

The Reader's Guide

Conducted by MAY LAMBERTON BECKER

Inquiries in regard to the selection of books and questions of like nature should be addressed to MRS. BECKER, c/o The Saturday Review.



THE AMERICAN COLONIES IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

By Herbert Levi Osgood

Late Professor of History in Columbia University

Vol. IV. pp. xxiv + 582. \$5.50 (Set \$20.00)

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A BALANCED RATION
ORIGINAL LETTERS FROM INDIA. By MRS. ELIZA FAY (Harcourt, Brace).

THE NEGRO AND HIS SONGS. By HOWARD W. ODUM and GUY B. JOHNSON (University of North Carolina Press).

THE SMITHS. By JANET A. FAIRBANK (Bobbs-Merrill).

G. H. M., New York, who asked for bookplate advice, is informed that the "Book Plate Annual" for 1925, of whose approach I gave warning, is out, and a large blue beauty it is.

AN illustrated article on the bookplates of Dugald Walker most charms me, but there are others on Robert Anning Bell and D. Y. Cameron, many examples of contemporary bookplates and an exchange list. Talking of hobbies, as lately we were doing, why not develop this one? You can take it by collecting or by becoming an enthusiast in woodcutting. The "Book Plate Annual" is published by Alfred Fowler, Kansas City, Mo.

Here are some books sent in by readers for lists already printed:

H. A., Baltimore, found a brief survey of Russian history for the American reader in S. A. Korff's "History of Russia from Earliest Times": a preliminary syllabus, published by the Institute of International Education, New York City. E. J. M. (I wish he would send me his address if he wants questions answered in a reasonable time) tells E. J. M. that a list of ghost stories should have J. Lewis French's "Best Psychic Stories," the volume of supernatural tales in the eight-volume set of "Masterpieces" edited by him for Doubleday, Page, and "The Grim Thirteen," "by a man named Green, which I read with much pleasure in the Spring of 1918." F. F. K. asks why I did not recommend Algernon Blackwood's "A Prisoner in Fairyland" (Macmillan) to the man who liked "The Wind in the Willows"? Indeed it's a good book for him or anyone who likes delicate and gently-moralizing fantasy; it is the book I recommend to readers who write in every now and then, amazed at the strange power and beauty of his "Episodes Before Thirty" (Dutton) to ask which of his novels they shall read first. A Vermont correspondent even bought "A Reader's Guide Book" largely because he thought it must have a reply to a prospective Blackwoodian which appeared in this department some time ago. (By the way, the price of that priceless work is \$2.75 and Holt publishes it, so please do not send me checks while the headquarters of this department are—this Summer—across the Atlantic.) As K. H. N., Philadelphia, asks for a series of Blackwood stories, I should say that the short story "The Wendigo" is the most thrilling beginning anyone could make—it is a supernatural tale of a prehistoric survival in the North Woods—and that after the "Prisoner" I would read "The Extra Day" unless you are interested in transmigration and magic in general, in which case you can begin anywhere. I drop off as he nears Egypt.

One more hint to clubs: the University of North Carolina publishes several excellent outlines, more detailed than most of such aids are, for the study of a number of literary subjects. Now it has added "Great Composers," by Paul Weaver, to the list; these may be ordered from the University, at Chapel Hill, N. C. F. H. P., Washington, D. C., sends me a copy of the English magazine *The Gramophone*, Compton Mackenzie's avocation, saying that his phonograph's value has been greatly increased by it, especially in his increased knowledge of foreign records. H. P. S., New York, adds to my recent advice on predestination and free will Prof. George Herbert Palmer's "The Problem of Freedom," published by Houghton, Mifflin in 1911.

B. H. K., Spokane, Wash., asks for books that outline the relationships of New Thought and Christian Science to Christianity in general and our Transcendentalists in particular. He does not want "the enthusiasm of a faithful believer or the attack of some convinced defender of orthodox religion, but a reasonably fair-minded discussion."

