

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*.

H. W. O., Chapel Hill, N. C., asks for books about wanderers and hoboes, saying that books like Tully's "Jarnegan" and Harry Kemp's "Tramping on Life" may be included in this field.

JIM TULLY'S "Beggars of Life: a Hobo Autobiography" (A. & C. Boni) and "Jarnegan" have just been rounded out by "Circus Parade" (A. & C. Boni), his experiences with "Cameron's World's Greatest Combined Shows" in the Far South. Was there not once a tradition current among stay-at-homes that however loose-lived the stage might be, the life of circus families was of almost cloying respectability? Mr. Tully's notes, set down with dogged delight in gore and gorillas, burst this sweet dream: there is scarcely a respectable moment in the book. It is even less virtuous than the stage representation of such an enterprise, Kenyon Nicholson's "The Barker" (French), which has reached book-form just in time to turn an appropriate sidelight on "Circus Parade"—and as exciting an entertainment as the play. Harry Kemp's autobiography has been continued by "More Miles" (Boni & Liveright); the recast "Adventures of Johnny Walker, Tramp," published last year by Jonathan Cape, is the period in the career of W. H. Davies that comes between his "Adventures of a Super-Tramp" and "Later Days." Two small sidelights on the literature of the road are published by the A. No. 1 Press, Erie, Pa.; "From Coast to Coast with Jack London," by A. No. 1, the famous tramp, and "Mother Delcassée of the Hoboes." Nathan Kussy's "The Abyss" (Macmillan) is a novel of tramp life, and its most realistic play is Maxwell Anderson's "Outside Looking In"—(based on Jim Tully's "Beggars of Life"), unless one takes in the vast field of Russian vagabondage and includes Gorky's "Lower Depths" (Brentano). Indeed, any tramp list should include Gorky's "Through Russia" (Everyman's), and "In the World" (Century).

Glen Hawthorne Mullin, in "The Adventures of a Scholar Tramp" (Century), gives sociologists something to chew on and the general reader an idea of tramp life in America as it impressed a man of education and a good mixer. "Tramping with a Poet in the Rockies," by Stephen Graham (Appleton), is not in the hobo class; it is the companion-piece to Vachel Lindsay's "Going to the Sun" (Appleton), and belongs with books of voluntary and short-term vagabonding, like Vachel Lindsay's "Adventures While Preaching the Gospel of Beauty," and "Handbook for Beggars" (Macmillan).

"The Hobo: the Sociology of the Homeless Man," by Nels Anderson (University of Chicago), describes the life of homeless men and migratory workers in and around Chicago, their camps and jungles, restaurants and stores, ways of travel and reasons for leaving home, occupations, health conditions and even songs, on which there is a section that will interest collectors. A new edition of the book has just been published. "Why There Are Vagrants," by F. C. Lanbach (Columbia) is based on an examination of one hundred men. Other books like this are listed in "Vagrancy," a bibliography published by the Russell Sage Foundation in 1925. Considering the subjects historically, two recent books make delightfully discursive reading: "English Way-faring Life in the Middle Ages," a long-admired work by J. J. Jusserand, has appeared in a new edition (Methuen), and for early America there is Richardson Wright's "Hawkers and Walkers" (Lippincott), illustrated with sixty-eight old prints and telling stories of peddlers, preachers, doctors, actors, river men, vendors, and other American itinerants. "The Tramping Methodists," an early novel by Sheila Kaye-Smith (Dutton), is accurate enough in detail to be added to the historical section.

For the technique of tramping for pleasure Stephen Graham's "The Gentle Art of Tramping" (Appleton) is the most comprehensive guide; it is based on experience literally world-wide and shows this in its reflections as well as its instructions. A part of the invaluable "Camping and Woodcraft," by Horace Kephart (Macmillan), is given to tramping. The smallest book on the subject is also one of the most practical: "Tramping and Trailing with the Girl Scouts" (Girl Scouts, Inc.). This is a pamphlet that weighs scarcely anything but gives all information needed for organizing and conducting group expeditions, with sec-

tions on food, shelter, first-aid, packs and fires, sanitation, songs, and impromptu entertainments. There is even an excellent selection of poetry-books for a camp library (beginning with that best of outdoor anthologies, "The Gypsy Trail" [Kennerley]), and a few sources for story-telling. I am glad to see among these the junior Everyman's known as "The King's Treasures," these combine small size and light weight with large type and are especially good for reading aloud. The titles range among the classics.

