



the magazines of the English-speaking world in 1952." Maintaining a nice balance between the two extremes of the uncompromising reactionary and the uncompromising avant-garde, this collection contains poems by many of the distinguished poets of our time as well as the work of excellent though less widely known writers. As the late Leonard Bacon pointed out, such an anthology does an important job in preserving much admirable poetry which would otherwise be lost in the back numbers of magazines, and the editors have upheld a high standard of taste in their selections. Four Pulitzer Prize poets are represented—Robert Hillyer, Peter Viereck, Leonard Bacon, Robert P. Tristran Coffin—and a sampling of the index also lists Helen Bevington, Randall Jarrell, Dilys Laing, David Morton, Alastair Reid, Dylan Thomas, Richard Wilbur, Tennessee Williams, and others. —SARA HENDERSON HAY.

**THIRTY-FIVE-YEAR HARVEST:** Would a poet starting today begin by imitating John Masfield? Or Alfred Noyes? Or Carl Sandburg? (That is not to say he would necessarily do any better for himself as a poet by imitating Wallace Stevens, W. B. Yeats, or T. S. Eliot.) Or would he, except for parody perhaps, allow recognizable echoes of Pope, Gray, Coleridge, Tennyson, Joaquin Miller, and Walt Whitman to appear in his own writing? But when Thomas Caldecot Chubb went to Yale in the second decade of this century it must have seemed nearly inevitable. The winning of the Masfield Prize in poetry, given an undoubted talent, followed naturally.

The years since have seen Mr. Chubb carving a place for himself as a Renaissance scholar and a man of action—like his men of the Renaissance—in many fields. In his poetry, however, as now collected in "*Cornucopia: Poems, 1919-1953*" (Fine Editions Press, \$4.00), no clear direction yet appears: the poet seems, except for a romantic predilection for the sea, American landscapes, footnotes of history, and "a wonder that he could not disclose," to be blown about by

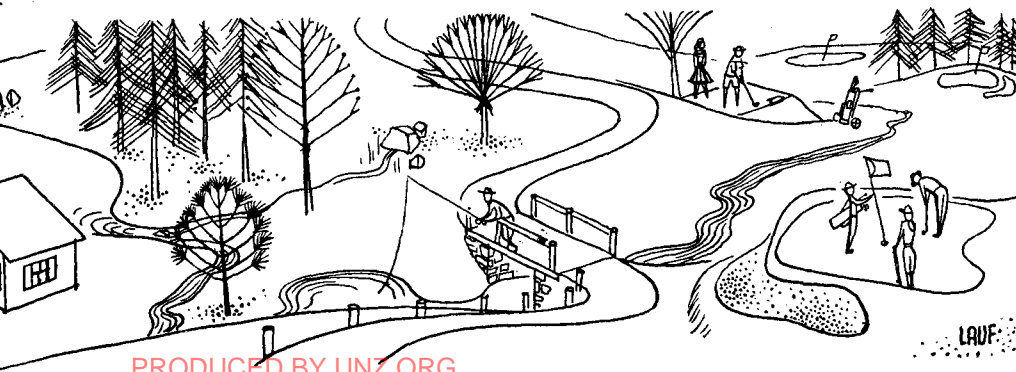
the winds of time. The poet himself, as a distinct personality, escapes between the lines.

In all fairness, it must be added that Mr. Chubb can turn out individual poems that are effective, like "Portrait of a Seadog," "Winged Fable," and "Prayer for Children"—and individual lines, like "As no one knows so very many things," which are happily new and set up resonances that promise depths of meaning. Finally—though there are few novelties in Mr. Chubb's outlook, and even positive infelicities of style—well, he is on occasion able to muster a blunt strength that brings the reader up short—as in the conclusion to "The Drowned Man":

Yet I looked up and in the sky  
Saw Christ there like a fierce  
white rose.  
Then I looked down, and saw  
hard by  
All mankind dicing for his  
clothes.

—GERARD PREVIN MEYER.

**WIT WITH SOBRIETY:** I am certain that, when posterity's precincts have been heard from, Sam Hoffenstein will take his place among the best writers of light verse who have used the English tongue. And, light though his verse may be by definition, it frequently is freighted with sober, even somber, thought. For the most part regular meters served him well; but within these forms the play of his wit and intelligence was free, and to have access to both was and remains a happy experience. One of my most cherished memories is of Sam and me leaving Ernest Boyd's at five in the morning, many years ago. When we came to Fifth Avenue it was deserted, so Sam said: "Let us sit down in the middle of the street and await the dawn." Whereupon we sat ourselves down in the middle of the Avenue, and Sam began to improvise verses in honor of the coming sun. Those verses are not included in "*The Complete Poetry of Samuel Hoffenstein*" (Modern Library, \$1.45), but the volume does not need them to make it worthy of a host of new readers. —B. R. R.



