers of hashish came to be called *hashshashin* in the Arabic and from that origin comes our English word *assassin*!

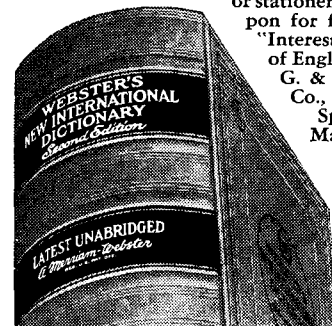
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## THE EDITOR & THE GRAPHIC ARTS

(Continued from page 27)

the new author. It was pitiful before 1709, when the Statute of Anne came into existence to recognize him as little more than a necessary evil, and has improved very little since then. Now he is the victim of mounting production costs. On this score, a matter of grave concern to the modern editor and to the entire graphic arts lies in a new word recently come into use in editorial judgment of manuscripts. That word is "marginal." It damns with faint praise. It refers to manuscripts of acknowledged talent but without the prospect of earning production costs. A first book, it is argued, must be reasonably sure of a sale of six to eight thousand copies to cover plant and edition investment. The risk involved is great and caution suggests rejection. The consequence is that some gifted young writers lose their opportunity for a first hearing, become discouraged, and turn their talents to other fields. The word "marginal" has condemned and defeated them.

THIS situation represents as much a challenge to the graphic artist as it does to the editor. For his own survival, as well as the writer's and publisher's, the technician in the graphic

arts must devise means by which costs of production will come down. One way or another the editors and technicians must find the means of lowering costs without cheapening our books.

A publishing house which does not discover and encourage new talent is moribund. The first books of today's best-known writers entailed great risks. Because production costs were lower twenty years ago, no thought was given to the marginal factor in the first books by Sinclair Lewis, Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, John Steinbeck, and many others. Somehow or other publishers managed with no great loss to give these men a hearing, and they went on to repay them many times over. Editors and the entire graphic arts must find the means of doing as much for each new generation of beginning writers.

It is all too obvious that far too many of the 11,000 and more titles issued each year in America should not have been published at all. Too many of them die unsung and even unnoticed. Nonetheless, taken all together, they are as true a measure of our culture and our time as any standard available to us. Grandiose as that sounds, it is no exaggeration to insist that the books we bring into being by our collaborative efforts are the most permanent means of recording, evaluating, and continuing our civilization. It is not too romantic to believe that they influence men's minds as much now as they have since 1454, when Gutenberg printed the first Bible. The blandishments of radio and television and all the more spectacular devices used for the communication of ideas have not seriously affected the value and function of books.

The dour words in Ecclesiastes, "Of making many books there is no end," can be paraphrased by the editor and the practitioner of the graphic arts to suggest that there are ever new ends to be sought in the making of many books. Some of these can be achieved if the editor would be willing to learn from the technician and if the technician would stop his high-gearred machines long enough to ask what end they are serving.

By working together they can effect some degree of harmony between idea and form, between concept and method, between value and function. This can be done if all their special but interdependent skills and instruments are correlated.

### Woman to Man

By Laura Benét

IF you came back, stood near  
In gentle peace and pride.  
Would you feel happy, dear,  
Be satisfied?

Would your enlightened mind  
Realize sharp and clear,  
My faults you sweetly bore  
When you were here?

Would you not think me still  
Most unimportant, small,  
Grieve I had not arrived  
Among the famous tall?

Would you take me aside,  
Speak gravely wise,  
Warn I might not attain  
A mansion in the skies?

Or would you hold me close,  
Laugh softly, say, "Because  
You are your very self,  
There's no restricting clause."

## WIT AS A WEAPON

(Continued from page 14)

so similar in so many ways that a joke that has served against one will also do damage to the other.

**SOME** of the jokes have a leathery durability, and scores were old even when first turned against the Nazis.

As an example of how an anecdote can survive the decades without loss of vigor, and do duty against any quarry that offers itself, there is the story of the schoolboy and the litter of kittens. Not long ago *Time* reported this version as being current in Communist Hungary:

A schoolteacher asked ten-year-old Istvan to compose a sentence containing a dependent clause. "Our cat had ten kittens," said Istvan, "of which all were Communists."

