

*Language*, fourth edition, 1936. The correlative chapters are concerned with the pronunciation of the American language, American spelling, the common speech, proper names in America and American slang. The volume runs to 890 large, closely-packed pages, not counting 43 three-column pages of index. It need hardly be said that the book is immensely readable, footnotes and all, and that it will delight all philologists, professional and amateur alike. In his preface Mr. Mencken says that it is "highly improbable" that he'll ever attempt a *Supplement Three*, though notes for it have been piling up. One hopes that he had his fingers crossed when he made this threat.

WORLD WORDS, *Recommended Pronunciations*, by W. Cabell Greet. \$6.75. *Columbia*. This is a second, revised and enlarged edition of a work that is pretty much the highest authority in the field of the pronunciation of foreign names and places. It contains about 25,000 entries, or twice as many as the first edition. Each entry is spelled in two ways, first in a simplified Websterian alphabet, then phonetically. The three-column pages are clearly and handsomely printed, and very easy to consult for reference.

## MUSIC

HANDEL'S MESSIAH, *A Touchstone of Taste*, by Robert Manson Myers. \$5.00. *Macmillan*. When the *Messiah* was first performed in London in 1743 it was received coldly, a fact that now seems almost incredible in view of the great influence that the oratorio and, indeed, nearly all of Handel's work has had on English culture for two centuries. The English have looked upon Handel as "the Shakespeare of music and a poet for all time." Samuel Butler said of him, "Of all dead men Handel has had the largest place in my thoughts. In fact, I should say that he and his music have been the central fact in my life ever since I was old enough to know of the existence of either life or music." Dr. Myers, who is assistant professor of English at the College of William and Mary, discusses Handel's vast influence in England with massive learning, yet in a very readable manner. Musicologists and literary historians will find the book of great value, but general readers will also find it of considerable interest.

MY MANY LIVES; by Lotte Lehmann. \$3.75. *Boosey & Hawkes*. In this book Mme. Lehmann discusses the rôles she played in opera, especially in Europe where she was for many years a star who enjoyed great critical and popular acclaim. She was equally at home in the works of Wagner, Puccini and Tschaiakowsky. In this book she does more than present memories; she also has many shrewd things to say about the musical and dramatic worth of the operas themselves, and she evaluates the different schools of direction. Occasionally she falls into the trap of discussing "vibrations" of actors, but fortunately that is not often. Altogether a book of solid worth, that professionals will find of value. There are several reproductions of photographs. The translation is by Frances Holden.

## POETRY

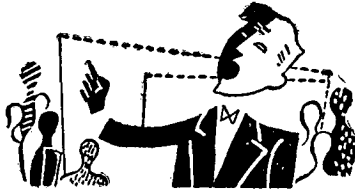
THE WHITE PONY, *An Anthology of Chinese Poetry*, edited by Robert Payne. \$4.00. *John Day*. This apparently is the first comprehensive and truly authoritative anthology of Chinese poetry in English. The translations have been made by scholars, and they in turn have been edited and revised by Mr. Payne, who also supplies many helpful historical, biographical and critical notes. The result is a volume of great fascination. The time span covered is from 1100 B.C. down to the present, and the variety of poems translated is immense. Some of the poems, especially the lyrics, have an amazing similarity of emotion to English poems.

TRIAL OF A POET AND OTHER POEMS, by Karl Shapiro. \$2.00. *Reynal & Hitchcock*. Mr. Shapiro's fourth book of poems shows him as marking time. He is still master of the simple phrase that somehow says more than appears on first reading, and he can still blend cynicism with sentiment without offending. But, on the other hand, he has not yet rid himself of verbosity, occasional vagueness and stray bad taste. In the verses in this book he deals largely with incidents in his early life and with his war experiences; but in them he adds nothing that he has not already said in his previous works. There is also a long poem-plus-prose-poem on the place of the poet in society. Unfortunately, it barely makes sense.

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## THE OPEN FORUM

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### FRANCO'S SPAIN — SECOND ROUND

SIR: Your article, "Franco's Spain" [by Melanie L. Pflaum], published in your January issue, forces me, out of respect for you and loyalty to your readers, to answer an article based upon unfounded and undocumented sources. . . .

Let us start with the statement of one "Miguel," who, it appears, is a chemistry professor. We are not informed whether he is a high school or university professor. Only that "he earns the same salary he earned seven years ago. His expenses have risen 500 to 600 per cent." Both statements are untrue. According to the Government budget and teaching appropriations, if he is a university professor his basic salary was 8000 pesetas in 1935. It is now 12,000 pesetas (since 1942). If he is a high school teacher, his basic salary was 5000 pesetas in 1936 and is at present 10,000 pesetas (since 1944). *Fascism In Action* (p. 158) gives the April 1947 cost of living (approximately the time Mrs. Pflaum was in Spain) as from three to four times prewar levels. The salary figures I have given also disprove her statement that "university professors are worse off than secondary school teachers, who are well paid and well treated." Remember also that traditionally, professors lecture one or two hours a day and are able to triple or quadruple their official income by the lucrative practice of their specialized knowledge. The writer, a high school professor in Madrid, who does not belong to the Falange, has decently supported a family of four by more work in the open market.

Mrs. Pflaum's partiality has blinded her to a reality not limited to Spain. A survey of the American teaching problem by the New York Times published in 1947, shows "that 350,000 teachers left the schools since 1940 and that the morale of the Nation's teachers was never lower." As a Spanish professor, I should add, neither is this an exception, for it is a world condition due

to the teacher's greater interest in his vocation than in his financial interests.

"We are falling so far behind the rest of the world," adds this curious Miguel, "it will take a century to catch up." Neither he nor Mrs. Pflaum has seen the statement appearing in the New York Times, July 31, 1947: "Sister Elizabeth Kenny, widely known for her controversial system for treating poliomyelitis, declared that infantile paralysis research in Spain was far ahead of that in other countries including the United States." Spain does not claim to be as far ahead in all fields; she may lag in some, but in many others bears comparison with the best.

Mrs. Pflaum continues: "They checked official statistics on public health and discovered that physicians had learned not to give starvation as the cause of death, but to list secondary causes, such as tuberculosis or anemia." The implications in this statement are gratuitous. It is curious to compare this with the statement of Dr. Francisco Blanco Rodriguez, in *La Lucha Anti-tuberculosa en España*, Madrid, 1945, page 96, on considering errors in diagnosis: "There are undoubtedly medical errors, but this inevitable fact does not amount to much, because the diagnosis of consumption in an advanced stage is accessible even to the layman. On the other hand, the deliberately falsified certificates are surely more important. In the rural zones of our country, tuberculosis is considered a degrading disease, and those doctors who have sentimental or economic ties with the patients' families are asked to dissemble the true diagnosis." This honest and plain-speaking statement is precisely contradictory with Mrs. Pflaum's assertions. Apart from this, how does Sr. Miguel reconcile the statement on hunger with the fact that the nation's health, instead of weakening presents symptoms of betterment? Here are some facts: death