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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

GIANTS IN THE EARTH. By O. E. Rølvaag. (Harpers).

THE NEXT AGE OF MAN. By Albert Edward Wiggam. (Bobbs-Merrill).

THE RENASCENCE OF THE TWELFTH CENTURY. By Charles Homer Haskins. (Harvard University Press).

L. A. K., Brooklyn, N. Y., is to be a secretary to an executive when his course in shorthand and typing is completed; he asks for books on general secretarial work, to supplement this course.

"AN ANALYSIS OF SECRETARIAL DUTIES AND TRAITS," by Charters and Whiteley (Williams & Wilkins, Baltimore, 1924), has been recommended to me for this purpose, also "How to Become a Company Secretary," by E. J. Hammond (Pitman, 1922), and two books in vocational series, "The Private Secretary," by E. J. Kilduff (Century, 1924), and "The Training of a Secretary," by A. L. Church (Lippincott, 1922), both presenting the duties and opportunities of the profession. The latter manual includes information not only for secretaries of business enterprises, but for those of clubs and other organizations.

H. C. B., New York, asks for novels—not translations from the French—with the scene in Paris.

SO many good Americans have gone to Paris in print that I must keep this list to the more recent romances. Of these I find Ethel Mannin's "Pilgrims" (Doran), the most important; the central figure is a Dutchman, an artist of the sur-sur-realist type, or whatever is the word for an individualist painting for the day after tomorrow. But he is a genuine artist, and his spiritual and financial struggles are against a background of those curious non-producing painters who complicate life on the left bank, and whose importance to art or to anything else is about that of an ex-assistant bookkeeper in a delicatessen shop. A grade below this are the people in Ernest Hemingway's "The Sun Also Rises" (Scribner). Wyndham Lewis's "Tarr" (Knopf), a novel of artist life ten years old, has recently been reprinted by Knopf; Nancy Hoyt's "Roundabout" takes its name from the street-carrouseis figuring in local fairs. "The Lingering Faun," by Mabel Wood Martin (Stokes), is about the upset and feverish post-war Paris, with an American girl married to a Russian prince. "These Frantic Years," by Warner Bellah (Appleton), begins on the Riviera, then goes to New York, then to Paris. I have not read Harold Loeb's "The Professors Like Vodka" (Boni & Liveright), but according to the description the professors are American and meet their fates in a Czarist café in Paris. "The Rat" (Doran), is novelized by Phyllis Bottome from Ivor Novello's play of that name; it is the stage Apache, and off the stage he loses his breath. "Morning, Noon, and Night," by Kenneth Phillips Britton (E. V. Mitchell), tells about a lady who goes to Paris to get back her lost youth: it is a very young book—nothing marks the age of a writer more accurately than his idea of the age-limit on enjoyment. "A Fiddle for Eighteen Pence," by Sybil Ryall (Doran), begins in Paris but soon takes to the open road and romance. "Mr. and Mrs. Haddock in Paris," by Donald Ogden Stewart (Doran), and Homer Croy's "They Had to See Paris" (Harper), display the travelling American family as it is supposed to be when it is funny.

"On the Slope of Montmartre," by William Wallace Irwin (Stokes), is a series of brief and illuminating sketches of life as it is really lived among the self-respecting, self-supporting inhabitants of this sacred ground—for no matter how many penny-catching parasites may taint its air with electric signs and jazz bands, so long as there live on this high land young people—and old ones too—who will quietly go hungry and cold for the sake of art, the place will be still a Mount of Martyrs. I know plenty of them doing just this at this moment, and glad of the chance to do it; they do not get into the papers, but they work in Paris.

Mr. Irwin, by the way, is not a composite of the Irwin brothers, William and Wallace; he was born that way.

W. A. C., a valued collaborator of the Guide in Kingston, Jamaica, asks me to tell two citizens of this island, soon coming to this city on a visit, what book will "give them an idea of your city, open sesame to its charms, its mystery, its barbaric splendor; such a book—and this will let you know exactly what I have in mind—as Chris Morley might write."