"MODERN Religious Cults and Movements," by Gaius Glenn Atkins (Revell), would be described in some such terms as this. The greater part of the book is given to New Thought, more especially to Christian Science. The author, who is pastor of the First Congregational Church of Detroit, discusses principles and phenomena open-mindedly, looking for truth and not afraid to find it anywhere. Books like this seldom please devotees, who are often more wounded by praise for both sides than by blame for themselves alone; students welcome them. Audiences at the League for Political Education welcome Alfred W. Martin's "Psychic Tendencies of Today" (Appleton) in lecture form in 1928; in book form they are discussions of New Thought, spiritualism, psychical research, and modern materialism in relation to the idea of immortality.

F. W., Nebraska City, Neb., asks what important novels have been lately translated from the French.

THE list is unusually varied. Psychological studies as tense as Francis Carco's "The Hounded Man" (Seltzer) seldom get into fiction, French or otherwise; the strain of suspense is almost sickening, though the murder in it has been committed before the story opens and the murderer's only real danger is from his own fears. Nor do we often have in fiction psychology as subtle and concerned with so unusual a subject as in Jean Cocteau's "Thomas the Impostor" (Appleton). A boy gets into the war on a false name and with no right to be there at all, fights brilliantly and fearlessly because, one suspects, it has not occurred to him that after all it is not a game that he is playing, and is buried under a monument telling of his heroic conduct, when, one thinks affectionately, what really lies there is a boy killed in a snow-fight. A crazy time it was, those mad first weeks of war, and this book preserves some aspects of them.

The immense *Leviathan* of Marcel Proust unfolds two more volumes called "Within a Budding Grave," this time under the auspices of Seltzer. Holt begins Romain Rolland's novel that will prove to be the feminine counterpart of "Jean Christophe" and that I for one find already much more of an entertainment than that was. This first volume is "Annette and Sylvie." In the next one Sylvie will be more respectable and Annette much less. "Lazarus," by Henry Beraud (Macmillan), is another psychological romance, an amazing study of a man who comes back to life after sixteen years in another personality, due to the accident in which his beloved wife was killed. He learns this only on his return to his old world, rich, restored to health—and haunted with anguish. There are two more novels from the group that Louis Hémon left, besides "Marie Chapdelaine," the scenes of both laid in London. "Blind Man's Buff" is one, "Monsieur Ripois and Nemesis" the other (Macmillan). The publication in English of Stendhal's "Life of Henri Brulard" (Knopf) is an event: it did not appear even in France until after Stendhal's death. In Henry Céard's "A Lovely Day" (Knopf) a French housewife takes one day off to live dangerously—at least she does her best. But for this sort of thing more is required than good—or bad—intentions, as more than one middle-aged lady has learned, in and out of France. Paul Morand's "Open All Night," "Closed All Night," and "Green Shoots"—the last the English title for "Tendres Stocks"—come from Seltzer. The first two are world-renowned; the third presents three sophisticated young ladies.

YOU ARE A WRITER. Don't you ever need help in marketing your work? I am a literary adviser. For years I read for Macmillan, then for Doran, and then I became consulting specialist to them and to Holt, Stokes, Lippincott, and others, for most of whom I have also done expert editing, helping authors to make their work saleable. Send for my circular. I am closely in touch with the market for books, short stories, articles and verses, and I have a special department for plays and motion pictures, The Writers' Workshop, Inc., 135 East 58th Street, New York City.



