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# THE ENGINEER'S BOOKSHELF

By WILSON R. DUMBLE

**MR. WHITE AND OTHER STORIES**—by Booth Tarkington—(Doubleday, Doran & Company) (\$2.00)

**WE WHO ARE ABOUT TO DIE**—by David Lemson—(Charles Scribner's Sons) (\$2.50)

**WE THE ACCUSED**—(by Ernest Raymond—(Frederick A. Stokes Co.) (\$2.50)

**MRS. ASTOR'S HORSE**—by Stanley Walker—(Frederick A. Stokes Co.) (\$3.00)

## Hell and Booth Tarkington

Once again Booth Tarkington has published a small book with a wealth of wisdom in it. The volume contains four long short stories, the titles of which go to make up the title of the book, "Mr. White, The Red Barn, Hell and Bridewater." Each story presents a clear cut picture of interesting characters, as widely dissimilar as the titles represent. "Mr. White" is probably the best, although the other three are worth looking into.

What we want, however, we admirers of Mr. Tarkington, is another "Gentle Julia", or another "Monsieur Beaucaire", or yes, even another "Gentleman From Indiana." If he will write just one more "Magnificent Ambersons" we shall forgive him all the other stories that he has done.

Anyway, "Mr. White" is worth anyone's time, calling it what you will, long short story or novelette.

## San Quentin

I have just finished reading David Lamson's "We Who Are About to Die", a fine record and an amazing narrative of prison life at San Quentin, California. It is not a novel, nor do I think it should be considered a biography, as the publishers wish it called. It is a splendid sociological study of the men in the condemned row, startling, brutal, intimate, sensational records of the men who live in the shadow of the gallows. Here is an account of what those men think and do, of their reactions to their fellow prisoners and the "bulls" who guard them.

I was rather hesitant about starting the book; I thought that perhaps I would not care for it. But as I read further and further I found an absorbing record, somewhat dispassionately told, but always with a flare for holding the reader's attention. My reading of this record recalled to mind so vividly an experience that happened to me some five summers ago when I witnessed a

performance of "The Last Mile" in Manhattan. I lasted only through the first act; when I went into the open air for my entre-act cigarette I took my hat with me and failed to return to see the other two acts. One act consisting of the preparation of a young man for the gallows was plenty for me. I rather imagined my reaction to this novel might be the same; yet I read it all and enjoyed every word.

## A British Dreiser

London book sellers are delighted with the sales of Ernest Raymond's new novel, "We the Accused". And "We the Accused" is proving in more ways than one that it is the British counterpart of Theodore Dreiser's "An American Tragedy". Like the Dreiser novel it is an impressive story of crime and its consequences. It unfolds the tale of one Paul Presset, a mild-mannered, sensitive little man, married to a fading hypochondriacal wife, harassed by poverty and the terrific worry that accompanies the guilt of an illicit love. Murder, arrest, conviction and execution follow in rapid succession, until "in the silent pit, the pinioned and wrecked body, with its hooded head at a foolish angle, swung perceptibly no more, but sometimes twisted round and back again; the body of a man who had floundered".

No, it is not a pleasant story, but it is one that is beautifully, swiftly and strongly told, with a stroke of the pen that is at the same time both sure and timid.

If Hollywood buys the script of "We the Accused" I shudder to think what they might do to it. Or, did they learn their lesson with the production of "An American Tragedy"?

## Debunking Delux

So unlike the Raymond novel is a record of our times recently published from the pen of Stanley Walker. Probably you remember Mr. Walker; he is a newspaper man and several years ago wrote a book debunking the journalistic game. He called it "City Editor." His new volume is entitled "Mrs. Astor's Horse." Undoubtedly in years gone by, you too have heard of the socialite who was so gaudily dressed that she "looked like Mrs. Astor's plush horse." Well, here you have the horse, Mrs. Astor's horse, and indeed, it is plush.

