

cynic named Doc and a Capotish young eccentric named Tarragoo. The chemistry is right for deep, pristine romance, and it follows immediately. Eddie and Pam act out the beautifully wrought scenes of maturing first love through small crises and big ones (pregnancy, meeting the boy's mother and stepfather, the draft notice). And their tenderness provides the foil for panoramic scenes: Doc's selfish affair with a divorcée, a flamboyant reefer party, saloon encounters, campus contacts with students and faculty members, Eddie's philosophical conversations with his disenchanted mother and the businessman she married.

After an extremely pivotal spring season, Eddie seems about to accept some motherly advice as he swings into the final subway: "Try to change the world for the better but remember that you have to live in it meanwhile . . . Specifically, do what you can to help the causes and the people you love; but be strong enough and man enough to face your limitations. Accept that which you can't change. Adjust without surrendering."

"The Young Lovers" does what the author intended; gives us a picture of people feeling their way into adulthood. It should interest any reader who is now young or has ever been young—or who just likes an entertaining novel. Mr. Halevy will be heard from again.

Notes

HITLER'S SOLDIERS: Gerhard Kramer, a lawyer and veteran of Hitler's Wehrmacht, has written, and Anthony G. Powell has translated, a heavily-populated novel about German army
(Continued on page 40)



—Jacket detail from "The Young Lovers."
". . . romance from seed to fruit."

WRITERS AND WRITING

A Lyricist's Milieu

"Emily Dickinson's Home," by Millicent Todd Bingham (Harper, 600 pp. \$6.50), provides a collection of letters of the poet's family which serve to illuminate her career. Professor Henry W. Wells, of Columbia University's English department, who reviews it below, is the author of "An Introduction to Emily Dickinson."

By Henry W. Wells

EMILY DICKINSON died in 1886. E wholly unrecognized and virtually unknown to literature. Since her death, three years stand out as having unusual importance for her posthumous fame. In 1890 appeared the first selection of her poems, which promptly gave her at least an honorable place in the opinion of most of her critics. In 1924 appeared the first extensive collection of her poems, a biography accompanied by many letters, and the first selection of the poems to be produced in England. In 1955 have already been published two volumes of biographical interest by Millicent Todd Bingham: "Emily Dickinson: A Revelation" and "Emily Dickinson's Home," while there are announced for publication within a few weeks a biography by Thomas Johnson, and the definitive edition of her poems, edited by the same hand, with the assistance of Theodora V. W. Ward. The sequel to this monumental edition of the poems, that of the letters, awaits publication for a while longer.

Emily Dickinson's importance in our literature stands beyond serious question. Although she can be annoying, embarrassing, and trivial, she has written not merely, as some assert, a handful but several hundred remarkable poems, presumably establishing her as America's chief lyric poet. Whatever concerns her personality or her social background is unquestionably of importance.

This most recent book is actually a forerunner to Mrs. Bingham's earlier "Ancestors' Brocades." That study dealt in particular with her later life and with the family and friends who possessed her many manuscripts after her death. This book deals chiefly with her early life, especially from 1851 to 1853, and with her family from the

first years of the last century approximately to the outbreak of the Civil War. It glances briefly at the main crisis in her emotional life, coinciding with the most hotly contested years of that national calamity.

Part of the book consists of Emily's own letters in versions as a rule fuller and more faithfully transcribed than in earlier editions. At least as considerable in quantity are letters by her brother Austin, her sister Lavinia, and her father, Edward Dickinson. Some still earlier family letters cast revealing light on Emily's noteworthy grandfather, Samuel Fowler Dickinson, one of the founders of Amherst College, a man generous to the degree of recklessness, who died while laboring in behalf of educational and religious enterprises in the rapidly expanding towns of Ohio.

The book's chief value lies not in its welcome presentation of Emily's letters, which will usually be sought elsewhere, but in the other family correspondence, which shows Emily in her setting, insofar, at least, as so rare a creature can be said to be explicated by her environment. There is, obviously, a sense in which the poet is unique; and just as clearly, in another sense she was representative of thousands of New Englanders, for the most part women, leading astonishingly private lives. It is possibly good news that Mrs. Bingham's book does not disclose the identity of Emily's beloved nor even instruct us whether these should best be regarded as of singular or plural number.

THE disparate materials have been carefully arranged. Although much, of course, remains secondary, inspired glimpses are many. A strangely intimate and beautiful letter by Austin Dickinson to Martha Gilbert was written on "Tuesday even," May 11, 1852. There is a remarkable description by Emily of her visit to Mount Vernon, in April 1854. In a perceptive passage, Mrs. Bingham relates the frugality of New England house-keeping to the poet's terseness.

This book is at once personal and impersonal. It succeeds in its unusually modest aims of supplying a picture of the Dickinson family and of contemporary manners in rural New England. Although Mrs. Bingham is on the whole sympathetic, she re-

mains objective. Her elaborately executed picture sets the stage for the crisis of Emily's life. There is a cool air about the writing, as after a summer storm; the action takes place before Mrs. Bingham's own mother. Emily's vivacious friend and first editor, enters the scene, and before the unhappy events that have troubled so many scholars and occasioned so much heart-burning, while the great legacy of her poetry and her letters has been subject of such heated controversy—an engagement almost as fierce as that of the ancient heroes over the golden armor of Patroclus.

