

The Times Book Page

THE FIRST READER—By Harry Hansen

'The Time Is Noon'

Portrays Young Collegians In Roaring Twenties

"THE TIME IS NOON." A novel by Hiram Haydn. New York, Crown, \$3.50.

AMERICA'S jazz decade, the 1920s, was the time when the younger generation broke away from all restraints. The World War had brought only disillusion. Prohibition had made gaudy, fashionable, and country lanes were lined with pint bottles tossed out of the motor cars. Half-baked Freudianism routed sex reticences and encouraged easy alliances. Literary standards broke down likewise and practically everybody was a poet. But many college graduates still preferred Wall Street to Grub Street.

You must admit that a thoughtful author would find this period ready-made for his purposes. Yet only a few writers have tackled it, and none with much success. Hiram Haydn, novelist and teacher of writing, gets a pretty strong grip on the period in his latest story, "The Time Is Noon." For in these 561 pages he has built convincing, full-length portraits of half a dozen young Americans of college age, and kept the story going at a rapid pace.

IT IS REALLY REMARKABLE how much activity and talk Mr. Haydn has packed into this novel, for most stories about college students get pretty thin. He also manages to portray convincing backgrounds in Florida, Boston, Greenwich Village, Paris, Harlem and Gastonia, N. C., and to convey the air of the times when girls were unsexed by rowdy attentions, rich young men considered the world their domain, broken men became bootleggers, and one or two serious ones threw themselves into social and economic causes.

The latter give Mr. Haydn a chance to portray a young man who works for the underdog. Sol Krassovsky, though a fellow student with Tom Robinson, Lathrop Stone and Charley Hoyt at Emerson College, is an outsider who offends against convention when he attacks Christian ethics in a school paper. Sol is expelled because he won't apologize, and soon thereafter is abused by anti-Semites among the students.

SOL BECOMES the chief protester against the abuses in American democracy. He gets into the fight to free the Gastonia mill workers, who, with Fred Beale in the lead, were accused of murder. Sol clashes with Communist organizers who are exploiting the incident for party purposes. This enables Mr. Haydn to give a pretty clear description of Communist disregard for truth in the interests of strategy. Since the chapter closes with the conviction of the accused, Mr. Haydn does not give the sequel, in which Beale eventually got away.

In portraying the rest of the characters, Mr. Haydn has two capital characters in the girls—Sand Warren and Harriet Hawthorne, but they are unlike any dappers you ever knew. More introspective and mature for their years, perhaps. To what extent their talk and that of the other men will hold your interest depends on whether you find their

lives exciting or tire of their talkativeness. For myself, there were times when I was willing to take them for granted.

But there was no doubt that Mr. Haydn had thought deeply about the period and its young Americans. He comes from a scholarly family—his grandfather was president of Western Reserve University and his father is a professor there—and he attended much success. Hiram Haydn, Amherst, Western Reserve and novelist and teacher of writing, gets a pretty strong grip on the period in his latest story, "The Time Is Noon." For in these 561 pages he has built convincing, full-length portraits of half a dozen young Americans of college age, and kept the story going at a rapid pace.

New 'Race' Story Out

"LOST BOUNDARIES." By W. L. White. New York, Harcourt, Brace, \$1.50.

W. L. WHITE'S little document, "Lost Boundaries," contributes a cheerful note to the writings on race relations.

Mr. White has found a family in Keene, N. H., which long has passed for white but is actually Negro.

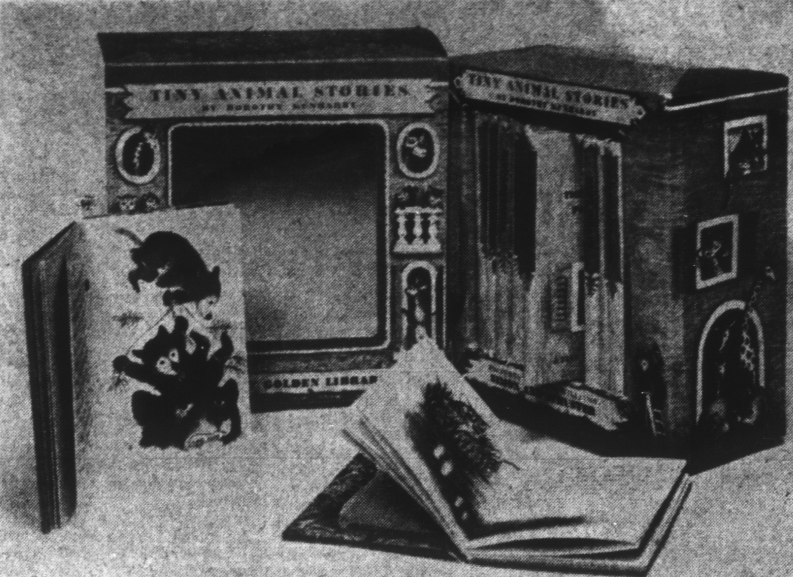
Dr. Albert Johnston, a graduate of the University of Chicago and Rush Medical School, said nothing about his race until he was turned down by the Navy; then he told his 17-year-old son, Dr. Johnston, the story of his life.