There is a most amusing article about the Hauptmann trial, "where tickets could be obtained for \$10, \$5, a pint of good bonded rye, or a box of cigars." There is

still another chapter about Miss Sally Rand and her fans, and there are paragraphs, many of them, about Queen Marie and her American sojourn, about Aimee Semple McPherson and her desert vacation, about Earl Carroll and his bath tub full of wine, and yes indeed, about General Hugh Johnson and Huey Long and Father Coughlin and many, many others. It is a kind of "While Rome Burns," only more so; read it and you will see what I mean. Long live Stanley Walker. My suggestion for the day is that Mr. Walker be thoroughly acquainted with the legislative antics of Ohio's governor. What he could do to our state political fiasco the reader only too well realizes.

### Accent on Youth

In University Hall Chapel on December 13 and 14, Strollers is producing Samuel Ralphaelson's "Accent on Youth," with what I think and hope to be a very splendid cast. Probably you remember the cinema that was made from this stage play which was one of the splendid pieces on Times Square last season. Sylvia Sidney and Herbert Marshall took the leads on the screen and did them well, too.

"Accent on Youth" presents the story of the young secretary who falls in love with her play-wright employer, a man some thirty years her senior. Their decisions and indecisions about matrimony make a charming play, and secretly will delight those who might be fat and "fortyish." No less pleased with the ending will be youth, who, after all, you must remember, receives the accent. The choice of play was a happy selection on the part of the Strollers committee; and I am anxious to see how the cast handles the production.

### The Notre Dames

Since the Notre Dames descended upon us on November 2, every columnist in the state of Ohio has taken upon himself the privilege to comment. And I find myself not immune to that situation. My comment, however, concerning that football classic, must be confined to a quotation from a column in the Baltimore Evening Sun of September 3 last. I clipped it from that paper while in the East several months ago. Paul Menton, sports editor of the *Sun*, wrote:

There's no real reason why the Big Ten should have been surprised with Francis Schmidt's team last fall because he has been a very successful football coach since 1915.

In that time his team had won 137 games, lost 30 and tied 10.

During that period his teams have always played hard, smart football and were quick to adopt new plays, new methods.

That's the kind of a man and coach Francis Schmidt is. He is a fine student of the game of football, always working for improvements, looking ahead. He is willing to try anything

new, but when he uses it all the small details have been worked out.

He has some of the finest movies ever made on football and his lectures and talks have become very popular throughout Ohio.

He is a fine handler of boys and that is half the task of coaching.

Among the Big Ten teams, Ohio State this fall will play Northwestern, Indiana, Chicago, Illinois and Michigan, but will not meet Minnesota.

And when Thanksgiving Day rolls around there probably will be two undefeated teams in the conference, Minnesota and Ohio State.

Minnesota suffered greater losses from the 1934 squad than did Ohio, but the Gophers have plenty of reserve material.

Ohio State's offense and tricky lateral passes this fall are expected to be made especially suitable to Jumping Joe Williams, a sophomore back who is expected to be one of the star ball carriers of the year.

The big danger to a team like Ohio State is the fact that if three or four lateral passes go wrong early in a game, it can leave a team so upset it may not recover the rest of the afternoon.

Laterals are more effective as a surprise or in conjunction with power than as a straight weapon of attack.

But when a team has the power to go marching down the field it seldom fools with the laterals.

### A Cinema Fiasco

When I came from the Palace theatre several weeks ago after seeing the cinema production of "The Last Days of Pompeii," I crossed the street to the news stand and purchased a copy of the November issue of *The Stage*. I was interested and highly amused at the review of that cinema in the front pages of the magazine. If you saw the picture I feel sure that you, too, will enjoy them, and I am passing some along to you.

Sorry, Lord Lytton,  
Your classic was written  
Was perused;  
And refused  
As completely unfittin'.

And these lines addressed to Mr. Basil Rathbone.

Pontius Pilate, noble Roman,  
Hid beneath a slight frown.  
By looking further we discover  
Basil in a night gown.

And finally this one entitled *Marquee*.

The last day  
Of Pompeii.