THE inquirer lately looking for torture-books will find a chapter devoted to the use of torture in legal proceedings in the Middle Ages, in "The Old Yellow Book," by John Marshall Gest, Judge of the Orphan's Court, Philadelphia (University of Pennsylvania). This is a complete new translation, differing in some important details from those hitherto made, of the collection of documents concerning a medieval murder-case that was the source of Robert Browning's "The Ring and the Book," and indirectly the inspiration of the play "Caponsacchi," drawn from it to the greater glory of Walter Hampden. There is a curious charm, even to the casual reader who may chance to begin this fat volume, in the coils and repetitions of this ancient law-report, going after its facts first from one direction, then from another: I recommend it to Edmund Lester Pearson, who has no doubt already ordered it from the advance notices. But Judge Gest has his doubts about Pompilia.

The mass of Browning literature has a new addition so modern in spirit that one is somewhat surprised to find it so little iconoclastic: "One Word More on Browning," by Frances Theresa Russell (Stanford University Press). This is a series of revaluations in relation to the life of today and its forms of expression in literature. I know of no book of equal scholarship so likely to induce an interest in a beginner in the poetry of Browning: I am especially grateful for a chapter on "his saving grace of pessimism," because it may change the ideas of those who know this poet by one line alone not only on the poet, but on the nature of pessimism. The feature of this book that makes it indispensable for library equipment is as good a bibliography as any student could wish: not too bulky for steady use, provided with brief but sufficient comment, and divided to make reference most easy.

Returning to tortures, the subject is discussed at length in Thomas Mann's "The Magic Mountain" (Knopf)—but then so is almost everything else.

A. H. F., Lake Charles, La., finds that the books on psychology that have come his way are too advanced for him; what is a good introduction to the subject?

MARY WHITON CALKINS'S "First Book in Psychology" (Macmillan) is so well-adapted to its purpose—the introduction of the subject to adults intelligent but uninformed on these matters—that it is no wonder it is generally advised as a beginner's book.

The inquirer who desires to discover the various lines of approach before he allies himself to a particular school may find material for information in Isaac Madison Bentley's "The Field of Psychology" (Appleton), a survey of individual, social, and genetic experience. Everett Dean Martin's "Psychology: What it Has to Teach You About Yourself and Your World" (People's Institute) was first given in lecture-form and retains a quality of speech that makes it attractive to beginners, while it is trustworthy for students.

P. E. T., Casadero, Cal., asks for books on the habits of snakes, especially rattlers, in the West.

"THE REPTILE BOOK," by Raymond Ditmars (Doubleday, Page), is a large and well-illustrated book in the "Nature Library" familiar to many readers; it has pictures in color and photographs. The same authority's "Reptiles of the World," another large volume, is published by Macmillan. One of the recent publications for the University of Michigan by Macmillan is a small but complete "Key to the Snakes of the United States, Canada, and Lower California." Somehow I cannot accustom my mind to the idea of a key to a snake. The publications of the California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco, will be useful to this inquirer; they have included several monographs on snakes in

their published proceedings. The Smithsonian Institution's publications include some that may be useful.

D. F., San Francisco, Cal., asks for a practical book on concentration and methods of study, for one who has been away from school for a number of years and is planning to conduct a class of young employees of financial institutions.

THE most recent and so far as I can find the most thorough-going work of this kind is "Learning How to Study and Work Effectively," by William Frederick Book (Ginn). It is meant for first-year college classes learning how to study, for group reading by teachers or others, or for anyone wishing to make the best of his abilities in the time at his command. It is in five parts, developing the subject from its physiological and psychological basis to the performance of specific tasks by the application of general principles, making a book of over 400 pages.

