



THE BOOK FORUM



400 MILLION CUSTOMERS — Carl Crow (Harper, \$3.00).

POISONS, POTIONS, PROFITS — Peter Morell (Knight, \$2.00).

DO YOU WANT TO WRITE? — Margaret Widdemer (Farrar & Rinehart, \$2.00).

THE MAKING OF A SCIENTIST — Raymond L. Ditmars (Macmillan, \$2.75).

THE GONCOURT JOURNALS — Edited & translated by Lewis Galantière (Doubleday, Doran, \$3.50).

THE LIFE OF PAUL GAUGUIN — Robert Burnett (Oxford, \$3.50).

JONATHAN SWIFT — Bertram Newman (Houghton Mifflin, \$3.50).

THE EDUCATION OF H*Y*M*A*N K*A*P*L*A*N — Leonard Q. Ross (Harcourt, Brace, \$2.00).

OLEANDER RIVER — G. B. Stern (Macmillan, \$2.50).

HE DID NOT DIE AT MEYERLING — the autobiography of "R," written in collaboration with Henry Lanier (Lippincott, \$3.00).

If the Japanese had asked advice from an American named Carl Crow, they might have saved themselves the present trouble of trying to shoot their way into China. No people on earth, says Mr. Crow, have the quintessential sales resistance of the Chinese. Before they accept anything, they test it for quality, price, and general usefulness. If it is found wanting, woe to the dealer (or diplomat) who offered it. Not even bullets, it appears, will induce them to adopt an article of doubtful value. Mr. Crow's respect for and delight in Chinese habits of common-sense judgment come from his 25 years as head of an advertising agency in Shanghai. His *400 Million Customers* is the whimsical, engaging record of adventures with merchants and prospective Oriental buyers of everything from pink pills to poker rules. In addition he has given us that rare thing, a loving and observant portrait of a people whose ways are not his own ways.

With all the zest of Sherlock Holmes he notes his progress through the mystery of Chinese markets. Why, for instance, did second-hand horseshoes from Hamburg sell, when identical horseshoes from New York could not find a single buyer? The answer is as logical, once you understand the Chinese, as it is fantastic. This and a hundred other astonishing problems make the book a combination detective-story travel-romance. Through it all runs Mr. Crow's own sly humor and

practical wisdom. No more salty and illuminating book on China is likely to appear in many a season.

LESS canny than the Chinese apparently are American buyers, according to Peter Morell. "A little alcohol, a little water, some coloring matter, a large advertising campaign, and you have it — a new, miraculous remedy." This is the thesis of *Poisons, Potions, Profits*, a study of radio advertising which Mr. Morell has based on reports from Consumers Union. Consumer movements are not new to this country, as THE FORUM has had occasion to point out. The vast and successful Scandinavian consumers' organizations have given cumulative precedent and guidance to similar American groups. Among them is Consumers Union which, though it has nothing to sell, devotes itself to advice on what to buy and what not to buy.

Mr. Morell starts his book from an unusual point of view. Rather than discuss advertising in a particular place like China or of a particular commodity like cosmetics, he anatomizes the whole technique of radio ballyhoo. It is, he finds, the lineal descendant of medicine shows and their fraudulent cure-alls: streamlined snake oil poured on the ether waves. There are fireworks in his facts. He names names. And his themes — "The slenderizing way to death"; "Some are hanged"; "Not a cure in a carload" — for all their irony lead somewhere. No Socrates he, speaking futile wisdom before he downs the hemlock offered by a legion of sponsors. Though the products you are cajoled and crooned into buying are bad, says Mr. Morell, you need not lose heart. Knowing the enormous remedial energy native to us consumers, he draws up a hopeful, persuasive plan for making this country a safe place to shop in.

LEST you think all radio broadcasting is quackery, we cite you Margaret Widdemer, whose recent series of radio talks on the arts of authorship has been collected and enlarged into a volume called *Do You Want to Write?* In somewhat the manner of a trusted but frank family doctor comes Miss Widdemer to cure your ailing stories and bring new ones into the world. Herself a novelist and poet, she has a warm and generous spirit about her craft. Its secrets, she believes, belong not to a small fraternity of the elect but to all who have genuine creative yearnings. That is, to the whole world of housewives, stenographers, bank pres-

Important New Fiction

G. B. Stern
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RIVER**

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at all bookstores

THE MACMILLAN CO.
60 Fifth Avenue, New York



The
story of
a
woman's
renaissance:

Mabel
Dodge's
life in
the
Southwest



Mabel Dodge Luhan's EDGE OF TAOS DESERT

How Mabel Dodge, cosmopolitan hostess and friend to the "Movers and Shakers" of two continents, discovered Taos and the Southwest and broke off from her former life. Against that vital and colorful New Mexican background, midst growing friendships with the Indians, values changed and brought a new sense of reality. And finally, here is the intensely personal and happy story of Tony Luhan, whose wife Mabel Dodge was to become.

