

# Esther Gould's Book Corner

Are you interested in books of Fiction, Biography, Travel, or History? For lists write to ESTHER GOULD, c/o The Lake Forester

### JUST PARAGRAPHS

After a fall season of unprecedented activity when even Chicago bought twenty per cent more books than last year, so far forgetting itself as to triple its demand for poetry the publishers are opening the spring publishing season. From now on until the first of July there will be a stream of books of varying degrees of importance—the first of July sees the opening of the fall season.

A great deal of literature is gathered together when Rebecca West is visiting, as she is, Gladys B. Stern in the house described by the latter in "Thunderstorm."

Hans Coulenhoy is dead. Dying, as he lived, alone in his camp in the heart of Africa with only his black boys, whom he describes in his recent "My African Neighbors," about him. He asked to be buried there where he had lived so long and with such happiness.

### PENNELL—ARTIST AND MAN

#### "THE ADVENTURES OF AN ILLUSTRATOR"

By Joseph Pennell Little Brown & Co.

Joseph Pennell is an illustrator. Which makes it natural that the illustrations in this exquisitely made book are a truer account of his adventures than the story which he tells. They speak eloquently of the delight of seeing beautiful things, of spending one's life traveling among them and of being able as no ordinary mortal is able, to catch them and make them secure.

The text of the book records the other, the human side of Mr. Pennell's life which meant so much less and was so much less important to himself and to the world than his artist's life. He is a person who felt a joy of living which he could not translate into human living. It makes him bitter about people, about the fact that he was not recognized as the artist whom he could express only through his art, instead of the man whom he expressed in his living. He said of an early friend of whom he lost all trace when he was about fifteen years old, "I never had another real friend. Do they exist?"

The adventures of this man, then, are a twofold thing which the reader blends in his mind to make the whole as a tune and its accompaniment blend in one's ears. There are stories, endless stories of people most of whom Mr. Pennell did not like or who did not like him, or both; endless stories of another world which we are often reminded has passed away, ruined by the war. A world in which people had time to live and to enjoy beautiful things and to go to beautiful places in some way other than in a motor which Mr. Pennell says allows one to see no more than "riding in a freight car." Walking or cycling: Mr. and Mrs. Pennell, the latter of whom we have but fleeting pictures, move through a world which should have been gloriously happy, and was to the artist but not to the man. Everything new is reviled by Mr. Pennell, most of all the American business men, American ideals of art and prohibition. And when the artist in him has won so far as to praise anything—the man hastily qualifies it. As a legend under a picture, "One of the little unspoiled villages of the upper Saone, probably destroyed during the war, if rebuilt, utter ruined."

But the book is a wonderful record with its hundred beautiful illustrations, of early American art, of the growth of the art of illustration, of American and Europe during the last of the nineteenth century. And sometimes, as here, even in the text the artist with his fine perception of life

peeps through: In Venice, "All those hot afternoons after lunch we loafed in the Piazza and had our coffee till it cooled off, till the shadows crept across the pavement and up the church where the flags flew and the mosaics glittered in the setting sun—and those hot evenings, too, every evening, for the Piazza in summer was a great salon, a great drawing room, and everyone went there save the tourists who think they do and the Americans, like Crawford, who are superior to it," and the man has shouldered the artists back in his place.

### THE FACE THAT LAUNCHED "THE PRIVATE LIFE OF HELEN OF TROY"

By John Erskine Bobbs Merrill Co.

"The Private Life of Helen of Troy" is a delicious experiment in disproportion. Or it is a proof that, accepting their initial premise, all lives can be understood logically.

Mr. Erskine has taken Helen of Troy a woman known to us mainly in her spectacular aspects, as one whose face "launched a thousand ships," and shown us Helen of Troy at home.

The story opens as Helen, and her long suffering husband reach one more their deserted hearth. After twenty years there are naturally a number of delicate adjustments which must be made. Nor are their troubles entirely over, either, since their brother, Agamemnon has yet to be killed by his faithless wife whose son in turn slays her, and then marries Helen's daughter. Those little events treated in a modern manner by more than usually intelligent and sophisticated minds gives a situation which is bristling with the ridiculous.

