

whose beauty cannot be exaggerated, and was trudging through the rain holding out before me, like a tray inscribed with hieroglyphics upon which, alas, the rain fell like drops of oil spattered by a gas-engine, a copy of the *Herald-Tribune* and devoured with the mind as the mouth devours a rich, steamy pudding the prose of Rebecca West in praise of Sherwood Anderson! The dun street on which I was walking, trance-like — I have forgotten what block it was — receded into unreality like a movie fade-out and the words became more real than the whole caboodle of my sense-impressions. I felt warmed, comfortable, as in one of our highly heated apartments to which our English friends so often object, but here

was one whose sense of guilt, whose internal conflict, had been so nicely adjusted and harmonized that she might be said to cling sympathetically to a mental radiator and match its temperature with the warmth of her talk.

"One of Mr. Hardy's ancestors must have married a weeping willow.' Now that is superb wit. It can only be accounted for as a little gift of the unconscious. Miss West's unconscious clearly reveals to us by its extravagance why her virtues become excesses for which her American cousins are so highly grateful."

I shall not apologize for laying it on with a tar brush: the parody has to be crude for those readers who are unfamiliar with Miss West's irrelevant chat about her

personal life and her obsession with psychoanalysis as a key to art — not to speak of her habit of pitching her judgments into the superlative. The only remedy I see for her is to cultivate a habit of questioning the alleged glories of our age — and I wish she would question her style too. Figures of speech by the score are not scores of ideas about Joyce, Hardy, Wells, Shaw, the Sitwells, Sherwood Anderson, Willa Cather, Herbert Quick, and the other writers gushed over in this book.

Perplexing India

UNDERSTANDING INDIA, by Gertrude Marvin Williams; Coward-McCann, \$3.50.

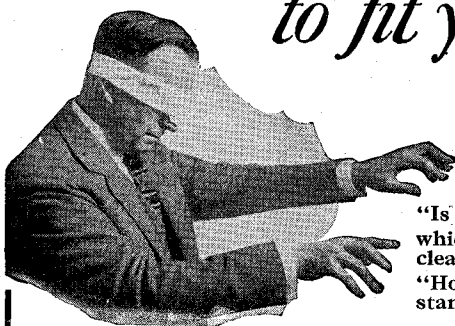
Reviewed by L. H. TITTERTON.

I THINK that the difference in what Miss Mayo and I saw was due in part to the way we saw it." When we read this sentence in the short foreword to *Understanding India*, our fears began to arise; but they were groundless. This is not another book dedicated to the refuting of statements in *Mother India*. It is on the contrary, a series of vivid portraits and landscapes of Indian people and places, impressions obtained under most unusual circumstances. Mrs. Williams, an American, "traveled more than six thousand miles in India, and traveled alone." And this is truly astounding, for a white woman *must* be accompanied by a man when she ventures outside the definitely British sections of Indian cities, according to the etiquette and invariable usage of foreigners resident in India. The reason given is that she will be insulted or attacked by Indian men if she goes alone.

Mrs. Williams went alone. Part of the time she had a native bearer or servant with her, but for the most part she made few plans and moved from place to place entirely unaccompanied. She traveled first, second, and third class on the railroads — and the whites never travel except in the first class. She slept in native villages; she visited the dominions of some of the most mediæval native princes; and never once did she receive any but the most courteous treatment, except at the hands of a British consular official and a Portuguese banker. Her experience, moreover, was remarkably rich and varied, since a journey of six thousand miles necessarily took her to the remotest corners of India, enabled her to see a complete cross-section of modern Indian life.

For the sake of convenience she divides her book into seven parts, and thus avoids the tedium of a chronological sequence which would necessarily be often repetitious, for she is enabled to group together the impressions she gained from all manner of sources. Perhaps "impressions" is an unfortunate word, for Mrs. Williams does not blindly record what she saw and what she was told. Her story is marked by

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"What word conveys the exact shade of meaning I desire?"

"Is there a better word than the one I am using?"

"What is that word I have forgotten?"

"Is there a word in the language which expresses my thought clearly?"

"How can I avoid this constant repetition?"

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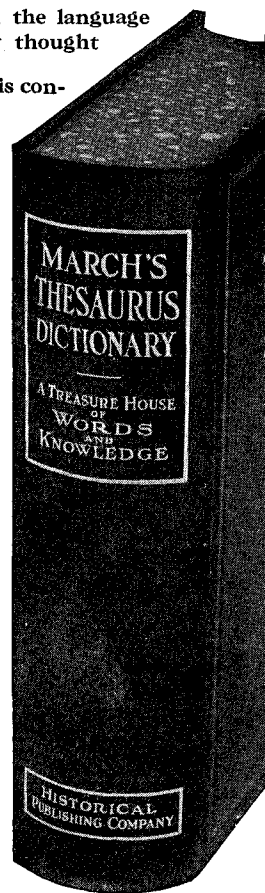
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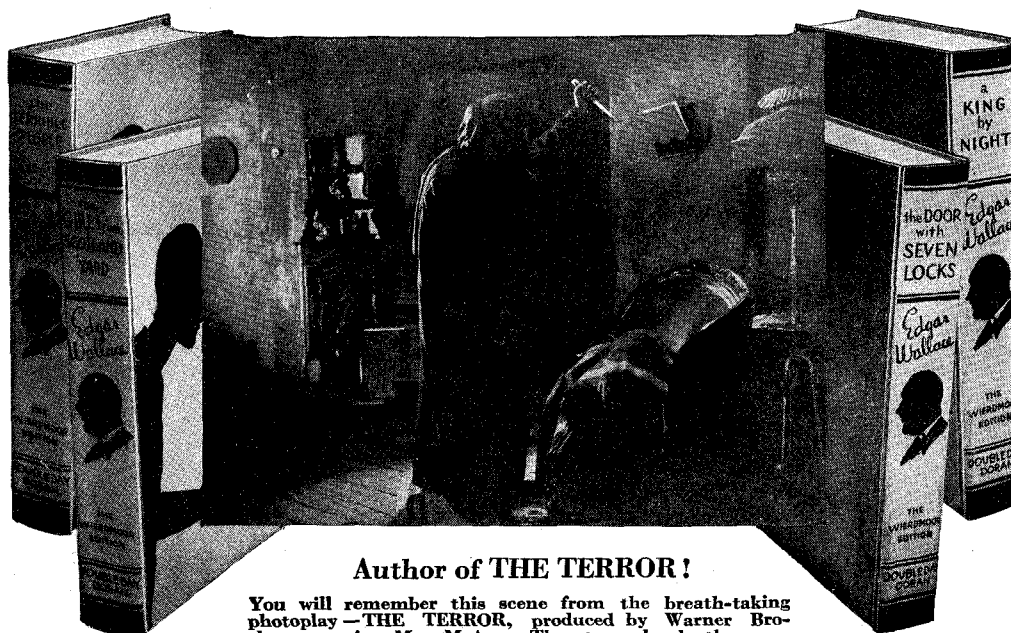
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