

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*.

R. S., *Dowagiac, Mich.*, planning a motor trip through New England, asks for books with information on historic and scenic high spots.

"SEEING THE EASTERN STATES," by John T. Paris (Lippincott), is a large, well-illustrated travel-guide, one of a series much used in planning motor tours. "New England Highways and Byways from a Motor Car," by Thomas D. Murphy (Page), describes a trip taken in the golden Northern month of September, 100 miles a day; half the pictures are in color. "Old Paths and Legends of the New England Border," by Katharine M. Abbott (Putnam), covers Connecticut towns, the Deerfield region, the Berkshires, and other famous localities. "Old New England Inns," by Mary C. Crawford (Page), Mary Northend's "We Visit Old Inns" (Small, Maynard), and "The Romance of Old New England Rooftrees," by Mary C. Crawford (Page), are interesting not only to legend-lovers but to antique-hunters. "Touring New England on the Trail of the Yankee," by Clara Walker Whiteside (Penn), is an illustrated record of a trip from the neighborhood of Greenwich through New Haven, Lyme, Providence, New Bedford, northward, taking in the Peterborough Colony. W. E. Kitchin's "Wonderland of the East" (Page), is for the guidance of motor tourists, with good pictures of scenic attractions.

My own favorite approach to New England—though I am glad enough for the motor journeys on which I have been taken so many times—is by the humble secondary road or foot-path—best of all, the mountain trail. The present headquarters of this department is along the road in Vermont. I am therefore in a position to appreciate books like "The Harvest of a Quiet Eye," by Odell Shepard (Houghton Mifflin), essays derived from walking experiences in this part of the world, "Vacation Tramps in New England Highlands," by Allen Chamberlain (Houghton Mifflin), a small book that will open a new country to many walkers, and "Trails and Summits of the Green Mountains," by Walter Collins O'Kane (Houghton Mifflin). This is pocket-sized, and has besides the information the mountain-climber needs, the story of the opening of the trails.

P. H. B., *Chester, Vt.*, asks for books on numismatics, and information on the present value of old coins.

"CHATS ON OLD COINS," by F. W. Burgess (Stokes), gives facts about coins of ancient and modern Europe, the United States and the British colonies, also about tokens. The bibliography will give an enthusiast further leads. *The Numismatist*, a monthly magazine for collectors of coins, medals, and paper money, is published at Federalburg, Md.

E. R. P., *New York*, asks for novels about Rome and Berlin, in line with the list of novels with Paris as their scene.

MODERN Rome is the scene of Wilfranc Hubbard's "Donna Lisa" (Macmillan), but the leading characters are all foreigners, and the young lady in the centre comes from Virginia. Isabel C. Clarke's "It Happened in Rome" (Benziger), takes place in the Pilgrimage Year, with the Holy City crowded with tourists and pilgrims; the heroine is a convert and the divorce problem figures in the plot. T. W. Wilder's spectacular "The Cabala" (A. & C. Boni), presents a brilliant group in high society. "Pagan Fire," by Norval Richardson (Scribners), concerns an ambassador's wife. "The Harvest Moon" (Doran), which though written by J. S. Fletcher, is not a detective story, places a good part of its action at Rome, where the descriptions of architecture are quite detailed; this story is concerned with the descendants of Dutch engineers and workmen brought over by Charles I to drain the great marsh in the southern corner of Yorkshire, and still preserving there a Dutch landscape peopled with Dutch-named Englishmen. "Roman Pictures," by Percy Lubbock (Scribners), is not really a novel, I suppose; the thread holding in line these lovely sketches is very slight, but I know of no better book for getting a sense of scene in the Holy City—especially if with it is read the only book I know at all like Lubbock's, though not imitated from it, Stark Young's sketches of Rome in "The Three Fountains" (Scribner). "Things Greater Than He," by L. Zuccoli (Holt), is an unforgettable story of a misunderstood

boy; the pictures of everyday family life are not elsewhere to be found in translation.

This inquirer—the initials are those of Edwin Robert Petre, head of the Institute of Foreign Travel and author of the practical little guide for the first trip abroad, "When You Go to Europe" (Literary Digest)—says that he is familiar with the older publications of this sort, so I do not tell him of the six novels of Marion Crawford that deal with Rome, though the beginner should know that the beaver-like industry of Crawford in documenting his writings make his references to places and historic events unusually reliable. Everyone knows the regulation guide-book novels, but I wonder if the Italian scene of William Dean Howells is as well-remembered as it should be?