Mr. Erskine has chosen the unusual method of using conversation entirely, so we have nothing but the swift duelling of mind with mind.

Accepting Helen's first premise or theory of self-development, we find her the most tolerant, intelligent, sympathetic character in the book. Things usually thought of as common sense or ordinary respectability suddenly become narrow priggishness. Defending quite a usual sense of propriety Orestes says, "I agreed with her entirely. There are limits to broadmindedness." "I have always found that there were," said Helen. And immediately we realize that there are not.

It is in this standing on its head of our ordinary conventional thinking and making you think for your self. And it has a great deal of value, to say nothing of the exquisite enjoyment to be had from its keen irony.

500 a day is the rate at which lovers of humor are buying GENTLEMEN PREFER BLONDS By ANITA LOOS The best book of humor in years 7th large edition \$1.75 Boni & Liveright N. Y.

Just Published the first novel in three years by the author of IF WINTER COMES ONE INCREASING PURPOSE by A.S.M. HUTCHINSON Little, Brown & Company Publishers, Boston

### LENIN LAND NAME FOR RUSS ISLAND

FIRST NAMED FOR CZAR

### Body of Land Surrounded by Ice Most of Year and Where Ivory Is Mined; Meet 50,000 Years Old

Lenin Land is Russia's new name for Nikolai Second Island, one of Russia's Arctic islands north of Siberia and is thus described by a bulletin of the National Geography Society.

If one disregards the bits of land close to the Siberian shore which may be considered practically a part of the mainland, the "Arctic Islands north of Siberia" might be grouped into Wrangel Island, near Bering Strait, the new Siberia group, a few scattered unimportant islets northeast of New Siberia and east of Wrangel and the island which has the new name, lying northeast of the northernmost point of Siberia.

One can not be too dogmatic about Siberian Islands, however, for the dramatic discovery of former Nikolai Second Land, ten times the size of Long Island and only 60 miles off shore, occurred as recently as October, 1913. The "Northeast Passage" had been navigated through this 60 mile strait and several other ships had sailed through without the explorers gaining any idea of the existence of the land. It is a rugged, icy region with evidences of volcanic origin.

#### Where Ivory Is Mined

It is necessary to throw overboard numerous opinions and definitions in dealing with the islands north of Siberia. "A body of land entirely surrounded by water" does not quite fit these islands. They are bodies of land almost continually surrounded by ice. The only practical means of transportation for hunters and trappers between them and the mainland, in fact, is sleds drawn by dog teams. The New Siberia Islands, largest group north of Siberia, lying 50 miles off shore, were discovered in 1770 because a hunter saw a huge herd of deer walking on the ice out of the northern sea, and had curiosity enough to trace their tracks backward.

One must also put aside the idea that only minerals are mined. Ivory from the tusks of thousands of mam-

moths that perished in former geologic times is dug by the ton from the ground of the New Siberia group. With the ivory are other mammoth bones together with those of musk oxen, other species of ox, deer and primitive horses. So numerous are these deposits that one writer has said that "the whole soil seems to consist of bones." Fossilized trees also exist on the New Siberia Islands, showing that in the age of the mammoth, trees grew as far north as the 74th parallel of latitude. The northernmost trees in this part of the world now grow some 400 miles farther south.

#### Meat 50,000 Years Old

Rarely carcasses of mammoths have been found in the ice cliffs of these islands and the neighboring mainland, and native hunters eat the ancient meat—probably 50,000 years old—without any apparent ill effects. The dogs devour this "pre-historic food" with the same avidity that they gulp down fresh killed reindeer meat.

Because of the tragic deaths and dramatic rescues that have taken place on it in recent years, Wrangel Island is doubtless the best known of the Arctic islands north of Siberia. It is about 70 miles long by 28 wide and lies a little more than 100 miles off shore. It is also the nearest of the larger islands to Alaska and has therefore been visited many times by American explorers and whalers. It is believed to have been first sighted

