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**TRADE**

*Winds*

**FROM THE RIGHT-HAND DRAWER**

WHEN THE AUGUST judges of the Book-of-the-Month Club nominated Jim Bishop's "The Day Lincoln Was Shot" for future distribution the elated author sent notes to a half-dozen publishers who had rejected the manuscript, urging them to look up a certain quotation in the Bible. Those who bothered to consult the paragraph referred to found that the quotation was, "O ye of little faith. . . ." George



Brockway replied with another quote from the Bible: "And they who mourn shall be comforted." . . . *The New York Times Book Review* is circulating a memorable dictum from the works of the Danish scholar Thomas Bartholin (1616-1680): "Without books God is silent, justice dormant, natural science at a stand, philosophy lame, letters dumb, and all things in Cimmerian darkness." . . . A more contemporary savant—ye ed of *The Saturday Review* in fact—has this to say in the *ALA Bulletin*: "The library is not a shrine for the worship of books. It is not a temple where literary incense must be burned or where one's devotion to the bound book is expressed in ritual. A library, to modify the famous metaphor of Socrates, should be the delivery room for the birth of ideas—a place where history comes to life."

**PROFESSOR KEVIN GUINAGH**, of the University of Illinois, was reconciled to a \$500 fee for a four-year job retranslating Virgil's "Aeneid"—until his wife won \$1,000 in a slogan contest. Now Professor Guinagh vows there will be no more bookwriting in his life—unless it involves "only twenty-five words or less." . . . George Oppenheimer, formerly of Viking, is the new drama critic of Alicia Patterson's bustling *Newsday*. With Arthur Kober he has also collaborated on a new play called "A Mighty Man Is He" (it's about a fellow named Smith) that will

be produced by Walter Fried in the fall.

**IRVING STONE AND RICHARD ARMOUR** side by side recently at a Book Author luncheon in Los Angeles. Armour noted that while three of Stone novels were being offered handsome boxed together, his own "Light Armour" was displayed in solitary grandeur. He thereupon passed this note to Stone:

The books of Irving Stone are boxed,  
Look fine upon the shelf.  
Some day, perhaps at Shadow Lawn,  
I may be boxed myself.

**C. M. CRIST SPOTTED** a pile of copies of Steve Fisher's new novel in a Seattle bookshop. "Giveaway!" he quipped. "I'll bet they can't even sell it!" They are, however. It's about the bedraggled folks who haunt daytime TV quiz shows, hoping to be called on the stage where they may win a radio, a broiler, or an order for a new dress which they promptly peddle to a hustler at the door of the studio for about one-fifth its retail value. Producers of the shows soon spot these "regulars" and employ every stratagem to beat them from their programs. "Giveaway" has reminded some critics of the late Nat West's "Day of the Locust," which dealt with another segment of the impoverished fringe that haunts Hollywood.

**SPEAKING OF TV STUDIOS**, a recent commercial called for a trayful of a new brand of dog biscuits to be placed before a ferocious looking terrier



while the announcer gushed, "Isn't it a succulent dish? And watch ol' Spot here go for it! He knows what's packed with the rich vitamins and crunchy delights to keep him spry and

healthy!" Old Spot, however, mortified he sponsor—and convulsed the audience—by taking one contemptuous sniff of the biscuits and marching laughingly out of camera range. There was a hasty council held, and one announcer fired. The next evening good old Spot devoured his biscuits at a single gulp. For concealed in the middle of every one of them was a hunk of the finest and most expensive beef steak on the market.

And in Station KNX-CBS, in Hollywood, Jack Price told about the discokey who sent the front and rear cushions of his jalopy to be repaired one morning. The garage attendant returned only the front cushion. His explanation: "Brother, I don't take a back seat to nobody!"

**GRAPHIC EXAMPLE** of the retail book-eller's plight today is presented by the January 16 issue of *The New York Times Book Review*. A spread on pages 18 and 19 proclaims, "Any 3 for only \$3.95: Values up to \$22." On page 21: "Your choice of 3 up to \$20.25 retail value for only \$3.98." On page 23: "Which 3 of these fine books do you want for only \$2? (value up to \$25.95 in publishers' editions)." On



page 25 (phonograph records): "Regular \$12.50 value—all yours for only 1." On page 34: "Take any 3 of these books (values up to \$20) for only 2.95."

I have no magic formula to offer that will put an end to this sort of practice. Book-club selections have been the only things that have kept more than one publisher in the black a recent years. The fact remains, however, that the position of the book business is becoming steadily more precarious. Text and juvenile departments are now depended upon to overcome the deficits chalked up by the trade divisions. Nine out of ten first novels lose substantial sums. Ninety out of a hundred volumes of poetry and essays do likewise. Even standard non-fiction has become a long-shot. What to do, what to do?

**D BUCKLEY, MANAGER OF** New York's Hotel Roosevelt, was approached recently by the wife of a prominent publisher who asked him to donate the Grand Ballroom for a charity dance. Buckley explained to her that



Out-of-town convoy heads for the hurricane area.

## Telephone Men and Supplies Were on the Way Before the Winds Died Down



Giant trees were uprooted and broken like matchsticks by winds of more than 100 miles an hour.

