

From Indiana—Ernie Pyle

Old Swede Gives Ernie the Blues,
But Taxi Driver's Friendly Greeting
Causes Him to Call Alaska 'Home.'

FAIRBANKS, Alaska, Sept. 10.—We rode the Brill Car from Matanuska to Fairbanks—300 miles, sitting up all night.

The Brill Car is what the Alaska Railroad runs north with the mail as soon as a boat arrives at Seward. It's a high-ball express—run just for the mail, but carrying a few passengers willing to sit up all night to get there in a hurry.

It is a two-car train, run by a gasoline motor generating electricity. It is called the "Brill Car" all over Alaska, and it is called that, I assume, merely because the cars were made by the Brill Co. The train sometimes lifts as high as 45 miles an hour.

Walter Pippel and I were the only passengers getting on at Matanuska Junction. He is Matanuska's prize farmer, you know. Bob Alwood came through the smoker where we were sitting. He is editor of The Anchorage Times. I remembered that I had a letter to him—written by Dr. Ernest Gruening of Washington. So I introduced myself.

He's Not the Doctor

"Oh yes," he said. "I've heard of you." And I thought to myself, "Yeah I know. You think I'm Dr. Pyle of Juneau. Everybody thinks I'm Dr. Pyle of Juneau. But I'm not. I'm Simple John Pyle, of Jackson Hole, Wyo., and you never heard of me in your life. I won't say anything. I'll just sit here and watch you squirm when you read the letter and find I'm not Dr. Pyle of Juneau."

But he carried his mistake off well and never let on, and sat down and we chatted for an hour or so. About 9:30 p. m. we began to see Mt. McKinley. It is the highest mountain in North America—20,300 feet.

We were within sight of it for nearly two hours. It looked about 10 miles away, but the mail clerk said it was 40. It was covered with snow.

It was 1 o'clock in the morning when we stopped at McKinley Park station. There's nothing there but a little depot, a few white tents of the Alaska Road Commission and a big log arch across the road, saying, "Welcome to Mt. McKinley National Park."

A few people got off the train, carrying heavy bed rolls. One of them was an old man. Suddenly I realized I knew him.

He was the old Swede who had been my fellow-passenger weeks ago in the back end of a truck on that nightmarish ride from Fairbanks to Valdez.

Finally Got Week's Job

I went over and talked with him. He said he had been hunting for work ever since I saw him and had finally got a few weeks' job with the Road Commission, in the park.

For the next hour we tried to sleep. We curled up on the leather seats, with subcases for pillows. It was like being on a vibrating machine, so we gave it up and sat and watched the already light horizon grow lighter. By 2 a. m. the sun was glaring in our eyes.

It was just a little before 5 a. m. when we rolled into the outskirts of Fairbanks. I saw the University Experimental Farm ahead, and knew Prize Farmer Pippel would want to see it. I shook him awake.

In a few minutes we were at Fairbanks. The taxi drivers were all at the station, and one of them said: "Hello, Mr. Pyle, back again?" And I said: "Yeah, had to come back home."

That's one of the lures of Alaska. Pretty soon, no matter where you go up here, somebody knows you. And some people even get to distinguish you from Dr. Pyle of Juneau.

My Diary

By Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt

Dolls of Children's Museum Here
On Exhibit in Hyde Park Library.

HYDE PARK, N. Y., Thursday.—This certainly was a busy morning. I began by breakfasting at 7:45 with young Cyril Martineau and a friend of his. Cyril is the son of my husband's first cousin, who married an Englishman. He came over to this country to work for an English oil company on the West Coast and married an American girl. Now he has left her with their two children in his mother's little country home in England.

The company is sending him on a year's trip to South America. He is visiting different stations and could only spend the night with us, but it was nice to see him.

It is interesting to watch these youngsters grow up and develop, but I feel sorry for him as I thought that, in spite of the interest of the trip, he would be separated from his family for a long time. I am even sorer for his wife, and yet, England is a good place to live in and Cyril's mother is one of the most charming and capable women to consult if one feels a little lost and lonely.

Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln MacVeagh and my brother, Hall, appeared for breakfast a little later and then went off for their destination by motor. The day gradually planned itself. People had to be brought from Poughkeepsie to see the President and returned to their trains. I thought there were to be 14 people for lunch, but it turned out there were 15. Several delegations came to call during the morning. While two of the children and two young friends ate a rather late breakfast, I sat at the table and glanced at many plans as I could get gathered what information I could as to John's belongings.

