

THE NATIONAL ARTS CLUB

15 GRAMERCY PARK

New York

N. Y.

April 11, '31.

Miss Ida M. Tarbell,
120 East 19th St.,
New York City.

Dear Miss Tarbell,

Enclosed find reports from ten manuscripts which have been submitted in the "Soul of America" Contest.

I am positively ashamed to have to make such adverse reports, but this group of manuscripts is all but impossible! I don't mind burning the mid-night oil when there's something lovely to think about, but dear me!---

Sincerely,



Jane Scales

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No. 56 SHADOWS OF OUR OWN

An interesting volume of verse done in the modern manner, but unfortunately, I find, upon finishing the reading of this manuscript, that it does not meet with the 40,000 word requirement.

No. 57 THE SOUL OF AMERICA

A volume which is part essay, part biography. The essay section of the book is an unscholarly attempt to define the soul. There are a few good sentences, but at times, the author unwittingly contradicts himself. For instance, he says, "No power can stay the advancing progress of the soul." A few pages later, he admits that there are some things, such as greed, inhibitions, etc., which do arrest the soul's progress. The latter half of the book is a poorly written biography of John Brown. A "flowery" Epilogue of some two or three pages closes the essay.

No. 58 A SKETCH OF AN AMERICAN FAMILY

A most uninteresting, high-school type account of the every-day life of several generations of a family named Fisher. Of no possible interest to the Committee.

No. 59 MAGNIFICENT GESTURE, THE SOUL OF AMERICA

This work is almost totally irrelevant to the subject at hand. It is, in large part, a volume of verse. The author says that he gives the Committee the privilege of throwing out anything from the book which they don't like. But he wants a criticism. He says further, that he has not bothered with the rules of the Contest, but that it was the Idea that interested him. As a consequence, I receive the impression upon reading his manuscript, that he has collected everything that he has ever written, and has, with one "Magnificent Gesture," moulded all into one volume. There is a very long Preface which deals with "The Poet," and the media in which he exists;--followed by three short essays--"The Poem,"--"The Scene,"-- and "The Reader." This part of the manuscript, of course, is totally irrelevant to the subject at hand. The remainder of the volume is in verse. The poems deal with everything from the Grand Canyon to Women of the Streets.

No. 60 THE AMERICANIZATION OF A D.A.R.

An autobiography of a sort, telling of the author's experiences on the Continent and in England. This is followed by more "experiences" in the South of the U.S., and then, still more befall her in New York. The work is totally irrelevant to the subject of the Contest.

61 No. Three Flowers

An American Indian romance, told in poor verse. Of no possible

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interest to the Committee.

No. 62 SLAY-ON E----SEVENTEEN

The book is in two parts. The first half is not original with the "author", but is an actual transcription of the letters written by a Lt. Col. Cooper of the Civil War, to his ten year old daughter Ada. These letters are just about what one would expect. Col. Cooper always tells the child where he is, and speaks of battles in which he has participated. These descriptions are interspersed with admonitions to the child, such as---"bathe every week,"---"brush your teeth after every meal,"---et. The latter part of the book is another series of letters. This time, they are written during the World War by one Betsey, and addressed to the same "Ada" whom the flight of time has made "Aunt Ada." The book is in high-school style, and decidedly uninteresting.

No. 64 IF MAN UNBUILT GOES

A sort of "Babbitt" story, told in immature fashion. However, Fremont Pepperstone, the main character, starting out as a government clerk, wakes up just in time to become a College Professor. His wife, who is also a government clerk, decides that she, too, will "improve" herself by reading good books, et. The dialogue of the novel is an obvious attempt upon the part of the writer, to be funny. The result is a series of forced, stilted and trite speeches.

No. 65 IN THE LAND WHERE THE EAGLE SPREADS ITS WINGS

A series of poorly written biographies, essays, poems, et. The English is quite bad. The biographies include those of the philosopher, Kant, several unknown Americans, et. Of no possible interest to the Committee.

No. 66 THE SOUL OF AMERICA

A volume of extremely poor verse. The reader is constantly astonished by such sentences as---"Florida ships northward sponges, oranges, and other fruits and vegetables." Or this one---"The Mississippi rolls on, and swallows up the Neva, the Tiber, the Rhone, the Rhine, the Thames, Et.,---"