These books are for the modern city: for ancient Rome there are the familiar historical novels listed in "Baker's Guide to Historical Fiction," and of recent years two quite different stories pay especial attention to details of everyday life. A. C. Allinson's "Children of the Way" (Harcourt, Brace), is a story of the first years of the Church, with spirited street scenes and descriptions of interiors. "The Comedians," by Louis Couperus (Doran), is a startlingly real bringing-back of the life of the Suburra, and the conditions under which the theatre operated in the days when actors all were slaves.

Novels of Berlin, recent and in translation, are not so easy to name; "The Ninth of November," by Bernard Kellermann (McBride), is a novel not without importance as a historical document, for it preserves the general frame of mind and some of the conditions of life in the last days of the Great War. "Herty Geybert," by G. H. Borchardt (Doran), is a family chronicle of eighty years ago, when women's position was not what it is now, in Germany or anywhere else. I can give this inquirer news of a Budapest novel, Louis Joseph Vance's "The Dead Ride Hard" (Lippincott), in which the Red Terror in Hungary figures, and one in which the hero goes to Vienna to study, Adelaide Eden Phillpotts's "Tomek the Sculptor" (Little, Brown), art students will recognize the descriptions. But I would be glad to know of any novels of fairly recent publication in which the scene is Berlin: Thomas Mann's tremendous family chronicle, "Buddenbrooks" (Knopf), takes place in North Germany. There is a story of post-war Berlin in Vernon Bartlett's "Topsy-Turvy: Tales of Europa Deserta" (Houghton Mifflin).

D. L. W., *Boston, Mass.*, asks for books on amateur magic and parlor tricks, adding that he fears "so lowly a subject is rather out of my line."

MURMURING that I do not use a line but a net, I hasten to reassure this inquirer on the lowliness of his subject; it is a good thing for him that Houdini is not here to catch sight of this column, which he used regularly to read and to which he more than once brought aid. The best introduction I know to this subject, one that is ideal for the beginner's use, is "Magic in the Making," by John Mulholland and Milton Smith (Scribner). Honors cluster about Mr. Mulholland, who is a member of the Society of American Magicians, the Magicians Club of London, and the Magic Circle; both he and Mr. Smith are teachers in Horace Mann School for Boys. There are diagrams and drawings in this little book, and the important subject of patter gets proper attention.

One never stops with a single book of this sort, however. "Magic for Amateurs," by W. H. Radcliffe (Appleton), describes fifty tricks calling for very little apparatus. A famous book of this sort, much larger but not too difficult for a determined amateur, is C. L. Neil's "Modern Conjurer and Drawing-Room Entertainer" (Lippincott), an English book that has been popular for years. A recently issued English book for young people, "The Boy Showman," by A. Rose (Dutton), has a chapter on parlor magic, ventriloquism, and various tricks; this is a fine book for home use, for it has all sorts of peep-shows, panoramas, and Punch entertainments, the latter with the words given. The works of Professor Hoffmann are published by Dutton: the most important are "Modern Magic" and "Later Magic," especially the latter. Dutton also publishes Houdini's "Miracle Mongers and Their Methods," "The Unmasking of Robert Houdini," and "Hou-

dini's Paper Magic," the last-named is not too difficult for boys.

I can recommend these books because I have had the pleasure of knowing at least half a dozen devoted magicians who talked to me about the literature of their art. But would I study one myself? No, I am the ideal audience for the conjurer; I refuse to know how the bunny gets into the hat! enough for me that he gets out. A sleight-of-hand performance is the only place in the world where I put my reason in pawn—secure that I can redeem it unimpaired on the way out.

N. R., *Chapel Hill, N. C.*, asks for books of travel in Germany, giving post-war conditions if possible, for a course of reading in a rural study-club for women.