He pointed to a pile of soiled clothes in the middle of his bedroom floor and announced that some day he and Johnny Drayton would get together again and divide their belongings, which at the moment are so well mixed they could not possibly distinguish them. One must be young to be as careless and trusting as these youngsters are, but it is a grand period in one's life. We should all be grateful that our children can enjoy it. Troubles and responsibilities come soon enough, no matter how kind fate may seem to be.

Mrs. James Roosevelt Jr. and her two little girls are coming this afternoon to stay with us. It will certainly be a joy to have children in the house again. My son, James, has already warned me that the gate at the top of the stairs must be kept closed constantly, or Kate, who is both active and inquisitive, will fall down the stairs.

I have given the two dolls which were sent me by the Children's Museum in Indianapolis to the library here in the village of Hyde Park, where they are holding an exhibition of dolls. I was delighted to see how appreciative everybody was of the beautiful way in which these dolls are made and dressed.

I wish so much that other museums might have the advantage of a painter like John Quincy Adams—no, not the President, but a direct descendant. He has a great gift for painting backgrounds. I imagine his paintings bring out the various child and attract children more than any other single thing I saw in the museum.

Walter O'Keefe—

THE Chicago Times planted a couple of smart reporters on the trail of the American Nazis and they bring up the fact that the Nazis are planning to seize the U. S. Government.

Well! Well! Well! Those Nazis always seemed crazy, and this proves it. Imagine trying to take over a broken-down business like the U. S. Government! Wise gamblers are laying money that if it ever happens they will never get Maine and Vermont.

It's a strain on one's imagination to think of Der Fuehrer Himmler riding triumphantly up Broadway into the Bronx smiling and bowing from Mayor La Guardia's car.

Of course, such a thing never can come to pass, because Americans have too great a sense of humor to worship a guy with a mustache like Adolf.

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A Gardener's Dreams Come True

'Tray Agriculture' Makes One Acre Do Work of 30—Without Hoeing!

By Morris Gilbert
NEA Staff Correspondent

LAKE SHENAROCK, N. Y., Sept. 10.—In a little sunny patch of ground beside a modest bungalow up here in the country 50 miles north of New York City, Dr. Gould Harrold, associate of the Boyce Thompson Institute for Plant Research, is growing tomatoes in trays, their roots not in the soil but in tanks containing a chemical solution.

It is a practical demonstration of one of that small cluster of modern inventions which the National Resources Committee, in its recent spectacular report to President Roosevelt, predicted was capable of radically changing the entire complexion of American civilization.

Is "tray agriculture" the answer to the Dust Bowl? Is it the "out" for whole classes of Americans, capable of making them healthy, independent, if not wealthy, wise and sun-tanned, like a sort of sublimated "Townsend Plan" applied to agriculture, with the benefit of being practical? Does it offer a real permanent improvement in costs and conditions of living? And will it take the headache and the backache, the heavy investment and the poor return, the long hours and the insecurity out of some kinds of farming, on a national scale?

HERE at Shenarock, Dr. Harrold will not answer those questions. It is too early, and the experiment is too modest. But he and Dr. John M. Arthur, famous biochemist at the Boyce Thompson Institute, who is supervising the work, are thinking in those terms.

For tomatoes—the produce now growing at Shenarock—"tray agriculture" is a success. Dr. Harrold has 10 tanks in use. They fit into his small "side yard." In two or three of them, they have been making special tests. The plants even look as if they were growing as ordinary tomato plants. But in the majority of tanks, where a proved chemical formula and technique are in use, the results are extraordinary.

This is the station's first season. While its work is still experimental, perfect tomatoes are already being grown in exceptional abundance, for a very low price, and without the hard labor, equipment, or expense of ordinary farming.

Vines are sturdy, high, and heavy with foliage. They are set much closer together than in ordinary garden culture. The clusters of tomatoes are bountiful, giving definitely more than the normal yield. The tomatoes themselves are vivid in color, firm and meaty in texture, with plenty of juice, but no wateriness. Their flavor is rich, sweet, refreshing, in fact, literally perfect.

"TRAY AGRICULTURE is which it is based on. Almost 80 years ago an American chemist, Dr. Julian von Sachs, listed the chemical elements a plant requires to grow. Supply those elements under proper conditions, the theory ran, and plants would sprout and flourish.

