I read A Street in Bronzeville in one excited sitting and warmly recommend that all readers dash to the nearest bookstore and add to the circulation of a rare event in poetry and the humanities. ALFRED KREYMBORG.

## Sea Minus Salt

NEW CHUM, by John Masefield. Macmillan. \$2.50.

 $\mathbf{F}_{\mathbf{k}}^{\mathbf{OR}}$  an exciting yarn of the sea and the men who sailed it before the turn of the century, don't go to New Chum. But if you are an admirer of Masefield, this autobiographical flashback to his sailing days may interest you. He was a boy of thirteen when he began his first term as an apprentice or "new chum" on the merchant training ship HMS Conway, and the book is virtually an hour-by-hour account of it. Masefield's reminiscences are amazing in their detail. By the end of the first day (almost half way through the book) he recollects: "At last, I was snug abed; my first day aboard was over. It had been the longest and the strangest day I had ever known, with much in it intensely interesting; much, delightful, but nearly all of it bewildering, incomprehensible. . . But it was an odd world; I was off my feet; and felt lost."

Unfortunately this bewilderment and lostness is shared by the reader. A sailing enthusiast, such as one sometimes unhappily finds as a dinner partner, may enjoy a story told in such specialized gear-and-rigging language, though even he may find himself up the mizzen and looking for escape.

Nevertheless some of Masefield's own charm, something of the warmth of his personality, and his love of beauty and of things well done, shines through. Describing the tug taking him to shore and home, he writes: "In the pitch darkness, we drew near the lights of the stage and slackened for coming alongside. I love watching the skill of men; I have for years watched the skill of men who handle tugs, and ferries, and bring them alongside piers just as gently as though the ships were made of eggshell. We all watched the skill of our tugmen, who, in the darkness, crept to a berth and stopped at invisible marks by a sense which none of us had."

On the whole, however, the book, disappointingly, lacks vigor. The profuse use of dots and dashes for sailors' language, the allusion to songs never sung, pales the color of events, and distills the salt from the sea.

September 4, 1945

NM.

Anne Kyle.



# FOR RENT

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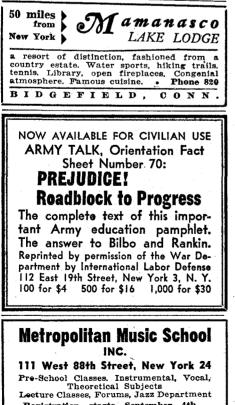
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## A Lost Time

BARINGTON, by Edward Tatum Wallace. Simon & Schuster. \$2.50.

THIS is a book of the Venture Press, a new department of Simon & Schuster designed to bring out "firsts" of literary distinction. If *Barington* is an example it is a "venture" to be supported. There should be a place for such unorthodox publications, often damned as "slight," but which contain nuclei, in both form and content, that are rich in promise and for which in the past there has been little place in publishing. Such books may help to break down the iron-bound concepts of what a book must be.

Barington has all the spontaneity of a notebook. It is the author's very personal recollection of the village of his youth, around 1900, when the sparking was still done in the buggy and the town hall was the village hardware shop. The nostalgia of the dying village permeates the book. Bart Tatum, the genial uncle who runs the barber shop, dies just as the tide of industrial America floods in upon the village and the hand-made tool, the axe, the shovels, give way to the Sears Roebuck mail order catalogue where you get earth augurs, "cats" and machine-made lace. Sometimes Mr. Wallace annotates the peculiar mores of the village like an anthropologist, digging bit by bit down into the humus of memory, placing side by side the relics of the past; and the frozen words of a lost time melted in the warm air of his longing; and he heard them all.

There is a sound place for this kind of root material, not too much doctored and tampered with to make a "slick" book; and I believe there will be readers grateful for this kind of honest, homespun, undoped reporting of the things of memory and imagination.

MERIDEL LE SUEUR.

## **Brief Review**

VICTORIA THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS: The Life of Lewis Carroll, by Becker Lemnon. Simon S Schuster. \$3.50.

How did it happen that the Rev. Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, parson, mathematician and Oxford don, created that wonderful, imaginative world of the white Rabbit, the Red Queen, the Jabberwocky, and the Walrus and the carpenter? Mrs. Lennon's biography attempts an answer in mainly psychoanalytic terms. She gathers her evidence from Carroll's own published writings, his letters and the testimonies of his contmporaries, as these reflect Dodgson-Carroll's conditionings, frustrations and relationships. Here her scholarship is beyond reproach.

The author acknowledges that literature is not created in a vacuum, that it is the result of internal development within an environmental structure. But Mrs. Lennon's assumptions and generalizations concerning the Victorian period are not enough. Furthermore, her Freudian interpretation frequently descends to the mechanical. The book is further marred by a phony "entre nous" with her presumably sophisticated readers, leading to such strained passages as "the hope of making logic square with common sense, of finding some coherent relation between the ideal platonic chair, the non-existent Berkeleyan chair and the upholstered armchair on which he, barked his shins."

# Worth Noting

What is said to be the first union contract negotiated by a music school was signed recently by the Metropolitan Music School at 111 West 88th Street, New York. Paid vacations and a sick leave provision are among the clauses. The contract was with the Music Teachers' chapter of the Teachers' Union. Another New York music school, The Neighborhood Music School at 2914 Cooper Avenue, the Bronx, is following suit and a contract is under negotiation.

LUDMILLA PAVLICHENKO, Hero of the Soviet Union, whose sniping ended the careers of hundreds of Nazis, has just graduated with honors in the history course at Kiev University that the German invasion had interrupted. Her diploma project was a study of the role of the Ukrainian political leader, Bogdan Khmelnitsky.

**T**HE\_Book-of-the-Month Club selection for November will be Days and Nights by the Soviet writer Konstantin Simonov, whose play The Russian People was produced in New York two years ago. The novel deals with events of the siege of Stalingrad.

A COLLECTION of the war year writings of Louis Aragon, French Communist writer and underground leader, is soon to be issued by Duell, Sloan & Pearce. The collection is edited by Hannah Josephson and Malcolm Cowley.

September 4, 1945 NM

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