A club in Sacramento, Cal., has been reading "The Life and Times of Rodrigo Borgia," by Arnold H. Matthew (Brentano) and has been thereby inspired to continue the study of Borgia family history for the coming season.

RAFAEL SABATINI, whose "Banner of the Bull" (Houghton Mifflin) is a popular novel for this period, has made a serious contribution to historical biography in his "The Life of Cesare Borgia" (Houghton Mifflin). His play "The Tyrant" (Hutchinson) is based on the same career. Arthur Symon's play "Cesare Borgia" (Brentano) is in the same volume with his "Isult of Brittany" and "The Toy Cart," and there is a play, "Cesare Borgia," by Claude Radcliffe (French). Count Gobineau's "The Renaissance" (Putnam), is made up of five historic scenes centering on as many famous men: Savonarola, Cesare Borgia, Jules II, Leo X, and Michael Angelo; his "The Golden Flower" (Putnam) contains the essays written as prefaces to these scenes. In Mrs. Leyal's "The Magic of Herbs" (Harcourt, Brace), lately described here, there is some reference to the poison-making of Lucretia Borgia. A play, "Lucretia Borgia," by Sydney Salsberg (Dorrance), has been lately published: Gregorovius's "Lucretia Borgia, According to Documents of Her Day" (Appleton), is out of print, and so are the biographies of Cesare Borgia by J. L. Garner (McBride), and W. H. Woodward (Dutton), Fyvie's "Story of the Borgias" (Putnam), and Justin McCarthy's novel, "The Gorgeous Borgias" (Harpers). Joseph McCabe's novel, "The Pope's Favorite" (Dodd, Mead) deals with the Borgia family, and Alexandre Dumas's "The Borgias" is one of the chapters of "The Book of the Rogue," compiled by J. L. French (Boni & Liveright). To round off this collection it must be noted that the Universal Knowledge Foundation, 119 East 57th Street, N. Y., publishes in five volumes the "Material for a History of Pope Alexander VI," by Mgr. P. Van Roo.

The New Books

Poetry

(Continued from preceding page)

SELECTED LYRICS OF AMELIA JOSEPHINE BURR. Doran. 1927. \$2.

Miss Burr has for years been an accomplished poet of the periodicals and has pub-

lished a number of books. In the present one she has selected from her many lyrics and has presented a tithe of her work in attractive form. Miss Burr's method is simple and direct. Her more fervid and subtle love poems are not to be found here. The opening poems of this volume are from an elder and wiser point of view, or so it would seem. "A Lynmouth Widow" is a good example of her direct treatment of love and sorrow. "God's Challenge" is vigorous. "Surrender" has a certain inevitability in the phrasing, and is psychologically true. There are poems concerning England and other places, there are gypsying songs and songs of the common way. "The Wedding Journey" concerns an age-old situation but has charm and pathos. The sonnets "Unpunished?" and "The Price" are psychologically interesting. "The Mother of Judas" is originally conceived. "Songs of a Child," however, have no great originality, and "Songs of Nature," though "The Clothes Line" is entertaining (and hardly Nature), are merely gently sentimental, on the whole. But "Magdalen to Christ" has nobility; "A Song of Living" has courage. The qualities of her nature manifest in Miss Burr's poems are admirable, but her method of writing is hardly remarkable. Triteness and flatness of statement are not altogether alien to her verse. She remains a workmanlike but a distinctly minor poet.

CHOSEN POEMS. By DOUGLAS AINSLIE. Holliday Bookshop: 49 East 49th Street. 1926.

Mr. Ainslie's book bears a preface by Gilbert K. Chesterton who calls attention to his "variety of scenes and settings and sources of cultural inspiration." Mr. Ainslie is a friend of Croce's and has a decided preference for the Italian scene. He can also translate from the Sanskrit, however, and write of China or Greece. We like his "Sea Eagle," and the playful verse upon the word "The" is unusually well turned for a thing so slight. He also writes well on Venetia Digby and can handle a Scots ballad, as indeed he should be able to. The stately and courtly Sapphics tendered to the Duchess of Marlborough have an antique grace. In general Mr. Ainslie strikes us as a cultivated gentleman whose poetry bears the stamp both of scholarship and enthusiasm for the great traditions. He is also, as Mr. Chesterton says, a citizen of the world and yet a thoroughly native Scot.

