

A Timely Book BATTLING THE CRIME WAVE

Applying sense and science
to the repression of crime

by HARRY ELMER BARNES, Ph. D.

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The list of ten best-selling books printed on Page 280 is compiled from reports sent to the Outlook each week by wire from the following representative bookshops:

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ing encoded matter the Germans always knew precisely where the American troops were and where they were planning to go. He claims too that he has a plan by which we could in the future have a system that no expert cryptographer could ever decode.

The book is a combination of crossword-puzzle reading, immensely exciting stories, and personalities. Captain Yardley cannot speak in too high terms of Van Deman and Marlborough Churchill, the men who engaged him, while Lansing, he contends, would have been able to change the course of world events had he not been "tied to a tyrant schoolmaster" at home and represented in London by an "Anglophile." It is such remarks as these that make one a bit dubious about the book, but as a matter of downright information it must take the very highest rank in the now-it-can-be-told series.

ALLEN W. PORTERFIELD.

"THE RED FOG LIFTS," by Albert Muldavin (Appleton, \$2.). After fourteen years of rhetorical, emotional, statistical, political, sociological and other serious books on Russia, here is an informal, human and humorous book which does more to lift the veil from the granite face of Bolshevism than even Maurice Hindus. The author went to Russia in 1929, before the Wall Street crash, to sign a contract with the Russian government for a big deal. He is not anything but a quick-witted business man, humanly sceptical of Com-

munist and alive to the human factors involved in all business transactions. He does not pretend to give "the truth about Russia"; instead he tells "the truth about myself in Russia"—a super-human act of restraint.

And he discovers that people, even members of the Communist Party, remain people, even under Stalin; that women like to dance and flirt; that men like to grumble and look out for No. 1; and that Russia is not so much a "menace" as it is a "warning" to the rest of the world to write social justice into the overhead of capitalistic society. His conclusion is that "I am not as enthusiastic about conditions as I found them in Russia as much as I am depressed by what is going on in the rest of the world, especially in America."

This book is, to all intents and purposes, a rewritten diary, a sketch-book, describing what the author did and said and thought in the course of a brief stay at Moscow and a long trip through White Russia and the Ukraine. Of Russian origin and with a smattering of Russian speech, Mr. Moldavin saw little evidence of the "Potemkin villages" which Russian emigrés assert are used to deceive the unwary foreigner as to the true character of Soviet Russia. He thinks the Five-Year Plan is working pretty well and will make Russia an efficient competitor. Of considerable interest is his impression of the Wall Street panic, in which he lost heavily, as seen from Moscow, and the striking reverse it brought about in the relations of the company which he represented with the Soviet government. Where before the panic his company had been skeptical of Russia's ability to fulfill a contract, after the panic it was so skeptical of its own ability that Mr. Muldavin's mission was regarded as a great success because he did not get the contract.

It is, however, the human side of Soviet Russia that comes out most strongly in this book and is most worth seeing. Out of many incidents, there is space to quote but one, which is in many ways the best Soviet story that has yet appeared. A school-teacher is instructing a class of children in arithmetic:

She put a problem before the class. "If a man bought a hundred pounds of coffee for one hundred rubles and sold it for two hundred rubles, what would he get out of it?" The children must have been trained in such examples and answered in chorus: "He would get three months in jail." "Unless," added the teacher, "he was a foreigner and had a concession."

JOHN CARTER.

Behind the Blurbs

A NUMBER of art books are to be brought out jointly by the Museum of Modern Art and W. W. Norton. In September will come a book on Modern German Painting and Sculpture, with 50 full-page plates. The second offering will be a book on Picasso. * * * *The Columnist Murder*¹ is a fair to middling tale in which Tommy Twitchell, gossiping columnist of the *Blade*, is slain in a telephone booth in a theatre. Well-known Broadway names and characters are used and slightly distorted, Belasco becoming Tabasco and Winchell, Twitchell. Detectives, gangsters, dancers and journalists dash about through night clubs and penthouses, taking pot shots at each other and otherwise acting very sophisticated, but the fireman was right, and the clue to the murder is in Twitchell's last column. * * * *Legendary France*,² a companion vol. to *Legendary Germany*, reviewed last year, is an informal guidebook that sketches pleasantly the remote past of various French provinces, particularly Provence and the Basque country. A good book to use in combination with Baedeker. * * * *Mariners of Brittany*³ is a book of the Breton fishing villages, illustrated, as was his former book on the Scotch fishing villages, with many charming pen drawings by the author. It can have been no simple task to gather all this material on Breton customs and superstitions, life at sea and on shore, for the Bretons are suspicious of strangers and slow to give their confidence. This is not a book to read from cover to cover, but if you dip into it once you will return to it. * * * *The Selected Works of Sabatini*⁴ include in a book of more than 900 pages *Captain Blood*, *Scaramouche* and *The Banner of the Bull*. * * * How our early New England ancestors lived, the things they made and used, their arts and crafts, are discussed with much entertaining detail in *When Antiques Were Young*.⁵ The author has spent many years gathering material, and in this book you will find much curious lore, and many quaint anecdotes of the past. * * * *Gold, Men and Dogs*⁶ is the autobiography of Scotty Allan, who went to the Klondike in '97, and became the most famous musher of dogs in the world, three times winning the Alaska sweepstakes. The book is packed full of adventure and incident, exciting and entertaining, and there is a chapter on training dogs that dog owners will profit by.

WALTER R. BROOKS.