Recently various efforts to supply the necessary nutrition to seeds or roots of flowers and vegetables by artificial means instead of through the soil have been tried. One system surrounded roots with sand in a flower pot, and furnished the chemical elements by a drip arrangement from a tank. Another system worked by inserting roots into holes bored in wood, floating on the chemical solution. These seemed fairly cumbersome and expensive in practice. Then science hit upon the method now being developed in Shenarock, with excellent prospects of practical success.

SINCE Dr. Harrold is a tomato expert, tomatoes were chosen for the test. For tomatoes, water-



Results of the "tray agriculture" tests at Lake Shenarock—Dr. Gould Harrold displays roots of tomato plants (the tray has been tipped up to show how the roots grow down into the chemical tanks).

tight cypress tanks were built, 12 feet long, a foot wide, a foot deep. Above these were placed movable trays, the same dimensions as the tanks except that they were only four inches high, with a bottom of chicken wire.

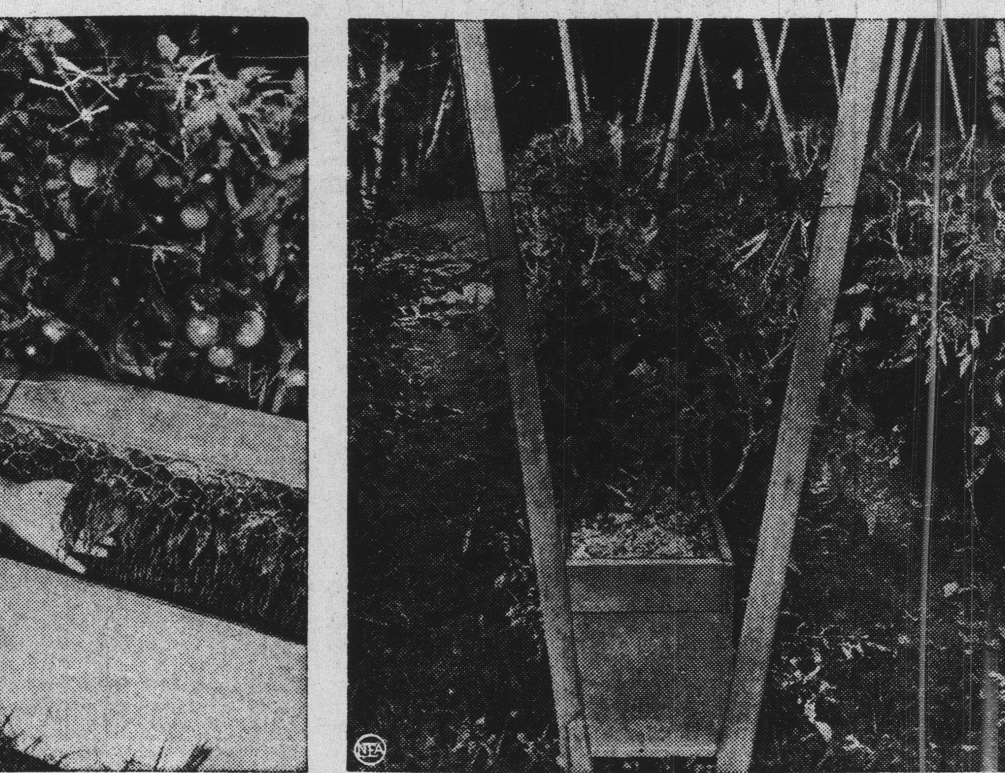
It is the chicken wire—an essential contribution made by the celebrated Prof. W. F. Gerike of the University of California, pioneer of tray agriculture—which makes this type of water culture practicable. A layer of excelsior an inch deep covers the chicken wire, and above that a layer of shavings 3 inches deep.

Tomato plants meanwhile were grown from seeds in a seed tray by ordinary soil methods, either in a hot house or a cold frame. When the plants had almost reached their blossoming time, they were transplanted to the trays. Their roots were inserted through the shavings and excelsior into the tank, being careful to leave an air space between chicken-wire and liquid surface. The plants were spaced a foot apart in length down the tray and 6 inches apart in width. That gave 24 plants to each tray. The average space between tomato vines in field cultivation is between 3 and 4 feet.

THE solution in which the plant roots were placed has as base 62 gallons of water to a tank, practically filling it. The rest of the elements filled a mere quart mason jar to be poured in each time. Others are added in minute doses with an eyedropper. The chemical compounds used were: Sulphuric acid, nitric acid, phosphoric acid (these three in the largest proportions), potassium hydroxide, ammonium hydroxide, calcium oxide, and magnesium oxide.

