

GOOD READING FOR SPRING

SR's Seasonal Book Poll



IF SOMEONE whose literary tastes are discriminating asked you to name half a dozen "good new books" that they would enjoy reading this spring what would be your answer? We asked this question of twenty-nine book editors of leading newspapers from coast to coast. They had suggestions—a total of eighty-two, to be exact. Thirty-one turned out to be fiction and fifty-one general.

Although there is no particular virtue in numbers, it is always interesting to see which books the editors name most frequently. Seven stand out from the crowd:

"A History of the English Speaking People: The Birth of Britain," by Winston S. Churchill, eighteen votes.

"The Quiet American," by Graham Greene, twelve votes.

"Years of Trial and Hope," by Harry S. Truman, eight votes.

"The Last Hurrah," by Edwin O'Connor, eight votes.

"Imperial Woman," by Pearl S. Buck, seven votes.

"The Mandarins," by Simone de Beauvoir, seven votes.

"The Power Elite," by C. Wright Mills, five votes.

In the hope that you will find the editors' suggestions useful as a guide to your own reading we list all the books nominated below. As in the past, we are greatly indebted to Marianne Gutman for assistance in compiling the list and to John Haverstick for help with the annotations. The names in the brackets following each annotation are those of the twenty-nine book editors who made the nominations.

—RAYMOND WALTERS, JR.

Fiction

TWELVE VOTES

THE QUIET AMERICAN. By Graham Greene. Viking Press. \$3.50.
Mr. Greene's novel of a light-stepping Amer-

ican in Saigon (and of love, intrigue, and contemporary world politics) has been criticized for its characterization of America, but it is nonetheless an excellent novel as Mr. Greene has done in the past decade. (Bradley, Dolbier, Emmart, Flowers, Hogan, Kogan, Little, Rothermel, Thomas B. Sherman, Snajdr, Tinkle, Yeiser.)

EIGHT VOTES

THE LAST HURRAH. By Edwin O'Connor.

Little, Brown. \$4.
The best-selling novel of Irish-Americans (and their politics) which has won the Atlantic Monthly Press Prize, become a Book-of-the-Month Club selection, and achieved several other literary distinctions too numerous to be listed here. (Bond, Cross, Douglas, Hormel, Little, McAlister, Molyneaux, O'Neill.)

SEVEN VOTES

IMPERIAL WOMAN. By Pearl S. Buck. John Day. \$4.95.

The life story of the Empress Dowager Tzu Hsi, who was largely responsible for the Boxer Rebellion, of her rise to the throne from third-rank concubine, and of other interesting matters concerning Tzu Hsi's life as remembered and fictionalized by a Nobel Prizewinning novelist who was born in China sometime around the era of Tzu Hsi. (Babcock, Bradley, Douglas, Flowers, Rothermel, John K. Sherman, Smith.)

THE MANDARINS. By Simone de Beauvoir. Translated by Leonard M. Friedman. World Publishing Co. \$6.

Postwar love and ideas in a postwar Left Bank Parisian apartment. A novel which won the Prix Goncourt when it first appeared in France. (Barkham, Cross, Dolbier, Hass, Kogan, John K. Sherman, Tinkle.)

FOUR VOTES

BANG THE DRUM SLOWLY. By Mark Harris. Alfred A. Knopf. \$3.50.

A novel about baseball, lifted to first-class literature by a life-and-death theme. By the author of "The Southpaw." (Cady, McManis, Thomas B. Sherman, Yeiser.)

THREE VOTES

THE HORSE SOLDIERS. By Harold Sinclair. Harper & Bros. \$3.95.

About the unwitting heroes who as members of Grierson's cavalry cut a swath across Mississippi during the Civil War. (Cady, Cross, Hass.)

THE SHADOW OF MY HAND. By Holger Cahill. Harcourt, Brace. \$4.95.

