



amphetamines and ombudsmen

are in the news —

and University of Toronto Press
has books on these newsworthy subjects

University of Toronto Press has recently published Northrop Frye, Clifford Leech, Nicholas Mansergh, Marshall McLuhan, James Eayrs, William E. Blatz, A. P. Thornton and Cornelius Lanczos

University of Toronto Press major projects include *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, and *The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals*

University of Toronto Press will publish this year a new edition of *Design with Type* by the famous typographic designer Carl Dair; *Painting in Canada: A History*, by J. Russell Harper, Chief Curator of the McCord Museum, McGill University; *The St. Pierre and Miquelon Affaire of 1941* by Douglas G. Anglin; *The Race of Time* by Herschel Baker (in the Alexander Lectures series, which also includes works by Bertrand Bronson, Douglas Bush, R. S. Crane, E. M. W. Tillyard, and Leon Edel)

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From Notes to Novels

Told in Letters: Epistolary Fiction Before Richardson, by Robert Adams Day (Michigan. 281 pp. \$7.50), deals with the precursors of Richardson and the epistolary novel. Pulitzer Prizewinner Leon Edel wrote "The Modern Psychological Novel."

By LEON EDEL

IT IS a commonplace of literary history that the epistolary novel was the creation of Samuel Richardson, whose *Pamela* in 1740 swept England and Europe. The author of *Told in Letters* does not dispute this; but he demonstrates, with patience and careful scholarship, that Richardson built upon a century of letter-novels. In a word, he demonstrates again that behind every classic there is a tradition; that it takes much trial and error and quantities of subliterate to produce the given burst of genius, the synthesized masterpiece.

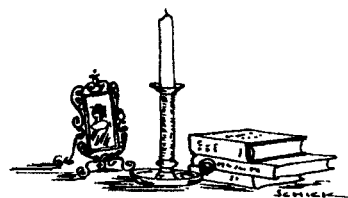
Bravely reading his way through dozens, indeed hundreds, of forgotten novels, Robert Adams Day has thus filled a gap in the history of the fictional form. The titles suggest the sort of thing he waded through—*The Post-Boy Robb'd of His Mail*, or *The Power of Love In Seven Novels*, or *The Unnatural Mother and Ungrateful Wife*. From such works he disengages the essential elements of the genre: the need for the storytellers to manipulate their materials in order to get the story told; the portrayal of character through the kinds of letters written; the general subjective and psychological quality of this type of novel, which links it to the stream-of-consciousness experiments of our own time. The epistolary novelist, confined to letters, must create story, character, and personality within severe restrictions; the modern subjective novelist, confined to a given stream of thought, undertakes in depth what his primitive predecessors first adumbrated.

In the course of his treatise Day discusses various French models, the taste of the age, the increasing skills acquired by the hack-writers. The letter-form achieved tremendous popularity; indeed, certain titles have survived whose texts were "read out of existence" and are no longer extant.

A neglected and unrewarding area in the novel's history is thus usefully explored with clarity and insight. If *Pamela* and *Clarissa* transcended their inept predecessors, so that Richardson emerged as the supreme creator of the

epistolary genre, this was because he breathed humanity into his story; he had a mastery of suspense, a remarkable eye for detail. Above all he fell, perhaps unwittingly, upon the supreme subject of the eighteenth century. His readers read *Pamela* as the story of an embattled servant girl preserving her virginity against the assaults of her master. But behind this, it was read also as a triumph of the lower classes over the upper classes. In that light, Richardson may be bracketed with Rousseau.

Mr. Day's book suggests an interesting thought. The real reason for the popularity of the bad novels he writes about was that they gave people a feeling they were reading other people's mail. These are keyhole-peeping books; and their history may bear a relation to



the subliterate of our time in which not only the keyhole is available but the key as well.

Perhaps some day our current voyeuristic novels will enjoy the same oblivion as the novels described by Mr. Day. It is a happy thought.

Gifts

By A. D. Freeman

IN his first sermon the minister, just fledged, said, I come to you in fear and trembling; summer ironed the waves outside.

The next June lavender dyed fallen flesh; I cried No, No. But the dead man walked steadily into the lake. He grew smaller, smallest.

The minister wanted to give me spiritual consolation. I said, Keep away. But, sorting clothes afterwards, I sent him a pair of new gray suede gloves and a white silk scarf.