THE best book is "That's New York!" by Morris Markey (Macy-Masius). This may not please the aborigines of this town—although, come to think of it, I am one of these, and it pleases me—but there can be no doubt that it catches and passes on something of the distinctive spirit of the city at this moment, not only in its grandiose aspects but in its nervous intensity of action. Along with this I would by all means take "New Backgrounds for a New Age," by Edwin Avery Park (Harcourt, Brace), a surprising survey of architecture, arts and crafts, advertisements, fabrics—all the extraordinary evidences that art is alive in this city and screaming at the top of its lungs to be heard over the din of traffic. The book is not concerned altogether with New York, but it centers here; I am pleased to find that I have been in the movement without knowing it; the only restaurant that I frequent with anything like regularity—save for the one across the street from my home—is the only one whose decorations get two sets of pictures.

These visitors should keep in touch with the magazine *The New Yorker*; it has the same relation to New York that *Punch* has to London. This is one of the reasons why some New Yorkers go to London.

H. G., New York, asks for books that would tell him the conditions of standing timber in South America.

THIS can be best obtained from "Forest Resources of the World," two volumes by Zon and Sparhawk (McGraw-Hill). This gives not only the information, but also a detailed bibliography of value for further study.

## GOING ACROSS

Whatever you care to know

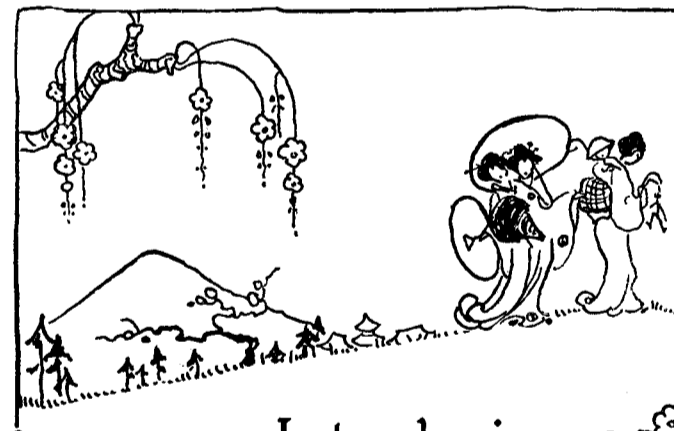
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## The AMEN CORNER

THE OXONIAN realizes his own ardent incapacity to distinguish between verses which are (as William Webbe put it) "meere Poeticall, or which tend in some respecte (as either in matter or forme) to be Poetry." Hence he offers not without trepidation these petty vandalisms and light-hearted ravages upon the poetry of a more creative past. From time to time these lipping numbers and purposeful parodies have found their way to the Oxonian's desk. Whether the offender be Pamela's Latest Victim, who takes this doubtful course to his lady's favor, or whether the Publisher's Young Man be the culprit, the Oxonian cannot say. At any rate, although these pillaged verses condemn themselves sufficiently unaided, they show what fantastic contortions June may wreak upon a youthful mind.

Tell me not, Sweet, I am unkind,  
That from the nunnery  
Of thy chaste breast and quiet mind  
To Modern English Usage I fly.

Yet this inconstancy is such  
As thou too shalt adore.  
I could not love thee, dear, so much,  
Loved I not Fowler more!(<sup>1</sup>)

Sumer is icumen in,  
Loud sing cuckoo!  
Cometh flowers, and pretty bookes,  
From Oxford to you—  
Sing cuckoo!

This by our own Daisy Ashford!

When mothers chide and fathers curse  
There's still the Oxford Book of Eng-  
lish Verse.  
When I seek refuge from my woes,  
I turn to ditto English Prose!(<sup>2</sup>)

Hark! hark! the lark at heaven's gate  
sings,  
And Phoebus' gins arise,  
By reading of our catalogue  
His mind to Oxford - ize!(<sup>3</sup>)

Take, O take those lips away,  
That so sweetly were forsworn;  
And those eyes, the break of day,  
Lights that do mislead the morn,  
But my Fowler bring again,  
Bring again;  
It promises less fickle joys,  
And greater gain!(<sup>4</sup>)

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,  
Thou art not so unkind  
As man's ingratitude.  
Who borrowed Eighteenth Century  
Verse,  
And left me all forlorn.  
Heigh ho! sing, heigh ho! unto the green  
holly:  
Most friendship is feigning, most loving  
mere folly!(<sup>5</sup>)

I sent thee late a *Rasselas*,  
Not so much honouring thee  
As giving it in hope that there  
It could not wasted be;  
But thou therein didst only glance,  
And send'st it back to me;  
Since when, thou fool, thou'lt get, I swear,  
No more good books from me!(<sup>6</sup>)

I dare not ask a kiss,  
I dare not beg a smile,  
Lest having that, or this,  
I might grow proud the while.

