

The Dawn of Tomorrow

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BOOK ROOM FOR NEGRO AUTHORS

Once-Hungry Writers Finally Hit Pay Dirt in Publishing Houses

After a long century of frugal, fruitless writing, Negro authors are finally hitting pay dirt. World War II and the heightened concern of America over the race problem has replaced the haggard, hungry look of colored writers with a new-found smile of prosperity. A book boom is here.

Along Book Row in New York's mid-forties, publishers are frantically grabbing at any and all manuscripts which touch on the Negro. Lucrative prize money is held out as bait by several publishers for first rate works by Negroes. At least two or three new titles concerned with the darker brother hit the book stalls each month. The schedule in coming months calls for even more.

In the book stores around the nation, ancient dowagers and giggling stenographers no longer shrink from "race books." They may ask for a price, but they ask, nevertheless.

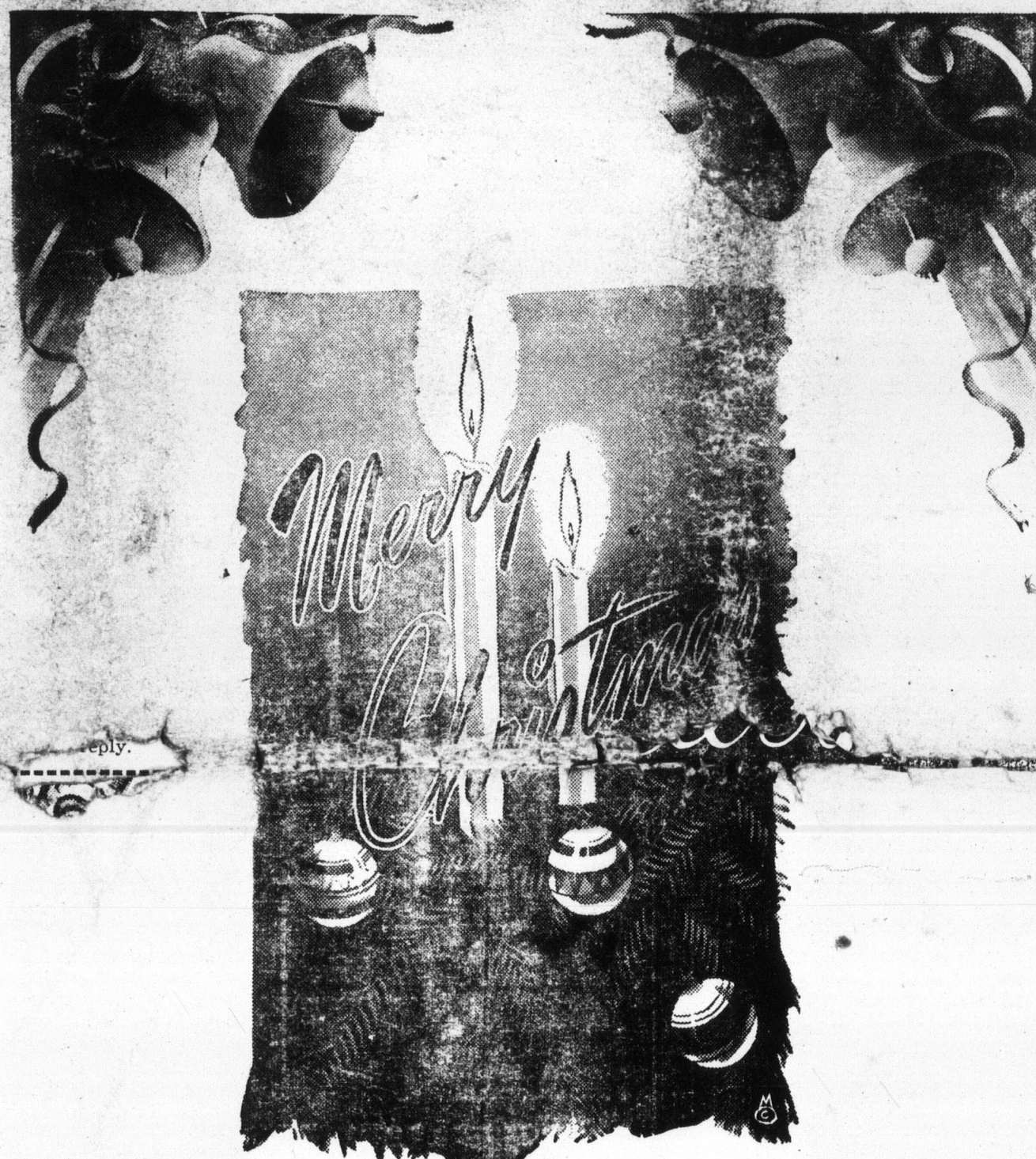
The book clubs are finding novels about Negroes sell well and they vie with each other for first distribution rights. Richard Wright made history in having two successive works, *Native Son* and *Black Boy*, selected by the Book-Of-The-Month Club in little more than five years. Cheap, low cost editions are beginning to clutter up the market. Howard Fast's *Freedom Road* will be published in a \$1 edition.

