

The Knowledge Bank at The Ohio State University

Ohio State Engineer

- Title:** The Engineer's Bookshelf
- Creators:** Dumble, Wilson R.
- Issue Date:** Oct-1935
- Publisher:** Ohio State University, College of Engineering
- Citation:** Ohio State Engineer, vol. 19, no. 1 (October, 1935), 5-6.
- URI:** <http://hdl.handle.net/1811/35220>
- Appears in Collections:** [Ohio State Engineer: Volume 19, no. 1 \(October, 1935\)](#)

THE ENGINEER'S BOOKSHELF

By

WILSON R. DUMBLE

PATHS OF GLORY—by *Humphrey Cobb*—(*The Viking Press*) (\$2.50)

COME AND GET IT—by *Edna Ferber* (*Doubleday, Doran & Co.*) (\$2.50)

PERSONAL HISTORY—by *Vincent Sheean*—(*Doubleday, Daran & Co.*) (\$3.00)

Paths of Glory

Late in the evening of a damp rainy day in June when I was spending a couple weeks at Granville, I picked up a copy of Humphrey Cobb's *Paths of Glory*. Of course I knew that it was a war novel; I had read several reviews of it and I glanced at the blurbs on the jacket before I started to read. Those announcements were extravagantly worded, as so many of them are these days. But with it all, I never expected to find the gripping, terrifying story between the boards of the book that I did find. It was hours past midnight when finally I finished the last page. *Paths of Glory*, I decided, ranked with Hemingway's *Farewell to Arms* and with John Dos Passos' *The Three Soldiers*.

It is an account of the weekend adventures of a French Infantry Regiment, the 181st to be exact, and an intimate glimpse into the lives of three soldiers, Ferol, Langlois and Didier. On a certain morning in July, 1915, the 181st Regiment makes a charge on the enemy in order to straighten out a bulge in the firing line. Someone, however, had erred in giving the command, because the first members of the regiment to go over the top were hopelessly entangled in the uncut barbed wire. They were mowed down by enemy machine guns with the result that the remaining companies of the regiment could not advance. In other words the attack was a wholesale slaughter without one inch of ground being gained.

The commanding officer in charge of the regiment, wishing to shift the blame for the failure to other shoulders claimed that the enlisted men of the regiment refused to charge when the order was given; and hoping to make an example of them before his entire outfit ordered three men to be court marshaled.

The last third of the book is devoted to the final hours of Ferol and Langlois and Didier, the three chosen by lot to pay the penalty. The reader sees them writing their last letters to the members of their families, watches them pass to utter stupor and unconsciousness before they are carried at dawn and placed before the firing squad. In

front of the entire assembled regiment they are shot to a relieving death.

The story leaves the reader cold with rage, especially when he realizes that these incidents which form the slender plot for the story, are an actual piece of history, and surely a blot on French Militarism in the World War. And then, when he considers that the world is once again on the very verge of a bloody conflict, he wonders what it is all about. *Paths of Glory* is a volume which could be aptly recommended to the present day Italian war leaders.

Come and Get It

The only other book I read during that Granville visit was Edna Ferber's *Come and Get It*, a story of pioneering in northern Wisconsin. Miss Ferber always writes entertainingly, and her account of the Glasgow family, its rise and fall, in the town of Butte des Morte, is one of the most lively pieces of fiction I have seen lately. Only Miss Ferber can accurately picture Barney Glasgow descending the stairs of his splendid home on a crisp October morning and greeting his suspecting wife at the breakfast table. Also, only Miss Ferber can do justice to Emma Louise Glasgow's smugness, and the gait and beauty of Lotta Morgan, the Iron Ridge mistress, Barney took to Chicago.

If one likes to read Edna Ferber one will like *Come and Get It*. It somewhat reminded me of the early Ferber, the good Ferber of those splendid short stories some fifteen years ago. Surely as a novel it has better construction than her *So Big*.

Personal History

In a far different vein of *Paths of Glory* and *Come and Get It*, is *Personal History* by Vincent Sheean. Mr. Sheean belongs to that post World War batch of expatriates who wandered from one European capital to another during the few years following November 11, 1918. And now at the age of thirty-four, he devotes his time to writing his memoirs. In particular I recommend reading the first half of Mr. Sheean's four hundred page account of his life. I believe that the record of his experiences at the University of Chicago will be of interest to all university students. Surely if one has ever joined a Greek letter fraternity he will be interested in the chapter entitled "The Modern Gothic." No Greek could read the first page of that section and not wish to push on to see what follows. For that matter the entire book presents an entertaining study of our times.

