

# Esther Gould's Book Corner

Are You Interested in books of Fiction, Biography, Travel, or History? For lists write to ESTHER GOULD care your local paper.

## A GAY DECEIVER "Thomas the Impostor"

By Jean Cocteau. D. Appleton & Co.

Why do we all love a gallant impostor? Because he treats the world as lightly as we feel it ought to be treated and takes himself as seriously as we know we ought to be taken? Jean Cocteau, who, as he modestly states, "is better known than his writings," has written a delightful and slim book about "Thomas the Impostor." And although it is a tale of the Great War it has atmosphere of ancient days when knights strode about doing impossible things and fact and fancy did not need to cling together as closely as subject and predicate.

Guillaume Thomas, penniless young wanderer from Montmartre, dressed himself in a uniform given him by a friend and journeyed forth into a world which offered him always such a tempting bill of fare that he could not resist the next course. As he strayed into the courtyard of the hospital organized by the Princess de Borne, someone asked him, "Who are you?" "Guillaume Thomas de Fontenoy"—he took the name because it was his birthplace—when they continued, "Related to General de Fontenoy?" he replied instantly, "His nephew." Not because he wished to lie but because he wondered what adventures might befall General de Fontenoy's nephew.

And much does befall him. He becomes the mascot of the ridiculous pilgrimages to the Front for wounded men, his name the magic password by which all calamities are averted. Two charming women fall in love with him, a passion which he can scarcely be expected to return since he is so taken up with living. He comes to know something of the War on its northern front where Germans and French shout friendly warnings back and forth—"the neighborly spirit engendered by a long war" M. Cocteau calls it.

And finally Guillaume Thomas knows the one moment of his life, when on the rocket and shell strewn field reality and fiction become one. The book has in it satire and grace and a delicate something which in people we call "personality."

## POOR STUFF "To Babylon"

By Larry Barretto. Little Brown & Co.

Just a year ago Larry Barretto wrote a good story called "A Conqueror Passes." It was the story of a young man getting out of the Army to return to civilian life and encountering the disappointments and disillusionments which were quite possible in such a situation. The book had a sincerity about it which made quite unnecessary the information on the cover that the author had been in the Army during the full extent of the War and had suffered many vagaries of Fate both before and after. We knew that he had lived through these experiences either in the world or within the covers of his book.

Now Mr. Barretto has brought out another book, "To Babylon," one which he has not lived through. It is as if encouraged by the receptiveness of a kind public he had decided to "become a novelist." Laying in a

## POLA' NEW COIFFURE

Pola Negri has a new coiffure. It is not any one of the numerous bobs which bob in and out of fashion with rapidity bewildering to the male; neither is it any one of the almost forgotten conventional modes which once prevailed.

Pola's new head-dress is Chinese, a style in which the hair is fashioned and then drawn tight so that it seems carved in ebony. The Chinese are noted for the unusual effects which they secure in this respect. Pola's blue-black tresses lend themselves to the smooth perfection of the Oriental style admirably and it is possible that a new vogue may result when her latest starring picture for Paramount, "East of Suez," becomes better known.

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"Thomas the Impostor" by Jean Cocteau.  
"To Babylon" by Larry Barretto.  
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supply of paper and ink he has proceeded to spin a tale which the breath of reality has never touched. Saved by Mr. Barretto's gift for story telling from being actually boring, "To Babylon" is yet extremely obvious.

Anthony Thorne leaves the little Mid Western town of his birth to try his fortune among the towers of the modern Babylon—New York. There he meets the inevitable rich shallow society girl, and inevitably marries her. Inevitably disharmony follows and inevitably the girl from home who has conveniently come to New York brings in the necessary contrast.

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If Mr. Barretto becomes convinced that he isn't "a novelist" he may write some more good stories.