Beginning to reap a rich harvest of royalties for the first time in history are the dozen or so really top-rank Negro authors who have been struggling in vain for years to crack the best seller class. Dust-covered manuscripts dragged out of forgotten attics have been rushed into print. And many aspiring authors, who had to turn to other fields because of the one-time futility of writing, are returning to their typewriters.

Typical success story of a long-struggling writer is that of Arna Bontemps, a graduate of the Chicago WPA school of literature which also turned out Richard Wright, Margaret Walker, Frank Yerby, Horace Cayton and other well-known writers. Bontemps plodded along for years, wrote three novels, *Drunks At Dusk*, *Black Thunder* and *God Sends Sunday*, all of which just about paid his rent. Finally he forsook writing full time to take a job as librarian at Fisk University. He continued writing there as a sideline.

Now he has suddenly become a very-much-in-demand author. He has two books, *They Seek a City* written with Jack Conroy, and *We Have Tomorrow*, a collection of biographical sketches. A play, *St. Louis Woman*, which has been making the rounds for years, is now set for a Broadway production. Bontemps will not have to worry about feeding his five children for some time to come.

The new-found interest by publishers in Negro books comes after



MAY YOUR CHRISTMAS DAY AND NEW YEAR, TOO, BE ALWAYS AS BRIGHT AND SHINING AS THESE GLEAMING, STAR-DUSTED CANDLES — THAT'S OUR WISH FOR YOU.

CONDESCENDING TO MEN OF LOW ESTATE

The title of this article may be somewhat misleading. I am not on a pedestal. I am not by any means superior to my fellows. In many ways I am their inferior. I would prefer the phrase "associating with men of low estate." No man who knows his own limitations and weaknesses should go "high hat" or assume an air of superiority. Through years of unskilled labor I have developed perhaps to some extent an inferiority complex, but at least because of my experiences I know what it is to have much in common with the underprivileged in the matter of labor, race and color. I do not regret having had these experiences. I know the common person better than as though I had belonged to and always associated with a privileged class. Come to know them the common folk are not as commonplace as some would imagine them to be. Their experiences when you come to hear them related are human and interesting as

I work with a man, a native Spaniard who in better English than some people of English descent use, can tell of life among the poor people of Spain, of experiences in various lines of work in the newer parts of Canada and of his own hard struggle to support a family under trying domestic conditions. I have quite a bit in common with men of German and Italian descent who work in the plant where I am an employee. Here is a suggestion I heard a few days ago which was timely: "Get acquainted with your neighbour or as in this case, your work mate; you may like him." We can easily pass the other fellow by without a friendly nod or word if we so will, but it is better for our sake and his to utter the word of greeting. I have known some Negroes whom I got to think a good deal of. One in particular in Vancouver who stopped his team on the street to congratulate me on the wearing of a police uniform.

The politician at election time knows the game of catering to and endeavouring to win the good will and support of the man on the street but not for ulterior purposes but for the mutual benefit of friendships developed and experience exchanged, should we contact our fellows of the common task and the common way. The Man of Galilee was the best mixer (to use the term in its highest sense) the world has even known. Here was an example that few of us follow but which should move us nevertheless to more closely follow in His steps. He understood men and women and was the soul of kindness, sympathy and love. We may not have his healing power but we may have in a measure, his kindly touch. Let us be a little more approachable, a little more neighbourly, yes a little more loving in our relationship with our fellow men, for "we shall not pass this way again."

MORLEY T. SWART

DEMAND MONEY; KNOCK VICTIM OUT

Brantford, Dec. 7 — Four men who brutally beat two of their victims after invading a Brantford home were sought by police tonight as this city of about 30,000 sprang into the centre of Ontario's continuing crime wave.

The thugs, all wearing masks, forced their way into Alex Mallott's house through the back door last night and tied up the owner and three other men. They took what money the men had on their persons some \$170, and then ransacked the home in search for more.

Demand Hiding Place

Trevor Goold, visiting Mallott, said the men then demanded that the owner tell them where was hidden "or we'll let you have it."

"How could he tell them?" Goold

said. "He didn't have money except what was on him. But they wouldn't believe him and they went to work on him. It was horrible. They smashed him in the face and over the head and he kept whimpering: 'I haven't got any money—there isn't any hiding place!'"

Finally he passed out. Nobody could take what he was taking. Then the men left. The place was like a shambles."

Beaten With Club

Both Mallott and Goold, who said he was also beaten over the head "with some sort of a club," were taken to hospital. Goold was released after treatment but Mallott was detained for treatment for head wounds and shock.

The four men were found trussed up on the floor about two hours later by a neighbour. One of the other two, Mallott's brother, Dan, was an 80-year-old invalid and the fourth was W. J. Muir, a visitor to the house.