

the importance of suspense, and manages to keep it up even though large outline and the details, too, are in the public record.

Nor are there many inaccuracies. I noted but two. The "triste field of Mohacs" is discussed the year before it was fought, and it is my impression that the author of "Back and side go bare, go bare" sung by Henry Patenson still lacked seven years of being born.

But when Mr. Brady sets Sir Thomas More into the framework of the age he lives in, he moves from history to polemics. His identification of the humanist with Thomas à Becket is perhaps not completely out of line, but by his linking Cromwell to Herman Goering, by his constant belittling of Cranmer who was subsequently a martyr himself (on the other side), and by his apparent lack of awareness (otherwise he would be less severe) that Bluebeard Harry was followed by Bloody Mary, he not only sets himself down as one who, like Theodore Maynard, "regards the Reformation as not merely a religious but a social disaster," but as one who is willing to turn creativeness and understanding into special pleading.

Those who disagree with him—and there are many—will regret this. For they on their part must move from enjoyment and illumination into argument.

## Fiction Notes

**THE REVOLUTION NOT IN THE TEXTBOOKS:** Like William Ellis, whose "Bounty Lands" reached such a high literary mark last year, John Brick is one of the most forward-looking of our historical novelists. Both Brick and Ellis take all the roughness and violence our time seems to demand, preserve the authentic crudity, and remove what crudity is intruded for its own sake. They talk to us in our own terms, so we are willing to go back into any century with them, and their research is of such quality that we could point to it as being as sure as any established thing, the way we used to point to Plymouth Rock or the Constitution.

In "The Rifleman" (Doubleday, \$3.75), John Brick has chosen to take us through the Revolutionary War with Tim Murphy, one of Dan Morgan's riflemen. There is plenty of shooting, drinking, and wenching here, for Tim was usually in the thick of these activities. The author has sifted all the knowledge preserved about Tim, soberly compared fact and legend, and combined them in a fine

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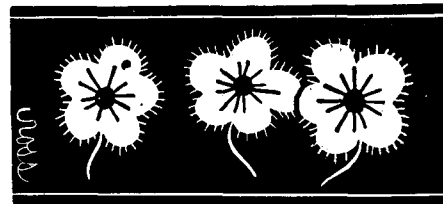
NEW EDITIONS

## Gallantry in the Face of Death

ERNEST HEMINGWAY has long enjoyed a popular reputation as a tough naturalistic writer, but as far back as 1926, when I first read "The Sun Also Rises," I began to suspect that he was a Romantic. The suspicion was confirmed by "A Farewell to Arms," and was transformed into conviction by the books that followed. Now that I have just read for the third or fifth time "The Sun Also Rises," "A Farewell to Arms," "To Have and Have Not," and "Green Hills of Africa" (\$3 each)—in new editions recently published by Scribner's—the romantic character and power of Hemingway's work have again impressed me with all the liveliness of a fresh discovery. Naturalism does not respond to life; it adds nothing, and subtracts only because selection is unavoidable. It reproduces, copies, as best it can. But it does not respond. Hemingway's writing, on the other hand, has from the beginning—from the time of "Three Stories and Ten Poems" (1923)—been an active response, a gallant response. In this gallantry, however disguised, we find the most vital of Hemingway's own vital juices, and the key to all the characters whom he admires. His heroes and heroines are men and women who, seeing clearly what they are up against as actors in the human drama, are able not only to "take it," but to take it in a certain way—gallantly. They and their creator have translated *noblesse oblige* into *soi-même oblige*. It is the motto by which they live, however far their applications of it may depart from orthodox morality. They are doomed to defeat of a kind, for the cards always go against them, and the "dirty trick" that did Catherine to death in "A Farewell to Arms" is always waiting to pop out of the wings like a maleficent *deus ex machina*; but they can score a kind of personal triumph, even in defeat. For this they strive—with a stiff upper lip that is kept, as a point of honor, as invisible as possible. When they find themselves closely associated with a person who can not meet the requirements of the code, there is shame all round; and the best the unfortunate Robert Cohns can do for the benefit of everyone concerned, is to crawl away and hide. It is inevitable that the moralists should find the Jake Barneses and Brett Ashley's and Harry Morgans of Hemingway's world pitiable at best

and loathesome at worst; that critics who live only by the light of a social conscience should find Frederick Henry and Catherine Barkley and the hunters of "Green Hills of Africa" socially irresponsible; that readers who believe that their lives rest securely on supernatural sanctions should sneer at the code which provides Hemingway's best characters with the only meaning that they can discover in existence. But all this has nothing to do with literature or literary criticism. It is the writing that counts, and it is some of the very best of our time. For Ernest Hemingway, at least, the code has worked. And for us, too—for we have the books.