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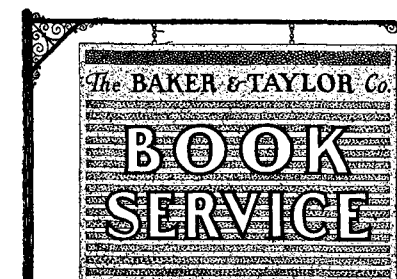
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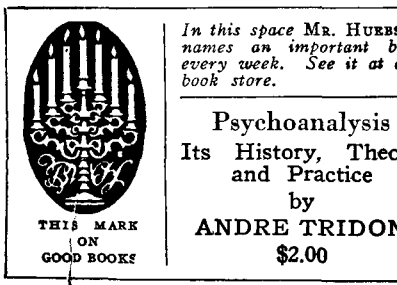
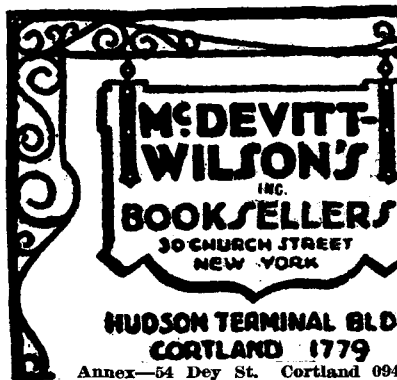
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Points of View

On Critics and Poets

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:
SIR:

Mr. Maxwell Bodenheimer's essay, "Criticism in America," in your issue for June 6, should not go uncontested, though it is difficult to find a direct approach to his general contention: it seems to be not quite precisely realized in his own mind.

Yet this much is certain: he deplores the supposed absence of an objective criticism in America, and he displays a good deal of superior impatience with an alleged neglect by critics of certain qualities of poetry which, one suspects, he imagines to be the qualities of his own and thus of his own discovery.

Indeed, the entire account of the state of our criticism and the motives of our critics he advances with a patronizing assurance of original discovery. Here one remembers some of the "new criticism" written some years ago for the *Little Review*, which passed as discovery in aesthetic principle among those who believed that criticism was not written before Margaret Anderson and the year 1900, just because they hadn't heard of it. One remembers also, in the *Little Review* (December, 1917), a letter from Ezra Pound unmistakably written to Mr. Bodenheimer: "If you knew more of what had been, you wouldn't expect people to fall in adoration before what you take to be 'new and colorful combinations,' but which people of wider reading find rather worn and unexciting. . . . The fact that you like pretty things doesn't distinguish you from 500,000 other people. . . . At twenty I emitted the same kind of asinine generalities regarding Christianity and its beauties as you now let off about poetry. . . . Mastering an art doesn't consist in trying to bluff people. . . ."

But Mr. Bodenheimer's ignorance includes much of the present also. After having ascribed inappropriate limitations to a group of journalists, who subsume under his notion of "literary critic,"—Farrar, Stallings, Maxwell Anderson, Brown who does his job well enough without pretensions to criticism—he speedily draws and quarters Mr. Mencken and Mr. Sherman with the tremendous finality of a platitude, omitting to mention that it has been said often before: both gentlemen being moralists, lack aesthetic interest; in fact, under unlike surfaces they desire the same moral ends. Apparently, to Mr. Bodenheimer, these journalists exhaust the field; he is conveniently enough unaware of Santayana, Eliot, Edmund Wilson, Conrad Aiken, who are all expositors of an objective, unmoralistic criticism and are affected not at all, or very little, by the cliques and jealousies to which Mr. Bodenheimer alludes. But then they aren't journalists; they have no interest in the editorial minutiae of judgment which control the market for verse and review in the magazines; therefore, to Bodenheimer they do not exist.

But two critics of much the same general interest as these, however, do exist—Malcolm Cowley and Gorham B. Munson. They may or may not be critics of the first rank. But if Mr. Bodenheimer cares to comment on them, he might at least read something they have written or refrain from falsifying the tendencies respectively upheld by these men. The whole program of Secession emphasized exclusively the purely formal aspects of literature and put no limits on the artist's subject-matter or attitude whatsoever; Munson wouldn't object to anybody's irony, therefore, on principle. And if either Mr. Munson or Mr. Cowley has failed to accept Bodenheimer's particular brand of irony, it is possibly because of another reason.