FAGOTS OF CEDAR. By IVAN SWIFT. Bookfellow Edition. Goodhart, Michigan: Chippewa Cove Woods. 1926. \$3.

We are late in reviewing Mr. Swift's book of poems because it demands a careful reading than most. "The Blue Crane" is a beautiful poem in free verse. "Retrenchment," for its depth of feeling guarded in the expression, is another. There are lumberjack songs and love songs. When Mr. Swift waxes very colloquial he is apt to mar his poems with too much swagger and too many italicized words. But there is gusto to the "Song of the Cedar-Maker," "The Way of the North" is dramatically etched, some of the verses in "On the North-Bound Train" are vivid, and, perhaps "I Take the Slashing Yet" is the most successful of all his poems in vernacular. Then we have "The Portrait," in free verse, de-

(Continued on next page)

"Of all the young American novelists, pre-eminently the best and most vital."

Says John Carter, in the N. Y. Times of

LOUIS BROMFIELD

Pulitzer Prize Winner, whose new novel

A GOOD WOMAN

is being greeted with warm enthusiasm. *Herschel Brickell*, N. Y. *Evening Post*, says: "It is renewed evidence of the strongest kind that in Louis Bromfield we have one of the best and at the same time one of the most promising novelists writing English today."

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On a week-end jaunt through the Westchester hills last October, *The Inner Sanctum* began secret and patient Negotiations and Arrangements on An Editorial Project of the First Magnitude . . . Today it can be told:

In alliance with *The Forum* magazine, SIMON and SCHUSTER have the honor of announcing the establishment of the FRANCIS BACON AWARD for the HUMANIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE. A Prize of \$7,500 in cash and a gold medal will be presented to the author of that new work which, in PROFESSOR JAMES HARVEY ROBINSON'S now historic phrase, "carries on the conscious adventure of humanizing knowledge."

The award is named after FRANCIS BACON as a tribute to his daring and monumental achievement in taking "all knowledge for his province."

SIMON and SCHUSTER will publish the winning book and *The Forum* magazine will serialize it.

The terms of the award are broad enough to embrace virtually any distinguished non-fiction work. Briefly, the aim of the prize is to encourage and reward both new authors and established writers, who can organize and clarify specialized knowledge in any interesting and significant field—be it biography, music, art, philosophy, psychology, astronomy, history or any of the other arts and sciences.

The Inner Sanctum respectfully submits that had the FRANCIS BACON AWARD been established several years ago, and had the manuscripts been offered in competition, the following would undoubtedly have won the accolade:

The Outline of History by H. G. WELLS
Creative Chemistry by E. F. SLOSSON
The Mind in the Making by JAMES HARVEY ROBINSON
The Story of Philosophy by WILL DURANT
Why We Behave Like Human Beings by GEORGE A. DORSEY
The Story of Mankind by HENDRIK WILLEM VAN LOON
Queen Victoria by LYTON STRACHEY
Our Times—The Turn of the Century by MARK SUBLYAN
Microbe Hunters by PAUL DE KRUIF
The Decline of the West by O. SPENGLER
The Travel Diary of a Philosopher by COUNT HERMANN KEYSERLING

The JURY OF AWARD for the FRANCIS BACON prize includes:

DR. GEORGE A. DORSEY, author of *Why We Behave Like Human Beings*
DR. WILL DURANT, author of *The Story of Philosophy*
DR. HENRY GODDARD LEACH, editor of *The Forum Magazine*
DR. EDWIN F. SLOSSON, Director of Science Service and author of *Creative Chemistry*
DR. HENDRIK WILLEM VAN LOON, author of *The Story of Mankind*

Associated with these eminent judges will be an equally distinguished council of specialists, including:

DR. JAMES HENRY BREASTED, orientalist, of the University of Chicago
DR. EDWARD GRANT CONKLIN, zoologist, of Princeton University
DR. JOHN DEWEY, philosopher, of Columbia University
DR. VERNON L. KELLOGG, Director of the National Research Council
PROFESSOR FRANK JEWETT MATHER, art critic, of Princeton
DR. HARLOW SHAPLEY, astronomer, of Harvard University
PROFESSOR WILLIAM MORTON WHEELER, entomologist of Harvard University
DR. HENRY RADFIELD OSBORN, President of the American Museum of Natural History.