1. By Lawrence Saunders: Farrar & Rinehart, \$2.00.

2. By Regina Jais: Dial, \$2.50.

3. By Peter F. Anson: Dutton, \$3.75.

4. Houghton Mifflin, \$2.50.

5. By Marion Nicholl Rawson: Dutton, \$5.00.

6. Putnam, \$3.50.

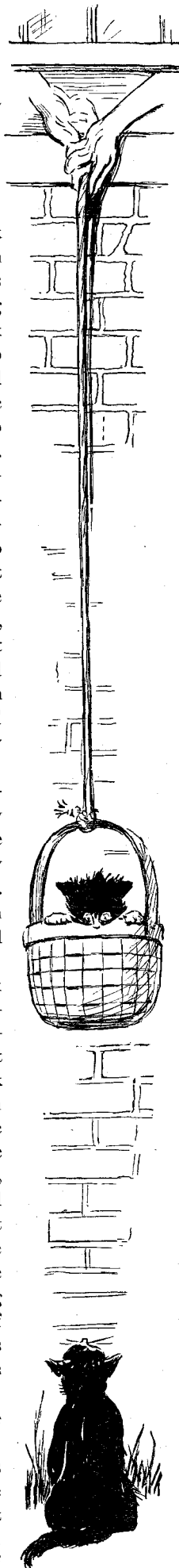
Prose and Worse

WE HAVE in our home what we believe is the only cat elevator in the city, run and operated solely for the convenience of cats. The window of our apartment being some fifteen feet above the level of the back yard, our cat, Bitte Schön, was forced for the first week of his stay with us to remain indoors. He spent most of his time on the window sill, gazing longingly down into the back yard where there was grass to roll in, flowers to stamp on and bugs of various kinds whose habits it was impossible to study from so great a distance. We were sympathetic but helpless, and Bitte Schön was confined to the house until it occurred to our brighter half to tie a cord to a bushel basket and lower him to the yard. He rode down without protest, pursued for a time with great absorption his botanical and entomological studies, then curled up in the basket and went to sleep, when it was easy for him to be drawn up again.

The basket has become an institution. Several times a day he climbs into it, and sits there patiently crying until somebody notices him and lets him down. When he becomes bored with Nature, he gets in again and howls to be pulled up.

He has a friend in the back yard, a somewhat older cat belonging to the people downstairs. For a time this cat watched the elevator at work with an air of boredom which masked, we were sure, intense interest. At last one day he took his courage in both paws, jumped into the basket and was himself pulled up and let down several times. Indeed, he liked the trip so well that we had some difficulty in getting him out. The novelty wore off after a while, but he still comes up occasionally, though it is evidently just for the ride and not to pay a social call, as he goes right down again.

Once or twice the two cats rode up together, but Bitte Schön behaved so badly that we had to put a stop to that. He is the kind of cat who if



you took him out rowing would think it great fun to rock the boat, and he nearly upset the elevator in midair.

☆☆☆☆☆

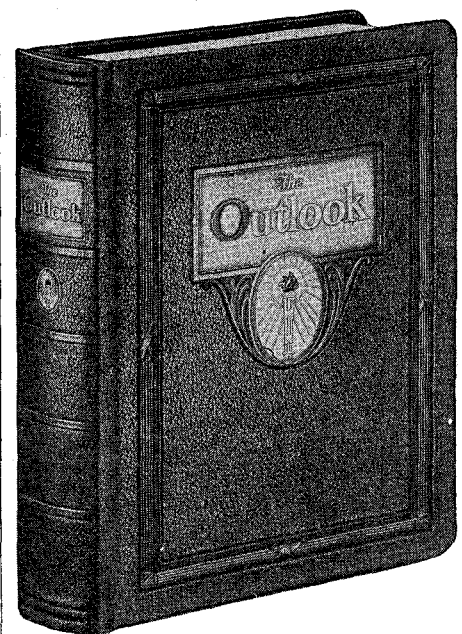
We have had several inquiries regarding H. Meadowcroft. The reason we have been unable to print any of his recent communications is that as a result of our write-up of his raid on an uptown speak-easy, he got a job doing undercover work for the prohibition forces. He writes us very freely, but "I'd rather," he says, "that you didn't print any account of my work in your column. When we've got the town dried up, as we hope to do by fall, it'll be time enough to publish my letters. Maybe you could sort of throw them together into a connected story and sell them to the *Outlook* as *The Memoirs of a Prohibition Agent*, or something like that. Boy, it's a great life, though! Did you ever have any Bristol Milk? I've got a couple bottles set aside for you. And I'm on the track of some Chateau Margaux, 1899. A shipment came in the other day and as soon as I locate it the boys will put on a raid, and I'll send you a few bottles. This prohibition is a great thing, all right. I didn't realize it until I got to working for it. Depression means nothing to us. Good salaries, plenty to drink, and clear consciences because we're doing our duty. There are just three things this country needs: more respect for law, an end to the depression, and the prohibition question settled. And I've figured out a way it can be done. The Meadowcroft One-Year Plan, I call it, and I'm going to send it to Mr. Hoover, as soon as I have time to write it out. Roughly, it amounts to this: Appoint every citizen a prohibition agent. You see how it works? Suppose you're appointed. You get a good salary; you have respect for the law because you're enforcing it; and you won't be putting money in the bootlegger's pocket because you'll be drinking the liquor you confiscate. You'll say

this is too much like the dole in England, which hasn't worked out well. But it's not like the dole, for the dole takes away a man's self-respect. This is a salary, for which the citizen has to work. Pleasant work, too. Some people, I suppose, will object that it will take a good deal of money for all those salaries. But I haven't a doubt that lots of people would be willing to pay for the job, once they realize its advantages. There's no reason why it should cost the government a cent."

WALTER R. BROOKS.

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