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## 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.

### A BALANCED RATION

FIVE WEEKS. By Jonathan French Scott (Day).

THE ALLINGHAMS. By May Sinclair (Macmillan).

REVOLT IN THE DESERT. By T. E. Lawrence (Doran).

M. H., Princeton, N. J., asks for light on "the Curse of St. Ernulphus," which he has heard, or read somewhere, is of especial severity, but he can find nothing about either malediction or saint.

SOMEHOW, having friends in Harvard, it makes me shiver a trifle when a Princeton man asks me a question like that.

It doesn't seem natural that Arnulf, or Ernulphus, should have been Bishop of Rochester, one of those "old uns" for whom Durdle's hammer was continually tapping in "Edwin Drood." It is so mild, not to say sleepy a town; even in the twelfth century it must have been placid as a crop-full bird. Yet sometime before 1124 Ernulphus evolved, from unexplained reservoirs of disapproval, the vivacious malison that bears his name, amazing alike for the recklessness of its language and the explicit nature of its details. You may find it complete, Latin and English in parallel columns, in "Tristram Shandy," when Dr. Slop and Uncle Toby are trying to find language that will fit the case of one Abadiah, who has incurred their dislike by tying some knots. Mr. Shandy brings out this magnificent formula of excommunication, but Uncle Toby, used as he is to the profanity of the troops in Flanders, feels that the blessed Ernulphus really goes a bit too far; he himself would not curse the Devil so. But the Devil, according to Dr. Slop, is cursed like this already, to all eternity. "I am sorry for it," stoutly maintains Uncle Toby.

A one-volume edition of "Tristram Shandy," by the way, is now published by Boni & Liveright, and in good type too.

It was several days after this question came before I could remember where I had read St. Ernulphus's anathema, twenty years ago, and meantime I went searching for it in all sorts of places. In the course of this inquiry Mr. James Branch Cabell blithely sent me up a side-alley that may allure others interested in commination. "The Curse of St. Gengulphus," says he, "was an extremely personal maleficence in the form of a flank attack upon his unfaithful wife. You may find the rather embarrassing details recorded in the First Series of 'The Ingoldsby Legends.'" The gayety of this reply is revealed when you read the poem. It may be added that according to the author of "The Ingoldsby Legends" Gengulphus is the Latinized form of Jingo, for this is the gentleman whose name was formerly so often used in adjurations such as "by the living jingo."

It is astonishing how much I find out by running this department. Earthly life not being long enough, or spreading in enough directions, to make use of it, I thought I was getting it ready for Heaven. But now I see that I have some provision ahead in case I am sent in the other direction.

O. B., Alabama, a free-lance writer, wishes "a clearer working knowledge of grammar learned at school," and asks if there is a combined grammar and rhetoric, also a book on the technique of modern poetry. I infer that it is for reading rather than for composing purposes.

"Good Writing," by Leonard and Fuess (Harcourt, Brace), is a high-school textbook combining grammar and rhetoric: it seems to me practical for such a purpose as this, and those to whom I have often recommended it have found it so. Add to this "Better Writing," by Henry Seidel Canby (Harcourt, Brace); it clarifies the muddle in which so many English students find themselves when at the end of four years they start out to write for themselves and for publication. No other book provides just the sort of help that this one does.

"The Forms of Poetry," by Louis Untermeyer (Harcourt, Brace), is the latest of these manuals: it is a "pocket dictionary of verse," combining a list of terms and a classification of forms, arranged alphabetically, with a sketch of the history of English poetry, compressed to a wafer but not without nourishment. "The Craft of

the Poet," by F. W. Felkin (Holt), is the American edition of an English work whose value is greater than its size, for though but an outline, it is one that the student is expected and inspired to fill out for himself. There are brief but wise sections on the classic metres, the combinations of lines into continuous poetry, and the modern revolt against poetic conventions.

