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Ohio State Engineer

Title: The Engineer's Bookshelf

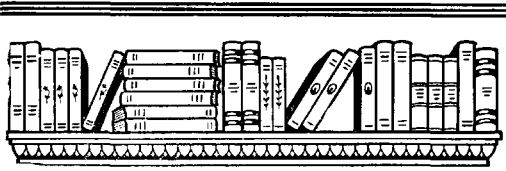
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The Engineer's Bookshelf

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The following paragraphs form a portion of a radio broadcast, somewhat cut, given by the editor of THE BOOKSHELF over Radio Station WOSU on Tuesday evening, February 2:

I would like to say a word in praise of a book of American humor. I am referring to a volume edited by E. B. White and his wife, Katherine S. White. In it they have placed the better humorous poetry and prose bits published in America from the time of Benjamin Franklin to the present day. Coward-McCann published it and the Whites call it **A Sub-Treasury of American Humor**.

First, let me tell you what you will not find in the volume. You will not find jokes, radio gags, or news breaks. You will not meet, praise the Lord, the word coinage of Walter Winchell, nor the red hair of Harpo Marx, nor the lispings satires of Ed Wynn. As Mr. White writes in his introduction, you will not find "the wonderful stuff that the stenographer with her pad upon her knee tosses to the stockroom boy coming in with a fresh supply of paper clips." Mr. White feels that humor does not have to preach in order to live; it needs only speak the truth. Then he concludes, "... as for this book, I think the truth is in it."

Now, let me tell you what you will find in this **Sub-treasury**: Short stories by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, Sinclair Lewis, and Dorothy Parker; fables and moral tales by Jim Thurber, George Ade, and Don Marquis; parodies and burlesques by Bob Benchley, Ring Lardner, and Franklin P. Adams; folklore and tall tales by Mark Twain, Joel Chandler Harris, and Roark Bradford; criticisms by Alex Woolcott, Clifton Fadiman, and Wolcott Gibbs; by Edgar Allan Poe, George Jean Nathan, and Dorothy Parker; etc., etc. You will find nearly a thousand pages of the best selections to make you laugh, a few selections that you have read before but unfortunately have forgotten, many selections that you will be happy to meet for the first time.

Take, for example, the section called **Critics at Work**. Did you ever know how Edgar Allan Poe with great gusto and precise thoroughness, took apart William Ellery Channing, Jr.? Took apart, and practically refused to put together again? Do you recall what Clifton Fadiman did in a review of Gertrude Stein's novel called **Ida**? Do you remember that George Jean Nathan in reviewing Bernard Shaw's "**Back to Methuselah**," tore Brit-

ain's vegetarian playwright limb from limb? Are you interested in seeing the bitter pen of Mrs. Dorothy Parker at work reviewing a book entitled **Re-enter Margot Asquith**? Or probably you prefer the late Mr. Woolcott furtively slaying a trite bit of dramatic trash called **Manhattan**, a poor Broadway concoction of the late Twenties? You may be as delighted as I was, to find them all assembled in one volume. If you are not, I know you will be delighted to dip here and there in the book, to meet new friends, and to renew the acquaintance-ship of old. Seeing the old and meeting the new are the delights of any well selected anthology, be it humor or otherwise. Surely, they are also the fascinations in reading the selections that the Whites, husband and wife, have culled for your pleasure in **A Sub-treasury of American Humor**.

Now, I recommend for your closest consideration, a volume published not only for the Christmas trade but also for the book trade of all times; a book that you should read whether or not you have ever traveled in Europe; a book that will send you into gales of laughter and down merry avenues of reminiscences, or I miss my guess—**Our Hearts Were Young and Gay** by Cornelia Otis Skinner, a daughter of the great actor, and by Emily Kimbrough, daughter of the Muncie, Indiana Kimbroughs.

Taking themselves to Europe on their own during a summer in the early Twenties, the summer of their graduation from Bryn Mawr, the Misses Skinner and Kimbrough have recounted for you in riotous reading some of their highly amusing experiences, which, in turn may have been your experiences too, should you have been so fortunate as to have crossed the North Atlantic during those times when hearts were young and gay.

Sailing from Montreal on the S. S. Montcalm in early June, they were marooned on a mud flat before their steamer, listing like the tower of Pisa, ever passed Quebec. Then followed ten glorious days when they were guests of the steamship company at the Chateau Frontenac in Quebec before they embarked a second time in the Empress of France.

Now their adventures begin—and what adventures: tea with the captain in his quarters; participation in a deck tennis tournament that almost ended in a riot; a leading part in the ship's concert that could never be forgotten by its audience; and

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ENGINEERS BOOKSHELF

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Cornelia's near-quarantine because of a severe attack of measles, of all maladies, upon their arrival at Southampton.

If you read the volume you probably never will forget how these nomadic creatures, dressed in brand new rabbit fur cloaks descended upon the Trocadero in London for dinner with Mother and Father Skinner; nor their journey with Mother and Father by train to spend a quiet Sunday in the country with Mr. H. G. Wells—Father Skinner had met him on the summit of an Alp several summers previously; nor their fortnight in St. Valery on the Channel coast; nor even their pension adventures at Rouen which I believe I dare not recount here.

From the time of their arrival at the Gare St. Lazare when they were whisked by a mad Parisian taxi driver from place to place, until their tearful farewell of the Paris to which they lost a big portion of their gay hearts, you will find Cornelia and Emily doing much the same things that you may have done, or that you would have done. They paid a visit to the Opera; they sat hour after hour at the Cafe de la Paix watching the world go by; they journeyed to the Ritz bar with John Mason Brown, famous drama critic, also seeing Paris for the first time; they haunted the book-stalls on the quais and wandered through the galleries for glimpses of the Cezannes and and Matisse and Picassos; they took their two newly-acquired toy Belgian Griffons to lunch with them at the Ritz—and with the expected results; and from the ateliers they purchased duplicate copies of black satin gowns.

Your hearts, too, will be young and gay when you read the book; I recommend it; you really can't go wrong with Cornelia and Emily.

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