ON the nineteenth of October, according to the announcement of the house of McBride, Robert Medill McBride's "Towns and People of Modern Germany" will appear; judging from the prospectus this will be just what this club needs. His trip was made by rail, motor, steamboat, and aeroplane, and covered the country from the Hanseatic cities to Nuremberg, Dresden, and Leipzig; there are many pictures. "In the Footsteps of Heine," by Henry James Forman (Houghton Mifflin), was published in 1910, but the countryside from Gottingen to Ilsenberg—which Mr. Forman traversed on foot—is not one to call for up-to-date treatment. One of the most interesting of the many foot-tours of Harry Franck is "Vagabonding Through Changing Germany" (Century). "Motor Rambles in Central Europe," by F. C. Rimington, is a recent Houghton Mifflin publication: intended for use on the road, it would give a stay-at-home traveler more than a taste of the Black Forest, Bavaria, and the Tyrol.

In this connection the group will be interested in "The New Germany," by Dr. Ernst Jaekch (Oxford University Press), three lectures by one who has been a leading German liberal since 1902, and "German After-War Problems," by Kuno Francke (Harvard University Press).

W. H. B., *New York*, asks what famous books were written in prison.

THE names of "Pilgrim's Progress," Sir Walter Raleigh's "History of the World," Wilde's "Ballad of Reading Gaol" and "De Profundis," and certain short stories of O. Henry, come at once to mind, but there I stick. Mrs. Kate O'Hare's "In Prison" (Knopf), is by a political prisoner in Jefferson City Penitentiary, and Thomas Mott Osborne's "Within Prison Walls" (Appleton) describes his experiences during a week's voluntary confinement in Auburn, while Frank Tannenbaum's "Wall Shadows" (Putnam), draws some of its force from the author's enforced stay behind bars.

The New Books

(Continued from preceding page)

Pamphlets

THE HILL OF BENNINGTON. By Daniel L. Cady. Rutland, Vt.: Tuttle.

THE ONE THOUSAND COMMONEST WORDS. Written in Isaac Pitman Shorthand. Pitman. 25 cents.

ART AND INSTINCT. By S. Alexander. Oxford University Press. 70 cents.

MUSEUMS AND NATIONAL LIFE. By Sir Frederic George Kenyon. Oxford University Press.

B. P. GRENFELL. Oxford University Press. 35 cents.

NATIONALITY, COLOR, AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY IN THE CITY OF BUFFALO. By Niles Carpenter. University of Buffalo. 50 cents.

Philosophy

AN EXPERIMENT WITH TIME. By J. W. DUNNE. Macmillan. 1927. \$2.50.

Mr. Dunne proposes an unusual thesis and does so because he has had an unusual experience. Many readers will find it hard to follow the argument, and the reviewer can help them but little. The experience is that of getting an impression, mostly in dreams, of events or little episodes with some measure of detail, which events later appearing in reality, are found in that sense to have been anticipated. Some of these events have a personal reference and would otherwise not have been observed, and others have a wide interest: such as the dreaming of a volcanic eruption in advance of the Martinique disaster. Now it must not be supposed that Mr. Dunne is dealing with anything quite on the level of "dreams that come true" or even of experiences which would take him to the Society for Psychical Research and enroll him in the group who believe in mystic powers of foreseeing the future. Mr. Dunne has a scientific, an engineering type of mind and has made inventions in the field of aeronautics. These experiences have led him to entertain an hypothesis that some would call as daring as an exploit in the air and others extravagant.

It is nothing less than a suggestion after the manner of Einstein's theory of relativity, or some higher mathematical concept of other dimensions than those we live in, of the possibility that occasionally the time-sequence is reversed, and the future succeeds the past. In other words, that instead of taking time by the forelock as a precautionary measure, there is the hint of a world in which, like in "Alice in the Looking Glass," things happen in the reverse order; and we recall that "Lewis Carroll" was a mathematician. Mr. Dunne tries to invent a mathematical scheme in which time-reversal might be a possibility. It is something like the notion that if we only could get out sufficiently far in space in the universe where it would take us a hundred years or more to reach us, might now be actually seeing the events Napoleonic days. One could dismiss it all as fantasy were it not plain that the entire spirit of the enterprise is a serious one, and that as a bit of literature it belongs to the speculative considerations of space and time, the stability of which have been given a shock by the doctrines of relativity. But for most of us time is too precious and its order too fixed to be seriously disturbed by such a speculation.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF PERSONALITY. By P. F. Valentine. Appleton. \$2.50.