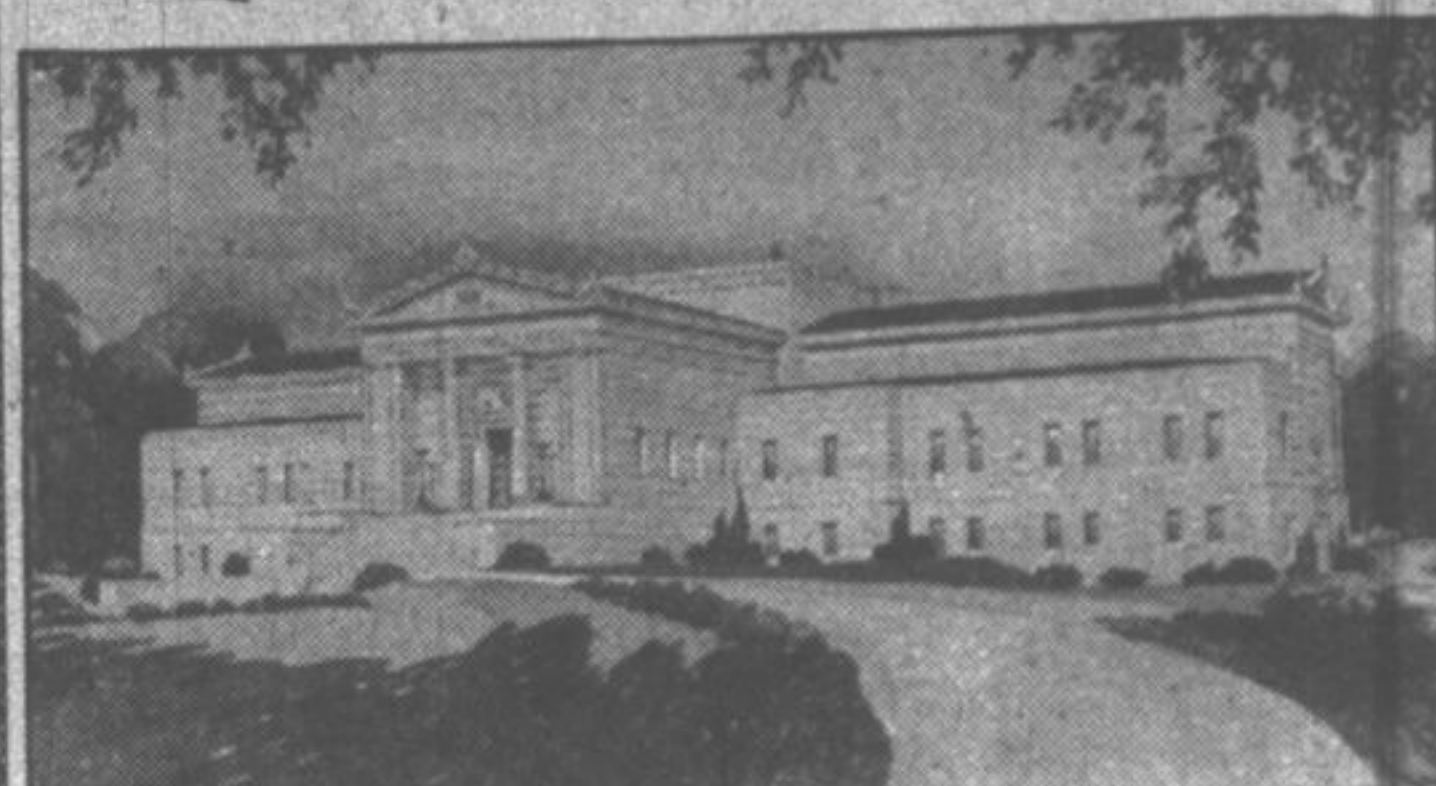
by an American whaler, Long, in 1867. A United States naval officer, De Long, explored it in 1881, proving it to be an island and not a continental land mass, as had been suggested.

#### Hunters Visit Them In Summer

The Arctic Islands north of Siberia have no permanent inhabitants. Foxes and other fur-bearing animals live on them, and almost every season hunters and trappers from the mainland visit them. They cross by sledges in late spring, spend the short summer collecting furs, and return south as

soon as the ice is thick enough. No minerals of value are known to exist on the islands, and, except as sources of fur and ivory, they have no present value. If regular long distance aerial navigation should become practical, however, the short routes of the North Polar regions between Europe, America and Asia would have a strong appeal, and these Arctic Islands would doubtless become valuable as possible air bases.

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