No, no, the utmost share  
Of my desire shall be  
That you shall give me back  
*Croce's Biography*!(<sup>7</sup>)

In the hour of my distress,  
When temptations me oppress,  
And when I my sins confess,  
Sweet Victorians, comfort me!(<sup>8</sup>)

When I consider how my light is spent,  
Ere half my days in this dark world  
and wide,  
I do regret those wasted moments when  
I went  
Without the *Pocket Oxford Dictionary*  
for my guide!(<sup>9</sup>)

Indeed, indeed, Repentance oft before  
I swore—and I was sober when I swore!  
And then came Fowler, and behold!  
My former errors have appeared no more.  
(<sup>1</sup>)

All the words that I utter,  
And all the words that I write,  
Are dissected by Krapp and Van Santvoord,  
Whose wisdom gives me a fright!(<sup>2</sup>)

With malice toward none, and apologies  
to all!

—THE OXONIAN.

(1) Fowler's Dictionary of Modern English Usage, cloth \$3.00, India \$4.00. (2) Oxford Books of English Verse and Prose, cloth \$3.75, India \$4.25, and in leather. (3) Oxford Complete Catalogue (ready July 1). (4) Oxford Book of 18th Century Verse, cloth \$3.75, India paper \$4.25. (5) *Rasselas*, ready soon, about \$3.00. (6) *Imitation vellum*, \$1.75. (7) Oxford Book of Victorian Verse, cloth \$3.75, India paper \$4.25. (8) *Pocket Oxford Dictionary*, American Edition, \$2.00.

## The Phoenix Nest

WELL, as promised, here is our second Ferocious Sonnet number. As we look over the material we again humbly salaam to Mr. Leonard Doughty, of Austin, Texas, who has gone to the trouble of copying out many sonnets by the great of other years and sending in these and others of his own thick as leaves on Vallombrosa. If a book of ferocious sonnets is ever compiled with our assistance we shall certainly see that Mr. Doughty's name is upon it and that he inherits a major portion of whatever royalties may accrue. But we have so much work on our hands at present that such a book must wait. Meanwhile, we can print but several of his, in order to give others a chance, but he may be assured that all of his sending will be consigned safely to our grateful file, to be resurrected in a happier time. . . .

Meanwhile, we may mention that Mr. Doughty has reminded us of various sonnets of Lord Alfred Douglas; but as we are not sure whether we could avoid difficulties by quoting them, we do not do so. He has also, as Procrustes, keeper of the tavern, rather daringly experimented with making a sonnet of a part of No. IX of Housman's "Last Poems," using literally his words and making an alexandrine of the last line. But this we cannot quite allow. Likewise he charges us by our soul's repose not to forget Sir William Watson's "Year of Shame." We shall not, if the book ever comes to a book, but meanwhile must. And now, to choose from his plenty; here is a sonnet of Sidney Dobell's that may not be too familiar to you:

LIBERTY TO M. LE DIPLOMATE

Thou fool who treatest with the sword,  
and not  
With the strong arm that wields it! Thou  
insane

Who seest the dewdrops on the lion's mane,  
But dost forget the lion! Oh thou sot,  
Hugging thy drunken dream! Thou idiot  
Who makes a covenant against the rain  
With autumn leaves! Thou atheist who  
dost chain

This miserable body that can rot,  
And thinkest it Me! Fool! for the swordless  
arm

Shall strike thee dead. Madman, the lion  
wakes,  
And with one shake is dry. Sot, the day  
breaks

Shall sober even thee. Idiot, one storm  
And thou art bare. Atheist, the corpse is  
thine,  
But lo, the unfettered soul immortal and  
divine!

And so to two parody-sonnets of Doughty's own, but attributed to the diary of Algeron Imperial Wordstoburn, whence they are wrenched, with the motto

. . . Quare id faciam, fortasse requiris.  
Nescio: sed feri sentio. . . .  
Catullus, Carmen 85.

I

AD AMICOS

God strike me dead, if I unhate my hates;  
Hate is my livery and my heart's red sign;  
I said to Hate, O Master, be thou mine;  
Thine am I, as when Plague with Earth-  
quake mates;  
Fling open wide thy loved infernal gates,  
And shut me in forever. . . . Thou  
benign  
High god of my heart's worship! here I  
pine  
In a void world where vapid friendship  
prates.

