

SOMETHING TO READ

Edna B. Woods  
Ass't Circulation Librarian

Great Story-Tellers of France

The gradual emergence of France from the Nazi darkness reminds us of the great part she played for so long in the civilizing, more especially in the civilized entertaining of the world. The French have always excelled everybody else in the arts of intelligent amusement. And of course, since good fiction is the greatest source of intelligent amusement, the French have produced some of the best of all novelists.

Not the least amusing, and certainly not the least intelligent of French novels is *Candide*, written in the 18th Century by Voltaire. *Candide* is a witty and somewhat wicked attack on that exasperating type (whom we have with us today, in large numbers) the beaming optimist. The young hero of this little tale is conducted through Europe by his cheery tutor, Dr. Pangloss, who has undertaken to prove to his pupil that "everything is for the best in the best of all worlds." Slaughter, earthquakes, and pestilences are mere grist to the Doctor's optimistic mill. He interprets them all as blessings in disguise. (By the way, haven't you met Dr. Pangloss a good many times?)

Balzac wrote the first "hard-boiled" modern novels. At a time when the English-speaking world was devouring the plumed romances of Scott and the sentimentality of Dickens, the French were watching Balzac take apart human nature and human society and show what makes them tick. And how dramatically he does it! Old Goriot contains some of the meanest women since the wicked daughters of King Lear. Eugenie Grandet, on the other hand, depicts the indestructibly beautiful elements of woman's nature. The Wild Ass's Skin is the grimly fantastic tale of the inevitable progress of self-indulgence. If you want to understand human nature, you can't afford to read less than three of Balzac's novels.

Everybody knows about Victor Hugo's vast romance, *Les Miserables*, probably one of the three best-loved stories in world litera-

Exes Are Awarded Military Honors

Three Ex-Students of A. and M. have recently won honors in military efforts.

First Lieutenant Wilson B. Buster '40, son of Mr. and Mrs. W. B. Buster, Junction, Texas, has completed his bombardier training at the Army Air Forces Training Command's school at Carlsbad Army Air Field, New Mexico. Lt. Buster now becomes one of the Army Air Forces new "triple-threat men"—air men who have completed instruction in dead-reckoning navigation and aerial gunnery in addition to the regular bombardiering course.

Jack G. Morgan, '45, son of Mrs. Standlee D. Roberts, Denton, Texas, was given a commission in the same class at Carlsbad.

At Matagorda Peninsula, Texas, in the class studying the science of deflection gunnery, was First Lt. Delphon C. Kenney '44, son of Mr. and Mrs. Gaylord Kenney of Harlingen, Texas. The class includes fighter pilots gathered largely from the world's battlefronts, and are men who are now being trained to become instructors. Lt. Kenney has flown 42 missions in Tunisia and Italy and was once shot down by enemy fire. He holds the Purple Heart with one Oak Leaf Cluster and the Air Medal with seven clusters.

ture. But perhaps you haven't read his *Toilers of the Sea*, the most thrilling of all man-versus-nature dramas, or *Ninety-Three*, which in my opinion beats even *A Tale of Two Cities* as a novel of the French Revolution.

Of course, also, everybody knows *The Three Musketeers* of Dumas, and nearly everybody has read (or seen) his *Count of Monte Cristo*. But have you followed D'Artagnan, Athos, Porthos, and Aramis through their other stories. The *Queen's Necklace*, for example, and

Twenty Years After? These are wonderful yarns too.

Paul Muni introduced thousands of movie-goers to Emile Zola, who spent his life in catching smug novel-readers by the scruff of their necks and rubbing their noses in the grim realities of the lives of the great miserable majority of human beings. *Germinal*, *The Abyss*, *Nana*, forced respectable people like ourselves to admit that their respectability existed at the price of the degradation of millions. (It still does, look, and not only east of the Atlantic!)

These are a few of the classics among French story-tellers. I have no room even to mention the short stories of Maupassant and Merimee or the novels of Flaubert, Marcel Proust, Romain Rolland, Andre Malraux, Antonie de Saint-Exupery and their modern associates.

Try French fiction, if you don't know it already. The Library has a fair collection of translations in the Browsing Room including those just mentioned.

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—AIRCRAFT—  
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vised. Smith, a former student of Sam Houston State Teachers College and a graduate of the Curtiss-

Wright Technical Institute of Aeronautics, has had wide experience as supervisor of mechanics and maintenance at several Army and civilian airfields.

There will be no tuition fee, but students will be required to furnish their own books. Board and lodging can be furnished by the College at a nominal charge.

Early phases of the course will be given in A. & M.'s well-equipped Aeronautical Engineering laboratory. There will be practical but highly skilled work on engines and aircraft, using new type engines running from 65 horsepower to twin-row 2,000 horsepower, Instructor Smith said. Some of the

later courses will be given at the College Airport.

While work in any of the 12 subjects included will be valuable to the student, it was explained that satisfactory completion of the entire course will be necessary to qualify for a CAA license examination.

Trainees must be American citizens, 16 years of age or older, and preferably have had at least three years of high school education, Dean Barlow concluded.

Registrants will report to Room 106, Mechanical Engineering Shops Building for assignment.

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