This one is about a young man in search of his soul who, among other affairs, has several brushes with a wheat farmer who is running for Congress (on the Republican ticket) and several interesting sexual experiences and/or conversations with the wheat farmer's sister. (Little, Smith, Snajdr.)

TWO VOTES

H. M. S. ULYSSES. By Alistair MacLean. Doubleday. \$3.95.

The story of what happened when the crew

of a British light cruiser that had mutinied during wartime in frigid Arctic waters was ordered back into dangerous convoy service. (Hogan, McManis.)

HARRY OF MONMOUTH. By A. M. Maughan. William Sloane. \$4.50.

A story of Henry V as riotous and dissolute prince and as admirable king of England.—all of it differing, however, from one William Shakespeare's interpretation of the same fellow. (Bond, Cady.)

THE MALEFACTORS. By Caroline Gordon. Harcourt, Brace. \$3.95.

A frightening little tale of the sufferings of a frustrated poet (who says, "I've been dead myself for seven years"), of his wife (who turns her attentions to animal husbandry), and of their assorted friends (several religious fanatics and several homosexuals), and, of course, of the tangle that finally results when most of these meet on a Pennsylvania farm. (John K. Sherman, Yeiser.)

MR. HAMISH GLEAVE. By Richard Llewellyn. Doubleday. \$3.95.

All about the Burgess-MacLean case (the one which involved the two British Foreign Office men who deserted to Communism in 1951) as fictionalized by the author of the once best-selling "How Green Was My Valley." (Thomas B. Sherman, Yeiser.)

A PERFECT WOMAN. By L. P. Hartley. Alfred A. Knopf. \$3.95.

An ironic tale of restiveness simmering beneath apparently composed middle-class English life. (Emmart, Wyllie.)

A SINGLE PEBBLE. By John Hersey. Alfred A. Knopf. \$3.

All about some Americans who went dam-building in China (and about the Chinese whom they met while dam-building). A new novel by the author of "Hiroshima," "The Wall," and "A Bell for Adano." (Bond, Flowers.)

SOME INNER FURY. By Kamala Marikandaya. John Day. \$3.50.

The growth and flowering of a young girl who, leaving the confines of her traditional family in India, encounters the larger world of love and experience in England. (Little, Molyneaux.)

A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE. By Nelson Algren. Farrar, Straus & Cudahy. \$4.50

Pimps, panderers, and whorehouses in New Orleans, all done up nicely by the author of the best-selling "The Man With the Golden Arm." (Bradley, Kogan.)

ONE VOTE

THE ABODE OF LOVE. By Aubrey Menen. Charles Scribner's Sons. \$3.50.

Or "Life in an English Harem," being the strange tale of a highly unusual Victorian clergyman who was un-Victorian enough to maintain an Oriental harem quite publicly on the southern coast of Victorian England. (Barkham.)

THE ACCEPTANCE WORLD. By Anthony Powell. Farrar, Straus & Cudahy. \$3.50.

The ins and outs of those posh-and-poor
(Continued on page 61)

The Mold of a Statesman

"Savrola," by Winston Churchill (Random House. 241 pp. \$3.50), the only novel written by the great British Prime Minister, first issued in England sixty years ago, foretold its author's glorious political destiny.

By Ben Ray Redman

IN THE year 1826 a young man of twenty-two who was destined to be one of his country's most distinguished prime ministers published the first of his many novels. In the year 1897 a young man of twenty-three who was destined to be one of his country's most distinguished prime ministers published his one and only novel. Neither "Vivian Grey," by Benjamin Disraeli, nor "Savrola," by Winston Churchill, can have had many readers in recent years, but the second is almost certain to be read widely now that it has been reissued, and both these novels have a strong claim upon our interest for other than literary reasons. It has long been a commonplace that Disraeli's novels



—The Old Print Seller Collection.

