

experiments and skilful surfaces have two really distinguished volumes by American poets this year — Ridgely Torrence's *Poems*<sup>3</sup> and John Peale Bishop's *Selected Poems*.<sup>4</sup> Both are mature as poets, for both know their own potentialities and their own medium. John Peale Bishop knows our own time, and he knows it because he knows what

<sup>3</sup> *Poems*, by Ridgely Torrence. \$1.75. Macmillan.

<sup>4</sup> *Selected Poems*, by John Peale Bishop. \$2.00. Scribner.



### FICTION

**THE HARP AND THE BLADE**, by John Myers Myers. \$2.50. *Dutton*. A few first novels — but a very few — bear a guarantee that their writers are going to have the career of successful novelists. John Myers Myers is very distinctly the writer of such a first novel in *The Harp and The Blade*. He is a man who knows a period and so is marked for an historical novelist. But an historical novelist with a difference, a modern, streamlined historical novelist. John Myers Myers uses the English of today and peppers it with our own colloquialisms. And without any archaisms in language, this author can make us feel we are in a distant land at a distant period. His hero is Finnian, an Irish harper and poet, moving through a France that is being ravaged by the Danes and a rabble of native freebooters. One feels that if France emerged from such devilment in the tenth century, maybe Europe of today will emerge too.

**SLIGHTLY PERFECT**, by George Malcolm-Smith. \$2.00. *Random House*. "Slightly

former times were; he knows history; like Yeats, like Eliot and the truly modern poets, he understands the significance of history and takes themes from it. In Ridgely Torrence's *Poems* there is that radiance, that transforming action which belong to real poetry; he gives us the sense that what is happening around us is being looked at, not by a commentator, but by a seer.

perfect" refers to the main character, but it might be a description of this novel itself. It comes near being a first-rate example of the Picaresque in a modern style. George Malcolm-Smith has discovered a delightful field for picaresqueness — Amos Carter's Acres of Fun, with the human oddities of its carnival troupe. And he has hit upon the right personage to interact with the "carny" folk — Milton Northey Haskins, the rising young actuary of the Nutmeg Insurance Company of Hartford, one who knows all about life expectations and hardly anything about life. Involving young Mr. Haskins with his lightning arithmetic and his calculations with the concessionaires and the "gleeks" (the human oddities of the side show) gives fresh and original comedy.

**THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM**, by A. J. Cronin. \$2.50. *Little, Brown*. This new novel by the author of *Hatter's Castle* is the story of Francis Chisholm, a Scots priest, from his poverty-stricken childhood to his struggles in a mission in China. Melodramatic in spots, but sincere writing makes it convincing.

**THE BATTLERS**, by Kylie Tennant. \$2.50. *Macmillan*. The battlers of this story are the migrant laborers of Australia, who struggle for self-preservation on the road. A story written with sympathy and understanding.

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# THE OPEN FORUM

## L'AFFAIRE CRANE-GARTZ

SIR: Yesterday I attended an "indignation" meeting at the home of Mrs. Kate Crane-Gartz, the only really civilized and cultured and friendly woman of her generation I've met in California. It was all on account of an article, "The Red Queen of California," you had let Mr. William Henry Chamberlin write for your magazine. Countless letters now will probably be bombarding you from all over this part of the country, protesting that article as being "unfair," "scurrilous," "untruthful," "malicious," etc., etc., because those were some of the terms let loose up there yesterday, which I feel sure flew on rapid wings to New York straight for your editorial conscience — if any!

In this connection I too promised to write a letter! It is an effort, at least, at a fair and relatively unbiased interpretation of a noble and generous woman; and you may print it as a free contribution to the cause of truth in journalism.

In 1936 I returned to Los Angeles from a two-year "hermit" experience, and after a public talk on books and writers, met Mrs. Gartz, who gave me her books to read. I wrote an appraisal. She liked it very much and engaged me to write the story of her family. For six months I examined all the private diaries of her father and mother, and got to know the entire family fairly well. Mrs. Gartz then said she didn't want to go on with the story; but as a result of that study I am forcibly impressed by the contributions, cultural and otherwise, which I think her family has made to America.

At times Mrs. Gartz has engaged me to give book talks to a weekly Tuesday Meeting she has at her home. For thirty years or so, forty or fifty of her friends and neighbors have been coming together at the Tuesday

Meetings to talk, have tea, and to meet and exchange gossip with the most charming, generous and cultivated woman in Pasadena, if not in the whole state. I have met Paul Jordan Smith there; Upton Sinclair used to be a regular visitor. I have always believed, in fact, that some of Mr. Sinclair's ideas were gotten from her writings. In one of his novels, *100%*: *The Story of an American*, she appears as "Mrs. God."

Ernst Toller came straight to her home and gave his first American lecture there. She sponsored the \$5.00-a-plate luncheon held for him, which I attended, and got almost choked on tobacco and guttural, sentimental talking. She helps support the Pasadena Community Theatre. I was told that she once paid a well known writer's expenses to China — presented her one day at a luncheon with two or three \$1000 bills, just because she had expressed a wish to see China. There is a bungalow court owned by Mrs. Gartz where many impecunious writers (some of them quite well known) have lived for a long time. I've seen letters to Mrs. Gartz from a great many other "big names," expressing gratitude for money or for favors done.

Mrs. Gartz is about the only writer I've ever met who has written for forty years without being forced, at any time during that period, to write merely for "the money." She writes for love.

JOHN G. MOORE  
*Hollywood, California*

SIR: Mr. Chamberlin's "portrait" of Mrs. Kate Crane-Gartz, the Mme. de Sevigné of California letters, is a palpable attempt to cloak reaction in the mantle of "humor."

No one can expect, after reading Mr.