







PICK OF THE PAPERBACKS

 **RECENTLY** the National Council of Teachers of English released a report on their national survey of the use of paperbound books in both public and parochial schools. More than 2,300 teachers and librarians, representing 365 secondary schools, responded to the questionnaire. The survey revealed some important findings: that most participating teachers do not use paperbacks to any extent other than as a source of "free reading" or students' book reports; that curiosity about paperbacks in the classroom—how other teachers use them, what books are available in paperback—is prodigious. That teachers want to know more about paperbacks is borne out by New American Library's report that they receive more than 100,000 letters each year from teachers in search of information. Those who have introduced paperbacks successfully into their classrooms cite the economy, the attraction of students to paperbacks, the fact that students can take notes in their books, and the excellent introductions. On the other hand, teachers who do not recommend paperbacks list among their objections small print, objectionable covers, and weak bindings. Publishers, please take note.

 **SPEARHEADING THE MOVEMENT** for paperbacks as classroom texts is the Study Guide Program, sponsored by Pocket Books and its subsidiary, Washington Square Press. Designed for the secondary schools, the study guides are used along with the paperback text to direct the student in his reading. The guide sheet to "Huckleberry Finn," a favorite among students in the tenth to twelfth grades and one of the fifteen books offered in the series, contains a map of the Mississippi for the student to chart Huck's and Jim's adventure, a list of difficult vocabulary, some provocative questions for group discussion, and projects suggested for the individual student. The effects of this program should extend beyond the classroom. Students might well be encouraged by the less formidable paperback format to read other classics and even to discover the fun of collecting their own library.

 **"A UNIVERSITY PRESS** should be aware of the new and experimental as well as the tried and the true," writes Thomas E. Parker from the University of Michigan Press, whose paperback ventures include the publication of Waldo Sweet's fresh approach to the teaching of Latin. Michigan is not only interested in providing texts, but collateral reading as well. The four-volume "History of the Modern World," edited by Allan Nevins and Howard Ehrman, supplements studies of Latin American, Russian, and U.S. history. The paper, by the way, is the same high quality used in the hardcover books. . . . Phoenix, the University of Chicago's paperback imprint, is also presenting a handsome set in "The Selected Greek Tragedies," which includes fifteen plays in three volumes at \$1.35 each. The original hardbound edition sold for \$20. . . . "Americans are most history-conscious during February," says John Simmons of Cornell University Press. It follows, then, that this is the publication month for Cornell's library-in-a-box, a set of eight volumes about American history, ranging from Charles Andrews's "Our Earliest Colonial Settlements" on to Dexter Perkins's "The American Way."

 **TEACHING THE TEACHER:** Students aren't the only ones who benefit from Rinehart's paperbacks. Rinehart also publishes a series of educational booklets aimed at instructing the teacher. One excellent little book of self-evaluation is entitled "Are you a Good Teacher?" If the answer is no, a closer look into "Teaching Study Habits and Skills" or "Using the Committee in the Classroom" might well be in order.

FICTION

By the turn of the century, Henry James had embarked upon the last and greatest phase of his career. "The Ambassadors" (Premier, 50¢) is the earliest of his last three great novels. Essentially, the story is a simple one: Lambert Strether, a New England editor, past middle age, travels to Paris to rescue his benefactress's son from the enthrallment of Europe and instead becomes himself a captive. The depth of character, the subtlety of relationships, and the difficult but well-excelled Jamesian prose turn this story into one of the enduring masterpieces of English literature.

James's contemporary, Joseph Conrad began work on "The Rescue" (Anchor \$1.25) in 1898 but not until twenty years and many novels later did he finish it. It's an adventurous tale about Europeans who intrude into the affairs of South Sea islanders yet, in characteristic Conradian fashion, the heroic English sea captain, is eventually faced with a grave moral decision.

Another novel which ponders a philosophical question is André Gide's "Lafcadio's Adventures" (Vintage \$1.25), in which the idea of an unmotivated crime, a gratuitous act against society, is explored. For all the serious Dostoevsky-like implications of the theme, the book and reckless young Lafcadio Wliuki lead the reader on a merry chase through most of Europe.

For sheer reading pleasure there is nothing like a Graham Greene entertainment or a Josephine Tey mystery. The late Josephine Tey's "The Singing Sands" (Berkley, 35¢), while full of surprise and suspense, is highly stylish, witty, and always literate. In this story, Inspector Alan Grant catches up with his claustrophobia and a murderer at the same time. Graham Greene in "Our Man in Havana" (Bantam, 35¢) wryly investigates international intrigue in a droll portrayal of a mild Englishman who tries his hand at the spy business.