"Excellent," said the teacher. "Exactly right. Be sure you do as well next week when the Government supervisors come."

The following week she asked the prize student the same question. "Our cat," said Istvan, "had ten kittens, of which all were Social Democrats."

"Why, Istvan," cried the teacher, "that's absurd. That's not what you said last week. Last week your kittens were all Communists."

"I know," said Istvan, "but since then their eyes have opened."

In 1944 I used the same joke over Radio Luxemburg, only the kittens that had their eyes opened were Nazis then. In 1877 an "Encyclopaedia of Wit and Wisdom," published in Philadelphia, gave the following version of the same story:

A large Republican meeting was held in Clermont, Ohio, which was attended by a small boy who had four young puppy dogs which he offered for sale. Finally one of the crowd, approaching the boy, asked: "Are these Frémont pups, my son?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, then," said he, "I'll take these two."

About a week afterward the Demo-

crats held a meeting at the same place, and among the crowd was to be seen the same chap and his two remaining pups. He tried for hours to obtain a purchaser, and finally was approached by a Democrat and asked: "My little lad, what kind of pups are these you have?"

"They're Buchanan pups, sir."

The Republican who had purchased the first two happened to be in hearing, and broke out at the boy:

"See here, you young rascal, didn't you tell me that those pups that I bought of you last week were Frémont pups?"

"Y-e-s, sir," said the young dog-merchant; "but these ain't—they've got their eyes open."

So the ancient complaint of "that's an old one" means nothing in the political war of wits. If the joke packs its little charge of dynamite, if it delivers a sufficient blast at the prevailing system, if it jabs sharply enough under the skin of bureaucrat or *Gauleiter* or commissar, it will be repeated with relish and listened to with satisfaction regardless of age or previous condition of servitude. Considering that the jokes are spur-of-the-moment creations, fired off under pressure and with no time for smoothing and polishing, the remarkable thing is not that some are old and a little flat but that so many are sharp, apt, and deadly.

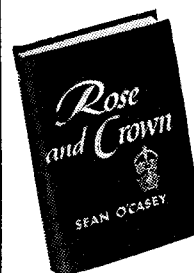
The totalitarians and their stooges are right to fear this type of humor. Sydney Smith long ago observed that "there are few who would not rather be hated than laughed at." The commissars, like the *Gauleiter* before them, are content to be hated, but they are terrified of laughter, for no one who laughs at them can be wholly deceived, wholly subdued. If we had no other clue to the true feelings of the masses huddled behind the Curtain these jokes would be sufficient proof that not all the threats and thunders of Communism can smother the canny good sense of the people.

## SEAN O'CASEY



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### ROSE AND CROWN

This is the fifth volume of

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### LOVE LYRICS

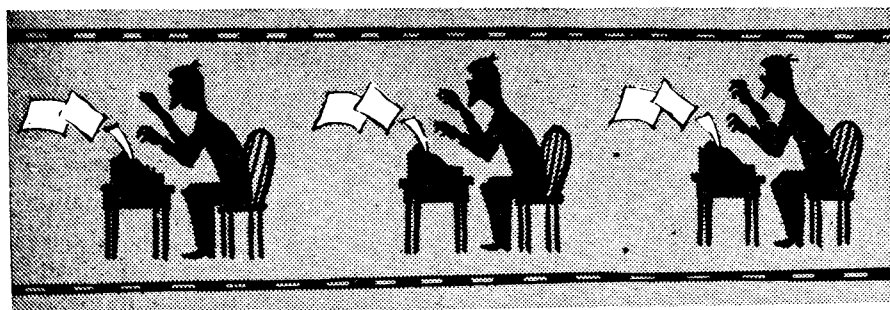
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DEFENSE BONDS



## FICTION

(Continued from page 21)

Carlo wishes to become a hero, and Gino does become the homosexual who tastes luxury briefly. The women become, somewhat too unexceptionably, what their men want them to become.

The simple and vividly dramatized lives of these young Italians veer as crazily as a barometer in a hurricane. For the first two-thirds of the book, everything is both plausible and illuminating, restrained in both style and action as neither of his other novels is. Then, one regrets to say, everything becomes as unlikely as the prospect of Heaven on earth next Sunday.