Mrs. Bingham depicts what she calls "the New England way," and comments upon it. Her contribution

here, as in her similar volumes, is of much value both for interpretation of Emily's own writings and for general social history. If this really be, as seems likely, the last of the long series of books related to Emily Dickinson produced by the two gifted women of the Todd family, now seems the time to write "well done" to a perturbed and almost unprecedented history of literary endeavor—nine volumes in all—extending through a period of nearly seventy years. The temporal has been accomplished. The great poems and the astonishing letters are about to appear in their final forms, leaving us, nevertheless, with deepest obligations to these two able and devoted women.

books of Zola as evil, and added: "It would be better had Zola never been born." All of Zola's works were placed on the Index in 1894 and remained there until 1948. It was therefore a bad joke of fate that placed Anatole France on the same Index in 1922, to remain there to this day.

One of the silliest manifestations of this age of the purge, and one of the most dangerous, is a ruling established by the Post Office in 1931. "Elmer Gantry" had been banned in Boston. The publishers fought back, but Washington retaliated by "upholding postmasters as censors." The New York Post Office then went a step further and banned a catalogue which only listed the book. In 1944 a New York bookseller issued another catalogue, listing 100 books selling at forty-nine cents, and again the Post Office refused to mail it until two titles, "Candide" and "Droll Stories," were blocked out. Yet the customs ban on Balzac had been lifted in 1930! Both books are now freely listed in many catalogues and published in many editions, but there has never been a ruling relaxing the 1931 interdict.

Despite an unquenchable prejudice to the contrary, no book has ever committed a crime. None has, as yet, broken into a bank, pilfered a post, or raped a woman. But men have. And those who busy themselves with such unfriendly conduct rarely read books. They do not have the time, the sense, or the inclination. Why, then, are books banned? Is it to protect such as these from "evil influences"? What is an evil influence? And why, as Morris Ernst asks, are not censors afraid of their own corruptibility? Perhaps a sentence from George Moore will help give us a partial answer: "If all the books objected to by censors as sexually stimulating were swept from the face of the earth, the spring breeze would remain to awaken desires in man and woman."

Miss Haight's book is a revised and enlarged edition of a work first published twenty years ago. In addition to the wonderful introduction by Morris Ernst, who "joyfully" defended many of these books in court, there are 118 pages of informal notes on banned books, an appendix on trends in censorship, with notes on Nazi banned books, overseas libraries, library censorship, comic books, paperback books, textbook censorship, milestone statements on freedom of the press, excerpts from important court decisions, as well as U.S. customs and postal laws and regulations, and a bibliographic checklist. All in all, a source of solid comfort for those of us who believe that books have been pushed around long enough.

The Urge to Purge

"Banned Books," by Anne Lyon Haight (R. R. Bowker, 192 pp. Cloth-bound, \$4. Paperbound, 75¢), is an informal account of trends in censorship from Homer to Hemingway.

By Aaron Sussman

ANNE LYON HAIGHT'S "Banned Books" is a monument. A monument to fear, to hypocrisy, to ignorance, to intolerance, to confusion. But more than that, it is a monument to stupidity. For it is stupidity, in one guise or another, that has caused most of the bannings described in its pages. Here is formidable proof, a chronological inventory of the deadly art of book banning, from 387 B.C. to 1954, with pungent comment along the way on the *what*, the *why*, and the *consequences*. The result is a peppery fascicle as disturbing as it is diverting.

Books have been suppressed for a bewildering multiplicity of reasons. Chief among these, the author points out, are religion, politics, and morality, making the offense one of heresy, treason, or obscenity. But books have also suffered bans for personal, whimsical, or even wistful reasons. Henry VIII, for instance, banned the Tyn-dale Bible, the first book to be so persecuted in England, not because it blasphemed, which of course it didn't, but because he disapproved of what it said about divorce. You can understand why.

The Holy Bible was first suppressed by Emperor Justinian in 553. Since that time, hundreds of editions have been condemned for one perverse rea-

son or another. "The Decameron," which has been banned more often than probably any other single work, was first proscribed by the Index of Rome in 1558. It was later returned to favor by the Pope in an edition that "transformed the erring nuns into noble women, the lascivious monks into conjurers." But as late as 1954 Boccaccio's perdurable treasury of tales was still being heckled in England, where a magistrate's court ordered it destroyed as "obscene," though an appeal court later reversed the decision; and in the United States, where something calling itself the "National Organization of Decent Literature" placed it on their black list. "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" was banned by the public library in Thoreau's home town of Concord. It was labeled "trash, suitable only for the slums."

AS YOU review the record, item by curious item, a heavy perplexity settles over the logic of the censor. There must be some sense in all this somewhere, you tell yourself. But the more you search, the less becomes clear.

Surprisingly enough, though authors have suffered much from the activity of the censor, they have frequently joined with their natural enemy and aided him in his work. In 387 B.C., for instance, we see Plato suggesting that Homer ought to be expurgated for "immature readers." In 66 A.D. Plutarch was attacking Aristophanes for his "obscene comedies." Once Lewis Carroll was horrified because a performance of "Pinafore" was acted out by children. In 1898 Anatole France attacked the