D. A. W., Raleigh, N. C.; S. E. W., San Francisco, and G. W. L., Bellingham, Wash., followed with interest the discussion on the merits of various Italian and French dictionaries lately conducted in this department and provided themselves therefrom. Now one wishes an equally good dictionary for German and the others one for Spanish.

MY own suggestion is Arturo Cuyás's "New Spanish-English and English-Spanish Dictionary" (Appleton, \$3.50), which has taken the place of the famous work of Velasquez de la Cadeña. It is an abridged dictionary with more than 4,000 modern words and 20,000 acceptations, idioms, and technical terms not in the latest edition of any similar work. The eighth edition of a standard German work, "Flügel-Schmidt-Tanger Wörterbuch für Hand-und Schulgebrauch" (Lemcke), is in two volumes; this is widely used in libraries. I am told that W. D. Whitney's "German-English Dictionary" (Holt, \$2.50) satisfied the needs of a young friend of mine at college, and another is using Cassell's "German-English Dictionary" (Funk & Wagnall, \$2.50) in making some rather important translations. As before, I welcome advice on this subject based on experience, either in translating or field use.

LIGHT and pleasant novels continue to drift in even now: "Detroit" has just forwarded Simeon Strunsky's "Professor Latimer's Progress" (Holt), a "clever, witty medley," Frederick Niven's "A Tale that Is Told" (this utterly charming book is out of print, but maybe readers could get it secondhand or in libraries), Phyllis Bottome's "Belated Reckoning"—"the same sort of delightfully maddening servants one encounters in G. B. Stern's 'Thunderstorm,'" Henry Harland's "My Lady Paramount" (come to think of it, there should be possibilities in this for Mr. Zukor); J. C. Snaith's gay and witty "Araminta" (Appleton); Julian Street's "Mr. Bisbee's Princess," and Allen Updegraff's "Second Youth" (a delightful extravaganza of a New York silk salesman).

AN anonymous upstate searcher for the stenographer who married her boss reports that two came pretty near it: Wade wanted Sally in Elizabeth Newport Hepburn's "The Wings of Time," and May Sinclair's Mary Olivier missed marrying her boss by ten days—"but," says my informant, "Richard could stand her in the room when he was writing his 'Euripides.'" As Stacy Aumonier was one of the writers whose short stories ranked high in favor in the "Three Star" symposium, it should be noted that he has a new volume of them, "The Baby Grand" (Holt), that I have found both entertaining and substantial; certain of these linger in the mind by reason of right-mindedness.

CLARENCE STRATTON, Director of English in Cleveland's schools, and author of "Producing in Little Theatres" (Holt), is delighted to find that I did not notice the sutures in the edition of Trelawny's "Adventures of a Younger Son" that he prepared for Harcourt, Brace. As a matter of fact, he reduced the text from some 200,000 words to fewer than 95,000. It may be recalled that I said I read it for the first time in this form and would not have known that it had been cut. Rev. Charles C. Bubb, D.D., Secretary of the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Ohio, tells me that there is a very good edition of this work in two volumes, in Bohn's Popular Library, new edition, and that the type is easy to read. This is a good chance to tell parents, teachers, and librarians that Harcourt, Brace is just bringing out an adventure story for boys by a new writer—new to me at least—"The Adventures of a Trafalgar Lad," by John Lesterman, whose dignified, almost reticent style in setting forth scenes of swift and startling action is in the manner of the older narrators. It is rare enough to find a smashing story for boys written in admirable English; here is one I shall keep at hand.

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## Points of View

### Apollinaire

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:

SIR:

In "Prejudices" (Fifth Series), H. L. Mencken devotes some pages to Guillaume Apollinaire and quotes a writer who declares that Apollinaire was the son of an archbishop and a noble Polish lady, that he was born in Rome and baptized in the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore. Mencken says that on the contrary Apollinaire, "like all the French with a sense of humor," was a German Jew, that his name was Speiseweisser and his mother's Schmidt, and that he was born in Germany.