Full details regarding THE FRANCIS BACON AWARD may be had by writing directly to *The Inner Sanctum*.

At the same time, inquiring readers of *The Inner Sanctum* may also ask for the 1927 Fall catalogue of SIMON and SCHUSTER, which has just come from the press today . . . It contains the first announcements of the forthcoming books by ARTHUR SCHNITZLER, FRANZ WERFEL, WILL DURANT, HALDANE MACFALL, ISAAC GOLDBERG, SAMUEL CHOTZINOFF, and—what an illustrious year for our contract department!—PLATO and ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER. There are important books by new writers, too.

—ESSANDESS

The Phoenix Nest

I MIGHT as well introduce myself at once. My name is O'Reilly, and I am an office-desk mouse and have been for some time. I got my name from a man I used to work for who was then on the city desk of the *Evening*—well, he might not like it if I gave away the name of his paper. . . .

I decided several years ago to move in higher circles. I had got pretty low at one time. At one time I worked my way through most of the desks of the editors of the *Tabloids*, and,—my dear! . . . but that's all behind me now. Everyone has to have some sort of a past. I have been really cultivating myself of late years. I have worked for the *Literary Digest*, where the name attracted me. But I can't say that I think it's the correct name for that periodical. The kind of coated paper they use is awfully indigestible. I was brought up on newsprint, and like it. But on the *Literary Digest* I got such constantly heavy meals, that I used to sleep most of the time. And that isn't the way a working mouse must do if he is going to bring home the bacon for his family. . . .

What do I bring home? Oh, odds and ends I find. It's enough to keep the family going. I never take home chewing gum. There are always odds and ends of chocolate around, there are crumbs of sandwiches. Bottles I can't handle. They're too big and too heavy, and besides, all my family have gone strongly Prohibition since I nosed into an open flask last year and came home quite empty-handed and hilarious. On these high-class periodicals, however, like the *Saturday Review* and the fine old long-established *Police Gazette*, you don't run into so much of that—bottles I mean. Life-Savers one finds a good many of. Stenographers' desks are, of course, the main sources of income. This guy I'm working for now, because he's on vacation, he's a Phoenix, or something, but I must say he doesn't seem to be so open-handed as some of the Elks and Woodmen of the World and Rotarians and Kiwanis members I have worked for in my time. I guess it either isn't very much of an order or else he isn't very high up in it. . . .

Still, at one time, about six months back, he used to buy those disks of Peter's milk chocolate and keep the container open in his right-hand upper desk drawer and then forget all about it. And it's very filling. And we made a new crib for the baby out of the container. So one night late when he was sitting up here all alone sort of moaning and saying, "Oh, these damn Nests! Oh, these damn Nests!" I got jerry to what was on his mind. He had to have a lot of them written in advance before he could go on his vacation. So,—well, the week before he had laid in a new supply of that chocolate and then forgotten all about it, so I said to myself, "Don't worry, old gink, I'll help you out while you're gone." And after he was gone that night I sat up at his machine and began to try my paws, and the first thing you know I had typed him this:

MisteR pheenix ALl rite dont WOxyzRRy
?&%\$ I ile do your jobe wile YOOR way sineD
O'Reilly

I kept a carbon of the note, and you can see how I have improved. I've been all through the Oxford pocket dictionary he had since, for one thing. I nearly got a cute indigestion over some of it, but I think I now show my mastery of English, to say nothing of grammar and punctuation. Well, anyway, the next day, the Old Man left a note for me when he cleared out of here in the evening, and it said:

I don't know who you are, O'Reilly. Do you clean windows? In any case, if you have any time off to do an extra Nest or two after office hours, here's a box of cigars. I'm leaving tomorrow. A thousand blessings on you. THE PHOENICIAN.