PRINCIPLES OF ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY. By Edmund S. Conklin. Holt.

ESSAYS IN PHILOSOPHY. By James Ward. Macmillan.

THE SOCIAL BASIS OF CONSCIOUSNESS. By Triglanti Burrow. Harcourt, Brace. \$4.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF CHARACTER. By A. A. Roback. Harcourt, Brace. \$5.50.

(Continued on page 63)



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best novelists writing
English today.”

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The Phoenix Nest

WELL, I see that I seem to have stirred
up a good deal of commotion with
my last—and first—piece, because *Mr.
Canby* is now back and he has intimated,
“Is there no way of stopping Him?” mean-
ing me, O'Reilly; but then he is glad to
get the copy he says, because I have been
under his desk listening to him talk about it
and only scared when he wiggled his feet.
They have decided I am to go on while
this Phœnician is still so far away, but I
must say he is a good guy and I am all
for him for he has wired the office.

MOUSE I THOUGHT HE SAID
MOOSE STOP HE IS ALL RIGHT
ANYWAY SUGGEST YOU LET HIM
PINCH HIT I MAY NOT BE BACK
FOR SOME TIME STOP AS I HAVE
FOUND THE PRUNES ON THIS
RANCH ARE FINE LOTS OF LOVE
GIVE HIM A PIECE OF CHEESE THE
PHOENICIAN STOP

So they have put out some cheese but
in a trap but I would not touch it under
those conditions so I delivered my ulti-
matum (which is not the same as a ukase.
Look it up in the old Oxford). I left a
note for Mr. Canby on his desk and said
as follows:

Dear Mr. Canby: I have gone into this
thing *con amore* and would not do anything
sub rosa. I think that trap is an insult. You
can not get a high-spirited mouse to work
under such circumstances even though he is
noble and disinterested. I have been reading
a lot of detective stories and will write you
an essay on them, but only on space. Mean-
while, I will say ½ box cheese per week,
which is fair enough. I mean Camembert.
O'Reilly.

So, of course, that brought them to terms.
Only we have reached a compromise on
American. I get a piece every night and
take it away. The family have all con-
gratulated me on my new job and I have
got a pair of horn-rimmed spectacles for
use at home; only they are a bit large, so
they pull the baby around in them during
the day as a sort of a go-cart and I prop
them up at night and do some reading. They
sort of magnify and I have to get across
to the other end of the room before I can
really see through them, but then I can see
well and can always go around them up
close if I want to really make out a word.
But still one absolutely has to have such
spectacles in this game, for all use them.
Phœnix I know always wore them because
I broke them for him several times when
he left them at the office by mistake. And
to judge by his language he does not know
much about the Society for Pure English
which is putting it extremely mildly. . . .

I have been improving my mind a good
deal and have been reading a book called
“A Good Woman.” “Why,” asked my
wife, “do you start by reading a book
called ‘A Good Woman’? You don't want to
be a good woman, and anyway you couldn't
be; but you *could* well be a good mouse
if you gave it a little attention.” Which
is just the way people come back at you—I
mean women—when you are trying to im-
prove your mind. “My laws,” I said, “it
would do you some good if you were to
read this book by Mr. Bromfield. He re-
cently won the Seltzer competition and is
regarded as a leading author, besides I think
the title would be a lesson for you.” Which,
I know, was putting it rather strong, for
she really is an extremely good mousess as
they go; but I only meant it as a joke. But
she cried a little. But that's all fixed up
now. . . .

Mr. Bromfield says in his Foreword,
which I have just finished, that “A Good
Woman” is the last of a series of four
novels from various angles with a strongly
marked phase. Those are his words and
I wrote a note to Mr. Canby if that was
pure English and he wrote a note back to me
which said, “Not so very.” That man is
diplomatic. But if Mr. Bromfield has
written four books as big as the one I
climb about on I must say he is a man of
Herculean (Oxford dictionary) achieve-
ment (ditto). This foreword has taken me
a coupla nights. (Mr. Canby will jump
on me for that again. And he is right.
You shouldn't say “a coupla,” but it is an
old newspaper habit I have a hard time
getting rid of. But this foreword is
pretty solid reading, especially as it is not
such pure English. Mr. Bromfield also
uses the locution (that I heard from Mr.
Canby) “all-encompassing.” Which is, as
Mr. Canby would say, not so pure. But I
mustn't say anything that would arouse Mr.
Sumner, of whom I have learned recently,
for this foreword is really as pure as you

could wish. I read it several evenings aloud
to my wife. It is only just not such very
good English. . . .