Garbo

With the advent of the new cinema season, a new round of good motion pictures has started at the Columbus theatres. Probably the most highly heralded film and at the same time most disappointing was *Anna Karenina* with Greta Garbo in the title role. No doubt the film was disappointing because the theme itself is outmoded; but certainly it was interesting because of the pageantry of Royal Russia.

Anna Karenina is a tragedy, following closely the famous novel by Count Leo Tolstoi. Curiously enough, although almost every incident in the picture pointed to illumine the emotional qualities of Miss Garbo's acting, it still remained Tolstoi. She did her usually splendid work, but somehow, I gained the idea that her efforts were hopelessly lost, or at least slightly dulled by a moral situation which has lost much of its point.

As I sat and watched the story unfolded before me in the beautiful Fox theatre in Washington, I could not help but feel that in this day and age of easy divorce, it is difficult to appreciate fully the significance of *Anna Karenina's* most decisive and fatal action, namely her abandonment of a cold-blooded husband and a beloved child in order to be with her lover, Count Vronsky. Her position at once became impossible in a society rigidly codified and at the sametime boorish as that of the aristocracy of Czarist Russia. Today she could have obtained a divorce and married the count; but such was not the case in Royal Russia in the days of Tolstoi. Yet it is always interesting to watch Miss Garbo work; certainly her crowning effort to sustain high artistry was admirably successful in the fascinating last scene in the railway station.

Hepburn

But the most disappointing picture of the new season is Katherine Hepburn's *Alice Adams*. To be sure Miss Hepburn was interesting enough as Alice, and certainly quite convincing in the majority of her scenes; but the producers decided that it would be better for the sake of box-office receipts to change the ending of the story. It is probably a good thing that Mr. Tarkington's eyesight is so poor that he, if he wished to, cannot see the cinema production; for what would he say when he finds that the hero had been lurking on the Adam's front porch and had heard the entire family quarrel, and then had decided to marry Alice. It just does not make sense; for the person who knows Alice Adams of the Booth Tarkington novel naturally associates with her the sad ending of the book, that part when Alice dolefully turns her steps to the stairway leading up to the office of the business college. But Miss Hepburn commands a high salary and it costs greatly to stage a production in Hollywood, and for these reasons the public must be pleased. Certainly, the producers probably feel, the public as a whole is not pleased unless the heroine falls into the arms of the hero. Unquestionably, for that reason alone, the picture's ending was changed.

Top Hat, et. al.

In the new musical productions on the screen *Top Hat* leads by a large margin. The public apparently never tires of seeing Miss Rogers dance with Fred Astaire. And that with the combination of lilting music, splendid dancing, beautiful costumes, surprisingly fine comedy and lavish settings, what could be expected but a splendid entertainment.

Personally I feel that individual honors in *Top Hat* go to Helen Broderick. In the role of the acid wife her performance could not be surpassed. Miss Broderick, a long favorite of mine, made her cinema debut in this picture, and let us hope that she will be included in the cast of many forthcoming pictures.

Probably a close second to *Top Hat* is the new edition of *Broadway Melody*, as good, clean entertainment as any one could wish. Jack Benny made a good Walter Winchell, while Eleanor Powell, a newcomer, took top honors in the dancing. By the way, it has been suggested that Miss Powell might be Fred Astaire's dancing partner in his next picture.

I am sure that many people were delighted to see once again Gracie Allen, this time in her most nonsensical picture, *Here Comes Cookie*. If you like Miss Gracie and her ilk you will go in heavily for her recent picture. It is much better than a three ring circus.

FIRST LIGHTING GRADUATE

Harris Reinhardt, member of the first class to complete the newly established illumination course in the graduate school of Ohio State University, has joined the staff of lighting specialists of the Westinghouse Lamp Company.

Following his early education in Des Arc, Arkansas, his birthplace and home, Mr. Reinhardt entered the state university at Fayetteville. He was graduated in 1931 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering, going to Ohio State University later as a graduate assistant.

While at Ohio, he matriculated in the special illumination engineering course for graduate students and in 1935 was graduated with his Master of Science degree in this subject. Since this course is recognized as the first to be established for regular curricular study in any American University, Mr. Reinhardt has the distinction of being the country's first M.S. graduate in illuminating engineering. The thesis for his degree was a comparison between sodium vapor and incandescent illuminants for highway lighting.

With Westinghouse Mr. Reinhardt will be stationed in the Commercial Engineering Department at Bloomfield, N. J., where his work in general illumination practice will allow him to utilize fully his specialized education. He is a member of the Tau Beta Pi engineering society, and Sigma Xi science fraternity and the Illuminating Engineering Society.