Carol, Edna and Hazel, as you may remember, were no ladies. They came raging in from the sea, to leave New England and eight eastern states reeling from wind and flood.

It was, as always, a challenge to the telephone companies. Local employees responded instantly. Companies in other states were quick to send help.

"The hurricane had not blown itself out," said one newspaper editorial, "before aid was on its way. Expert repair crews with their familiar green trucks hurried into the stricken communities with the dispatch of reserve army divisions rushing to stem an enemy breakthrough in a vital battle line."

Along with the will and the skill of telephone people to handle emergencies came the millions of miles of wire and the thousands of tons of equipment that were needed for the job. These were provided by Western Electric, the Bell System's manufacturing and supply unit.

One of the heart-warming things to us was the friendly understanding of the people in the hurricane areas. To them go the thanks of all the telephone men and women who took part in the work of restoration.

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*Van Wyck Brooks*

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this is the peak season for rental of such space, and that it would be impossible to give it to her free. "But this is such a worthy cause," she protested. "All these wonderful but penniless authors and their brood. . . ." Buckley again expressed regrets, then, remembering that she is mistress of a sumptuous estate in the suburbs, suggested that she hold the dance in her own house. "What?" was the lady's indignant rejoinder, "and have all those bums cluttering up my living room?" . . . W. A. Liddell accompanied



some other literary lights on a lobster-fishing expedition below Bar Harbor one day in early fall. It was a cloudless morning, and the ocean was glassy smooth, even two miles offshore. Gulls were paddling about, the old captain was in an expansive mood, and the brightly-colored buoys, marking the location of each fisherman's traps were clearly identifiable. After a while, however, the party was obliged to haul several traps while facing into the sun. The shadows cast by the buoys obscured their bright colors and the fisherman, confusing them with the birds floating on the water had to circle back several times to regain his bearings. "Jamie," said Liddell reprovingly, "if I didn't know you better I'd say your sea education had been sadly neglected. You can't seem to tell the gulls from the buoys!"

**TIME WAS WHEN ONLY** millionaires sneaked off to Florida and California as soon as the snow began to fly. Today everybody's doing it. There's the story, for instance, of a meeting that took place on the sands of Miami Beach between the wives of two rival book manufacturers. "I'm here for the whole winter," boasted one. "Four months solid in the bridal suite of the newest hotel! And you?" "Five weeks I'm afraid," was the answer, "is all I can spare for idling in the sun this year." "Tsk! Tsk!" clucked the first with a heavy sigh of sympathy. "So your husband's plant is shut down again?"

If you're interested, incidentally, in the rates of the newest Miami Beach hostelry, an author just returned therefrom advises, "Guess the highest you possibly can imagine—then add 25 per cent!"

—BENNETT CERF.



JANUARY 29, 1955



## THOREAU ON MADISON AVENUE

By JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

*Not long ago it was considered beneath a man to labor in the fields, subject to the cold and the sun; witty and ambitious boys flocked to the cities from their fathers' lands. Today neither his own psychiatrist nor modern playwrights, sociologists, or poets seem to be enthusiastic about the life of a city-dweller—the "luncher at 21" whose \$30,000 a year presumably shackles him to an intolerable life. The team of Krutch-Thoreau is particularly sour on the subject of the Madison Avenue ethos. The Krutch side of this equation is, of course, Joseph Wood Krutch, critic, essayist, and dweller-in-the-desert, whose last book was "The Best of Two Worlds."*

**N**OT long ago the shade of Henry David Thoreau visited me at midnight, as it occasionally does. As usual I broke the silence, but our conversation seems to me worth reporting.

**ME:** Well, Henry, this is an important day for you.

**HENRY:** I never knew a day that wasn't.

**ME:** The same old Henry, I see. I really should have anticipated that one. But I had something less transcendental in mind. I mean that it was just one hundred years ago that "Walden" was published.

**HENRY:** It was also just a hundred years ago today that I met in a bean field the plumpest woodchuck I ever saw. I didn't eat him, but I thought to myself that if I did eat meat I would want it to be some such savage meat as that.

**ME (dryly):** I have read your "Journal." But you were a writer after all. You did hope for some readers—for rather more than it seemed likely you would ever get. How do you like being the author of an accepted classic?

**HENRY:** A classic is a work which everyone acknowledges the obligation

to read and nobody thinks it necessary to take seriously. The New Testament is generally regarded as the most indispensable of classics. It is read every Sunday in churches and, occasionally, even in private. But if it were once actually heard by any congregation not a stone would be left standing of that church—or of any other.

**ME:** Oh! Come, come. It is generally admitted that your influence has been tremendous. Your writings are said to have been accepted as Bibles by many modern reformers, including the founders of the British Labor Party.

**HENRY:** And I have just reminded you how much influence Bibles really have.

**ME:** At least it must be a satisfaction to remember that your defense of John Brown carried some weight. And the slave was freed.

**HENRY:** From one of his masters, but not from himself. It is hard to have a Southern overseer; it is worse to have a Northern one; but worst of all when you are the slavedriver yourself. Abolition may possibly have