Moreover, it is most significant that Mr. Bodenheimer charges these critics with indifference to four of the most astonishing qualities ever discovered in literature or for it: (1) nonchalance, (2) conscious irony, (3) deliberate emotion, (4) the *romping of intellect*—! It is distressing to catch the champion of "sophisticated" intellectual subtlety committing himself to such preposterously naïve opinions; for surely the metaphysical problem of Unity and the inseparability of Attributes ought to be better grasped by such a "metaphysical" mind. But one understands his objection to Munson's remark that Pound has never found a "vital center"; for Mr. Bodenheimer apparently doesn't suspect that a poet might have a Mind. He must have these sophisticated, "deliberate emotions"; he is too wise to believe in anything but the foundations

of his own vanity; he is thus superior to the mob.

The four qualities are obviously the qualities of Mr. Bodenheimer's own verse. It is unfortunate if critics have failed to laud them (just as I, the present writer, am unfortunate in not being acclaimed a great poet—with sophisticated emotions). But one remembers Mr. Cowley's devastating critique of this "devastating poet." One remembers nothing of the kind, from any critic, about Robinson, Eliot, Elinor Wylie, John Crowe Ransom, all masters of irony after their several fashions and owners of considerable critical deference, here and abroad. How can Mr. Bodenheimer say that irony ("ironical pity") goes unrecognized? As for nonchalance and the romping of intellect (!) we are uncertain; although we have observed how annoying these are in the young and how vulgarly they adorn the mature. One thinks of twenty-year-old cigar clerks, secretly ambitious for superiority, reading bad translations of late 19th century French literature, and of Princeton sophomores, and of the Chicago-Bodenheimer-Hecht inferiority complex.

Mr. Bodenheimer's essay evaporates in a special plea for a very specialized kind of poetry (his own), which he calls metaphysical. One hardly catches John Donne having deliberate emotions, nor his intellect romping about in a welter of *savoir faire*. Historically, metaphysics is speculation about the nature of reality; vulgarly, it is anything hard to understand: Mr. Bodenheimer's verse says nothing about reality and is hard to understand. But this is not the place for an old fogey in the early twenties to offer tuition to a veteran like Maxwell Bodenheimer; but Mr. Bodenheimer's poetry, one might add, is too adjectival, that is, deals too exclusively in surfaces, to be metaphysical. It is a hazard to call it metaphysical because it is often obscure. But some of it is very good, and one hopes he will not further compromise its reputation by saying foolish and, as in the essay under scrutiny, disingenuous things about it.

ALLEN TATE.

New York City.

Mr. Guedalla Replies

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:
SIR:

The mail brings me your issue of May 30th and, with it, the indignation of your reviewer. He is distressed by the contents of a volume of mine entitled *Supers and Supermen* on the ground that "Since the publication of 'The Second Empire,' Mr. Guedalla has been exploiting the sound reputation. . . . It seems that his reputation gave Mr. Guedalla the privilege of writing whatever he pleased every week." I have to disappoint an eager critic. But I feel bound to inform you that *The Second Empire* was published in 1922, *Supers and Supermen*, a new edition of which was before your critic, in 1920. He might have discovered this fact, if he had done me the honor of a glance at my prefatory Note. But an author can readily forgive the eagerness of a critic who goes straight to his text. And no one is more acutely aware of the imperfections of his first book than the man who wrote it. But he must insist, in common fairness, that it is not treated as his latest. Your critic's manners are doubtless beyond your control; but I should be grateful if you would correct his facts.

PHILIP GUEDALLA.

London.

R. L. S.'s Birthplace

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:
SIR:

The Robert Louis Stevenson Club, having purchased R. L. S.'s birthplace—8 Howard Place, Edinburgh—will establish it as a Memorial House for the depository of his Manuscripts, Relics and Books already collected by the Club; also the late Lord Guthrie's valuable collection of Stevensoniana, lent by the City of Edinburgh, and the gifts of Sir Sidney Colvin and Sir Graham Balfour, thus making it a literary shrine for Stevenson lovers the world over.

To adequately endow the House, an urgent appeal is being made to all admirers of Stevenson to send contributions to Sir Thomas Hutchinson, Bart., the Commercial Bank of Scotland, Edinburgh. To assist in this purpose, a grand Bazaar will be held in Edinburgh, November 17th and 18th, 1925.