Well, where was I? I get very tired
sometimes bouncing around on these keys
and have not yet got quite used to the
racket. But in our wainscoat they think I
am remarkable the way I have come up in
the world. They are very proud of me
and are now talking about a Welcome
Home if I would only go off somewhere
awhile and stay—for a while. I have
brought a good deal of excitement into their
drab lives since I have come home with all
this cheese and they have read what I have
been saying. You see I am the first un-
fettered mouse who has really broken into
self-expression. . . .

Well, I was talking about Mr. Bromfield.
My wife has made a good suggestion.
One could gnaw a wonderful bed out of
“A Good Woman.” I mean you could
gnaw down into it until you had a very
snug retreat. The book is so thick. We
have needed a good bed for some time
anyway and you could line it with some old
neckties and socks I have around. Not
my own. I do not wear socks. I am a
collector and have been collecting neckties
and socks for a good while now. In fact
they say—and I wish Mr. Hopkins could
see his way to using this somehow in his
department of rare books that I have the
best necktie and sock collection in all the
wainscoats in our house. . . .

But I was talking of Mr. Bromfield.
Mr. Bromfield is a realist, so far as I have
gone. He wrote this foreword on June
15th of this year, and when this number
appears it it will be only a coupla (Oh, there
I go again!) a couple of months later.
Which shows you how quickly they manu-
facture books in this country. Which is the
whole trouble, as I heard Mr. Canby say
just the other day. Mr. Bromfield wrote
this foreword in Paris. I have never been
there; but that has evidently affected his
English. He has probably been speaking
French all the time. Once I knew a
French rat. He was an apache which you
pronounce apash. I did not know him long
but he chased me all around the wainscoats
of two floors. I hope I never see that rat
again. He was as big as Dempsey. . . .

But about Mr. Bromfield. I have now
skipped the Contents Page and the page
that has on it “PART ONE. THE JUN-
GLE.” I have got to where it says “A
GOOD WOMAN” in very big type. And
I was reading that last night and every
time my wife sees those words she laughs
for some reason now. She laughs and sniffs
both at once, what I call a snaff. Well, it
begins well.

Of course the first time you write a re-
view you naturally cannot marshal your
thoughts in the order you would expect; but
I shall soon get this all down cold. It takes
me very little time to pick up the knack of
anything. Well, it was eleven o'clock at
night when this woman—she is evidently
going to be the good woman of the story—
well, when the good woman came home she
found this letter. It looked just like an
ordinary letter—but I just know it's going
to turn out to be anything but that. It was
on the dining table “in the dim radiance of
gaslight turned economically low in the
dome hand-painted in a design of wild-
roses.” If I were going to criticize Mr.
Bromfield's style I would say there were
too many “in's” in that part. But then
that would be hypocritical—I mean (Oxford
Dictionary) hypercritical. But I am al-
ready interested in this Good Woman. My
wife chaffs me a bit about it. I am afraid
she thinks I am not a very good mouse to
be reading about good women, but if so she
controls her true suspicions admirably. . . .

There will be more about Mr. Brom-
field's work. And there will soon be an
essay called “Why Mice Do Not Read De-
tective Stories.” I could begin that right
now . . . but my wife has run up on
the desk squeaking and is in quite a state,
it seems. She says she is afraid this job
of mine is going to break up our happy
home life. I tell her I get home as early
as ever at night. But I really think it is
this book about a good woman that has set
her thinking. You never can tell about
women. Yet Mr. Bromfield has written
this whole book about one. I think it is
too silly of my wife to have such a sus-
picious nature. But I suppose she thinks
my idealistic nature will catch fire and that
I shall always now be thinking about how
good this woman is and meanwhile neglect-
ing her. Well, it is just too silly, but now
I must go home with her.

O'REILLEY.



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JURGEN, [2]

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agine the author
of *Candide* re-
writing the *Arabian
Nights* one
might get some
idea of the plot
and the style.”
Town and
Country