Well, hoping he would come in the next days, even if he was leaving, and because that box of cigars was too heavy for me to negotiate (Oxford Dictionary), I typed out a snappy rejoinder (Oxford Dictionary) right there. I said:

doWnt smoak beside it IS# the box I mene
Two hevY BUT meny thankz you sEe I
dow? ;nt clean WINDoWs x i am a moose BUT
wil DO it ennyway? OW about sum CHEez?

Well, he put a last reply on his desk, which I must say rather hurt my feelings at the time, but now I see it was all due to my spelling, because I had not been through the Oxford Dictionary at that time. He said:

A MOOSE! GOOD GOD! BUT DON'T
YOU MEAN AN ELK?

Well, anyway, he's gone; so, as I say, I am going to do his column for him for a while, unless they chase me out of here.

But it is all right, except the cleaning woman came in the other evening and chased me out of the typewriter with a broom, but she didn't know I had written what was in the machine, so when it got dark I crept back again and, working entirely by the touch system, which I often employ, I tore off what I thought was a pretty good little essay on literature for mice; so I am putting it in here to fill out, because it is brief, I think, and to the point:

In the first place, it is very difficult to get a mouse to read unless there is some cheese in it for him. It is not that mice are not intellectual. A mouse can figure out things pretty fast. The instincts of a mouse are pretty highly developed. And a mouse can cultivate him or herself pretty rapidly as notice how rapidly I have learned to write this pure English because I have also been into Mr. Canby's desk and have found out all about the pure English and all about the P. E. N. Club. To which latter I suppose I could not belong, unless in a parasitic (Oxford Dictionary) capacity. But there really should not be all this discrimination against us mice.

We mice are pretty downtrodden as a rule. That is we would be if we were not so sry. But we have electricity in our whiskers. And, as I say, if there is cheese in it for us we can accomplish a good deal. We will gnaw away and will gnaw away and will gnaw away while you sleep and the first thing you know when you open a desk drawer is you are in the presence of a lot of confetti which you can throw out of the window if Lindbergh is riding past in an open car.

But to return to literature for mice. We have always been kept so on the jump by those larger animals whom I scorn to mention that we have had very little time for reading. I don't remember a book of late years that we have given much attention to, except to dig ourselves in behind them when those big boobs of larger animals that think they are so smart called cats go past like elephants in the night. And they are *not* quick, *either*, which is a wrong reputation they have got, they are just big boobs whom any civilized mouse can circumvent without batting an eyelash. . . .

But to return to all about the mouse's reading and homework. I will tell you how it is. It is this way. The chances are that when a good home-keeping mouse gets home in the evening, all he wants to do, after a platter of toasted cheese, is to put on the old carpet-slippers and get out the old jimmy-pipe and close his eyes for a while in a nice little snooze until it is time to go to bed. We don't go out at night much to shows. Once in our wainscoat there were a coupla white mice put on a pretty snappy show for an evening or two, but the interest in it died down when it was discovered that they were not real white mice at all as they pretended to be, but only a coupla our own mice that had fallen into a flour barrel while making their depredations and thought they could get a bit of jack out of it by keeping it dark and themselves white. But it wore off. . . . We chased them out of our wainscoat and the last time I heard of them they were down in the Singer Building. . . .

By Jack I mean cheese, because of course we have no legal tender (Oxford Dictionary), but cheese talks and they had accumulated quite a bit of old Swiss and American and even some Brie from somewhere before they were exposed. But I pick up slang awfully easy especially around such offices as this where you would be surprised to hear what slang even Mr. Canby will use sometimes when he gets excited and is talking about the Society of Pure English. . . .

So we don't read much. . . .
O'REILLEY.

Iolo A. Williams has written a volume on "The Elements of Book Collecting," which Elkin Matthews and Marrot, of London, will publish in the autumn. Chapters are included on such topics as "Modern First Editions," "The Size and Parts of a Book," and "The Formation of a Collection."