LILLABELLE D. PALEY.

Brookline, Mass.

Trade Winds

I'VE been so busy getting my new shop in order that not till this week could I visit Brentano's new store, on 47th Street just west of the Avenue. It is a charming and brightly decorated abbey and the site, chosen after due consultation of various oracles, ought to be a lucky one. Just where is the nave of Mr. Brentano's new cathedral, once stood the modest cot where Messrs. Harcourt and Brace began their publishing business, at the tag end of the Teens. The canvas on the stairway, where Mr. Ernest Boyd goes down to look at European periodicals, is by Edward Simmons, the veteran painter and author of "From Seven to Seventy." It represents a young woman, presumably symbolic, in a high state of exhilaration over the discovery of a book. Or perhaps it is the Muse of the Reprint Business celebrating the tidings of the birth of Horace Live-right. No bookman's visit to New York can now be complete without halting at the New Brentano's. Even one of the colored door-boys has grown sideboards in honor of the translation.

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Another shop recently opened is the Doubleday-Page branch in the Lexington Avenue lobe of the Grand Central Terminal. It has always been maintained that Westchester commuters are more literary in taste than the Long Island crowd who buzz off from Penn Station. We shall see. Cedric Crowell, the manager of the D. P. chain of now twelve boutiques, interviewed by me on this topic, stands up stoutly for the Long Islanders. "We had to put in a second store in the Long Island wing of the Penn Station, closer to the trains," he says, "because often a commuter, buying a book at our shop in the main arcade, had finished it before the Oyster Bay or Port Washington cars pulled out. We have sold three thousand copies of 'The Constant Nymph' to Long Island commuters alone."

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News for Mr. Ovington: Maggie Kennedy, author of the "Nymph," is to be married on August 1st, to David Davis, former secretary of H. H. Asquith. Her English publisher is giving her a set of table-glass, and I think the American booksellers ought to do something about this, the most exciting literary wedding since Daisy Ashford's. She dropped an unexpected Best Seller on our counters. I have a good laugh when I think of the controversy over Miss Kennedy's age. The *N. Y. Times* lists her as 27, the *Manchester Guardian* says she's over 40. What does it matter? She wrote a good book.

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I was about to say that the best small dictionary that has come into my shop in recent years is the Pocket Oxford Dictionary. But at that moment a literary critic used the word *carminative* in what I felt sure was an incorrect sense. I seized the P. O. D. to look it up; and the word wasn't there. Particularly unfortunate in an age when writers greatly need just that. So, though the P. O. D. is a magnificent little book, I still swear by the Concise Oxford Dictionary.

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The Oxford University Press isn't the only publisher in Oxford, by the way. One of the pleasantest of recent visitors here was Mr. Basil Blackwell, who carries on with taste and judgment the excellent bookselling and publishing business founded fifty years ago by his father, Mr. B. H. Blackwell, who died last year. The Blackwell shop on Broad Street, Oxford, is remembered by every bookish visitor to that city; many queer little volumes of verse, by authors who later became celebrated, were published by Mr. Blackwell in their writers' undergraduate days. Sir William Osler once said that much of the intellectual life of the Oxford students revolved about Blackwell's, and it is still true. Basil Blackwell has done a great deal to expand the publishing side of the business, and his enterprise in coming all the way to Chicago to attend the American Booksellers' convention was very characteristic. A friend of mine who knew B. B. in college days says that his pleasantest recollection of this agreeable person was when he used to play a tin whistle to provide the music for a young band of Country Dancing zealots. On the waterside meadows of the Cher, many a summer evening, these gaily hallucinated youths and maidens used to gather, after supper, and to the wheedling airs of Mr. Blackwell's rustic pipe would joyously thud out the patterns of "Gathering Peascods" and "Cuckolds All Awry." Mr. Blackwell now has no less than forty assistants in his shop, and sometimes I wish I were one of them.