"Tiny doses of 'tonic' were added to this mixture with the eyedropper—a few drops of manganese, boron, copper, zinc, and iron. Proportions of this solution are still under experimentation, although satisfactory results have been obtained with one formula by Dr. Arthur and Dr. Harrold. It is understood that next winter a brochure containing the full list and proportions may be compiled at the Boyce Thompson Institute, Yonkers. Perhaps, thereafter, prepared solutions containing not only the principal ingredients but the "eyedropper tonics," will be made commercially available through chemical firms.

FOR the first few days after insertion in the tray, the plants wilted, according to Dr. Harrold. But then they took on new energy and commenced to grow. A wonderful thing happened next (within four or five days of planting in the tanks). The plants' ground roots, equipped to suck nourishment from soil but



The start of the crop—Dr. John M. Arthur, biochemist of the Thompson Institute for Plant Research (at left), with Dr. Harrold, just after planting tomato vines in sawdust, their roots extending down into tanks of chemicals.

less adapted to liquids, dwindled and rotted off. In their place appeared water roots. Transference of the tomato from a soil-growing to a liquid-growing plant was completed.

Now at full growth, clusters of water roots have spread richly and grown far down into the tanks. They even appear in the damp shavings and excelsior. The vines are firmly anchored in the chicken wire, although they require support above as in ordinary cultivation.

The only change in the fruit itself is in its perfection. There were practically no blights or diseases to affect it adversely. And nature has helped it along through a wonderful quality which Dr. Harrold picturesquely calls a "cafeteria idea." This is the faculty of plants, having available all the various elements they want for growing, to select and use exactly what they need in exactly the right proportions.

IN the system in use under the auspices of the Boyce Thompson Institute not only "truck crops" are adaptable, but many flowers, such as begonias, cosmos, the lily family and gardenias. Potatoes also are adapted to this system, although trays and tanks must have a different shape. With "root crops," such as beets, carrots, turnips, radishes, the technique must be different; but under the general principles of "tray agriculture" these, too, can be efficiently grown.

Prof. Gerike foresees an age when America's cities will be densely packed with greenhouses bearing their crops in wonderful profusion and freshness, coming ripe and cheap to market—initial costs having been greatly reduced by the cheapness of production, and selling costs greatly reduced by the elimination of the long railroad or truck haul.

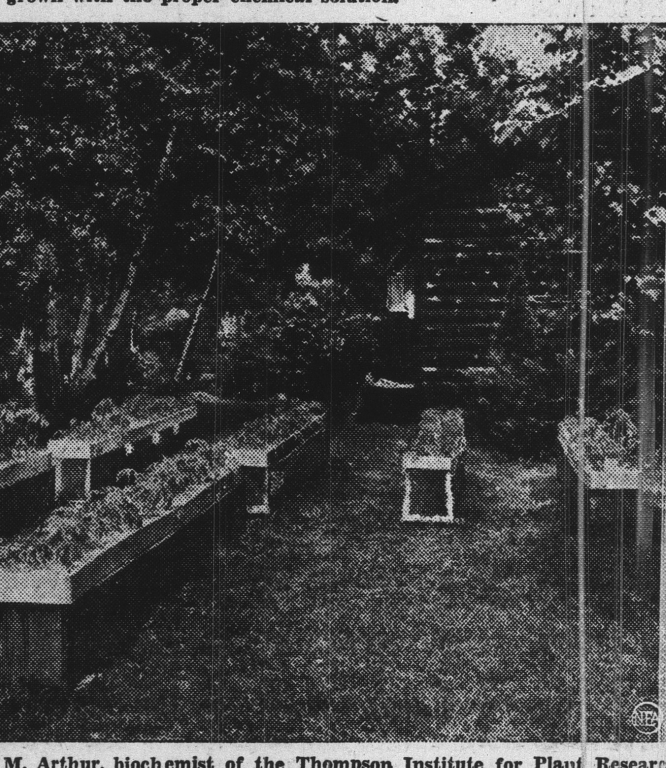
But the approach of Drs. Arthur and Harrold has been very different. The California idea of Prof. Gerike is civic, and requires considerable initial capital for greenhouses. Drs. Arthur and Harrold have been investigating the problem from the point of view of the individual, and for cultivation in the open air.

It's farming without the cost or the sweat. No horse, no cultivator or plow, no weeds, no manure spreader, no hoeing. Best of all—no disease from the soil, such as the blossom-end rot which in tomato country, some years, takes from 20 to 50 per cent of the expected crop.