The first two volumes of the new Widecombe edition of the Dartmoor novels of Eden Phillpots, which the Macmillan Company will soon publish, will contain "Widecombe Fair" and "The Thief of Virtue." The series will be completed in twenty volumes, and will appear at the rate of two each month.

The New Books

Poetry

(Continued from preceding page)

scribed as seen and heard, and "My Vigil," with charm in its simplicity. Mr. Swift's work is uneven. Some of his poems make little impression. But a number of them convey the full flavor of his cedar country. He writes of the things he knows best. His merit is in musing such as this:

*This house, now in the making,
Is of old timber from the beaches,
Old-weather with green hangings and a
navajo
And symbols of eternal things—
No longer reckoned so.
It is a quiet place full of eloquent whispers
In summer, and cedar trees perfume the lofts.
The white birch stands a trim sentry
Against the boulder patterns,
And a blue crane is at peace with the night,
On the furthestmost rock along the shore.*

THE DREAM TAPESTRY. By Joseph Kling. The Unicorn Press (5 East 57th St.) 1927. \$1.75.

DYMER. By CLIVE HAMILTON. Dutton. 1926. \$2.

Here are what might be called two novels in verse, one as the publisher calls it, "the dream book of a sophisticate," the other the mystical dream book of a character symbolical of the human rebel. A languorous lady and a structural iron bridge appear on the jacket of the former; a gentleman, who looks as if he were juggling brass rings while wearing a union suit, on that of the latter. The gentleman is also breaking chains and cavorting in the shadow of a very purple archangel. The jackets of these books are not fortunate. Stripping off the jackets the cover of the one is a vivid egg-yellow with purple lettering and the cover of the other is purple.

But such trappings mislead us. As a matter of fact Mr. Kling displays some wisdom and knowledge of life. A few of his observations are subtle. His telling of the rather misted and fairly uninteresting story he has to tell is as if the Delphic sibyl should speak through ticker-tape. The story clicks along in extremely free verse, mixed meditation, asides and incident, even as the quotations on the ticker are mingled with other matter. The story that finally emerges is a journalistic love tragedy in terms of the phantasmagoric. The structure is so fluid that the whole thing wavers like a reflection in water; which was probably the effect designed. But the effect would only be valuable if the treatment were a matter of true art. It is not. One feels that this sort of thing would not be at all difficult to do. It is distinctly minor work, occasionally revealing a musing rather keener than the ordinary. As for "Dymer" the symbolism is to us not at all clear. Dymer was born in the Perfect City, a horrible utopia from which he quite naturally revolted. But his revolt led to a revolution for which he felt himself severely to blame, though he had merely run away, after, it must be said, murdering a lecturer. (But then there have been many lecturers we have wanted to murder!) He finds a remarkable palace, has an affair in the dark with a very real girl who afterwards turns out to be the spirit of Truth or some such thing, meets up with an old gentleman who dabbles in black art and turns out not to be a gentleman at all, finds out the cheat of dreams, goes to a graveyard and is translated into the super-solar, where he meets an angel sentinel who says he is guarding the way of spirits from a beast of despair. This turns out to be Dymer's progeny by the lady aforementioned. So Dymer takes the arms from the sentinel, indulges in combat with the beast, is killed by it, and the conquering brute becomes a winged and sworded shape towering to the skies! There the poem ends. The stanzas are often reminiscent of Masfield when they are most realistic. There is, incidentally, some good writing; but the poem as a whole does not "jell." It displays talent, but no more. The mixture of realistic detail and of wandering symbolism is not successful, the phrase never extraordinary.

THE VAGRANT OF TIME. By CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS. Toronto: The Ryerson Press. 1927. \$2.

Mr. Roberts is a Canadian poet and a veteran. Our acquaintance with his work goes back to the days of Bliss Carman and Richard Hovey. A number of the Roberts

(Continued on next page)

EARN PROMOTION
AND
COLLEGE CREDIT

through the
HOME-STUDY COURSES
in 40 different subjects given by
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