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When the committee that makes the

Pulitzer Prize awards meets for its 1925 decisions, I hope it will give due consideration to Dr. Harvey Cushing's "Life of Sir William Osler." It is a noble summary of a noble life; and if one can read of the great doctor's death and how he lay his last night at Christ Church, in the scarlet gown of Oxford and his favorite copy of the "Religio" beside him—if one can read those pages without a tingling of the eyelids, yes and more, he is no man for me. * * * The runner-up for the Pulitzer biography award is equally unmistakable, so far. I mean, of course, M. R. Werner's "Brigham Young."

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Publishers and the dealers in rare books frequently get a summer vacation abroad. Gabriel Wells has gone to visit the schloss he has bought in Buda-Pesth. The *Maison Wells* it is now called; it stands, he assures me, in the very center of the city, right where the hyphen is. The plain ordinary plugging side-street bouquiniste, like me, who has only a young Amherst graduate in the shop to help him wrap packages and send out bills (I chose an Amherst man because he was the only youngster who could translate the Latin and Greek mottoes the publishers use on their colophons; no one would be so embarrassed as a publisher if asked to construe his own motto) is lucky if he gets a week-end at Atlantic Highlands. But if I can make it, this summer I'm going to have a flyer and go to the Poland Spring Hotel, Maine. Because it advertises, as its chief attractions, "Tennis, Bathing, Horseback Riding, Fishing, Library of 8,000 Volumes." Never before have I seen a hotel advertise its library. Though it is true that the Hotel Pennsylvania, here in New York, has in its library almost the only easily accessible copy of George Gissing's "House of Cobwebs" that I know of. And that reminds me: when will someone reprint Morley Roberts' "Private Life of Henry Maitland"? I have a call for it here in the shop regularly about once a month.

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It would be easier for all of us to take a European vacation if we had two stalwart sons like James F. Drake, or three like Izaak Mendoza down on Ann Street, to carry on the business. But even more valuable than sons are a globe of goldfish like Mr. Drake's. Nothing more priceless than those fish has ever been known in the trade—unless it be Fred Melcher's unimpeachable *bonhomie*. If ever a First Edition that is not completely flawless is brought into Drake's shop, at once one of the goldfish rolls over and expires of *taedium vitae*. Many another Rare Dealer would give much to know the secret of training those pets. The only drawback is that the fish will not permit Mr. Drake to keep in stock any edition whatever of Izaak Walton. Once when a very fine "Angler" was bid in by Mr. Drake at auction, the whole shoal leaped simultaneously from their tank and lay gulping on the floor.

"Wings and the Child," one of the most charming books E. Nesbit ever wrote—justly praised by Mr. Benét in this *Review* lately—is on the 50-cent counter at Liggett's in the Grand Central. And E. V. Lucas when he dropped into my shop remarked that the best fiction come out of American since O. Henry was Fanny Hurst's "Lummox." P. E. G. QUERCUS.

The Reader's Guide

(Continued from preceding page)

L. B. B., Boston, Mass., asks for books on the principles of investment.

A LIST on this subject appeared some weeks since; in addition to these and besides Henry Sturgis's "Investment: a New Profession" (Macmillan), thereon named, here are some recent publications: "The Common Sense of Money and Investments," by Merryly Stanley Rukeyser (Simon & Schuster), is for the beginner, the man or woman just entering the field of investment. There is a chapter on model investment lists for various classes and types of people; the author is a financial editor and knows not only his subject but the needs of his readers. "Common Stocks as Long Term Investments," by Edgar Lawrence Smith (Macmillan), challenges some of the principles of conservative investment, but it has had such careful testing that it is certainly no haphazard affair: 200 advance copies went out in 1923, 1,200 in 1924, all to be tried out by men of experience in the field. The result of all this, with new chapters and charts, appeared late in 1924. The problem of cycle control is vitally interesting: it is considered in "Economics of Business Cycles" by A. B. Adams (McGraw-Hill).