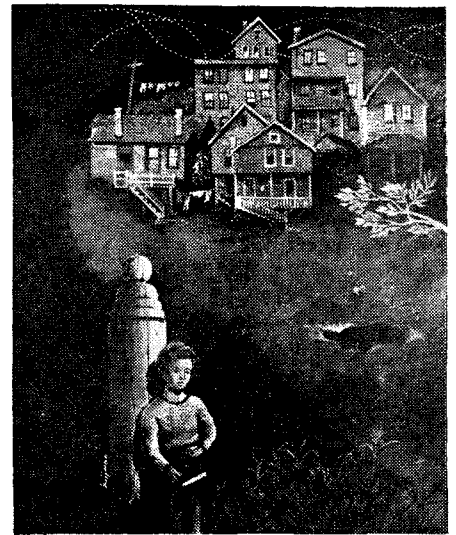
Sir Winston in 1900—"prophecy."

form a kind of serial autobiography in which his ideas, ideals, and ambitions stand revealed; and now that "Savrola" is in print again it should be plain that this tale of an imaginary country, written by an officer of Her Majesty's IV Hussars who was soon to enter Parliament, has a good deal to tell us about the ideas, ideals, and ambitions of its author.

When we read the novel today it is not the rather simple story of a dictator's defeat by revolutionary forces that holds us, nor is it the chaste and somewhat stilted love story of Savrola and the dictator's wife. It is the character of Savrola himself that fascinates us, for we realize that in creating the great republican of Laurania young Churchill was depicting his ideal hero, that he was putting into words the kind of man he wished to be—that he was, perhaps, determined to become.

Savrola was a born leader and swayer of men, at once a sagacious statesman and a cunning politician, wise in council, calm in crisis, brave in action. "His very presence imparted a feeling of confidence to his followers." He might dream of living the life of an artist, but he knew that for him "ambition was the motive force, and he was powerless to resist it." The furnishings of his room were those of a man "who appreciated all earthly pleasures, appraised them at their proper worth, enjoyed, and despised them." Eager as he was for all that life could give, he was still a philosopher who could contemplate the end of the solar system with composure.

But this hero's greatest gift, perhaps, is that of oratory, and it is when we read young Churchill's description of Savrola's reveling in the composition of a speech that we are most keenly aware that we are reading prophecy as well as fiction. "These impromptu feats of oratory," reflected Savrola as he planned to move a multitude, "existed only in the minds of the listeners; the flowers of rhetoric were hothouse plants." We watch him as he calculates how best to force and cultivate these flowers, exclaiming to himself: "What a game!" And, as we watch, the young Lauranian leader fades from sight and the familiar figure of the great Prime Minister looms before our eyes.



—Jacket for "Wine for the Living."

"... Armenians seen from the inside."

Displaced Persons

"Wine for the Living," by Richard Hagopian (Charles Scribner's Sons. 307 pp. \$3.95), is a novel about Armenians living near Boston, their hopes and their disillusiones.

By Thomas Gallagher

RICHARD HAGOPIAN's novel, "Wine for the Living," is an insistently honest and therefore not a Saroyanesque book about an Armenian family living in the outskirts of Boston. Poignancy, tenderness, and humor are here, but no foolishness and no unfounded affirmation. Its immigrants, the Armenians seen from the inside, the Italians from the outside, are those tardy spirits who sink their roots in the flatlands around our Eastern cities and whose drab alarm-clock lives are like bleats that it is better never than this late. Living in the shadow of Boston but at once bereft of America's transcendental meanings and failures at making lots of money, they seem to be forever asking themselves the question "Where did it all go?" For, unlike Sherwood Anderson's Midwesterners, they have not forgotten the beauty laboriously built up in Europe. They cannot afford to forget it and, indeed, are not encouraged to in a country where corporations now spend millions on "motivational research" to find out what makes the buying heart of America tick, where defunct theatre marquees proclaim sales on pork, and where the only pioneering goad is upward to executive suite.

It is the ferment in the hearts of neither-nor immigrants, the "Wine"