Illustrated with photographs, \$3.00

Catherine Carswell's THE TRANQUIL HEART

A Portrait of Giovanni Boccaccio. Boccaccio's Decameron continues to entertain after 600 years, but its popularity has obscured Boccaccio himself as a great figure, active and famous in his day. Here is a picture of one of the most attractive men who ever lived, who helped lay the foundations of European literature, European thought, European love.

\$3.00

Virginia Woolf's THE YEARS

Her most popular and widely praised novel, now in its ninth large printing.

\$2.50

HARCOURT, BRACE & CO.
383 Madison Ave., New York

The Book Forum

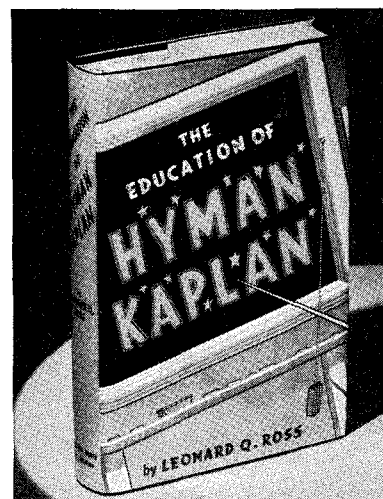
idents, factory hands who have plots and ideas but no encouragement. (You would be amazed at how many of the stories you read were written by people with just such full-time jobs.)

Miss Widdemer makes, however, no promises of best sellers overnight. Starting with a plan of self-analysis for the beginner, she leads on through early practice work to as clever and sensible a lot of checks, tests, and methods as you could ask for.

WE commonly expect a scientist to be impersonal, but when that stern virtue extends over into the realm of autobiography most of us turn gingerly away. Not so, however, with Raymond L. Ditmars' *Making of a Scientist*. A more apt title might have been *My Science in the Making*, but it would be hard to conceive any warmer, more colorful treatment of the material.

Naturalists, we are reminded by this book, are one up on others of the fact-finding clan. They deal with flowers, animals, weather—not ions or invisible rays. They travel and can mix adventure with data. These advantages all naturalists have, but Dr. Ditmars has still another. He can write—and not only about the reptiles that have been the basis of his fame. Volcanoes, hurricanes, Civil War battles, fire engines, giant vampire bats—these and a thousand other things have at one time or another been studied by this perennial enthusiast. Learning, knowing, and discovering still more are his passions. As if he, a great herpetologist, were afraid of being called narrow, his book becomes a kind of inspired argument for wide and scattered interests. Digging first here and then there has deepened the bed of his river and by no means dissipated its flow. Largely by emphasizing the material he has delved into, Dr. Ditmars makes the gusto of his intense life contagious.

THE scene is the American Night Preparatory School for Adults; the hero, a delectable gentleman who insists on signing himself in colored crayon with a sprinkling of asterisks. The result as narrated by Leonard Q. Ross is *The Education of H*y*m*a*n K*a*p'l*a*n*. Mr. Kaplan is the kind of pupil who strikes terror to any teacher's soul—he thinks for himself. With consummate logic, Mr. Kaplan believes that the opposite of *new* is *second hand*; that the superlative of *good* is *foist class*; that a proper conjugation would be "fail, failed, bankropt." But it is as interpreter of Shaksbeer that Mr. Kaplan shines with his most blinding light. The poet, he maintains, is a pessimist "because is *life* pessimist also." In fact, "life is a tale told by idjots, dat's all, full of fonnny sonds an' phooey!" *The Education* is no mere nonsense book—it is



Hau Kay!! "A genius of language named Kaplan is the protagonist of the season's funniest book."—Herschel Brickell, *N. Y. Post*. "One of the best mirth-provoking characters in the fiction based on mispronunciation."—Harry Hansen, *N. Y. World-Telegram*. "He has become an established institution. It is hard to imagine a world without him."—Joseph Wood Krutch, *The Nation*. \$2.00

The Education of H*Y*M*A*N K*A*P*L*A*N

by Leonard Q. Ross

"The best Saroyan" LITTLE CHILDREN

by William Saroyan

"His third and best volume," says Sterling North, *Chicago Daily News*, of the new book by the author of "The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze." "The best of the amazing Saroyan's amazing books."—*Los Angeles Times*. \$2.50

Dorothy Canfield's FABLES for PARENTS

Dorothy Canfield's warm understanding of the life of children, and their relation to parents and grandparents, made these stories from her recent work so popular that a book of them was demanded. \$2.50

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