Pratolini's wish for an earthly paradise compels him here, as it does in his other books, to make his characters unbelievably agree to wear their "poverty proudly, nail it like a banner over the gateway to the world, and stand united shoulder to shoulder." His commendable though esthetically incredible optimism compels him to reunite Valerio and Marisa in a love he has convincingly demonstrated could never be. Although "The Naked Streets" is better than the other novels Pratolini has published here, and well worth reading by those who do not understand the appeal of Socialism in Europe, still it follows the pattern of a convincing start that leads to an unconvincing conclusion. It Pratolini forgets theory and practises what he very well knows, he will write the novel he has always promised and never fulfilled.



—Jacket design for "The Best of Husbands."

*That Ole Tiber*

THE BEST OF HUSBANDS. By Alba de Céspedes. Translated by Frances Frenaye. New York: The Macmillan Co. 343 pp. \$3.75.

By THOMAS G. BERGIN

WITH this work the American public will be given the opportunity to make the acquaintance of yet another of the contemporary Italian writers. This is a rather special occasion, too, in that the author is a woman. Let it be said at once and with no false chivalry that Alba de Céspedes does not let the team down. She has given us a novel of substance and feeling, fully up to the high standards set by her masculine compatriots. Frances Frenaye, the translator, has as usual done a first rate job.

The novel is the brief life-story of Alessandra Corteggiani, written in her cell as she awaits sentence for the

murder of her husband. She takes us back to her childhood, spent in a struggling middle class quarter of Rome, darkened by her parents' memory of her brother who had drowned just before her birth, lightened by her worship of her mother and the girlish friendship with her frivolous school-mate, Fulvia. She tells us of her life at school, of her father's taciturnity and of her mother's passionate attachment to a young man of refinement and nobility of character and of how her mother's conflict drove her to throw herself in the Tiber. After which comes a period of retreat in the Abruzzi hills with her father's family and at length her return to Rome and her meeting with Francesco, an anti-Fascist intellectual. And from this point on her story revolves always around Francesco, whom she marries with the ardent hope of participating in his life but whose major interest is the fight against Fascism. By this time the war has begun, and the most perilous days for anti-Fascist conspiracy lie ahead. The cumulative frustrations and exasperations that lead her to kill this "best of husbands"—while still loving him—cannot be summarized; suffice it to say they are depicted with understanding and convincing realism.

There are many good things in this book. One would like to linger on the picture of life in the Abruzzi, austere and matriarchal, or on the pages describing the tensions in Rome during the dark months between Salerno and the liberation of the city, or on one or two of the carefully drawn minor characters. But these and other aspects of the work are dwarfed by the main theme which can be stated simply as the tragic failure of men to understand women. The title in the original ("Dalla parte di lei"—"Her side of the case") brings out its feminism very clearly, as does the remark of one of the characters: "All men are alike and they all bring trouble." It may be argued that Alessandra with her childish mother worship, her aversion to a sullen father, and what seems to be some latent lesbianism in her own make-up is a special case. Yet surely she is not abnormal among sensitive and intelligent women of today in wanting from her husband not so much protection as comradeship, not so privilege plus disregard as respect and interest. Tragedy comes about not because her best of husbands doesn't understand her but because he simply doesn't see that there is anything to understand. Not many wives, we may hope, will react as Alessandra does, but precisely because they won't this is a book for all good husbands to ponder.

*Your Literary I.Q.*

By John T. Winterich

## NEXT TO QUOTED MATTER

Here are ten lines of verse which immediately precede or immediately follow ten lines that are familiar to almost everyone. Identify the familiar line and name the author of the source. Score five points for each half-answer, on which basis eighty up is excellent, seventy good, and sixty moderately disappointing. (In the first five examples, the less familiar line precedes the familiar; in the second five, the less familiar line follows the familiar.) Answers on page 54.

1. And post o'er land and ocean without rest.
2. Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
3. Await alike the inevitable hour:
4. Or the car rattling o'er the stony street;
5. Thy Naiad airs have brought me home
6. Yes, and a single Alif were the clue.
7. That all with one consent praise newborn gawds.
8. Th' eternal years of God are hers.
9. Thou are not my friend, and I'm not thine.
10. Through all the wide Border his steed was the best.