I knew Apollinaire, and I thought he looked as if he had Jewish blood. He always denied this himself and even resented it. Just before the war he challenged to a duel a journalist who had written that he was a Jew, and exacted a public withdrawal of the statement. Yet he was not anti-Semitic; more than once in his writings he speaks favorably and even with liking of the Jews, and he had many Jewish friends. At least one of these, Max Jacob, who although a Catholic by religion is a Jew by race, has said that there was nothing specifically Jewish about Apollinaire. He gave me the impression of being shy, especially with women, and Jews are not often that. Like many shy people, men and women, he considered himself and others in an ironical way which with him was never bitter. He was very good-natured and willing to help others, and those are more Jewish than Christian characteristics—at least so I have found.

Shortly after his death I published in *Albert Jay Nock's* paper, *The Freeman*, an article on Apollinaire in which I gave the facts as to his birth and origin so far as they are known. I said that his name was Wilhelm Apollinaire Kostrowitzky, that he was born in Rome, baptized in the Church of St. Mary-Major, and spent his youth in Nice, where he attended the Lycée. These statements have never been controverted and I don't see how they can be. His widow has all the official documents, including the certificate of baptism. Several of his schoolmates remember him perfectly well at Nice. When he joined up for the war his *livret*

*militaire*, which is in his widow's possession, was inscribed with his name as I have given it. At that moment it would have been a very serious thing for him if he had made a false declaration: it might have cost him his life. Again, when he was so unjustly accused and imprisoned in the case of the robbery from the Louvre, there was some talk of expelling him from France. His antecedents were thoroughly investigated by the French police and his identification documents were found to be authentic.

The algebraical *X* in Apollinaire's ancestry is his father. His mother, whom I saw a few times, was a Polish Catholic, very devout and also superstitious, and very Slav in character. When her son was at the war she sent him ikons of various kinds, scapulars, and medals. She survived him and had Masses said for his soul. She did not seem to understand the value of her son Guillaume—whom, by the bye, she always called Wilhelm—and seemed more interested in his brother. For the "noble Polish lady" I should not care to vouch; but I cannot tell. After all, nobility has as many grades in Poland as it used to have in Russia. She had at least one sign of genuine nobility, and that was a total indifference to what other people thought of what she did. Strangely enough, Apollinaire, his brother in Mexico, and their mother were all swept off the earth within a few months of one another.

As I say, the puzzle which remains, and perhaps will always remain, is who and what was his father? It was himself who put about the legend of the archbishop. And he invented for himself other picturesque and romantic paternities. When such things are done it is generally a sign that the paternity is not very clear, or, at any rate, that it will not bear looking into. But an air of mystery clung about Apollinaire, and he was glad to thicken the mystery. Among the young Frenchmen who followed him and marvelled at him there was not one who had the clue. He was a magician, a wonder-worker, like the magicians of old, Simon and Paracelsus and Merlin, and there was something magical in his passage on earth.

Paris.

VINCENT O'SULLIVAN.

### Whitman Again

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

One of the most cosmic idiocies ever perpetrated is the notion that Walt Whitman is an innovation. The Right Thinkers, needless to say, briefly remark that he is a bounder, or, at the least, an ass (see comment by Sydney Lanier); but the pseudo-esthetes (bless their little, mystical tin hearts and harps!) would have it that he is a veritable locomotive of literature—brand new, and shining with inhibitions. This theory is the most comical monstrosity encountered in many a day. (I will here say that the more intelligent have always recognized his antecedents, but others have not).

Now, I should like to quote a magnificent poem of mine, which was written when I was six, or thereabouts. I claim nothing for the merits of the poem itself, although it is my fond belief that it represents fine art at its best, but my primary purpose in giving it here is to show my point. Here is the gem:

#### THE KILLER

(1)  
Moansa the killer,  
He who wandereth.  
Ah! those padded feet  
Like the feet of a panther  
trod that grassy soil.  
(2)  
Like a snake he cometh.  
Look! he raiseth that cruel spear!

(b)  
Oh! that crushing blow!  
May I never see that spear again.