THANKS to intelligent editing, the Modern Library has come a long way since the days of Horace Liveright and the smelly imitation leather bindings. And long may it grow! New titles are "The Greek Poets," edited by Moses Hadas; "Flowering Judas and Other Stories," by Katherine Anne Porter; John O'Hara's "Appointment in Samarra," John Gunther's "Death Be Not Proud," and Margaret Mead's "Coming of Age in Samoa" (\$1.25 each). Professor Hadas's "Collection of Greek Poetry from the Earliest Times to the Fifth Century A.D.," in translations by many hands, is an anthology full of delight and refreshment, interest and entertainment—and many reminders that the life-story we are living is an old, old tale. Reading Miss Porter's first ten short stories, in chronological order, one may trace the development of a highly esteemed talent. Of O'Hara's novels, "Appointment in Samarra" is still the one to beat. (He disagrees, saying it ties for second place.) John Gunther's memoir of his son, dead at seventeen, stands outside the pale of contemporary criticism. Margaret Mead's fascinating anthropological study of Samoan girlhood has the secondary value of giving us a comparative approach to the study of "storm and stress in American adolescents." —BEN RAY REDMAN.





—Endpaper from "The Great American Parade."

"... much to praise in the United States."

## A Continental Scrutiny

By Henri Peyre

The picture of the United States offered by an intelligent French visitor, **H. J. Duteil**, in "**The Great American Parade**" (translated by Fletcher Pratt, Twayne Publishers, 321 pp., \$3.75) is sometimes annoying, sometimes vexing, and at all times instructive, writes Mr. Peyre, French-born, professor of French at Yale.

AMERICA has always exercised a strange fascination upon writers of travel books, and French visitors to our shores have been the most prolific and the most entertaining among those Europeans who, found in America a convenient pretext for their myth-making propensities or for their sarcastic observations. From "The Jesuit Relations" to Chateaubriand, the myth of the new promised land and of the unsullied goodness of man in America prevailed. Then, from Tocqueville to Jean Prévost, whose "Usonie" is one of the most penetrating as well as the most flattering books written on this country, and even to Claude Roy, a

Communist whose "Clés pour l'Amérique" show that he was fascinated by America in spite of himself, Frenchmen observed, analyzed, interpreted this mysterious continent. More recently, the vogue set in of disparaging everything American and of treating Americans as an uncultured and mechanical mass, patronizing Europe, ready to listen to any neo-Fascists or warmongering militarists.

H. J. Duteil knows better. He seems to be a French Catholic of some note who spent several years over here during and after World War II. He has no ax to grind, came here with no prejudice to confirm and no thesis to document. He apparently underwent some unpleasant treatment at Ellis Island, until he discovered the sesame which opens the gates of the United States: "I have some rich friends in America." But he soon forgot the preliminary ordeal and looked at the country and the people around him with benign humor, an honest desire to understand and to like, and an intelligent avoidance of the temptation perpetually to compare the new world with nostalgic reminiscences of his native land.

The book he wrote about his ex-

periences has enjoyed great popular success in Europe and has been adopted as a guide by several travelers. Still, the claim put forward in the subtitle to the American edition—"The Great American Parade: The Strange Portrait of America That Europe Accepts"—is grossly exaggerated, and the publisher's jacket hurts the volume by making it appear far more sensational and more hostile to America than it actually is. M. Duteil is clearly no political thinker and no trained social observer of the "mores" or of the "culture" of the United States: he has nothing important to say on the working of democracy in this country, on the revolutionary type of industrial civilization or of labor relations developed here, on the undoctinaire-but-lived socialism of America. He displays an adequate knowledge of American history (rare in foreign visitors) and a vivid sense of geography. He has avoided the trite and superficial travelogue of European visitors, rushing from Harlem and Greenwich Village to the Chicago Stockyards, to Hollywood and William Faulkner's country.

The charm of the book lies in its freshness, in its lack of systematization, in its jerky and entertaining discontinuity. The author describes what he has seen or heard, borrows (too lavishly and uncritically) from sensational newspaper clippings, makes no attempt at profundity or even at literary style. He does not speculate on the soul or the psychoanalysis of America, on her future, on catastrophes that may befall it. His anecdotes and reflections, being unaccompanied by philosophical or pedantic disquisition, occasionally incisive, adequately represent the view of this country held by many European visitors. It is both entertaining and informing, even if occasionally annoying to native Americans, more anxious now than ever before to learn how others see them.

THE chief blame of this cultured European Catholic goes to religion in America, which he finds reduced to an effete ethical good will, and particularly to American Catholicism, dominated and corrupted by the Irish, split by commercialism and vulgarity. Next in order would be education, especially progressive education, upon which this French observer piles up scorn and irony. He is no admirer of the melting-pot and considers that this country has not recovered from the blow given its culture by the massive immigration of 1880-1920. "The great American cities contain thousands of impossible Europeans, sub-men, stupid characters

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