THE land doesn't even have to be good land. It can be the cheapest, most worn-out land on the map. It doesn't even have to be flat, so long as the tanks can be propped up level. And it can be a tiny estate, for the intensive use of tray agriculture is remarkable. All that is needed is the sun, and an average New York State summer, such as the present one, has given demonstrably fine results.

Figures on the current Shenarock experiment break down into interesting comparisons. According to Dr. Harrold, season's yield per plant in tanks is estimated at 10 pounds. This would amount to

No matter on what kind of soil the "tray agriculture" farm may be located, luxuriant plants like these at Lake Shenarock, N. Y., can be grown with the proper chemical solution.



The start of the crop—Dr. John M. Arthur, biochemist of the Thompson Institute for Plant Research (at left), with Dr. Harrold, just after planting tomato vines in sawdust, their roots extending down into tanks of chemicals.

200 tons of tomatoes an acre (planted solid with tanks). Meanwhile, the average yield of tomatoes under good conditions in the field is six tons an acre. Production of tomatoes from tanks thus amounts to more than 30 times production under ordinary farm conditions unaffected by disease.

Once tanks—which must be of cypress, morticed to prevent leakage, bolted for tightening at need, lined with a cement mixture—are installed they will last from 10 to 15 years. Cost of chemicals is negligible. Dr. Harrold estimates that expenses for growing a tankful of tomatoes—240 pounds—for an entire growing season come to no more than \$2.50—a cent a pound.

IN the month of September in New York State, when the market is flooded with local tomatoes, picked ripe, purchased cost to the consumer is rarely less than 5 cents a pound, frequently higher.

COMMERCIALLY speaking, tray cultivation of tomatoes in the Northern and Eastern states has, according to Dr. Harrold, an even better future than this indicates. This is because tray-cultivated ripe tomatoes can be put on the market a month ahead of ripe tomatoes grown on the local farms, and at a time when Texas and Florida and Mississippi tomatoes, shipped green, are selling in New York state for 25 cents a pound.

The perfect combination for the retired man with a small capital, Dr. Harrold declares, would be one farm in Florida for the winter

and another in the North for the summer.

And it's easy work. Dr. Harrold has found that even if soil diseases are eliminated, plants can catch other ills from the air. Mites, for instance, that attack the base of the buds, or flying insects. The answer is: Spraying. But it isn't hard to spray a few feet of tanks. Rain makes another problem. Persistent heavy rain badly dilutes the chemical solution. The answer is: Replenish. Syphon out the tanks and fill them again.

THERE are many problems yet to face, Dr. Harrold warns, so it isn't the moment for the enthusiast to plunge sight-unseen into tray agriculture.

So, under eminent auspices and with the Government casting a paternal eye on it, tray agriculture, one of those new inventions which might "radically" change the complexion of American civilization, gets its send-off in the East. In Kentucky University, Dr. McMurtry is experimenting with the tobacco plant. In Aurora, Ill., flowers are being grown by similar processes. On the Coast, Prof. Gerike pursues his brilliant work. Elsewhere other scientists are busy in the field.

"Shanghai Bombed by Friend and Foe" will appear on this page tomorrow.



Speeding past blind streets and alleys is a dangerous practice. Obstructed vision should, in itself, be sufficient warning to slow down and proceed with extra caution. That is the only way to insure safety at such places. Eternal vigilance is the price of safety.

Our Town

By Anton Scherrer

Founder of 90-Year-Old Tremont

Was Ahead of His Time in Providing
Modern-Type Service for Guests.

IN the past I've tried to hint that progress, or whatever you want to call our advancement, isn't everything it's cracked up to be. Once, I remember, I went so far as to say there isn't anything new under the sun. I didn't get to first base with the idea, but today I have more facts to offer which, I trust, will indicate more clearly what I mean.

For example, there's the three-story Tremont Hotel on the southeast corner of Washington and New Jersey Sts. It's almost 90 years old, which makes it the oldest hotel in Indianapolis.

Well, what I'm getting at today is that practically every guest room in the Tremont has a little opening next to the door through which refreshment, or anything else, for that matter, can be passed to the occupant. That proves that whoever built the hotel anticipated the need for something like that almost 75 years before Mr. Slater equipped his hotels with what he called "servidors." That's what I mean when I keep harping on the lack of something new under the sun.

Little's Tavern Prospered

It was in 1834 that John Little opened a two-story tavern on the site of the present Tremont Hotel. He made a go of it right from the start. So much so that sometime around 1850, Mr. Little and his sons, Matthew and Ingham, tore down the old shack and put up what you see today.