Thus it is, inexplicable division (1), (2-a), (2-b), and all. I do not quote it to illustrate my early mastery of the poetic art, but to show that this tendency—much further extended as in the case of Whitman—may be infused by ancestral blood into the very babe himself. I'll admit that my above masterpiece little resembles Whitman even at his worst, and more nearly approaches the inspired Longfellow and his wondrous Hiawatha, Mudweashka, and the rest; but the tendency to tear madly around the scenery to the tune of untrammelled verse is there.

To discover this *motif* carried to its utmost extent you should consult the Bible, which after all contains certain works of

very great beauty. I refer you, just for an example, to the renowned Song which is alleged to have been sung by the redoubtable Solomon, he of the trillion *fraus*. More clear and limpid than Whitman, although without Whitman's ideas, or any idea at all other than to produce voluptuous music, Whitman's "innovation" is here found. Whitman obtained much of his theory directly from this book. His poems are chants, just as the Bible poems are chants, and in their skeletons they are amazingly similar. Whitman did bring forth his inhibitions, but to say that they got their first birth in his mind is nonsense.

I have said nothing new. To say nothing new is becoming tragic: we all do it now. But if I have convinced any long-haired ass that Whitman was not strictly original, or any Fundamentalist that Whitman certainly can be no bounder if we are to judge from our Book (how many Fundamentalists have ever read the Song of Solomon?) I shall be happy for at least a little while.

JAMES G. WING

Mechanicsburg, Ohio.

### A Poe Society

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:

SIR:

The Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore was created by a small group of Baltimoreans in January, 1924, for the purpose of cherishing the name and fame of the poet in the city which furnished him such important inspiration during his life and which holds all that remains mortal of his body. Through its efforts the grave in Westminster Churchyard has received adequate care and preservation, and through annual public observances, addresses each year by an outstanding authority on the poet, interest is created in the personality and work of Poe. As a further step in its program an exhibit of first editions and objects connected with his life was held this year, and this will be repeated in 1929 on a larger scale. Over 400 people visited the exhibit in 1927, from many sections of the country.

There still remain many cherished objects for the Society to accomplish. Reminders of the poet still existing in the city should be preserved and restored, relics collected and brought together in an accessible place for public appreciation, and a city memorial, perhaps containing a collection of Poe's works, established. These, while of particular interest to Baltimoreans, it is felt, are also of interest to every admirer of the poet in all parts of the country. It is therefore felt that, whereas in the past membership in the Society has been limited to Baltimoreans, it may properly now be offered to all who call themselves friends of our first poet. Membership dues are one dollar and five dollars a year and may be sent to the treasurer, Mr. S. Page Nelson, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland. The officers for the current year are: Honorary president, Lizette W. Reese; president, John C. French; secretary, Caroline Hayden, and vice president,

KENNETH REDE.

4 Norwood Place, Baltimore, Md.

### The Short Story

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

In a recent editorial you tell us that the art of the short story is dead, and that its spirit has gone into the novel of flowing consciousness. Mr. Lloyd Morris says that in America the short story is bankrupt. There is plenty of machinery for turning it out, but no material to put into it. That you are both right, in the main, goes without saying. The inartistic short story, compounded of pep and hokum, flourishes like a lusty weed. The artistic short story—not the stodgy character-study which often poses as art, but the wistful and delicate flower of tragedy and ironic pity—this withers on its stem. America has no soil to sustain it.

Yet the writers are not altogether to blame. They are the victims of ingenuity, not—as Mr. Morris says—of too much technique. Technique in any art is held to include whatever is not individual and original to the artist. Cultural background and a broad knowledge of literary standards are as much a part of technique as the mechanical structure is. Writers who have been misled into believing that stories can be built upon the same principles of meaningless intricacy that characterize cross-word puzzles, and with about as much emotional content, may give the name of technique to their trick-work, but the higher technique of charm and clarity in word-handling is beyond them.