THE SON took it earnestly, but needed a period of readjustment. During part of that time he made a trip across the United States, visiting relatives.

He learned that many members of their family had crossed the color line, and that it was customary for a light-colored Negro to disappear among the whites. The Johnstons feel better now that they are in the open as "colored people."

Apparently they have not been victims of hysteria or of the violent affronts that make up so much of current fiction. Thus Mr. White's book bears testimony that some communities are generous and free from bias.

BUT IT SHOULD always be remembered that the Johnstons are very light-colored, and therefore "easy to take." Their attitude, one of pride in the Negro race, is to be commended.—H. H.



FIVE-INCH BOOKSHELF—This set of 12 miniature volumes with its colorful little bookshelf is "Tiny Animal Stories," by Dorothy Kunhardt, first of a new Simon & Schuster children's series called the Tiny Golden Library. Each little book has stories of different animals with illustrations by Garth Williams (\$1 the set).

Max Eastman's Autobiography Is a Frank Account of the Harm Virtue Can Do

"ENJOYMENT OF LIVING." An autobiography. By Max Eastman. New York, Harper, \$5.

By HENRY BUTLER
MAX EASTMAN'S autobiography, "Enjoyment of Living," is one of the frankest recent accounts of the harm virtue can do.

That statement is not a perverse paradox. Both Mr. Eastman's parents—his preacher-father, Samuel, and his mother, Annis Ford Eastman, probably the most eminent woman preacher of her generation—were distinguished for high moral principles, active conscience, both personal and social, and genuine kindness.

MAX'S MOTHER, far more gifted and imaginative than her husband, particularly exemplified the best liberal-Christian tradition of her time. And yet her life, and by subtle influence her son's life, both were somehow blighted by the very moral earnestness which 40 or 50 years ago was supposed to make people not only good but happy.

In such forceful and successful books as "The Literary Mind" and "Enjoyment of Laughter," Mr. Eastman impressed me as a vigorous personality—sensitive, no doubt, but not neurotic. Now comes his autobiography with a confession as candid as Rousseau's of personality difficulties.

Mr. Eastman's trouble in adolescence and young manhood was the familiar conflict between normal attractions and puritanical inhibitions. Despite all the loud frankness of recent decades, the conflict still persists and psychic trials make a good living from it.

WE MAY HAVE to wait for the second installment of the Kinsey Report to find out with some accuracy what the ideal of saintly purity has done to American womanhood. Writers like Philip Wylie and more recently Geoffrey Gorer ("The American People," Norton, \$3) have attacked that ideal as gravely harmful.

It seems to have made Max Eastman's mother unhappy. Marriage and the facts of life seem somehow to have given her a profound shock from which she never fully recovered. She felt guilty. She felt that she had failed her husband, and tried to compensate for her sense of failure by being tenderly, passionately devoted to her four children.

When her eldest son died in childhood, she found some comfort for her anguish in turning to Max for understanding. The mother-son relationship grew closer with the years, not without conflict and sometimes cruel revolt on Max's side.

AS A WILLIAMS COLLEGE undergraduate, Max began to feel keenly the frustration of being attracted by girls and simultaneously assailed by guilt and a sense of inadequacy. After one especially thwarting romance, he developed an obscure back pain which defied all medical "new thought" and psychiatric prescription for years. He could play tennis, he could swim and dive like a fiend, but he couldn't get through a day without physical suffering and need for rest.

Neurotic semi-invalidism did not interfere too much with achievement, however. His literary activity, starting with the college magazine, expanded into lecturing, especially when he grew interested in the then radical cause of woman suffrage. For some years subsequently, he padded an otherwise inadequate income as teacher and writer by traveling as propagandist speaker.

