

Behind the Blurbs

THE June book of the Scientific Book Club is Earnest A. Hooten's *Up From the Ape*. *** Through an error last week the price of the limited edition of *Gulliver's Travels*, distributed by Random House, was given as \$12.50. It should have been \$125. *** Not all the merchant adventurers of the 16th and 17th centuries sailed westward. Some sailed east, though less has been written about them. In *Eastward Ho!*¹ are given the stories of five of these men—Richard Chancellor, Anthony Jenkinson, James Lancaster, William Adams and Sir Thomas Roe—the tale of whose adventures is well worth reading. They visited the Indies, Persia, Russia, and even Japan, made treaties with Eastern potentates, and opened up British trade with the Orient. Their courage and resourcefulness bears comparison with that of such better known heroes as Drake and Hawkins. And in this book their story has been written by a competent hand. *** Old legends of ships and the sea have been woven together by one who knows and loves them into an amusing story of what happened to Tommy Lawn, who goes overboard when his steamer strikes an iceberg. He visits *Fiddler's Green*², the sailors' heaven, meets Mother Carey, the Old Man of the Sea, Davy Jones and The Man Who Flogged the Dolphin, gets a view of the famous Locker, and has various adventures which should please those who like to see the old tales preserved, tales and myths of the sea that began to die out when steam conquered the ocean. *** J. J. Connington's name on the jacket is always assurance that the yarn is competently put together. Here's *The Boat-house Riddle*³, in which it looks pretty black for young Keith-Westerton when one of his keepers is found down by the edge of the lake with a hole in his head. It might have been an accident, of course, but then why are there no fingerprints on the keeper's gun? And where was Keith-Westerton that night? And who stole the phonograph motor from the Squire's boathouse? And why are there pearls belonging to Mrs. K.-W. all over the place? If Sir Clinton Driffield hadn't been staying with the Squire these questions might never have been answered. But you follow along with him as step by step he unravels the truth from the snarl of facts and lies and half-truths that are presented, and come at last to a perfectly logical conclusion that will leave you with a feeling of satisfaction that you don't always get

1. By Foster Rhea Dulles: Houghton Mifflin, \$5.00.
2. By Albert R. Wetjen: Little Brown, \$2.00.

from detective stories. *** First Dudley Ralston had his head chopped practically off, then Wilfrid was shot. These were *The Bell Street Murders*⁴. Wilfrid had invented a screen that movie magnates were about to pay a million pounds for. The formula for this was left with Evelyn, who in an effort to find the murderer spent an evening with Prof. Blinkwell in Wilfrid's quarters—rather foolish, we thought at the time, and so it turned out, for she lost the end of her little finger before she got out. All these goings-on make a very good thriller by S. Fowler Wright, whose *Deluge* you may remember. *** *The Murder of a Midget*⁵ is a sideshow thriller, with snake charmers, living skeletons and others as the dramatis personae. The body of Sarza, a midget, is found in a doll carriage by a girl named Jado, who at 26 was the best reporter in Texas. (Oh, well, you have to accept these things in thrillers. Personally, we never heard a newsboy shout anything that sounded like "Wuxtree!" but maybe they do in Tex.) The circus owner, coroner and prosecutor insist that the death was due to heart failure, but Jado and her grandma, who is a hard-boiled but ladylike old gal, have ideas about a big drug ring. Then begins the scurrying around and shooting, ending when grandma herself has the fun of plugging the head criminal. Good, swift action in this one, and a gent who bites off his own tongue rather than confess. *** *Happy Sinner*⁶, the story of a romantic girl and of three brothers who loved her in different ways, and whom she loved in as many ways, is light but not frothy. The scenes and conversation are bright, easy and natural, and the characters well drawn. The author has a strong visual sense, which makes for color but not for depth in her writing. WALTER R. BROOKS.

3. Little Brown, \$2.00.
4. Macaulay, \$2.00.
5. By Martin Joseph Freeman: Dutton, \$2.00.
6. By Elizabeth Hamilton Herbert: Farrar & Rinehart, \$2.00.



"The Terrible Nuisance"
(Harcourt, Brace)

Music

Notable New Recordings

I DON'T know what the German for "torch song" is. I doubt if they do themselves, but I have just come across a *mädchen* who can certainly sing them. Her name is Greta Keller and she promises (so far as records are concerned) to be even more of a pain in the neck to Marlene Dietrich than the latter is to Greta Garbo. It will be some time before she makes any American records, I am afraid, but the more enterprising of our readers who wish to hear *Love for Sale* properly (by which I mean correctly) sung should go to a great deal of bother and have some importer get it for them. On the other side of this disk is *Jeder Tag hat 24 Stunden*¹, rendered in somewhat lighter mood.

But to find out why *die* Dietrich should be annoyed, however, you should get her singing *Wenn ich mir was wünschen dürfte*² on Electrola and then listen to what *Fräulein* Keller does to it for Ultraphon.³ The latter has what the officials at the Ultraphon studio assured me is the perfect microphone voice; it is low—low as either Garbo's or Dietrich's when she wants it to be—but it has real musical quality as well. In addition Greta Keller has such good diction that every word is clear to me, both in her German and English recordings.