Nevertheless, we have artists enough to keep the art alive. What we need is an art-market and an art-loving public. There

is a place for stories with a punch, for stories with a moral, for heroic stories and experimental stories, but if there is a market for the story written with beauty for the sake of beauty, and nothing more, I do not know what it is. Editors, in the main, are splendid fellows, but they are also intense and portentous fellows, serious about weightier things than art, and with ears alert for rumors from the circulation-office. Release an editor from fear, and there is a chance that he might take the risk of publishing something undynamic and unsentimental, for his public to take or leave as they like. Of course, it might be trash. An editor would have to be an artist himself to be sure that the elusive and poignant quality which he felt without comprehending, was the real thing and not an imitation. Perhaps we shall have such editors, some day.

There may be more vitality in the short story than you suspect. What it needs most of all is encouragement and a place to grow in, as an art, with all the reticent beauty and sincerity that the word connotes.

H. M. HAMILTON

Brooklyn.

### On the Air

THE following ten magazine articles, selected by a council of librarians as outstanding contributions to the periodical literature of March have been digested and broadcast under the auspices of *The Saturday Review of Literature* by Station WOR.

THOSE STUPID POLICEMEN. George S. Brooks, in *Scribner's*.

Mr. Brooks charges that partly due to the attitude of the average citizen the average policeman is lazy, incompetent, stupid, and dishonest. He cites numerous examples to prove his contention. Then, he constructs his ideal policeman.

THE RISE OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN. William E. Dodd, in *Century*.

An instalment of a short biography of Abraham Lincoln covering mainly the events in Lincoln's life leading up to the Civil War, his conduct during the war, ending with Lincoln's appointing McClellan to command in the East.

THE AMERICAN SECRET. Thomas T. Read, in *Atlantic Monthly*.

Mr. Read discovers the secret of America's success, analyzes it, tries to adapt American business methods to foreign countries, and finds that after all there are no workers like Americans and hence no place like America.

MUSSOLINI, RED AND BLACK. Francis Hackett, in *Survey Graphic*.

In a special issue of *Survey Graphic* entitled "Fascism and the Spirit of 1776" this article is outstanding. It presents a full length portrait of the genius of the new Caesarism etched by a master hand in psychological portrayal.

CHEER UP, AMERICA. William Allen White, in *Harper's Magazine*.

This is the open season for strident critics of American life. Mr. White points out for their benefit some of the good things for which our civilization stands, and which they seem in danger of forgetting.

JAPAN LOOKS AT AMERICA. K. K. Kawakami, in *Harper's Magazine*.

A Japanese, resident in America, tells us politely but frankly what his countrymen think of our foreign policy today, and especially our attitude toward Japan, China, and the problems of the Pacific.

THE LAST JUDGMENT. J. B. S. Haldane, in *Harper's Magazine*.

An outstanding English scientist prophesies the end of the world as it might happen, according to the latest finding of science. The earth at last becomes uninhabitable, but man, unconquerable, succeeds in colonizing Venus.

DIVORCE PUBLICITY HERE AND ABROAD. Judson C. Welliver, in *Review of Reviews*.

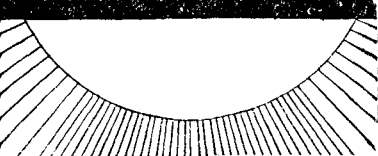
The New York State Legislature is now considering an act which restricts the reporting of proceedings in divorce litigation. Mr. Welliver reviews similar legislation in England and France, and reports the attitude of many Americans.

MADAME SCHUMANN-HEINK. Told to Mary Lawton, in *Good Housekeeping*.

In this instalment of her series, the famous contralto continues the intimate story of her crowded life. She tells mainly of her love for her second husband, Schumann, her work with him in Germany, and her debut in America.

THE LAWS WE ESCAPE. William Seagle, in *American Mercury*.

Thousands of idiotic laws are proposed annually in the legislatures of these incomparable States which, by the grace of God, do not reach the statute books. Mr. Seagle presents samples of them from all over the country.



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