Mr. Eastman's account of his early years in New York revives a long-forgotten spaciousness and hopefulness of outlook among intellectuals of the pre-World War I period. That was the "muck-raking" era described in Lincoln Steffens' autobiography. It was a time not yet blighted by the two wars which have made nations fear-ridden and bent on mutual destruction.

The chronicle of "Enjoyment of Living," ends in 1917, in Mr. Eastman's 33rd year, following the gradual collapse of his unfortunate marriage and his finding a new love.

It's a personal rather than a mainly literary chronicle, although Mr. Eastman includes a good bit of material on his work as editor of the Masses, a pre-World War I radical magazine not to be confused with the more recent Stalinist New Masses.

I think other readers will agree that Mr. Eastman should bring his story up to date in another volume. Now that the personal difficulties have been described at length, there should be a book about the further development of his ideas, particularly during the past 30 years.



CANDID—Max Eastman, whose autobiography, "The Enjoyment of Living," is a candid account of his first 33 years.

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NO TRAGEDY—'Pilgrim's Inn' Has Unusual Happy Ending

"PILGRIM'S INN." A novel. By Elizabeth Goudge. New York, Coward-McCann, \$3.

THERE WAS a time when the happy ending was so overworked in all kinds of stories that novelists tried hard to avoid it. They turned to violence, bitterness, crime and succeeded so well that a strange phenomenon must be recorded this day of 1948. The happy ending is news.

Without giving away any plot I may say that the happy ending is a welcome visitor to the book world, appearing in Elizabeth Goudge's new story, "Pilgrim's Inn." Miss Goudge is the English author who won the first MGM capital prize of \$125,000 plus, and who invariably starts a run on lending libraries when she publishes a new book.

SO IF YOU ENJOY READING a novel that recognizes the milk of human kindness as an article of nutrition, here's your order. "I am not a serious chronicler of the very terrible contemporary scene, but just a story-teller," says Miss Goudge. "There is so much tragedy about us everywhere today that we surely don't want it in the story books to which we turn when we are ill, or unhappy, or can't go to sleep at night."

I can hear Arthur Koestler exclaim: "Escapist!" And toss his cigarette aside. The escapist novel is not beloved by those who tackle the woes of the world and the individual fiction. That's all right in its place; it just happens that today's prescription is escapist—and soothing. I suspect many readers will welcome it.

MISS GOUDGE'S CHARACTERS have their failings, too; they have tempers and misgivings and temptations. But they also have love of kin, respect for the claims of close association and gentleness in their dealings with one another.

In "Pilgrim's Inn," the general, George Eliot, who isn't quite sure that he can make his wife contented and happy, comes across an old house that was once a house of God, or inn on the pilgrim road. His youngsters are enthusiastic about it and he proposes to buy it and live in it. His wife, Nadine, who had had what might be called an aberration for cousin David Eliot, a young actor, agrees, and the Eliots take over. The inn was called Herb of Grace.

JOHN ADAIR, the portrait painter, who also has taken a great liking to Nadine, comes with his daughter Sally to live at the inn. Sally is a lively, attractive girl who has been alternately a shepherdess in the Cumberland and caretaker of her father's Chelsea flat. Present are a number of other interesting characters: Lucilla, the matriarch, now 86; Hilary, her eldest son, aged 66, and the five children of the general's, including Ben, an artistic lad of 15 who appeals mightily to John Adair.

With such a family group to write about, Miss Goudge quickly intertwines their fortunes with life in the inn, which gradually casts its spell upon its inmates. The spell is not sinister, but friendly. Two characters have known violence in the past, and suffered for it, but their feet are on the path to health. With this hint as a guide, you may explore the book to your own satisfaction. Those who need a heady draught of the wine of bitterness, may ignore it. Those who want the warmth of friendship may drive in.



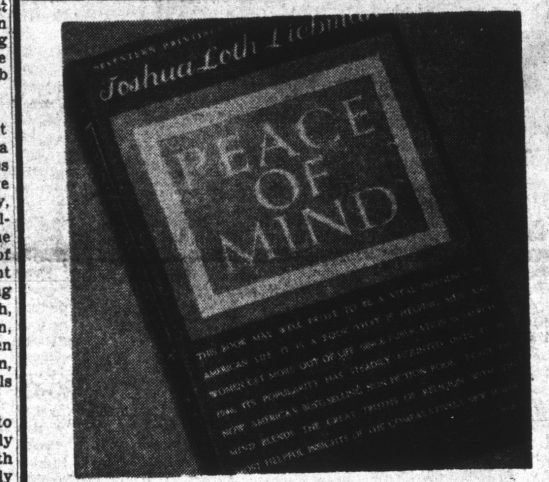
"CAREFUL, GRANDMA!"—With the caption: "Careful, Grandma, that's the first step toward fascism," this is one of the drawings reproduced in April Omnibook's condensation of Bill Mauldin's "Back Home." Other condensations in the same issue include: "Red Plush," by Guy McCrone; "The Proper Bostonians," by Cleveland Amory, and "Jim Farley's Story," by James A. Farley.