The Tremont doesn't look like Little's Tavern, however. That's because somebody in the meantime went modern and decorated the outside with cement blocks. On the inside, however, the Tremont retains some of its pristine glory. The original staircase is still there, and so are the hand-hewn timbers, even if you can't see all of them.

Almost as old as the Tremont is the hotel on the northeast corner of Illinois and Georgia Sts. It was built in 1856 by Henry Buehrig, a gregarious German whom everybody called "Lieber Bruder." Mr. Buehrig started out calling his place the "Farmer's Hotel" and later changed it to the Commercial. Now it's Stubbins Hotel.

The Spencer House (originally called the Tremont) was built in 1857, but with all the additions since then, it doesn't look anything like it did in the beginning.

Old Hotels Near Depot

A couple of hotels south of the Union Station around Illinois and South Sts. are pretty old, too, I guess. One is the Seaton which still houses the "Old Tunnel Bar." Next to it is the inn operated by Mr. Surber which somehow tickles me because of an anachronistic door labeled "Ladies Entrance."

Outside of that, there aren't many of the old places left. Remarkable, however, is the fact that most of the early hotel sites still are doing business at the old stands. The Old Bates House (1852), for instance, is now the Claypool; the old Oriental (1856) is now the Warren, and what was once the Morris Hotel (1853) is now the Sherman House. I'm told, too, that the present Washington Hotel is mighty close to where the old Union Hotel (1826) used to be. The Union, if you please, was the successor of John Hawkins' "Eagle" (1833), the second oldest tavern on record around here.

The exception to prove the rule is, of course, the southeast corner of Washington and Illinois Sts. Back in the old days, it was a great hotel corner—first the Palmer House (1840) and later the Occidental. Boy, that was the place to buy a mint julep.

A Woman's View

By Mrs. Walter Ferguson

Impressions of Unbroken Family
Remains as Memory of San Diego.

VACATION NOTES: In San Diego I lunched with the editor of the Sun, Magner White, and his wife. Their attractive home has an unequalled view of sea and sky. That, coupled with the interesting conversation with them and their Chicago guest, Father Magner, fixed the event in my mind as an especially pleasant memory. It made me homesick for something I have lost forever to see the happy group of father, mother and four children in the give and take of devoted, unbroken family life.

Mrs. Dorothy Scott of the Sun came around to talk to me about my work, and I was struck with the fact that she is much more worth a story than I will ever be.

A native of Virginia, she started out to be a journalist and attained a name for herself in the profession, first in Washington and then in New York. She had dedicated herself to her career when along came romance. She married, gave up her job, and settled down to housework and motherhood. After the last of her four children was born tragedy stepped over her threshold. Her husband, in the Naval Air Service, was killed in a plane crash.

So it was back to newspapering for Dorothy—this time with four children to support. In the most matter-of-fact way she told of driving with her babies, the youngest only five months old, from Virginia to San Diego.

"I'd never do it again," she said. "But you'd be surprised how kind everybody was. When they found I was alone they'd offer to do a sort of thing to help me. I would stop wherever I happened to be, knock on some strange door and ask to heat the baby's milk. Nobody ever turned me down."

New Books Today

Public Library Presents—

ELEVATION of a book to "best seller" importance invariably raises questions concerning its authorship. AND SO—VICTORIA (Macmillan) by Vaughan Wilkins, which the publishers promise bids fair to rival "Anthony Adverse" and "Gone With the Wind," is no exception.

Who is this versatile writer whose powers of delineation bring to lusty life a period rife with romance, adventure and infamous plotting and whose story portrays the era just before Victoria's accession, during the latter years of the Hanoverian dynasty in England, the hey-day of the "wicked uncles"? The author of this significant and exciting book, says "Publishers' Weekly," fought in the great war, is over 40, and has been since the age of 23 a British newspaperman. AND SO—VICTORIA is his first novel.

FOR those who care to refresh their minds further on the conditions and details of "L'Affaire Dreyfus" Yale University Press has very recently published THE DREYFUS CASE, by the man, Alfred Dreyfus, and his son Pierre Dreyfus. Pierre, who was 3 years old at the time of the tragic summons, relates the incredible tale from the time of the arrest in 1894 down to the trial at Rennes in 1899. The story then is carried on by Dreyfus himself in the form of memoirs covering the period 1899 to 1906 ending with his dramatic rehabilitation. Pierre again takes over the narrative which ends with the death of Alfred Dreyfus in 1933. This white telling is a dignified performance and touchingly human.