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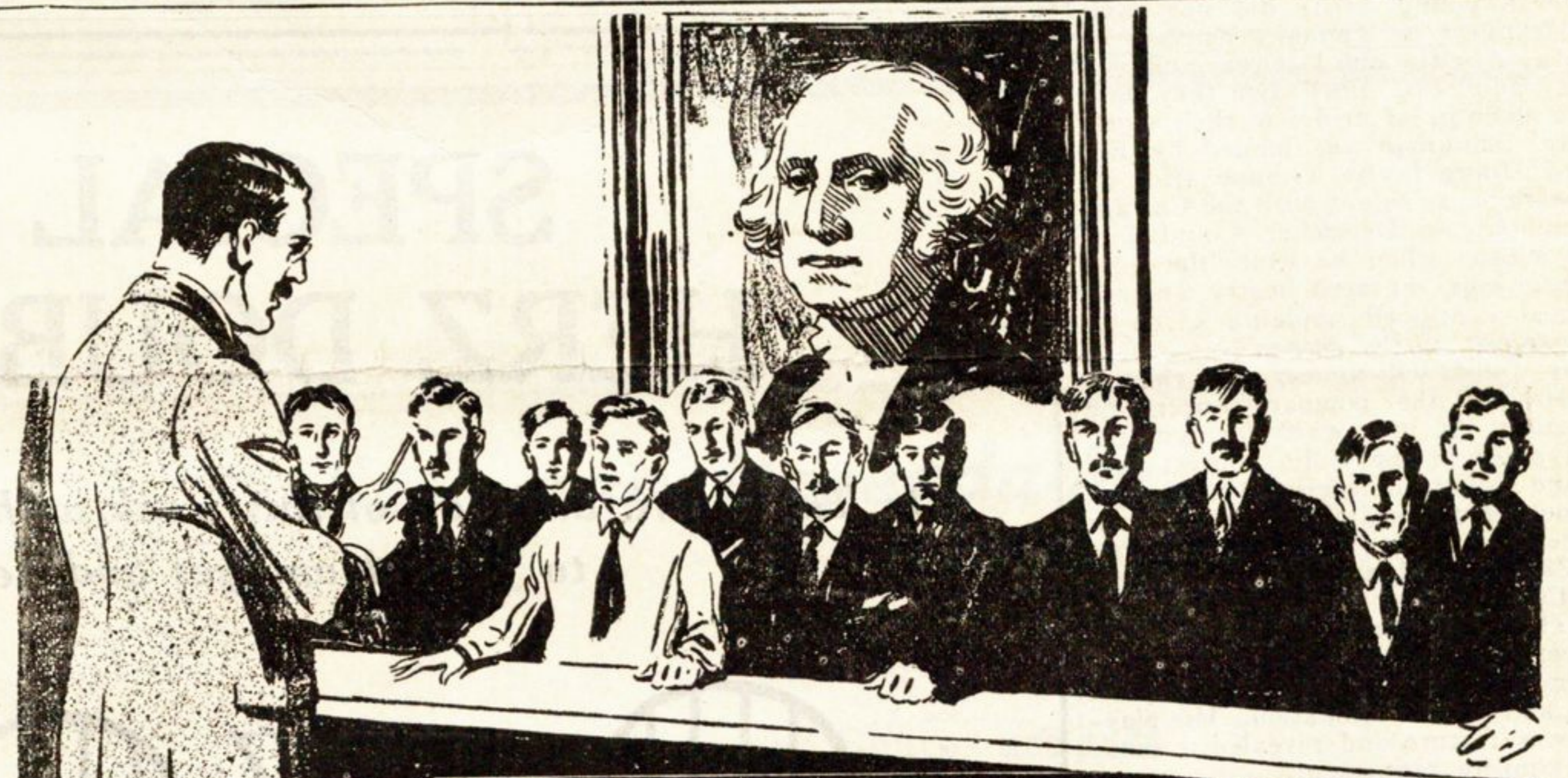
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## NORTH SHORE LINE

# Making Americans

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Where there was once indifference, there is now a determined enthusiasm to know all about this country of adoption, and the policies of the North Shore Line. It has resulted in a greater stabilization among a commonly floating type of labor. Men will study five nights a week, and when sufficiently advanced, draw books from the libraries, usually of the technical variety devoted to the principles of railroad operation. There is the case of one man whose thirst for knowledge led him to study a mail order catalog in his spare time because the pictures helped him with the words.

Men have learned to know American ideals, and comprehend the safety policies of the North Shore Line. Ambitious future citizens have been started on their way to opportunity. It is another phase of what the North Shore Line conceives to be its duty to its employes and its country.

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