SPEAKING of Ultraphon officials reminds me that I have another theory as to why European recordings are often so much better than ours. It is because of the atmosphere of the studios. I have visited Parlophone in London and Ultraphon in Berlin and a sharper contrast to our methods could hardly be imagined.

Over here nobody is in any particular hurry. If it doesn't come out right after seven or eight tries, what of it? Let's go down to the beer garden outside the front door, have a *seidl* of Pschorr-Bräu and try it again. In Camden everything is terrifyingly efficient and everybody tells you how much it costs to run the apparatus for five minutes and I'm sure any sensitive artist takes quite a while to get over his fright—if ever.

To revert: look out for that *Wenn ich mir was wünschen dürfte* chant. It's bound to become a nuisance, but you'll never hear it better sung than by Greta Keller.

O. C.-T.

1. Ultraphon A. 902.
2. Electrola 2265.
3. Ultraphon A. 901.

►► Ivory, Apes and Peacocks ◀◀

By W. R. BROOKS

IF YOUR milkman leaves your daily quart out on the back porch, where it is exposed to the sun and the depredations of wandering flies, there is a little jacket of paper you can get that slips down over it and protects it. The paper contains asbestos, which helps keep the milk from souring in summer and freezing in winter. It is easy to wash.

►► CHEMISTS' fees are today one of the largest factors in the high cost of drinking. Five dollars for blindness insurance added to the cost of each case runs up the price of exhilaration pretty high. But we have recently seen a little package containing certain chemicals with which you can test those just-off-the-boat beverages for wood alcohol. Each package contains sufficient sets to test six samples of licker. And you only have to use 6 or 7 drops of your precious licker, too. You pour the contents of three little phials into the sample, and if it turns purple—well, then you'd better stick to ginger ale for the rest of the evening. Chem-Test is the name of the package. It will show the presence of wood alcohol, acetone, and the aldehydes—oh, yes, you know the aldehydes, don't you? Of course, we believe there are other injurious things found in bad liquor—things which Chem-Test won't reveal. But according to the manufacturer, "there is small probability that any quantity of toxic substance sufficient to cause more than a temporary indisposition would be in a liquid without there also being present sufficient of the substances found by Chem-Test to cause the warning color to show in the test tube." One of these little packages would make a nice hostess gift.

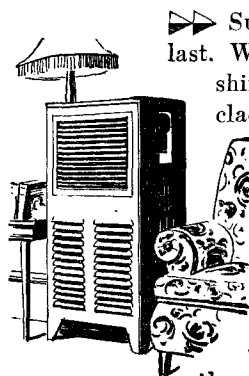
►► THERE seem to be more varieties of clothes driers on the market than of practically any other article. Here's a folding rack that can be adjusted to fit over a bath tub of any width. It has 27 feet of rustless line. And its name, as you have no doubt guessed, is the Uneek Tub Drip Clothes Drier. Goodness, what names won't they think up next for these trick gadgets!

►► THE Dromedary people—you know, the ones that ride around on camels, picking dates, have brought out something called Frostettes, with which you can decorate pies, cakes, ice cream—or your front sidewalk, if you want to, for that matter. It's fine-grained

cocoanut in pink, orange, white or toasted. We don't just know about that toasted variety, not having seen it. Couldn't the Lucky Strike people cause the Dromedary people some trouble if they use that word?

►► EVEN a picture of a new portfolio we have seen wouldn't help you to see what it is like, but take it from us, it is very ingenious and highly practical. It is made entirely of leather—no metal touches the skin, and folds in a very complicated way so that, closed, it can't possibly spill its contents, and, open, all the papers are fully visible. Cowhide or pigskin, and fitted with a lock if you carry that kind of document.

►► Do you know about photomurals? Well, it seems that the Eastman Kodak Company made some experiments which led to a method of producing enlarged photographs in panel strips, 40 inches wide, adapted to any wall measurements. These panels can reproduce paintings, fairy story illustrations, and so on, or can be used in carrying out an idea already proved to have unusual decorative value. Graceful draperies, for instance, can be photographed and reproduced in just the widths which are required by the walls.



►► SUMMER has come at last. We sit here in our shirtsleeves, and the clack of our typewriter is underscored by the whirl of an electric fan and punctuated by the splash of large drops of perspiration. It's the bath tub or the movies for us this evening if we want to keep cool. Unless we can scrape together an initial payment on one of the objects we have had illustrated for you here, which is a Frigidaire Room Cooler. It measures a little under four feet in height, is 22 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches wide and 21 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches deep, made of metal in ungrained mahogany finish, and has a silent fan which pulls in warm air, cools it, takes the moisture out of it, and pushes it back out into the room. It's not as pretty to look at as a sea beach or a pine wood, but it will keep you just as cool, for it has a capacity of 450 cubic feet a minute. Mop your forehead and think it over.

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