'Zulu Woman' to Be Published Apr. 30

Columbia University Press announces that "Zulu Woman," by Rebecca Hourwich Reyher, will be published Apr. 30.

The book is described as the "story of a modern woman's rebellion against polygamy." It concerns Christina, a missionary daughter, who became the first wife of King Solomon of the Zulus, who subsequently married 64 other wives.

Christina was the first Zulu woman to obtain a divorce. Miss Reyher's book, based on the story she got in 1935 in Africa from Christina herself, through interpreters, deals with the problem of a woman's feelings under a primitive polygamous system, according to the publisher.



The soaring popularity of this book by a famous minister, Joshua Losh Liebman, attests its great helpfulness in these troubled times. May it bring you serenity.

Block's Bookshop, South Mezzanine

Tells Story of Star Pitcher

"WALTER JOHNSON: KING OF THE PITCHERS." By Roger L. Treat. New York, Messner, \$2.75.

By FRANK WILSON
IN HIS FIRST BOOK, Roger Treat, sports writer for the Chicago Herald American, sketches a warm, human picture of Walter Perry Johnson, often called the greatest pitcher in the history of baseball.

I say sketches because Treat does not delve into the artful drawing of a solid picture of the career of "The Big Train." Rather, he shows the lovable farm boy from Kansas who came from the obscurity of the fun-loving sandlot game to the greatness of baseball's Hall of Fame. He gives the impression that Johnson was always nothing but a big carefree kid.

Johnson's speed as a pitcher won him the admiration of a nation of sports lovers in the early days of the 20th century. His record of 21 years as an active pitcher for the Washington Senators is tops. During that time he won 414 games in 802 times out. These two accomplishments are also major league records. And the list of his accomplishments goes on and on.

TREAT KNOWS his subject because he has lived with him. As the book jacket states: "He has known Walter Johnson all his life and has a deep and sincere appreciation of the man." But his treatment is unusual for the type of story expected. The entire thing is more of a character study, or analysis, of the man. Don't misunderstand. The book is baseball from cover to cover. But it is a look at the other side of baseball. It is a look at the human side of one of the game's immortals.

'Foolish Gentlewoman' Book-of-the-Month Pick

A new novel by Margery Sharp, "The Foolish Gentlewoman" (Little, Brown), has been chosen as the June selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club.

It is described as "the story of what happens one summer to an oddly assorted, but perfectly normal, group of modern English people."



OF SEATTLE—Mary Brinker Post, whose new novel, "Annie Jordan," is a story of the turbulent, reckless days of early Seattle (Doubleday, \$2.50).

Book Due Out On Kinsey Report

Protestant, Catholic and Jewish authorities will comment on the religious implications of the Kinsey Report in a symposium on the report to be published by Prentice-Hall next month.

Under the title "Sex Habits of American Men," the forthcoming book will present views of Dr. Seward Hiltner, executive secretary of the Department of Pastoral Service, Federal Council of Churches, representing Protestant thought; Dr. Charles Wilber, professor of physiology at Fordham University, representing the Catholic, and Dr. Louis I. Newman, rabbi of New York's Temple Rodeph Shalom, representing the Jewish view.

Mencken's Final Book In Series Due Apr. 5

The final volume in H. L. Mencken's "The American Language" series, to be called "Supplement Two: The American Language," will be published Monday by Knopf.

The forthcoming book covers American spelling and pronunciation, the vulgar speech, proper names, both personal and geographical and slang, embodying new material gathered by Mr. Mencken since 1936, according to the publisher.



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16 Work unit	6 Platform
18 Behold!	7 On time (ab.)
20 Knock	8 Bamboo like grass
22 Doctor of Holy Scripture (ab.)	9 Ship's record
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26 Winkling part	11 British account money
25 Among	17 Universal language
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37 Love god	
38 Social insect	
40 Either	
42 Chum	
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