# The Madman of Charenton

*Eighteenth-century Donatien Alphonse François, Comte de Sade, gave his name to a well-known form of sexual aberration: but equally significant has been his influence on the work of leading writers of this and the last century. Robert Pick, novelist and critic, uses four recently published volumes as an occasion to assess his life and work.*

By Robert Pick

ONE day in April 1768, in the village of Arcueil, near Paris, the apparently virtuous widow of a pastry cook came running to the police and told them that she had been lured to a nearby villa by a gentleman who had bound her naked to a bed and then beat her with birches, slashed her with a penknife, and poured hot wax in the wounds. The woman had wriggled out of her bonds and escaped via a window into the street. The gentleman was acquitted after indemnifying the widow, even though he admitted the main points of her story.

The gentleman was, of course, the Marquis de Sade, who was even then by no means unknown to rumor and to the police, and whose reputation and works have provoked the publication of no less than four books during the past twelvemonth. Born in 1740, the "plump little bantam" had made a good record as an army officer in war services in the Germanies. But, a few months after his marriage in 1763, at which the royal couple had been present, he was reprimanded for some kind of orgy he had arranged at a *petite maison*, and bound over to stay at his father-in-law's chateau in Normandy. Nevertheless, he soon moved to Paris and, equipped with the ample dowry of his wife, took a dancer from the Opera as his mistress. While not occupied with the danseuse he kept himself busily engaged with a succession of women supplied by a procuress. Although such libertinism was not out of keeping with the mores of the day, it was not long before rumors about Sade's debauches began to attach a peculiar odor to his name.

Four years after the episode of the pastry cook's widow, the Marquis' curious sexual habits got him into more serious trouble at Marseilles.

Three prostitutes with whom he and his rakish valet had spent a night filled with excesses denounced Sade for having fed them poisoned aphrodisiacs. Though the women had recovered quickly, he was indicted and, having fled to Italy, was tried *in absentia*. He was found guilty of "poisoning and Sodomy" and condemned to death. The sentence was annulled by the King in 1778, and the Marquis lived and moved with some freedom in France in the intervening years.

This case has given rise to endless discussion among Sade students. Even the posthumous admirers of Sade's work as a novelist—an impressive company including such men as Sainte-Beuve, Beaudelaire, Swinburne, and Guillaume Apollinaire—cannot overlook that gruesome, if never verified, episode. Partisans of Sade repeatedly have maintained that the German psychiatrist Krafft-Ebing wronged him by using his name as a clinical designation. A distinction must be made, they say, between his personal behavior and the erotic pipe-dreams that he poured into both his fiction and certain of his social "reform" propositions.

Geoffrey Gorer's well-documented book, *"The Life and Ideas of the Marquis de Sade"* (British Book Centre, \$3.50), whose first version was written twenty years ago under the impact of the early Nazi atrocities, comes close to adopting that attitude. After recounting Sade's life story, Gorer deals with the various intellectual pursuits that mark the second part of Sade's career, giving due note to the consistency of his break with Judeo-Christian morality. The author, a British anthropologist, also turns out to be an astute and witty literary critic. He compares Sade's novel *"Justine"* and "its continuous triumph of vice" to the "continuous triumph of common sense" in *"Don Quixote"*; and, with a measure of apology, analyzes Sade's *"Juliette"* by comparing it to *"Gentlemen Prefer Blondes,"* a latter-day story of a girl determined to "utilize [her] only asset." The claims that Mr. Gorer advances for Sade's accomplishments as a psychologist are by no means exaggerated. But his piecemeal treatment of the Marquis, however sound in each piece, seems to rob Sade of the "wholeness" that gives his figure its baleful uniqueness.



—Bettmann Archive.

"... must we burn Sade?"

Sade's personal profligacy, his oddly pedantic lasciviousness, and the tedious *Schrecklichkeit* of his novels are all part of what Albert Camus calls the "extreme consequences of a rebel's logic once he forgets its true origin." But so also are the political-philosophical ideas whose originality has carried Sade's twentieth-century fame way beyond the notoriety tainting his memory.

HE certainly was a most remarkable man. As a novelist, he is, of course, the ancestor of the Gothic teller, indeed a precursor of romanticism. Particularly in his *"Les 120 journées de Sodome,"* excerpts from which are printed in Leonard de Saint-Yves's judicious collection, *"Selected Writings of De Sade"* (British Book Centre, \$6.75), he is a forerunner of modern sexology and of certain concepts of psychoanalysis. And the scientist who in one of Sade's stories boasts of the artificial volcanic eruptions he can produce adds a lugubrious modern touch to Sade's repute as a man far ahead of his day. But it is in his political philosophy, expounded in his treatises as well as his novels and "dialogues," that his "modernity" actually is frightening. "The reduction of man to an object of experiment [says Camus in *"The Rebel"*], the rule which specifies the relation between the will to power and man as an object . . . are lessons the theoreticians of power will learn again when they have to organize the age of slavery . . . With [Sade] really begins the history and the tragedy of our times."

The total freedom this rebel demands is "not one of principles but of instincts." And the dominant instinct of mankind, to Sade's mind, is

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