The Motive Was Economic

***A History of Negro Slavery in New York*, by Edgar J. McManus (Syracuse. 219 pp. \$5.95), and *Life in the North During the Civil War: A Source History*, by George Winston Smith and Charles Judah (New Mexico. 397 pp. \$6.50), find the anti-slavery movement in the North to have been motivated more by economics than by idealism. Harry Hansen, former literary editor of the New York World and the New York World-Telegram, wrote "Civil War: A New One-Volume History."**

By HARRY HANSEN

THE REASONS why the freed Negroes remained an isolated segment of American society after the Civil War continues to engage the interest of revisionist historians, and the two books here discussed are new examples of their activity. Both reach practically the same conclusions, although in different ways: Edgar McManus's is a concise account of the fortunes of Negroes under slavery in New York State, and although it stops with emancipation, it provides numerous conclusions about the treatment of the free Negroes in white society. Professors George Winston Smith and Charles Judah likewise deal only with Civil War times in the North, as their title indicates; but they, too, provide evidence of the hostility that awaited the free Negroes in the states that had been violently antislavery during the war.

Dr. McManus assumes that there is an economic reason for most political and social movements, even to the extent of subordinating the idealistic efforts of eighteenth-century New York leaders to economic influences. While he gives full credit to the New York Manumission Society, founded in 1785, for being "the real working organization of the antislavery movement," and names its distinguished sponsors—John Jay, Alexander Hamilton, Melancton Smith, St. John de Crèvecoeur, Philip Schuyler, James Duane, and Chancellor Robert R. Livingston—he concludes that "although opponents of slavery stated the issue in ideological terms, the fact remains that no real progress was made toward general emancipation until the economy had virtually completed its adjustment

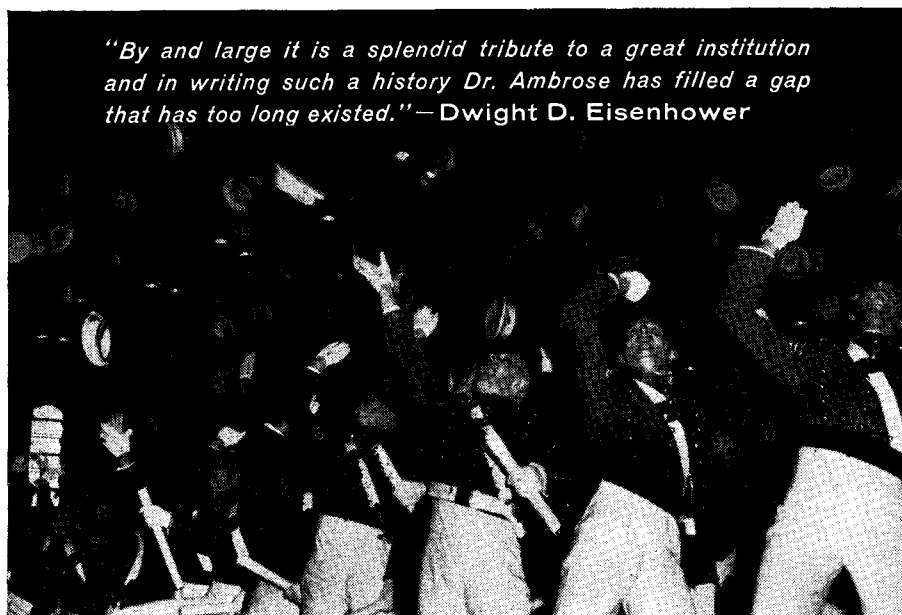
to a system of free labor." In describing the New York emancipation statutes, reluctantly enacted over the opposition of the state's lower house, Dr. McManus says it was more "highminded" to free the slaves because slavery was wrong than to free them because the system had become uneconomic. He also points out that the strongest advocates of anti-slavery were the well-to-do, who had little to lose; the opposition came from the workers, who feared competition for jobs.

This leads to the question whether the Negroes were qualified to compete for work that required special skills. Dr. McManus believes they were, and cites "the heavy volume of newspaper advertisements for Negro workers" in the New York newspapers of 1772 to 1779. He also asserts that "full occupational mobility regardless of race existed in New York throughout the colonial era." This seems to be taking in quite a bit of territory, especially since he describes

the hardships suffered by Negroes during the British administration, and the fear of Negro conspiracies felt by New York citizens after the slave revolt. But he does a service in showing that slavery was not an absolute; there were grades in bondage, and the slaves were not mere chattels but individuals who knew how to obtain concessions and to learn skills. The white workingmen, according to Dr. McManus, were the chief instruments of Negro exclusion from good jobs.

Professors Smith and Judah describe *Life in the North During the Civil War* as "a source history," the method used being to introduce a theme with expository paragraphs and then give original extracts from speeches, editorials, and reports of the war years. Their book may not be designed to concentrate on the Negro, but this is nonetheless its effect. There is also evidence to show that the American citizen was harassed by many other matters; there were slums and degradation for the poor, reckless speculation by the rich, controversies over inflation, a national paper currency, and manufacturing by the government in "national workshops." There was fear that the Roman Catholic hierarchy "in ambush behind the Democratic party" was about to take over the government with 150,000 Irish militia. The authors

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