My soul is mad with love of thee, O Hate;  
My heart is Hell with hate of thee, O  
Love;  
I rage, that there are those who love  
me well.  
O Master, burst these strangling bonds of  
fate;  
Arm me with ruffian strength that I may  
shove  
My lovers to the deepest depths of  
Hell.

II

AD COSMON

Damnation! Curse of God, and Devil's spite  
Confound with Hell's confusion and dis-  
may;  
Be Death by night, and Horror's rage by  
day,  
Forever and forever,—left and right,  
Be tortuous, suffocating grip and bite  
Of unseen ghouls and vampires, and the  
grey  
And unclean lips that lick all life away—  
Oh heart of hearts, breathe Murder day  
and night.

Turn devil, all ye gods of every age;  
Turn blood, ye wandering waves of every  
sea;  
Dove, insect, worm, and infant, rend  
and prey;  
Roar, Silence; rise Corruption; Darkness,  
rage;  
All earth and heaven and hell join in  
with me,  
And slay, and slay, and slay, and slay  
and slay.

That last seems to us pretty whole-souled  
and satisfying! In fact it makes us supremely  
cheerful. Next, we append a new sonnet  
by Leonard Bacon, whose former contribu-  
tion to this dour and gentle gallery is  
well-remembered:

SONNET WRITTEN DURING A STOMACH-  
ACHE

Thank God I am light-minded. I have had  
The happy disposition to ignore  
Nine-tenths of our contemporary lore  
That makes the younger generation sad.  
There's some good science and a lot of bad.  
Most of our literature is just a bore.  
Most of our art is piffle to the core.  
That I know it is no reason to be glad.

Light-minded! There are things I could have  
died for.

But ere I die, let's say, for Bertrand Russell  
The executioner will have to hustle.  
I want a brave bright madness of the heart,  
And not a blank-dashed theory (patent ap-  
plied for)

Or a tortuous and intellectual art.

Mr. Harvey C. Grumbine, of Washing-  
ton, D. C., has submitted a number of son-  
nets to us. The one we like the most is:

WHY OLD MEN ARE IMMORAL?

The things one runs away from half in fear  
Of danger to one's moral rectitude,  
And half (the deadlier half) in fear of  
rude

Behavior from bores who squeeze a tear  
For one's undying soul's sake with a leer  
Quite late Victorian, as of a prude  
Prying into a keyhole at some crude  
Naughtiness,—matter less as age draws near.  
They matter less when time has come and  
laid

An equalizing hand on high and low,  
On rich and poor, the fair, the strong, the  
weak;

For, seeing naught of which to be afraid  
Save stiffened joints and blood congealed  
to snow,  
Age warms at Beauty's breast its shrivelled  
cheek.

And the following, which we have been  
compelled somewhat to amend in its incep-  
tion, comes from David S. Oakes, of Deca-  
tur, Illinois:

TO A GUEST TOWEL

Forbidding freshness of unearthly white,  
Folded and fringed and bristling starchier  
Than ought save evening's bosom-shirts,—  
to stir

Whose creases sharp and folds too smooth  
and tight

Were sacrilege, to soil whose monogram  
Were desecration at a vandal's hand,  
E'en though the host's or hostess' gesture  
grand

Would have one think it mattered not a  
damn,—  
Gladly forbear these toil-stained palms of  
mine

To smirch your virgin snow! I leave you  
fast,  
Unsought, unsullied, pure forever more,  
To end your vestal life's conceived design;  
And seek behind the door, as in the past,  
The humble Turkish, damp from hands of  
yore.

And last, but not least, this from E. H.  
Burr, of Toronto, Canada:

O SOLOMON, O SINCLAIR!

O Solomon, think you that you were wise  
To breathe that one impassioned Song of  
yours?

The fleshly flavor of your love endures  
Wherever pagan hearts idolatrise.  
A king by palimpsest could subsidize  
And circulate libidinous brochures  
Among a chosen few; the simon-pures  
Reject such fervor with averted eyes.

Successive generations think they see  
Just what your Hebrew imagery meant;  
Walt Whitman read and then became so  
"free"

His broadening slowly down from precedent  
Surpassed your transcendental lechery,  
Now at its nadir in this Gentry gent.  
. . . And so, farewell!

THE PHOENICIAN.

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